



VIRGINIA BIRDS

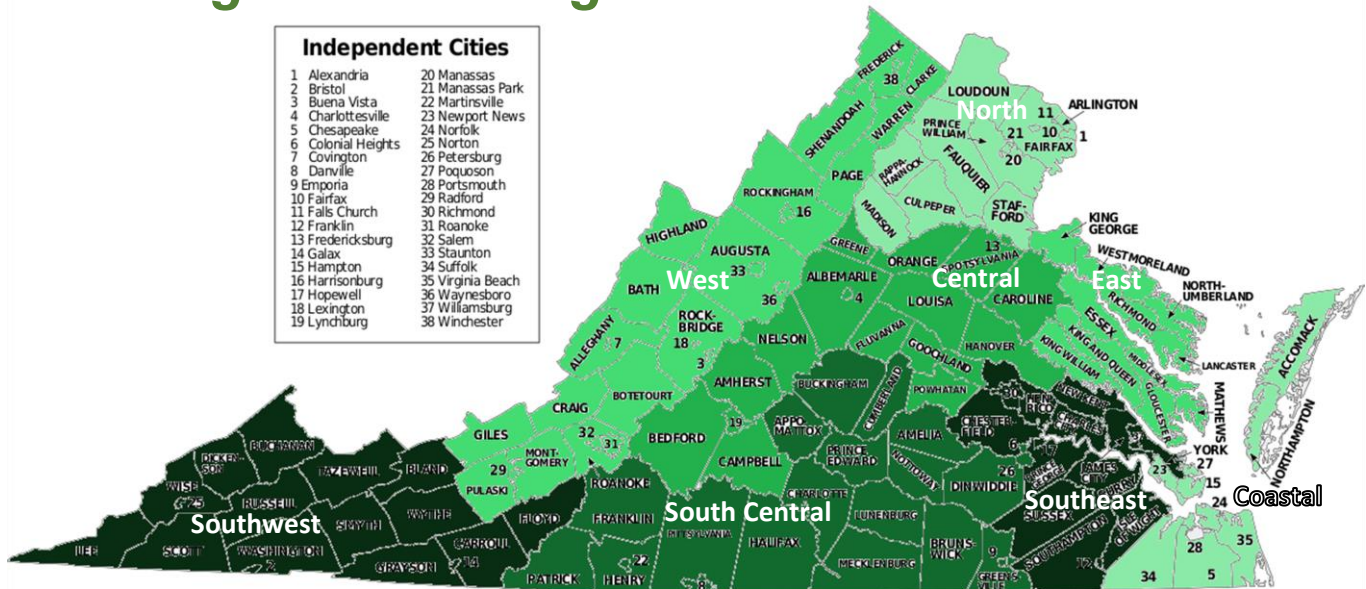
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Fall Records • Aug – Nov 2021

Virginia Birds Regions



Virginia Birds

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Submissions

Send reports to the appropriate Regional Editor. Photographs should be the highest resolution possible and sent to max92701@gmail.com. Articles for consideration can be sent to mhanthony2@gmail.com.

Season reports due to Regional Editors:

Winter (Dec – Feb): 15 Mar Spring (Mar – May): 15 Jun
 Summer (Jun – Jul): 15 Aug Fall (Aug – Nov): 15 Dec

Terms and Abbreviations

Species names appear in **bold** the first time mentioned, species on the Virginia Avian Records Committee (VARCOM) review list in **BOLD CAPS**, and county/independent city names in *italics*.

Abbreviations

ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
a. r.	audio recording
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
Dr.	Drive
et al.	and others
f.	female
<i>fide</i>	vouched by
FOS	First of Season
Ft.	Fort
Gold Book	<i>Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist</i> . Virginia Avifauna No. 7, 4 th Ed. (2007).
Hwy.	Highway
Is.	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
Ln.	Lane
m.	male
m. obs.	multiple observers
Mt.	Mountain, Mount
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NF	National Forest
NFC	Nocturnal Flight Call
NHP	National Historical Park
NP	National Park
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	photograph
Pk.	Park
Pkwy.	Parkway
Pt.	Point
R.	River
Rd.	Road
Res.	Reservoir
RP	Regional Park
Rte.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SR	State Road, State Route
VARCOM	Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDWR	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
v. r.	video recording
VSO	Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
*	specimen collected

On the cover: Matt Felperin's photo of a **Roseate Spoonbill** at Huntley Meadows, *Fairfax* 27 Jun 2021

Editor's Corner

As this edition of *Virginia Birds* hits your desk (or perhaps your email inbox!), we are already more than a month into 2023. Time marches on, in any event. With this issue, however, we take you back in time to the summer and fall of 2021. For birders as for everyone else, this was a time marked by tentative, carefully-negotiated returns to normalcy as we emerged from the worst throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Traveling, carpooling, birding together in groups – these hallmarks of pre-pandemic birding returned for many of us.

Summer – with passage migrants gone north, and our breeding species settled in to the business of, well, breeding, things oftentimes quiet down for birds. The days are longer, affording more precious birding time, yet heat and humidity sometimes make for uncomfortable days in the field. Of course, as many of us know, summer can be a very dynamic time for birds as well. Shorebird movements begin by June, and later in the summer breeding birds begin dispersing. Southern birds, especially waders, frequently wander at this time of year, turning up well north or inland of their typical haunts. For Virginia birders, the summer of 2021 was highlighted by another large-scale invasion of Roseate Spoonbills. Once a nearly unheard-of species in Virginia, in recent years this charismatic southern wader has become an annual visitor with records scattered across the Commonwealth. Recent trends notwithstanding, however, the invasion that began in summer and continued into fall 2021 was one for the books. Virginia's many spoonbill records were part of a larger, historic movement of this species that saw roving birds reach as far north as New Hampshire, New York, and Michigan. Every state on the east coast save for Maine and Rhode Island reaped the spoils of this movement, but inland records were plentiful too, with birds turning up in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. To a lesser extent, Wood Storks were also part of this movement, with a handful of extralimital records including a few in Virginia. Kenn Kaufman speculates that these movements, which almost exclusively involved young birds, were the result of a normal

northward post-breeding dispersal amplified by a combination of unusually successful breeding in Florida colonies – leading to higher numbers of wandering birds and greater competition that encourages further wanderings – and abnormally high water levels in some southern areas, making foraging more difficult and inducing birds to move wider in search of feeding grounds.

The records in Virginia during the summer and fall of 2021 lend support to Kaufman's theory, as all the birds documented by Virginia birders were indeed juveniles. Virginia was treated to an impressive geographic spread in spoonbill records, with at least one record from every *Virginia Birds* Region save for the West and South Central. All told, records were notched from fifteen counties and seven independent cities: *Accomack, Albemarle, Bedford, Carroll, Culpeper, Fairfax, Gloucester, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, Northumberland, Orange, Southampton, Stafford,* and *Surry* counties and the cities of *Alexandria, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth,* and *Virginia Beach*. The high count was a group of 8 photographed by Ernie Miller at Plum Tree Island NWR, *Poquoson* 29 Aug. Though far fewer by comparison, reports of Wood Storks were not lacking; Virginia had five records from *Fairfax, Henrico, Prince William, Sussex,* and *Virginia Beach*.

While certainly one of the most noteworthy avian events of the season, and pertaining to some of our most charismatic visitors, the spoonbill invasion was far from the only occurrence of note in summer or fall 2021. Though birders expecting Fall 2021 to duplicate the previous year's fall rarity madness were bound for disappointment, the season was not without its highlights. Read on to learn more about a summer and fall of sightings that included such highlights as multiple Sabine's Gulls, Purple Gallinule, Heermann's Gull, and more!

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not point out a few inadvertent omissions from the Winter 2020-21/Spring 2021 combined issue. These omissions

were unintentional and resulted purely from editorial oversight, for which I take full responsibility. The digital version of the Winter 2020-21/Spring 2021 issue has been corrected, but these errors are remedied as insertions in the print edition of the Summer/Fall 2021 issue. The first of these, a White-faced Ibis photographed at Burtons Pond, *Bland* 5 Apr 2021 by Karen Owens, was omitted entirely. This was a regrettable error, as this sighting constituted not only a significant local record but a first Mountains & Valleys record and the furthest west in the state by a wide margin! Though the sightings were included in the East column, photo submissions of, respectively, a Black-headed Gull at Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews* 6 Feb 2021 by Ty Smith; a Cape May Warbler at White Marsh, *Gloucester* 28 Jan 2021 by Susan

Crockett; and a Tennessee Warbler at Urbanna, *Middlesex* Feb 2021 by Jessica Coker were left out. Similar oversights will hopefully be avoided in the future thanks to the diligent efforts of our new photo editor (read on to learn more!).

Literature Cited

Kaufman, Kenn. "Ask Kenn: Why Have Roseate Spoonbills Invaded the North This Summer?" *Audubon*, 31 Aug 2021.
<https://www.audubon.org/news/ask-kenn-why-have-roseate-spoonbills-invaded-north-summer>.

Introducing: Max Nootbaar, *Virginia Birds* Photo Editor

As anyone who knows me and my interest in birding can attest, I'm not much of a photographer. My lack of knowledge about the finer points of photography, coupled with a few editorial oversights on photo submissions for the Winter 2020-21/Spring 2021 issue of *Virginia Birds* convinced me of the need to bring someone on board who was better equipped to manage the photography in this journal – an essential piece, and one that doubtless brightens the reading experience for our audience. Thus, I am pleased to welcome Max Nootbaar as the new *Virginia Birds* Photo Editor. Max joins us with a wealth of experience as both a birder and a bird photographer, and his efforts will be a major help in ensuring the high quality of photos appearing in the journal. Please join me in welcoming Max to the team, and read below to hear a little bit about him in his own words:



Hey everyone, my name is Max Nootbaar and I am the new Photo Editor for *Virginia Birds*!

I've had a love for the outdoors ever since I began exploring the wetlands and woodlands around my neighborhood at the age of six. My interests became more focused when I was given a pair of binoculars at twelve. I began watching birds and felt my interest slowly grow into a passion; something about birds inspired me. I became interested in photography shortly after becoming

a birder and saved up for several years. I eventually purchased a Canon 7D Mark II camera body and a Canon EF 400mm f/5.6L USM telephoto lens and have been using the same setup for five years. Although I love all kinds of bird photography, I especially enjoy capturing birds both in flight and in their natural habitats. In addition to photography, I love drawing birds both in color and with graphite.

My favorite bird at the moment is the Red Crossbill, mainly because of their peculiar bill shape and impressive evolutionary history. I'm a big fan of nocturnal flight calls, morning flight, storm fallout events, and visible migration. I have a growing interest in international travel that was sparked by recent visits to both the Yucatán and Iberian Peninsulas. Despite this, I have a special place in my heart for Virginia's beautiful scenery and astounding bird diversity and am proud to call the Commonwealth my home. Although the Eastern Shore and Chesapeake Bay are my favorite areas to bird, I have recently gained an appreciation for the New River Valley and Southwestern Virginia as a whole. I spend what little free time I have exploring these underbirded regions in search of new birding sites and first county records.

Although birding is an essential aspect of my identity, I also want to work to conserve birds and their habitats. I am a Junior majoring in Wildlife Conservation and minoring in Forestry and Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech. I am an active member of the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program and am involved in several projects studying shorebirds on Virginia's Barrier Islands. I have processed prey samples from Red Knots and am currently studying the dispersal dynamics of Piping Plovers for an undergraduate research project.

I'm looking forward to getting involved and contributing to *Virginia Birds*. Please send your photos of notable species to me at max92701@gmail.com!

Fall 2021 Virginia Hawkwatch Summary

Compiled by Bill Williams

Retrieved from HawkCount 25 Nov 2022

Effort Data

Hawkwatch	# Count Days	Date Range	# Count Hours	VA Birds Region	Fall Season Years
Mendota Fire Tower, <i>Washington</i>	8 of 24	12-25 Sep	50.5	Southwest	1958-2019; 2021
Snickers Gap, <i>Clarke/Loudoun</i>	36 of 95	28 Aug-27 Nov	178	West/North	1990; 1992-94; 1996-98; 2002-21
Harveys Knob, <i>Botetourt</i>	93 of 108	15 Aug-30 Nov	568.5	West	1979-2021
Rockfish Gap, <i>Augusta/Nelson</i>	84 of 106	17 Aug-30 Nov	519.75	West	1977; 1981-2021
Candler Mt., <i>Lynchburg</i>	1 of 1	25 Sep	4.75	Central	2002-2021
Kiptopeke, <i>Northampton</i>	89 of 92	31 Aug-29 Nov	755.95	Coastal	1977-2021

Species Counts

Hawkwatch	Osprey	Swallow-tailed Kite	Mississippi Kite	Bald Eagle	Northern Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Northern Goshawk
Mendota Fire Tower	9	0	0	15	4	22	7	0
Snickers Gap	81	0	2	160	33	452	63	0
Harveys Knob	88	0	0	243	15	548	110	0
Rockfish Gap	330	1	4	355	80	2309	402	2
Candler Mt.	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Kiptopeke	4039	0	4	797	673	4260	1412	1
Totals	4548	1	10	1570	806	7592	1996	3

Species Counts, cont.

Hawkwatch	Red-shouldered Hawk	Broad-winged Hawk	Swainson's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle
Mendota Fire Tower	3	2485	0	2	0	4
Snickers Gap	69	6022	0	267	0	4
Harveys Knob	26	4043	0	449	0	9
Rockfish Gap	52	33017	0	662	1	14
Candler Mt.	1	18	0	2	0	0
Kiptopeke	97	1336	3	508	0	8
Totals	248	46921	3	1890	1	39

Hawkwatch	American Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Unknown Raptor	Totals (All Species)
Mendota Fire Tower	9	4	5	6	2575
Snickers Gap	54	18	13	15	7253
Harveys Knob	81	16	30	35	5693
Rockfish Gap	204	53	56	62	37604
Candler Mt.	0	0	1	0	27
Kiptopeke	4098	1395	670	49	19350
Totals	4446	1486	775	167	72502

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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.

SUMMER 2021

Temperatures were above normal throughout the period in the Piedmont. Precipitation was below normal in the Piedmont; however, drought conditions did not develop across the Region. The highlights this season were several Roseate Spoonbills seen across the Region and the reappearance of the Brown-headed Nuthatch in *Culpeper*.

Abbreviations: Belle Haven (Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax*); Bles Pk. (Bles Pk., *Loudoun*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Oak Spring (Oak Spring Garden Foundation, *Fauquier*); Occoquan Bay (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Occoquan RP (Occoquan RP, *Fairfax*).

WATERFOWL — SHOREBIRDS

A **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck**, a rare visitor in the state with just 3 previous summer records in the Region (which include groups of 7 and 8), was seen and ph. by many at Huntley Meadows 27 Jun (ph. CBu, MMA). A **Blue-winged Teal**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont (late date 30 Apr), continued at Bles Pk. through the end of the period (ph. m. obs.). An **American Wigeon**, a rare summer visitor in the Region whose late date is 10 May, was seen at Belle Haven 6 Jun (ph. GF) and at nearby Dyke Marsh 14 Jun. A

Redhead, a very rare summer visitor in the Piedmont with only three previous records, continued from the spring period at Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* through at least 26 Jul. A **Bufflehead** observed at Occoquan RP 6 Jun (ph. MCo) was only the third known summer occurrence in the entire Piedmont. Reports of **Hooded Mergansers**, still a fairly rare summer resident in the Piedmont, included singles at L. Accotink Pk., *Fairfax* 11 Jun (anon.) and G.R. Thompson WMA, *Fauquier* 12 Jun (GF); 3 at Oak Spring 16 Jun (MCA); and one at Broad Run Stream Valley Pk., *Loudoun* 5 Jul (ph. BHi). Observations of **Common Mergansers**, rare in summer in the Coastal Plain and in the Piedmont e. of the Blue Ridge and away from the Potomac R., included 1–3 f. near Bittersweet Ln. 8 mi. s. of Sperryville, *Rappahannock* 2 & 8 Jun (ph. PL); 3 in the Thornton R. 1 mi. e. of Sperryville, *Rappahannock* 6 Jun (BHo); a f. with 5 juvs. continuing from late spring at the W&OD trail crossing of Difficult Run near Hunter Mill Rd., *Fairfax* 9 Jun (ph. JD); and one at Dyke Marsh 26 Jun (ph. TK). Seventeen adults lingered more easterly in the Thornton R. near Laurel Mills, *Rappahannock* 15 Jul (ph. anon.), where they were observed for about 30 minutes running back and forth on the surface of the water, swimming along the river bottom, and preening on the bank. Six to as many as 8 frequent Great Falls Pk., *Fairfax* year-round (m. obs.); while usually in the Potomac R. (so in Maryland), they are occasionally seen at river's edge or in an entering stream. A **Red-breasted Merganser**, a species

with just a handful of summer records in the Piedmont, was seen at Occoquan RP 5 Jun (MS, ph. MCo), with 2 there 15 Jun. Reports of **Ruddy Ducks**, known to rarely linger into early summer, included 5 at Occoquan Bay 2 Jun (PM), where one may have remained through the summer, seen 10–11 Jul (anon.); a single from a residential area of Herndon, *Fairfax* 6 Jun (EC); and a single at the Dulles Int'l Airport lake, *Loudoun* 7 Jun (MR) which continued from late spring and was seen again 28 Jun. A **Pied-billed Grebe**, a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, was seen at Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* 10 Jul (TMD). A **Black-billed Cuckoo**, a rare summer resident in the Piedmont (although less so in the nearby Mountains sector), was observed at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 2 Jun (GR). A **Virginia Rail**, a rare or locally uncommon summer resident in the Piedmont, was seen at The Woods of Warrenton, *Fauquier* 9–10 Jul (CP, ph., a. r. TMD), where it was observed again 24 Jul (CP). Single **American Coots**, rare in the Region in summer, were seen at Bles Pk. 2–5 Jun (ph. NH) and Occoquan Bay 17 Jun (JAl). Reports of **American Avocets**, rare inland, included 9 at Huntley Meadows 6 Jul (ph. TDi); 3 at Belle Haven 25 Jul (ph. DL); and 3 flying over the Lowes Is. ponds, *Loudoun* 26 Jul (ph. DC). Reports of **Semipalmated Plovers**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, included one at the Meadowbrook Farm ponds, *Loudoun* 1–2 Jun (SP, ph. MMy) and 3 along Kinchloe Rd. near Clifton, *Fairfax* 2 Jun (ph. P&JW). A flock of 23 **Whimbrels** was observed in flight over Harrison Rd., *Fauquier* 26 Jul (TMD); there are only four previous summer records in the Piedmont.

TERNs — FLYCATCHERS

Two **LEAST TERNS** (very rare away from the Coastal Plain at any time, with only 4 prior records in the entire Piedmont) were seen at the Vienna Res., *Fairfax* 8 Jun (ph. JAs) and again 29 Jun. Reports of **Caspian Terns**, a species with only 2 previous summer records in our part of the Piedmont, included 3 at Beaverdam Res.,

Loudoun 13 Jul (ph. GH) and 7 at Occoquan RP 21 Jul (A&ST); the extreme late date is 10 Jun. Single **Forster's Terns**, rare in summer in the Piedmont with only 7 previous records, were seen at Trump Nat. Golf Course, *Loudoun* 2 Jul (JH) and Beaverdam Res., *Loudoun* 8 Jul (CBo). Two **Common Loons**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont and typically on larger lakes, were observed at L. Mooney Pk., *Stafford* 13 Jun (ph. TS, ES). An **American Bittern**, rare in the Region in summer, was seen at Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 12 Jun (KS). Single **Tricolored Herons**, a very rare post-breeding visitor in the Region, were observed at Huntley Meadows 26–31 Jul (ph. CF) and Long Bridge Pk., *Arlington* 28 Jul (ph. EW), with 1–2 continuing through the end of the season there and at nearby Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, *Arlington*. Also a rare post-breeding visitor, a **White Ibis** was seen by m. obs. at Huntley Meadows 10–15 Jul (ph. LS). The season was favored with visits of **ROSEATE SPOONBILL**; the Region has experienced only one visit previously (two widely separated sightings over two days in Jun 2018). One or more individuals made appearances between late Jun and late Jul at the extremes of the Region. The first appeared at Huntley Meadows 25 Jun (IC) where as many as 3 were seen and ph. by m. obs. through 29 Jul; 2 of these apparently moved between there and Dyke Marsh (JM) at the end of Jul and, looking forward, did not return to Huntley after the end of the period though one did remain at Dyke Marsh well into the fall period. In addition, singles (perhaps one of these birds) made appearances well away at L. Pelham, *Culpeper* 5 Jul (KB), seen there again 31 Jul and beyond; and at Trump Nat. Golf Course, *Loudoun* 19 Jul (MW, ph. DC & JF). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was observed over Huntley Meadows 16 Jul (ph. SD). A m. **Northern Harrier**, a rare summer visitor in the Region, was observed swooping over the road at Paeonian Springs, *Loudoun* 16 Jun (SH), less than a mi. from where one of only eight previous summer sightings in our part of the Piedmont occurred almost exactly four years earlier. A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was seen in Hume,

Fauquier 22 Jun (ELe); most of the rare Regional summer sightings are in the n. and near the Blue Ridge. A **Merlin**, uncommon in the Region anytime, and with only four known summer occurrences statewide e. of the Blue Ridge, was seen at Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria* 13 Jul (ph. TK), where it was seen again 23 & 31 Jul; the extreme early date in the Coastal Plain is 30 Aug. There were three reports of **Peregrine Falcons** in Shenandoah NP, *Madison*, where they are rare summer residents; even rarer were the following sightings (singles unless otherwise specified): Ballston Beaver Pond, *Arlington* 1 Jun (BG); Reston Town Center, *Fairfax* 5 Jun (BBur, LW) seen and ph. by m. obs. through 3 Jul with 3 and 4 individuals each reported once; Mimosa St., *Stafford* near Fredericksburg 10 Jun (MCh); a pair flying over Possum Point Rd., *Prince William* 20 Jun (JM); w. of Woodbridge, *Prince William* 9 Jul (LJ); Belle Haven 10 Jul (KG); flying over a residence near Manassas, *Prince William* 16 Jul (SK); Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria* 18 Jul (DA); and Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 31 Jul (TH). There were multiple sightings of **Least Flycatchers** within Shenandoah NP, *Madison*, where they are fairly local in summer: Cedar Run Trail 3 Jun (NG); Dark Hollow Falls Trail 6 Jun (CLa); Big Meadows 7 Jun (a. r. M&JC), with 2 there 14 Jun and one again 4 Jul; and Story of the Forest Nature Trail 21 Jun (ph. ELa).

SWALLOWS — DICKCISSEL

There were several reports of **Cliff Swallows**, fairly rare in summer away from the extreme n. Piedmont: 5 along George Washington Memorial Pkwy. in *Arlington* 2 Jun (DP) with a known nest nearby; up to 2 at Woodglenn L., *Fairfax* 4 Jun–3 Jul (P&JW); one along Potomac Heritage Trail in Rosslyn, *Arlington* 10 Jun (EW); and 4 at Bull Run Marina RP, *Fairfax* 14 Jun (PS), with one there 24 Jun. A group of 4 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, was a surprise at Rust Nature Sanctuary, *Loudoun* 19 Jun (JY) (the Piedmont

extreme late date is 24 May). One was seen at the Pinnacles Picnic Area in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 24 Jun (JL), where the species is a fairly rare summer resident. The **Brown-headed Nuthatch** that had been recorded at Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper* nearly every month from Sep 2017 through mid-Feb 2020, then apparently went absent, reappeared 8 Jul (ph. KK). This species has only two other records in the Region and only one more in the state n. of Fredericksburg. A **Pine Siskin**, with only a handful of summer records in the entire Piedmont, was seen along Mason St., *Fairfax City* 5 Jun (ph. CLu); the Piedmont extreme late date is 3 Jun. A **White-throated Sparrow** made an unexpected summer appearance at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 13 Jun (RJ). The Piedmont late date for this species is 20 May, but late migrants occasionally linger into early Jun. A **Savannah Sparrow**, a rare and local summer resident in the n. Piedmont, was observed at Oak Spring 24 Jun (MCa), and 3 were detected near Upperville, *Fauquier* during a bioblitz 10 Jul (MBr, MCa, ML). Portions of *Loudoun* and *Fauquier* are among the few areas in the Piedmont where **Bobolinks** are known to breed, albeit increasingly rarely. Summer reports included 2 at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 2 Jun (GR); 2 at Langhorne Farm, *Fauquier* 7 Jun (BBut, AD); one at nearby Little Milan, *Fauquier* 7 Jun (BBut, AD) with 2 there later in the month, then 3 (possibly early migrants) 28 Jul (IT, TMD); up to 12 at Oak Spring 16 & 24 Jun (MCa); and 6 nearby on Rokeby Rd., *Fauquier* 25 Jun (ph. JK). Additional likely early migrants included singles at Meadowood Recreation Area, *Fairfax* 27 Jul (ph. CF) and Clifton Institute, *Fauquier* 31 Jul (BH); note, the Regional early date for transients is 20 Aug. There were numerous reports of **Prothonotary Warblers** in the extreme nw. Piedmont where they are rare, including 2 at Bles Pk. 2 Jun (EA), where one was seen by m. obs. through 1 Jul; singles at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, *Loudoun* 3–14 Jun (SP, ph. BP); Dulles Greenway Wetlands, *Loudoun* 5 Jun (AG, BHe); and Algonkian RP, *Loudoun* 12 Jun (EA); 3 at a

residence n. of Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 24 Jun (TR); 2 at Morven Pk., *Loudoun* 24 Jun (TR); and one at a residence just s. of Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 25 Jul (ph. GH). Reports of **Yellow-throated Warblers**, rare in our part of the Piedmont, included singles at Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 1 & 14 Jun (SB); Eakin Pk., *Fairfax* 6 Jun (L&CW); and Prince William Forest Pk., *Prince William* 13 Jun (CN); 2 observed during a 5-mile paddle on the Rapidan R. departing from the Elys Ford boat ramp, *Spotsylvania* and including portions of the river in *Culpeper* and *Stafford* 19 Jun (IT); and singles at Morven Pk., *Loudoun* 24 Jun (TR); Elklick Woodlands NAP, *Fairfax* 24 Jul (MBi); and Algonkian RP, *Loudoun* 29 Jul (ph. LB & EC). A **Summer Tanager**, rare in the Region, was seen at Huntley Meadows 12 Jun (BJ) and again 2 Jul. **Dickcissels**, historically a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, were observed at numerous locations, including: 2 at Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 5–9 Jun (NVBC, ph. m. obs.); singles at Langhorne Farm, *Fauquier* 7 Jun (BBut, AD) and Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax* 12 Jun (ph. PWB); 2 along Boteler Rd. near Calverton, *Fauquier* 13 Jul (JB) and 3 there 31 Jul; 2 along Algonquin Trail se. of Culpeper, *Culpeper* 25 Jul (ph. KK) and 2 on the same day 5 mi. se. along Greens Corner Rd., *Culpeper* (KK); 3 along Grassdale Rd. near Remington, *Fauquier* 28 Jul (ph. TMD); and 2 three mi. nw. along Cemetery Rd. also near Remington, *Fauquier* 29 Jul (GS).

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FALL 2021

Temperatures were above normal through October. Precipitation was also above normal, particularly across the Coastal Plain, through October before drier conditions in November. Highlights this season included Green-winged Teal (Eurasian) in *Loudoun*, Black Scoter in *Fairfax*, Ruff in *Fairfax*, Sabine's and Black-headed Gulls in *Fairfax/Alexandria*, and Iceland Gull (Thayer's) in *Prince William*, the first reports of Wood Storks in the Region, the continued presence of several Roseate Spoonbills seen across the Region, LeConte's Sparrow in *Fairfax*, and the first recorded Snow Bunting in *Stafford*.

Abbreviations: Algonkian RP (Algonkian RP, *Loudoun*); Aquia Landing (Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford*); Belle Haven (Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax*); Hunting Cr. Bridge (Hunting Cr. Bridge, *Fairfax*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); L. Accotink Pk. (L. Accotink Pk., *Fairfax*); Leopold's Preserve (Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William*); Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk. (Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk., *Prince William*); Mason Neck NWR (Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck NWR, *Fairfax*); Middlesex Pond (Middlesex Dr. Pond in Chantilly, *Loudoun*); Occoquan Bay NWR (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Riverbend Pk. (Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax*); Sully Woodlands (Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax*); Waples Mill (Waples Mill Meadow Pk., *Fairfax*).

WATERFOWL — SHOREBIRDS

The **Blue-winged Teal** that continued from spring through summer at Bles Pk., *Loudoun* lingered on through 15 Aug and possibly into its normal migration period. Interestingly, a late Blue-winged Teal showed up at Bles Pk. 14 Nov (ph. EA), with as many as 3 there through 29 Nov. The expected dates in the Piedmont, where the species is a rare summer and winter visitor, are 25 Aug–20 Oct—these birds preferred to be

exceptional! Also early, 5 Blue-winged Teal were found on Bull Run at Kincheloe Rd., *Fairfax* 12 Aug (DW). A **Gadwall** was seen at Government Is. Pk., *Stafford* 29 Aug (AG), prior to the 10 Sep Coastal Plain early date and considerably before the 15 Oct early date for the nearby Piedmont. Two **American Black Ducks** were found at Leopold's Preserve 17 Aug (IT), and 2 flew over a residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 24 Aug (GH), both well before the 10 Sep Regional early date. A m. **GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)**, a rare visitor to the state, was observed at Middlesex Pond 6 Nov (ph. PL), where it was seen by m. obs. through 14 Nov. One was also there at the beginning of the year for nearly 2 months—these are the only known sightings in the Virginia Piedmont. The **Redhead** that was present at Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier* since spring continued through 22 Oct; the Piedmont early date is 30 Oct. A **Greater Scaup**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Broad Run Stream Valley Pk., *Loudoun* 7 Nov (ph. JMc), remaining through 21 Nov. Sightings of **Black Scoters**, very rare inland, included a single at L. Accotink Pk. 1 Nov (ph. P&JW); 7 at Occoquan Bay NWR 22 Nov (ph. JAl), with 5–6 continuing until 29 Nov; and perhaps the same 7 about 4 mi. e. at Mason Neck NWR 27 Nov (AH). Twelve **Buffleheads** were observed at L. Accotink Pk. 9 Oct (anon.), well before the 24 Oct Piedmont extreme early date. The period saw several reports of **Eastern Whip-poor-wills**, which have become rare in the Region: one e. of Richardsville, *Culpeper* 9 Aug (TMD); one the same day about 25 mi. w. at Mountain Run, *Culpeper* (LD); one along Curling Cr. Ln. w. of Rixeyville, *Culpeper* 3 Sep (CH); 2 at the Bull Run Mts. NAP, *Prince William* 27 Sep (JSa); one at Fort Belvoir, *Fairfax* 12 Oct (MMi); and one at Mason Neck NWR 15 Oct (PB). Sightings of **Sandhill Cranes** included 6 flying over Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk. 11 Nov (ph. JSt) and 4 flying over the W&OD Trail in Herndon, *Fairfax* 27 Nov (TB). Reports of **American Avocets**, rare this far inland, included 3 circling over Beaverdam Res., *Loudoun* 3 Aug (CB); 3 possibly seen at the Upper Occoquan Service

Authority, *Fairfax* 4 Aug (RC); and 1–2 at Hunting Cr. Bridge 15–17 Aug (DLed, SSu, ph. m. obs.). Reports of **Black-bellied Plovers**, a rare fall transient in the Piedmont, included 2 at fields along Cemetery Rd., *Fauquier* 20 Aug (IT) and 3 near Myers Mill and Springs Rds., *Culpeper* 21 Aug (TMD). An **American Golden-Plover**, a rare but regular fall transient in the Region, was seen at the Bristow Rd. sod farm, *Prince William* 2 Sep (ph. SK), with as many as 4 seen through 21 Sep. A **RUFF** was seen at Hunting Cr. Bridge 11 Sep (ph. TK); this is the sixth record in the Region and the fourth at this location (Sep 1961, Apr 1964, and Aug–Sep 1983). Besides the aforementioned American Golden-Plover, additional rare fall transients seen at the Bristow Rd. sod farm, *Prince William* included: an **Upland Sandpiper** (just the fourth record in the Region since 2015) on 19–20 Sep (ph. DLa); 2 **Stilt Sandpipers** 2 Sep (ph. SK); 3 **Baird’s Sandpipers** 20 Aug (ph. SK), with singles seen 31 Aug and 8 Sep; 2 **White-rumped Sandpipers** 21 Aug (KG) (this species is more regular in spring); and 2 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** 29 Aug (ph. SK), with as many as 3 there through 6 Sep. Two Stilt Sandpipers were also seen at Belle Haven 3 Sep (SSu), and a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was also observed at Hunting Cr. Bridge 28 Aug (ph. TK). A **Sanderling**, rare w. of the Chesapeake, was found at Hunting Cr. Bridge 14 Sep (ph. TK), seen by m. obs. up until more appeared in mid-Sep, with 11 seen 18 Sep (ph. TK) and 1 remaining through 4 Oct. There was a sighting of one about 12 mi. s. at Mason Neck NWR 3 Oct (JA1). Single **Western Sandpipers**, a fairly rare fall transient inland, were seen at Hunting Cr. Bridge 22 Aug (ph. TK), remaining until 23 Sep, and Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, *Fairfax* 14 Sep (GF). Two **Lesser Yellowlegs** showed up along Kincheloe Rd. s. of Clifton, *Fairfax* 17 Nov (ph. P&JW), with one seen there 20 Nov; the Piedmont late date is 25 Oct. DLed observed a **Willet**, rare w. of the Chesapeake, at Belle Haven and then flying over Jones Pt. Pk., *Alexandria* 6 Aug. Another was seen from the George Washington Pkwy. pedestrian bridge, *Alexandria* 2 Oct (EPo, GP).

GULLS — WADERS

A **SABINE’S GULL**, a usually-pelagic bird with only three previous records in the Region, was discovered off Hunting Cr. Bridge 25 Aug (ph. MMc, m. obs.). A **BLACK-HEADED GULL**, similarly rare with only four previous records in the Region, was found off Hunting Cr. Bridge 17 Aug (ph. FA), with m. obs. through 29 Aug. A



Amiel Hopkins’s photograph of a **Black-headed Gull** from Hunting Creek Bridge in *Fairfax*, 24 Aug 2021.

FRANKLIN’S GULL, a species that rarely ventures into the Region, was seen at Leesylvania SP, *Prince William* 10 Sep (ph. JA1). An imm. **ICELAND GULL (THAYER’S)** was observed at the Prince William County Landfill, *Prince William* 22 Nov (ph. BBe). This usually w. subspecies is extremely rare in the Region (with just six well-substantiated previous records), especially in the Piedmont; most records, like this one, are at landfills. There were several reports of **Caspian Terns**, typically a rare transient in the Piedmont. The first two preceded the Piedmont extreme early date of 13 Aug. They included singles from C.M. Crockett Pk., *Culpeper* 7 Aug (GSI, SSI) and Vienna Res., *Fairfax* 10 Aug (JAs), with 2 there 15 Aug; 3 near a residence in Lake Ridge, *Prince William* 17 Aug (LC), where 1–2 continued through 25 Sep; a single on 21 Aug at Algonkian Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* (ph. GH) and at nearby Trump Nat. Golf Club, *Loudoun* (OP) (seen again the next day); 3 at L. Accotink Pk. 31 Aug (ph. P&JW); 3 at Ashburn L., *Loudoun* 16 Sep (JE); 2 at Beavertdam Res., *Loudoun* 16 Sep (CB); and one at Kincheloe Rd., *Fairfax* 21 Sep (P&JW). Two **Black Terns**, a

rare fall transient in the Piedmont, were observed over L. Pelham, *Culpeper* 5 Aug (TMD) and a single was seen at the Lowes Is. ponds, *Loudoun* 10 Aug (DCz). A **Forster's Tern**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at L. Brittle, *Fauquier* 8 Aug (GSI, SSI). Confirmed reports of **Royal Terns**, rare on the upper reaches of tidal rivers, included 2 at Hunting Cr. Bridge 14 Aug (ph. TK) and one at Aquia Landing 4–8 Sep (AR). A **Red-throated Loon**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was observed at Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax* 2 Nov (ph. FA). Single **WOOD STORKS** seen at Leopold's Preserve 14–19 Aug (ph. TH, m. obs.) and circling high over Fairfax Station, *Fairfax* before gliding south 25 Sep (ph. TQ) were the first records in the Region. **American Bittern**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, had just two reports: an early individual at Leopold's Preserve 14 Aug (FA) (15 Sep is the Piedmont early date, and the species is a rare summer visitor) and one at Waples Mill 20 Sep (FA), seen there again 23 Oct (m. obs.). A late **Great Egret** seen at Broadlands Wetlands Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 23 Nov (BHi) was past the 17 Nov Piedmont extreme late date. A rare transient and post-breeding summer visitor in the Piedmont, a **Snowy Egret** was seen at Algonkian RP 2 Aug (EA), lingering through 1 Sep, ph. by m. obs., including on Virginia water. Late birds were at Leopold's Preserve 14–15 Oct (ph. MC) and flying over near Arlington Nat. Cemetery, *Arlington* 6 Nov (ph. JBec); the Piedmont late date is 15 Sep, while the late date in the nearby inland Coastal Plain is 10 Oct. **TRICOLORED HERONS** made multiple appearances this period—unusual, since eBird only has 10 previous records year-round in the Region. They included 2 at Huntley Meadows (ph. m. obs.) 1 Aug, continuing from 26 Jul; 2 at Long Bridge Pk., *Arlington* and nearby Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, *Arlington* (ph. m. obs.) continuing from 30 Jul through 8 Aug; and one at Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge, *Fairfax* 24–29 Aug (ph. GF). Reports of late **Green Herons** included singles at Daingerfield Is., *Alexandria* 3 Nov (AD, JD, KDa, ph.); Broadlands Wetlands Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 6 & 12 Nov (ph. JMc);

and Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax* 18 Nov through the end of the period (ph. JBea). The Piedmont and Coastal Plain late dates are 10 Oct and 20 Oct, respectively. Reports of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons**, a rare transient and summer resident away from the coast, included singles at the Vienna Res., *Fairfax* 2–17 Aug (ph. JAs, m. obs.) and Lake Ridge Pk., *Prince William* 9 Aug (ph. JA1). **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS** continued as a highlight this season, the Region having previously only experienced one visit (in Jun 2018) before this summer. Individuals continued near Hunting Cr. Bridge through 27 Oct and at L. Pelham, *Culpeper* through 19 Aug, both ph. by m. obs. (The latest known historic occurrence in the state n. of Richmond was 7 Oct, at Chincoteague.). Another sighting was at Curtis L., *Stafford* 9 Aug (ph. KC).

RAPTORS

An **Osprey** was observed at Occoquan RP, *Fairfax* 27 Nov (AH), past the Piedmont extreme late date of 24 Nov. A **Swallow-tailed Kite**, a rare but increasing visitor in the Piedmont, was observed s. of Madison, *Madison* 10–18 Aug (ph. IT). A **Golden Eagle**, a rare transient in the Region, was seen along Mt. Marshall Rd., *Rappahannock* 28 Nov (DCho, EV). A manifestation of the increased prevalence of **Mississippi Kites** in the Region was the sighting of 6 (one a juv.) at Green Spring Garden Pk., *Fairfax* 30 Aug (DoS), 3 of which were likely the ones that nested nearby. While there were scattered reports of **Barn Owls**, listed in the Gold Book as an uncommon to rare and local permanent resident throughout the Region, in the Piedmont, there was just a single sighting in the Coastal Plain: at Huntley Meadows 1 Aug (ph. JBer, ph. LS). Interestingly, further research revealed this is the only eBird fall record ever in our part of the Coastal Plain, with only two additional records any time of year (Dec 1961 and Dec 2020). By contrast, **Merlin**, listed as a rare fall transient in the Piedmont, had far too many sightings in the Piedmont to report. In the Coastal Plain, where the extreme early date is 30 Aug, a

very early or summering bird seen 13–31 Jul at Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria* continued on through the fall period (ph. m. obs.). Sightings of **Peregrine Falcon** are no longer rare; there were too many to report throughout the Region. An early individual (or possibly the one continuing in the area from summer) was observed at Shenandoah NP's Stony Man Trail, *Madison* 3 Sep (CCa); the Regional early date is 15 Sep. Sightings of other early individuals away from areas in the Piedmont where the species is known to summer included sightings on 1 & 14 Aug (JMa, DLed) of the one reported in the Summer 2021 column on 31 Jul at Leopold's Preserve and one at a residence in Lake Ridge, *Prince William* 3 Aug (LC, AJ). A summary of the fall count at Snickers Gap Hawkwatch, *Loudoun* included: 81 Osprey, 160 **Bald Eagles**, 33 **Northern Harriers**, 452 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 63 **Cooper's Hawks**, 69 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 6,022 **Broad-winged Hawks**, 267 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 4 Golden Eagles, 54 **American Kestrels**, 18 Merlins, and 13 Peregrine Falcons.

KINGBIRDS — THRUSHES

A probable, well-described but very late **Eastern Kingbird** was reported near Woodville, *Rappahannock* 20 Oct (PLa); this is in the Piedmont but near the Mountains & Valleys



Baxter Beamer's photograph of a **LeConte's Sparrow**, taken at Sully Woodlands in *Fairfax*, 22 Nov 2021.

sector. The Piedmont late date is 15 Sep; the Mountains & Valleys late date is 10 Sep with an extreme late date of 2 Oct. There were several

reports of **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Piedmont away from the Blue Ridge and fairly rare in the inland Coastal Plain: 2 at Whitney SF, *Fauquier* 16 Aug (ph. JBo) (the Piedmont extreme early date is 31 Aug); singles at Crow's Nest NAP, *Stafford* 22 Aug (ph. JG) and Silver L. RP, *Prince William* 13 Sep (ph. TH); and 2 along Brandywine St., *Arlington* 20 Sep (KF). Although the Gold Book gives **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** as a rare transient in the Region and **Least Flycatcher** as a rare transient in the Piedmont and uncommon to rare in the Coastal Plain, there were too many confirmed sightings of both in the period to list. An undetermined shrike sp. was seen at a property on Millville Rd. near Upperville, *Loudoun* 11 Nov (KDr); either **Loggerhead** or **Northern Shrike** would be rare in the Region. An early **Blue-headed Vireo** was seen at Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 11 Sep (BHo), prior to the Piedmont early date of 25 Sep. Late Blue-headed Vireos were seen past the respective Piedmont and Coastal Plain late dates of 30 Oct and 5 Nov at Algonkian RP 14 Nov (PN) and Occoquan Bay NWR 21 Nov (KH, CS). A **Warbling Vireo** was seen past the 1 Oct Piedmont extreme late date at Middlesex Pond 13 Oct (BHi) and possibly again 16 Oct. A **Brown Creeper** was seen along Mountain Run near Culpeper, *Culpeper* 7 Sep (LD), well before the 25 Sep Regional early date. A **Winter Wren** seen along the Dark Hollow Falls Trail in Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 4 Aug (BHa) was well before the Mountains & Valleys early date of 30 Sep or, more likely, a fairly rare summering individual. A **Marsh Wren** lingered at Middlesex Pond through 7 Nov (KP), well past the 20 Oct Piedmont late date. Likewise, a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** lingered at Algonkian RP through 1 Nov (GSt), considerably past the 20 Sep late date for the Region, where the species is known to be a rare winter visitor. Remaining past the respective Coastal Plain and Piedmont extreme late dates of 22 Oct and 5 Nov were 2 **Swainson's Thrushes** at Mason Neck NWR 25 Oct (BBu, LB) and singles at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary, *Loudoun* 8 Nov (GH) and a residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 11 Nov (EK). Appearing

before the species' early October Piedmont extreme early date were a **Hermit Thrush** at a residence in Clifton, *Fairfax* 15 Sep (EK) and 2 at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 29 Sep (ph. JG).

PIPITS — DICKCISSEL

An early **American Pipit** was seen in the Big Meadows area of Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 11 Sep (ph. EL), before the Mountains & Valleys extreme early date of 21 Sep. An **Evening Grosbeak** was reported at a feeder in Woodbridge, *Prince William* 14 Nov (MS). A flock of 16 **Red Crossbills**, a rare and irregular transient in the Mountains & Valleys sector, was seen along Rapidan Fire Rd. within Shenandoah NP, *Madison* 25 Nov (DLeb). Single **Pine Siskins** were observed prior to the 10 Oct Piedmont extreme early date at Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk. 2 Oct (KG) and at a residence in Oakton, *Fairfax* 3 Oct (JBer). A **Snow Bunting**, a fairly rare inland transient in the Coastal Plain, and the first recorded in *Stafford* in eBird, touched down briefly at Aquia Landing 28 Nov (ph. JG) before continuing down the Potomac R. A late **Grasshopper Sparrow** was seen at Sully Woodlands 22 Nov (DG), well after the Piedmont extreme late date of 5 Nov. Sightings of **Clay-colored Sparrows**, a rare fall transient inland, included individuals at Aquia Landing 5 Oct (ph. TS); Four Mile Run Pk., *Alexandria* 13 Oct (ph. TK); and the Culpeper Sports Complex, *Culpeper* 22 & 29 Oct (ph. KK). Appearing just prior to the species' 2 Oct Piedmont extreme early date was a **White-crowned Sparrow** at L. Fairfax Pk., *Fairfax* 1 Oct (DY). A **White-throated Sparrow** seen at Monticello Pk., *Alexandria* 11 Aug (TA) was considerably earlier than the Coastal Plain extreme early date of 11 Sep, while individuals seen at a residence in Oakton, *Fairfax* 27 Aug (ph. NN) and Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 27 Aug (RH, KL) were slightly ahead of the Piedmont extreme early date of 31 Aug. A **Vesper Sparrow** seen at Myers Mill and Springs Rds., *Culpeper* 24 Nov (TMD) was much later than the 5 Nov Piedmont late date. A **LECONTE'S**

SPARROW, a very rare visitor with only 3 previous fall records in our part of the Piedmont, was found at Sully Woodlands 21 Nov (ph. JP), where it was seen and ph. by m. obs. through 29 Nov. A **NELSON'S SPARROW**, also a rare and secretive transient in the Region with only four previous records in eBird (one in 1893), was observed at Waples Mill 31 Oct (ph. NN); this is considerably past the 11 Oct Piedmont extreme late date. A **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD**, a rare visitor to the Region, was seen at Noble Pond near Dale City, *Prince William* 3 Aug (ph. JAl). A late **Ovenbird** was



John Aleknavage's photo of a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** from Noble Pond in *Prince William*, 3 Aug 2021.

well-ph. at a residence in Centreville, *Fairfax* 30 Nov (ph. DM, RM), well past the 11 Nov Piedmont extreme late date. A **Golden-winged Warbler**, a rare transient away from the Blue Ridge, was observed at a residence near Huntley Meadows 8 Sep (ph. AA). A **Brewster's Warbler**, the first-generation Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler hybrid, was observed at Riverbend Pk., *Fairfax* 11 Sep (ph. BHo); besides three scattered sightings this spring, there have only been a handful of previous records in the Region. A late **Prothonotary Warbler** lingered at Huntley Meadows 14–23 Oct (ph. m. obs.), well past the 15 Sep Coastal Plain late date. **Orange-crowned Warblers**, a rare transient in the Region, made a good showing this season with eight reports (three past the 1 Nov Piedmont extreme late date), including individuals at Royal L. Pk., *Fairfax* 29 Sep (P&JW); Ft. C.F. Smith Pk., *Arlington* 7 & 13 Oct (EW); Waples Mill 16

Oct (DLeb, ph. JBer & JK), seen by m. obs. through 12 Nov; Fairfax County Landfill, *Fairfax* 19 Oct (KG, SSu); Sully Woodlands 23 Oct (PB); Frying Pan Farm Pk., *Fairfax* 25 Oct (ph. HW); Winkler Botanical Preserve, *Alexandria* 9 Nov (DW); and Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, *Fairfax* 11 Nov (ph. EPa). Late **Nashville Warblers** made appearances at Long Branch Nature Center, *Arlington* 3 Nov (NVBC, ph. SH) and Waples Mill 7 Nov (ph. DaS); the Piedmont extreme late date for this species is 2 Nov. Rare **Connecticut Warblers** were seen at Riverside Preserve, *Fauquier* 16 Sep (ph. AE); Blooms Pk., *Manassas Park* 29 Sep (JF); Huntley Meadows 30 Sep (ph. BJ); a residence near Fairfax Villa Pk., *Fairfax* 1 Oct (JN); and L. Accotink Pk. 5 Oct (P&JW). Likewise rare transients, **Mourning Warblers** were seen at Manassas Nat. Battlefield Pk. 5–6 Sep (ph. TH); Riverside Preserve, *Fauquier* 18 Sep (GSI, SSI); and Algonkian RP 30 Sep (ph. PL). Seen well past the Piedmont and Coastal Plain respective late dates of 20 and 25 Oct were **Common Yellowthroats** at Sully Woodlands 18 Nov (SJ) and 28 Nov (SB, AB) and Northern Virginia Community College—Woodbridge Campus, *Prince William* 26 Nov (MS); this species is known to be a rare winter visitor in the Region. Also late were 2 **Cape May Warblers** seen at Dean Pk., *Manassas* 4 Nov (AD, KDa) (Piedmont late date of 20 Oct) and a **Magnolia Warbler** at Waples Mill 23 Oct (NN) (Piedmont extreme late date of 18 Oct). Late **Palm Warblers**, whose Regional late date is 30 Sep, were seen at Huntley Meadows 15 Nov (SB) and 2 at the Prince William County Landfill, *Prince William* 25 Nov (ph. SP); this species is a rare early winter visitor in the Piedmont and fairly rare in the inland Coastal Plain. Rare late fall sightings of **Pine Warbler** in the n. Piedmont included singles at a residence in Woodbridge, *Prince William* 3 Nov (BS); Jones Nature Preserve, *Rappahannock* 4 Nov (PLa, IT); a property s. of The Plains, *Fauquier* 20 Nov (FA); a residence in Lake Ridge, *Prince William* 21–28 Nov (LC, AJ); and Sully Woodlands 23 Nov (CCr); this species is known to be a rare winter resident in the Piedmont. There were a handful of

reports of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** arriving well before the Piedmont extreme early date of 28 Sep, with one at Algonkian RP 25 Aug (BHe) being the most unseasonal; it was seen again 2 & 5 Sep. Also early were 2 at Waples Mill 19 Sep (ph. PK) and one at a residence in Hume, *Fauquier* 21 Sep (EL). There were also a couple very early reports in Shenandoah NP (Mountains & Valleys early date of 25 Sep), including individuals along Limberlost Trail, *Madison* 8 Aug (IT) and at Big Meadows, *Madison* 9 Aug (DCha). This species is a rare and local summer resident in this sector. Although the Gold Book lists **Yellow-throated Warbler** as a rare transient in the n. Piedmont, and these occur mostly in the spring, there were over a dozen sightings this period. Likewise rare in the n. Mountains & Valleys sector, especially in the fall, was one seen within Shenandoah NP at Big Meadows, *Madison* 28 Aug (JMi). Reports of **Dickcissels**, a rare summer resident and transient in the Region, included singles along Batna Rd. at the Algonquin Trail in *Culpeper* 13 Aug (TMD); along Grassdale Rd., *Fauquier* 14 Aug (v. r. BHo); and Sully Woodlands 14 Aug (SJ); 2 at Occoquan Bay NWR 18 Sep (KG); and a late single at Waples Mill 23 Oct (ph. NN) (30 Sep is the Piedmont late date).

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WEST



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

SUMMER 2021

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

WATERFOWL — NIGHTJARS

Two **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS** continued at Willow L., *Rockbridge* from 31 May to 4 Jun (ph. DR, m. obs.). A flock of 10 was at L. Front Royal, *Warren* 2 Jul (ph. GC, JF), providing the first record for *Warren*. A **Lesser Scaup** was at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 1 Jun–3 Jul (GR). A **Ring-necked Duck** was also present there over the same dates. Another was at McCunes Pond, *Augusta* 11 Jun–30 Jul (AL), while 2 were along the New R., *Giles* 27 Jun & 4 Jul (PL). Up to 2 **Hooded Mergansers** were at Broadway WTP 2–16 June (ph. GM). Other reports included one at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 9 Jun (JDL); one in *Radford* 12 Jun (CK); one at the Virginia Tech Duck Pond, *Blacksburg* 14 Jun (DW); one in Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 7 Jul (ET); and one near the Twin R. Campground, *Botetourt* 18 Jul (GS, TS). **Common Mergansers** are now regular breeders throughout the Region; the high count for the summer was 40 at the Morgans Ford Boat Ramp, *Warren* 20 Jul (MK). Up to 4 **Pied-billed Grebes** were at Broadway WTP 8–31 Jul (m. obs.).

Singles were at Silver L., *Rockingham* 1 Jun (HH); L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DH); Augusta Springs Wetlands Trail, *Augusta* 2 Jul (EO); the Botetourt Center at Greenfield, *Botetourt* 3 & 23 Jun (SF, GK); the Historic Duck Pond in Narrows, *Giles* 11 Jun–24 Jul (AA); along the Roanoke R. Greenway, *Roanoke City* 2 Jun–20 Jul (m. obs.); and along the same greenway in *Salem* 30 Jul (ph. LC). The only **Chuck-wills-widow** reports were one at Union Springs Hollow L., *Rockingham* 6 Jun (MG) and 2 at Camp Fincastle Ln., *Botetourt* 28 Jul (BE).

RAILS — DICKCISSEL

The only **Virginia Rail** reports this summer were one along Big R. Rd., *Rockbridge* 4 & 13 Jun (ND, AL), and a confirmed breeding record of an ad. and chick along the Huckleberry Trail,



Garland Kitts's photograph of an **Anhinga** from Flowing Springs Ponds in *Botetourt*, 20 Aug 2021.

Montgomery 1 Jun (JK). A **Common Loon** lingered at L. Holiday, *Frederick* from 1–21 Jun

(GR), while another was at the Bath County Pumped Storage Station Recreation Area, *Bath* 6 Jun (LD). Incredibly, the **PACIFIC LOON** found at L. Holiday, *Frederick* in May continued until 4 Jun (GR). Two **Little Blue Herons** were at Sunset View L., *Augusta* 21 Jun (AL); one was at the Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, *Montgomery* 3–4 Jul (DW); 6 were at Pandapas Pond, *Montgomery* 7 Jul (ph. PL); and up to 3 were near the Little R. Res., *Pulaski* 19–20 Jul (ph. PL). A **TRICOLORED HERON** was at Tel's Pond, *Montgomery* 28–30 Jul (JK, ph. PL, DW). Aside from the usual reports of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** from the breeding populations in *Salem* and *Roanoke City*, there was a report of a juv. in Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 29–31 Jul (ph. DW, PL). A few **Pine Siskins** lingered into the summer, with 2 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 1 Jun (GR); 3 at Briery Branch Gap, *Rockingham* 25 Jun (FR); and up to 3 at Mountain L., *Giles* 1–28 Jun (MA, EA, VH). **Red Crossbills** were widely reported in *Highland*, *Augusta*, and *Rockingham*, and there was a report of a single bird at Wold Gap, *Shenandoah* 29 Jun as well (AH). Single **Summer Tanagers** were at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center, *Botetourt* 1 Jun (BK) and at the Roanoke R. Greenway, *Roanoke City* 21 Jul (KM). Unlike last summer, there were only **Dickcissel** reports from a handful

of counties, although *Clarke* had several different reports. Other sightings came from *Frederick*, *Augusta*, and *Pulaski*.

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FALL 2021

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

WATERFOWL — CRANES

A **Ross's Goose** was at Hillandale Pk., *Harrisonburg* 27–28 Nov (ph. GM, m. obs.). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was near New Market, *Shenandoah* 20 Oct (DH, SS). The only reports of **Tundra Swans** were flyover flocks of 270 in *Winchester* 18 Nov (GR) and 20 at the Snickers Gap Hawkwatch, *Clarke* 20 Nov (JB). It was a very poor fall for **Surf Scoters** in the Region. The only report was a group of 3 females at Pandapas Pond, *Montgomery* 23 Oct (ph. ABM). A **Black Scoter** was at L. Holiday,



Garland Kitts's picture of a **Purple Gallinule** spotted at the Botetourt Center at Greenfield in *Botetourt*, 23 Oct 2021.

Frederick 10 Nov (GR). A **Rufous Hummingbird** was in Spotswood, *Augusta* 16 Aug (ph. AL, PW) and remained through 6 Sep (ph. ADy, JD), and was banded 21 Aug to confirm the species; an ad. m. was near Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 5–7 Sept (ph. DW, m. obs.); and another m. was in Blacksburg, *Montgomery* 22 Oct–29 Nov (ph. SK, AP, m.

obs.). There were a number of **Virginia Rail** reports throughout the Region this fall. The only **Sora** was a juv. found dead in the Bluegrass Valley, *Highland* 28 Sep (ph. JS). A **Common Gallinule** was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 17–18 Sep (ph. LC). Even more impressive, a **PURPLE GALLINULE** was at the same location 23 Oct–3 Nov (BK, ph. BE, m. obs.). This was only the second record for the Mountains and Valleys since the most recent edition of the Gold Book. A **Sandhill Crane** flew over *Winchester* 9 Oct (JB); another single bird was at Eastline Valley Rd., *Augusta* 2 Nov (AL); a flock of 6 flew over the Broadway WTP 20 Nov (MG); and a flock of 12 flew over the Davis-Mills Farm, *Shenandoah* (DD).

SHOREBIRDS

One **American Avocet** was at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 26 Sep (ph. SS, JF, AS). Up to 3 **Black-bellied Plovers** were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 16 Aug–1 Sep (MG, ES); up to 6 were at Turner's Sod Farm, *Rockingham* 18–22 Aug (HH, DH). Single birds were also present at the Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery* 18 Aug (DW), and at the Seven Fountains Pond, *Shenandoah* 10 Oct (DG). Up to 2 **American Golden-Plovers** were at the Racetrack Rd. Pond 19 Sep–10 Oct (ph. KA, m. obs.); up to 14 were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 27 Aug–1 Oct (MG, m. obs.); one was at Hope L., *Augusta* 22 Oct (ph. HH, BB); another was at the Botetourt Center, *Botetourt* 3 Oct (CC, ph. JW); and one was at the Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery* 22 Sep (m. obs.). An **Upland Sandpiper** was at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 29 Aug and 11 Sep (DH, WL, ph. AE); another was at Rockfish Rd., *Augusta* 17 Sep (ph. GMa); and another single bird was at the Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery* 1 Sep (LA, m. obs.). Two **Ruddy Turnstones** were at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 18 Aug (ph. JF), and another was at the Broadway WTP 1 Sep (ES, WL). One **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the Racetrack Rd. Pond,

Shenandoah (ph. KA). Two **Sanderlings** were at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 18 Aug (ph. JF), and up to 5 were at the Broadway WTP 27 Aug–7 Sep (m. obs.). The only **Dunlin** report was 4 birds at the Broadway WTP 2 Nov (MG). It was a good year for **Baird’s Sandpiper** in the Region: up to 6 were at the Broadway WTP 22 Aug–16 Sep (m. obs.); up to 4 were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 29 Aug–12 Sep (m. obs.); one was at Turner’s Sod Farm, *Rockingham* 29 Aug (ph. DL); one was in Swoope, *Augusta* 3 Sep (ph. VL); and one was at the NRV Fairgrounds 30 Aug (MN, MM). The only **White-rumped Sandpiper** seen was a single bird at the Broadway WTP 2 Sep (WG). Up to 3 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were in the vicinity of the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 27 Aug–12 Sep (m. obs.); a single bird was at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 1 Sep (ph. VL); and single birds were at the Virginia Tech Airport, *Montgomery* 1 Sep and 14–15 Sep (m. obs.). At least one and possibly up to 12 **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** were at the Broadway WTP 29 Oct (MG, TMD). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was in the Swoope Area, *Augusta* 17 Aug (ph. VL); one was at the Roanoke STP 17–18 Aug (ph. MB, KD); up to 2 were at Leonards Pond, *Rockingham* 27 Aug–2 Sep (HH, m. obs.); and a flock of 6 were at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 1 Sep (ph. ES). A **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** was at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, *Rockingham* 18 Aug (ph. LB), while another 2 were in the Swoope Area, *Augusta* 2 Sep (ph. VL). A **WILSON’S PHALAROPE** was at the Mt. Horeb Pond, *Augusta* 28–29 Aug (ph. HH), and another was in the Swoope Area, *Augusta* 2 Sep (ph. VL).

GULLS — OWLS

A **LAUGHING GULL** was at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 18 Aug (DH), and another was at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 1 Sep (ph. BE, BK). The most shocking records of the fall were a **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** and a **SABINE’S**

GULL seen at the same time 17 Sep at the Broadway WTP (DH, ph. SS) – impressively, both were second county records for *Rockingham*. A **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** was also at the Broadway WTP 12–13 Oct (ph. MG); this was the first county record for *Rockingham* and the first record for the Region. The only **Caspian Terns** reported in the Region this fall were one at the Broadway WTP 15 Aug (MG) and 2 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 16 Sep (MM). Up to 13 **Black Terns** were at the Broadway WTP 11–23 Aug; one was at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 17–18 Aug (BW, DB); one was at Silver L., *Rockingham* 19 Aug (DR); 2 were at



Alex Shipherd’s photograph of an **American Avocet**, taken at Lake Arrowhead in *Page*, 26 Sep 2021.

Claytor L., *Pulaski* 18 Aug (MM); and 2 were also at the Whitethorne Boat Ramp, *Montgomery* 28 Aug (ph. DW). An **ANHINGA** at Flowing Springs Ponds, *Botetourt* 19–20 Aug (BK, ph. DG, m. obs.) was not only an exceptional local record but one of very few for the Mountains & Valleys. The only **American Bittern** records were two NFC records of single birds in *Montgomery*: one at the Virginia Tech Campus 16 Sep (a. r. LA) and one near Pilot 1 Oct (a. r. MN). There was a good number of **Cattle Egret** reports. One was at the Broadway WTP 29 Oct (DH, ph. MG); another was seen in *Winchester* 30 Oct (ph. AJ); 2 were at the NRV Fairgrounds 30 Oct (ph. DW, MM, PL); one was at the Oakwood Dr. Pond, *Rockingham* 1 Nov (ph. MG); one was along Cedar Hill Church Rd., *Rockbridge* 4 Nov (ph. AT); 2 were near Troutville, *Botetourt* 12 Nov (ph. BF); and one was at the Long Meadow Farm Pond, *Augusta* 18

Nov (AL, ph. VL). A **Little Blue Heron** was in *Radford* 8 Aug (CK). A juv. **WHITE IBIS** was found along Crystal Cr., *Roanoke* 1–3 Aug (ph. KD). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was found along Christians Cr. Rd., *Augusta* 16 Aug (PW); possibly the same bird was seen later that day near Mt. Jackson, *Shenandoah* (ph. JA). Another was at Sheep Cr. Ln., *Rockbridge* 2 Sep (ph. LN), and up to 4 were at Blue Grass Trail, *Botetourt* 23–29 Aug (BK, m. obs.). Up to 2 **Mississippi Kites** joined them on 25–29 Aug (m. obs.). Additionally, there was one at Fairway Dr., *Radford* 27 Aug (CK); 8 were at Cork and York Dr., *Montgomery* 20 Sep (XG); and Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* recorded singles 9, 11, and 18 Sep (VL). The only **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** was one at Rockfish Gap, *Augusta* 26 Oct (VL). A



Theo Staengl's photo of two **Short-billed Dowitchers** at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction in *Rockingham*, taken 1 Sep 2021.

light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** spent nearly a month at Guthrie Rd., *Augusta* from 28 Oct–17 Nov (ph. VL, m. obs.). The only **Short-eared Owl** report was one at Bells Ln., *Staunton* 23 Nov (AL). Two **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were recorded in the Jefferson NF, *Montgomery* 10–29 Nov (ph. MN, m. obs.); one was along the Pete's Cave Trail, *Rockbridge* 10 Nov (JP); one was near Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 12 Nov (BKe); one was near Mountain L., *Giles* 19 Nov (a. r. PL); up to 9 were recorded at the Highland Retreat banding site, *Rockingham* from 3–15 Nov (ph. BB, m. obs.).

FLYCATCHERS — DICKCISSEL

As usual for the fall there were numerous reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** from *Frederick, Clarke, Winchester, Page, Rockingham, Augusta, Botetourt, Roanoke City, and Montgomery*. Single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were seen at Switzer L., *Rockingham* (MG, PN); along Willis Cr. Rd., *Rockingham* 27 Sep (CT); and at the Augusta Springs Wetlands Trail, *Augusta* 3 Oct (LP). **Loggerhead Shrikes** were found at Swoope, *Augusta* 31 Aug–18 Nov (ph. RW, VL); Mike Longs Woods, *Page* 7 Oct (DH); Kent Farm Rd., *Pulaski* 9–10 Oct (DP, SP, DH); and Whitethorne Boat Ramp, *Montgomery* 12 Nov (ph. DW). The only **Brown-headed Nuthatch** reports came from the small population in the Roanoke area. **Black-capped Chickadees** didn't seem to leave their typical range this fall, with no documented reports outside their typical range in the mountains. The only **Marsh Wren** reports were single birds at Abrams Cr. Wetlands Preserve, *Frederick* 16 Oct (ph. GR); at Clover Hollow, *Giles* 10 Oct (ph. JW, WB); and at the Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, *Montgomery* 17–21 Oct (MN, WB, LA). In stark contrast to last fall, there were no winter finches of note. A **Lark Sparrow** was at Piney Woods Rd., *Rockingham* 25 Aug (ph. MG). There was a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Singers Glen, *Rockingham* 19 Oct (CT). A **NELSON'S SPARROW** was near Poor House Ln., *Frederick* 4–6 Oct (SM, GR, ph. JF). There were several reports of **Orange-crowned Warbler** this fall from *Frederick, Highland, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Roanoke City, Craig, and Montgomery*. It was a rather poor fall for **Connecticut Warbler** with the only records being single birds at Switzer L., *Rockingham* 9–19 Sep (MG, ph. DL, GM); Shenandoah NP–Paine Run Trail, *Augusta* 11 Sep (JH); Paul SF, *Rockingham* 25–26 Sep (GM); and Briery Branch Res. 1 Oct (a. r. MG). **Mourning Warbler** reports were singles at Pandapas Pond, *Montgomery* 10 Sep (DW, MN); the Virginia Tech Vet School Pond, *Montgomery* 13 Sep (SH); the War Spur Trail, *Giles* 30 Sep (LA); and the Cowbane Prairie NAP, *Augusta* 3 Oct (ph.

DCh). A few **Dickcissels** were around with singles at Milburn Rd., *Frederick* 14 Aug (GR); L. Holiday, *Frederick* 27 Sep (GR); and Cowbane Prairie NAP, *Augusta* 5 Oct (EO). There were also several records in *Montgomery*.

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SOUTHWEST



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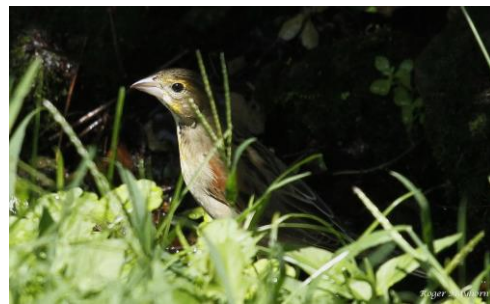
Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe counties; the cities of Bristol, Galax, and Norton.

SUMMER 2021

WATERFOWL — WADERS

With the conclusion of the five-year effort of Virginia's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2), the Southwest Region of the state saw significantly fewer reports. Species that once had decent numbers of sightings were now represented by fewer as the area was relatively untouched by birders who did not already live within the Region. **Common Merganser**, a species reported at least eight times in the summer of 2020, had only two reports for 2021. The reports came from a single bird at Veterans Memorial Pk., *Dickenson* 6 Jun (DG), and a flock of 7 birds observed in Damascus, *Washington* 6 Jul (anon.). Due to the efforts of VABBA2, it could be said that this species has colonized every watershed within the Region, and over the following years breeding confirmations were recorded in every county. **Northern Bobwhites** had a bumper year in the Southwest Region. Records of this species came from five counties including *Buchanan*, *Carroll*, *Lee*, *Washington*, and *Wythe* and were observed between 2 Jun and 5 Jul. One **Virginia Rail** was heard at a known breeding location at Gose Mill Pond in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 23 Jul (DS). One of the strangest records came from an **American Coot** that was heard at the pond at Wytheville Community College, *Wythe* 16 Jul (a. r. JD, AD). One of the best records for the period came from South Holston L., *Washington* 27 Jun

(ph. AN), where 2 **LAUGHING GULLS** were observed crossing the state line from a larger flock congregating on the Tennessee side of the water. Waders were abundant this summer, a pattern seen across the state, and several species were observed, some of which were first county records. A flock of up to 7 **Little Blue Herons** was seen between 8–27 Jul around the town of Ewing, *Lee* (ph. DK, ph. JK, m. obs.); this represented a first county record. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 14 Jun (AB). This location is becoming an annual stopover site for the species, and this report represents the earliest record for the lake per eBird, as other sightings were between Aug–Oct. A first county record juv. **WHITE IBIS** was observed at the Bull Fish Hatchery, *Smyth* 27 Jun (ph. JK, CH). The best record for Southwest Virginia over the period came from a **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** seen at Lovills Creek Boat Ramp, *Carroll* 23–25 Jun (ph. CJ, ph. ES), and it should go without saying that this was a first county record and a first record for the Region.



Roger Mayhorn's picture of a **Dickcissel** from Compton Mountain, *Buchanan* on 22 August 2021.

DOVES — FINCHES

The only recorded **Eurasian Collared-Doves** came from the town of Ewing, *Lee* 3–30 Jul (m. obs). The low number of reports was likely due to a lack of coverage and not due to a decline in the species. The I-81 corridor has become a well-known area for collared-doves; however, established populations remain sporadic and may be easily overlooked. A number of reports of **Merlin** came from Mt. Rogers, *Grayson* 16–25 Jul (GP, ph. PL, m. obs.), and reports indicated a pair may have attempted breeding there. Surprisingly, more Merlins were recorded than **Peregrine Falcons**, as the only record of this species came from Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 24 Jul (JP). A first county eBird record **Barn Owl** was seen multiple times in Willis, *Floyd* 22 Jun–29 Jul (SC), and another was seen at a known location in Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 23 & 29 Jul (DS). A number of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were seen in the Grayson Highlands this summer. The Bear Tree Recreational Area, *Grayson & Washington* 16 Jun–23 Jul (BD, AH, JM) was a notable location because of the number of reports. One was recorded calling at Massie Gap, *Grayson* 21 Jul (a. r. PL). One **Black-billed Cuckoo** was seen along Kimberling Cr., *Bland* 15 Jun (ph. KG); this species is undoubtedly more common in Southwest Virginia than reports indicate. An **Alder Flycatcher** was seen at the Scales Campground on Mt. Rogers, *Grayson* 19

Jun (ph. SM). Alder Flycatchers are typically seen annually around the summit of Mt. Rogers and the area may represent the last known breeding location for the species in the Region as warmer temperatures and reforestation claim much of the available habitat. **Swainson's Thrushes** were also recorded around the summit of Mt. Rogers, *Grayson* 25 Jun–16 Jul (a. r. GM, GP). Like the Alder Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush is extremely limited to high elevations and Mt. Rogers and nearby Whitetop Mt. may be the last breeding locations for the species in the Region. A number of **Red Crossbill** flocks were also recorded in the Grayson Highlands, *Grayson* 4 Jun–22 Jul (ph. JM, ph. PL, AE).

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FALL 2021

Temperatures across the Region were well above average and conditions were made worse by an ongoing drought. However, this fall continued to offer productive birding opportunities across many of the Region's better-covered counties. The drought-like conditions may have contributed to more mudflats and thus an increase in shorebird diversity and abundance. The warm conditions may have kept waterfowl to the north but kept many of the more uncommon wintering songbirds such as thrashers and Palm Warbler in high abundance.

GEESE — HAWKS

Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* and the Saltville Well Fields, *Smyth* both had their usual assortment of ducks but the Region was otherwise lacking in waterfowl. The only notable goose observed was one **Snow Goose** that was seen along the Creeper Trail, *Washington* 28 Nov (AD). An aberrant, nearly entirely white, **Canada Goose** returned to the Saltville Well Fields, *Smyth* 28 Nov (ph. RH). **Common Mergansers** continued to increase across w. Virginia and the Southwest was no exception. Birds were seen in several counties including *Buchanan*, *Dickenson*, and *Tazewell*. **Common Nighthawk** flights were recorded throughout Southwest Virginia with a high count of 300 coming out of the town of Independence, *Grayson* 4 Sep (VS). One **AMERICAN AVOCET** was seen at Falls Mill Pk., *Tazewell* 16 Oct (ph. CD), and presumably the same bird was picked up a day later associating with a flock of 18 **Blue-winged Teal** at Lincolnshire Pk., *Tazewell* 17 Oct (ph. anon.). At the ever-producing Burkes Garden, an **American Golden-Plover** was foraging along Spring Creek, *Tazewell* 4 Oct (ph. DS, CD). This was not only a second county record according to eBird, but a second record for the entire Region. There are no doubt more golden-plovers that travel through Southwest Virginia on an annual basis but go unreported due to lack of coverage. A small farm pond near Speedwell, *Wythe* became a local

Virginia Birds

shorebird hotspot with several species picked up including one **Semipalmated Plover**, 2 **Least Sandpipers**, up to 5 **Pectoral Sandpipers**, 3 **Solitary Sandpipers**, one **Greater Yellowlegs**, and 3 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, 3–30 Sep (ph. ER). One **Pectoral Sandpiper** was also observed at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe* 15 Sep (ER). Later in the season, Rural Retreat also produced a **Dunlin** 29 Oct (ph. ABo), a fifth record for the Region. Previous records of this species came from *Tazewell*, *Washington*, and *Wythe*. To finish off the notable shorebirds, one **American Woodcock** was observed at Marby Mill along the Blue Ridge Pkwy., *Floyd* 19 Nov (AB, JM). Two **Golden Eagles** were observed across the Region and surprisingly not all of them were from Burkes Garden. The first report came from an imm./subadult at Buzzard Rock on Whitetop Mountain, *Washington* 20 Nov (CC) and the other came from Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 29 Nov (DS).

FALCONS — WARBLERS

Potentially the rarest record for the Region came from Allen Boynton's yard, *Grayson* 30 & 31 Oct. He photographed a **Prairie Merlin** (ph.



Allen Boynton's photo of a **Prairie Merlin** (*F. columbarius richardsonii*), taken at his residence in *Grayson*, 1 Nov 2021.

ABo), a subspecies more often seen wintering on the Northern Plains or the Rocky Mountains than the hollows of Appalachia. This represents a

second state record of the subspecies after a juvenile bird was banded in *Northampton* in 2003. Two separate reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** came out of Southwest Virginia – which was two more reports than the previous fall. One was seen in the Fairwood Valley, *Grayson* 3 Sep (ph. ABo) and the other at Wilderness Rd. SP, *Lee* (ph. PG). **Philadelphia Vireos** were picked up in several localities across the Region including Foster Falls, *Wythe* 12 Sep (HK); Fairwood Valley, *Grayson* 16 Sep (AB, BRDC); Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* 25 Sep (GK,



Roger Mayhorn's photograph of a **Connecticut Warbler**, spotted on Compton Mountain in *Buchanan*, 14 Sep 2021.

MH); and Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 27 Sep (RM). Regardless of the lack of a boreal passerine irruption, several **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were spotted outside of the highland regions where they breed. One report for the period came from the **Brown-headed Nuthatches'** usual haunt at Washington County Pk., *Washington* 17 Oct (ph. TM). Burkes Garden, *Tazewell* was the only spot to pick up **Loggerhead Shrike** and it was first reported 25 Sep (ph. GK, MH) and seen

through 29 Nov (ph. JP, et al.). This represents a significant decrease in the number from the fall of 2020. There may have been fewer reports due to lack of coverage in the usual productive shrike spots but it could also represent the ongoing declining trend of shrikes in Virginia. A couple of **Black-capped Chickadees** were observed outside of the Grayson Highlands. One was seen at the Big Walker Lookout, *Bland* 6 Sep (ES), and 2 were observed at Foster Falls, *Wythe* 10 Sep–10 Nov (ph. HK). Both **Purple Finch** and **Pine Siskin** were present in low numbers this fall, especially when compared with last year's flight. One **Orange-crowned Warbler** was observed in Ivanhoe, *Wythe* 9 Oct (PE). Lastly, the coup de grâce of expected fall warblers: a **Connecticut Warbler** was seen and well-photographed on Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 14 Sep (ph. RM). This is the second rarest of our migrant fall warblers with only five total records, two of which came in the past two years. Finally, a **Dickcissel** was photographed at Compton Mountain, *Buchanan* 22 Aug (ph. RM).

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CENTRAL



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SUMMER 2021

This was a summer for the books, with the main excitement for local birders coming in the form of wading birds wandering north from the deep south. A good diversity of other species including several unseasonable warbler sightings was also enjoyed. Highlight species included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Anhinga, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Mississippi Kite, and Tennessee Warbler.

Abbreviations: Stillfreds (Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle*).

DUCKS — ANHINGA

Two **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS** visited the Region this summer; singles were at Oilville, *Goochland* 11 Jun (ph. CS) and at Spotsylvania Sportsplex, *Spotsylvania* 18–25 Jul (ph. BG). Each summer seems to bring more records of this rapidly-increasing southern species. An unseasonal **Ruddy Duck** was at Fort A.P. Hill, *Caroline* 10 Jul (ph. BC, DV). A **Least Sandpiper** was early at Stillfreds 2 Jul (ph. BB). Three **Caspian Terns** were a good Jul find at Northeast Res., *Louisa* 19 Jul (ph. SH, WH, NT). The sole **Common Loon** report consisted of an ad. at Smith Mt. L., *Bedford* 5 Jun (ph. BW). **ANHINGA** is always a Regional rarity, and remarkably, 2 were reported! One was at a known

site for the species, Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 4–10 Jul (ph. HB); and another was at Northeast Res., *Louisa* 19 Jul (ph. SH, WH, NT).

EGRETS — SPOONBILL

A **SNOWY EGRET** was at Stillfreds 8 Jul (ph. BB, TB, TS), and another there 31 Jul (ph. BB) could have been the same individual. **Little Blue Herons** had a huge movement into the Region this summer, with reports of some 25 individuals from *Albemarle, Amherst, Bedford, Fluvanna, Hanover, Louisa, Lynchburg, Orange,* and *Spotsylvania*. All but one report fell within Jul, with the earliest at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 30 Jun (EO). As with the other waders this year, all individuals involved were juveniles. Juv. **TRICOLORED HERONS** were detected at two locations: Groomes Pt., *Orange* 24 Jul (ph. ST) and Chris Greene L., *Albemarle* 30 & 31 Jul (ph. PJ, m. obs.). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was detected by boat at L. Orange, *Orange* 26 Jul (ph. SH, WH, NT). The only **White Ibis** was a juv. at Stillfreds 29 Jul (ph. BB, TB). Two **Glossy Ibises** were discovered at Hawkwood L., *Louisa* 12 Jul (ph. ST); they were accompanied by a juv. *Plegadis* likely of the same species. Undoubtedly the defining bird of the summer, **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS** invaded the state and several made it to the Central Region. The first was at Ivy L., *Bedford* 3 Jul (ph. anon.), and the rest came from *Albemarle*: 2 were briefly at Stillfreds 8 Jul (ph. ES); another at King Family Vineyards 9 Jul was also short-staying (ph. ES, m. obs) and was later seen flying

northeast over Crozet. A spoonbill at Beaver Creek Res., *Albemarle* 10 & 11 Jul (v. r., *fide* DS) was likely the bird from King Family Vineyards. Details of facial skin and bill confirm a minimum of 3 individuals present in *Albemarle* over the four-day period 8–11 Jul.

KITES — WARBLERS

Hanover continued to be the stronghold for **Mississippi Kites** in the Region, and two were reported: at Clazemont Rd. 4 Jun (DE) and Ashland Rd. 17 Jun (ph. NC). Two imm. **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were at Timberlake, *Campbell* 4 Jun (GS). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported, exceptional given the usual absence of this species in the breeding season: one was near Loft Mountain in Shenandoah NP, *Albemarle* 20 Jun (ph. BB) and another was at Warbler Cr. Farm, *Bedford* 30 Jun (BE). Localized breeders at high elevation in the Region, single **Winter Wrens** were found singing on territory at South R. Falls in Shenandoah NP, *Greene* 10 Jun & 17 Jul (SV, a. r. GB, SB) and at Flat Top Mt., *Bedford* 20 Jun (JV). Very late was a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Jefferson Pk. Circle, *Charlottesville* 5 Jun (BB, TB). A hatch-year **Pine Siskin** visited a feeder at L. Monticello, *Fluvanna* 23 Jun (ph. KK), suggesting the possibility of local breeding after the irruption.

Perhaps representing a late migrant or a prospective breeder, a **Magnolia Warbler** was at South R. Falls Trail in Shenandoah NP, *Greene* 17 Jun (LL). A **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Ivy Cr. Natural Area, *Albemarle* 3 Jul (LS, m. obs.) was surprising for a low elevation site in the Piedmont, as was a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** there 16 Jun (ph. ED) & 27 Jul (ph. BB). Providing the first Jul record for the state, a **Tennessee Warbler** was remarkably early at Azalea Pk., *Charlottesville* 26 Jul (ph. BB), possibly an early molt migrant or failed breeder. Other late Jul reports from West Virginia and Maryland suggest a more widespread early movement of this species. **Dickcissels** were absent from the Region this summer, with no reports even from regular sites.

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FALL 2021

This fall was highlighted by a stellar showing of southern wading birds in the early part of the period. Waterfowl were slow to trickle into the area, though there were several standout rarities. There were several surprising shorebird records, and low water levels at multiple water bodies in the Region provided ample mudflats for wading birds and shorebirds. Irruptive boreal passerines were lacking, but birders were kept busy by the regular migratory songbirds.

Abbreviations: SML (Smith Mountain L., *Bedford*); Groomes Pt. (Groomes Pt., *Orange*).

GEESE — GULLS

Two **Ross's Geese** were at Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 26 Nov (ph. BB). A **Ring-necked Duck** was an unseasonal arrival at Reusens Dam, *Bedford* 7 Aug (ph. ST, m. obs.) and continued through 6 Sep. An accidental migrant in the Region, a **BLACK SCOTER** was photographed at Chris Greene L., *Albemarle* 7 Nov (ph. CEa). A **Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird** was present at a backyard feeder in *Charlottesville* from at least late Oct through the end of the period (ph. BM), but the species-level identification was not confirmed by banding. Late and unusual was a **Virginia Rail** observed by flashlight at the Monticello High School L., *Albemarle* 12 Nov (ph. KP). Always a good find in the Region, a **Sora** was heard vocalizing at Sweet Briar College, *Amherst* 24 Oct (DMS). A lone **Sandhill Crane** flew over Mechanicsville, *Hanover* 21 Sep (ph. NC). Part of an unusual fallout of the species at multiple locations across the state on 26 Sep, an **AMERICAN AVOCET** was discovered at Adammson Tract, *Campbell* 26 Sep (ph. CEI). Four **Sanderlings** were found at Maidens Boat Ramp on the James R., *Powhatan* 20 Sep (ph. AC). One of the rarest shorebird migrants in the Region, a **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** was found foraging in a construction site puddle in the Belvedere

subdivision, *Albemarle* 4 Sep (ph. DC). Two **Short-billed Dowitchers** visited the Groomes Pt. mudflats 16–19 Aug (AR, m. obs.). A juv. **Ring-billed Gull** was very early at Reusens Dam, *Lynchburg* 2 Aug (AE).

TERNS — SPOONBILL

A single **Caspian Tern** was at SML Pkwy., *Bedford* 18 Aug (DA, BE). Two were at Groomes Pt. 29 Aug (MA, EA). **Black Terns** were encountered at several large reservoirs: a total of 22 at SML 18 Aug (DA, BE); 2 at Groomes Pt. 28 & 29 Aug (IT); and 6 at L. Anna, *Louisa/Spotsylvania* 31 Aug (WK). Single **Forster's Terns** were also reported at Groomes Pt. 13 Aug (TMD) and at SML Pkwy., *Bedford* 18 Aug (DA, BE). The 18 Aug terns at SML were noted to be observed after the passage of rainfall associated with the remnants of Tropical Storm Fred. An unseasonal **Common Loon** was at SML Pkwy., *Bedford* 18 Aug (ph. BE, DA). A rare summer visitor in the Region, an **ANHINGA** was discovered at the *Goochland* portion of Tuckahoe



David Shoch's picture of a **Tricolored Heron** spotted at Chris Greene L. in *Albemarle*, 1 Aug 2021.

Cr. Pk. 24 Aug and was also photographed there 29 Aug (ph. KH). High numbers of **Little Blue Herons** lingered from the summer period at numerous locations: one at Bellair Farm, *Albemarle* 1 Aug (DC); one at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 1–15 Aug (ph. LS); 2 at Maidens Boat Ramp, *Powhatan* (ph. AC); 2 at Groomes Pt. 4–29 Aug (m. obs.); up to 3 at Chris

Greene L., *Albemarle* 6–13 Aug (ph. GB); and up to 4 at L. Hanover Nature Trail, *Hanover* 11–21 Aug (ph. TBe). Two **TRICOLORED HERONS** continued from the summer period at Chris Greene L., *Albemarle* 1–7 Aug (ph. m. obs.). Up to 2 **SNOWY EGRETS** were at Groomes Pt. 13 Aug–10 Sep (ph. TMD, m. obs.). **Cattle Egrets** had an unusual presence in the Region late in the period. One was at Chris Geene L., *Albemarle* 31 Oct (ph. CE, WG); one at Mt. Air Farm, *Albemarle* 12 Nov (ph. PM); and another at SML Pkwy., *Bedford* 20–24 Nov (ph. BE, MJ). Always a good find in the Region, a juv. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was at Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 3 & 5 Aug (ph. MN). A juv. **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** at Riverview Pk., *Charlottesville* and Old Mills Trail, *Albemarle* 8–15 Aug (ph. RH, m. obs.) provided one of very few all-time records of this species for the Region. The lone **White Ibis** report was from Gordonsville, *Orange* 6 Aug (ph. DD). A



Will Burgoyne's photograph of *Goochland's* first **Snowy Owl**, spotted at Goochland High School 2 Nov 2021.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL flew over Stillfreds Pond, *Albemarle* 1 Aug (ph. DC), potentially one of the individuals that visited there earlier in Jul during the beginning of the massive invasion of this species across the eastern states. Another was at Groomes Pt. 4 Aug–10 Sep (ph. ST, m. obs.).

KITES — DICKCISSEL

Nearly annual in the Region but still rare, a **Swallow-tailed Kite** was spotted at Brackets Farm, *Louisa* 17 Aug (ph. KC, CH, DG, CS).

Rarely detected in the Region but likely a regular fall migrant, an imm. **Golden Eagle** was seen over James Monroe's Highland, *Albemarle* (ph. JD, CB). An early outlier in a good winter for the species, a **SNOWY OWL** delighted observers at the Goochland Co. High School, *Goochland* 22 Nov (ph. m. obs.). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found at regular spot in Shenandoah NP near Beagle Gap, *Albemarle* 16 Nov (ABa, JM). A new frontier for the species in the Region, up to 4 **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were found at Greenfield Dr., *Nelson* 20 & 21 Oct (ph. DC, a. r. DB). A **Winter Wren** was notably early at Pocosin Cabin, *Greene* 3 Sep (BB). The single **Marsh Wren** report of the season came from Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 23 & 24 Oct (ph. TBe). A remarkably late **Wood Thrush** visited a backyard water feature in *Goochland* 23 Nov (ph. CEv). There was no notable movement of irruptive finches into the Region this fall, with scarce reports of **Purple Finches** and very few **Pine Siskins**. Two **Orange-crowned Warblers** were found, one at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 21 Oct (ph. CEa) and another at Rivanna Trail Dunlora, *Albemarle* 24 Oct (TW). Single **Connecticut Warblers** were reported at several locations: one was early at Ivy Creek Natural Area, *Albemarle* 2 Sep (TBe), with another there 25 Sep (ABo); Powhatan SP, *Powhatan* 19 Sep (ph. ABr); Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* 24 Sep (ph. ES, TS); Loft Mt. Campground, *Albemarle* 30 Sep (ph. CT); and Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 8 Oct (ph. BB). A **Mourning Warbler** was very late at Greenbrier Pk., *Charlottesville* 23 Oct (ph. TBe). A scarce fall migrant through the Region, two **Dickcissels** dropped into the Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson* 7 Oct (ph. BB).

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SUMMER 2021

Temperatures in both June and July were near normal. Precipitation was slightly below normal in June and 3.5 inches below normal in July. Rarities this season included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Wood Stork, and Roseate Spoonbill.

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

DUCKS — DICKCISSEL

A **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** was at Watermill L., *Chesterfield* 3–6 Jun (m. obs.). A f. **Hooded Merganser** with 5 recently fledged young at Beaverdam Cr., *York* 26 May (ph. TM) established the first confirmed local breeding record. Subsequently single, probable hatch-year birds were in Ford's Colony, *James City* 15 Jun (GM) and at Harwoods Mill Res., *York* 25 Jun (DY). A m. **Ruddy Duck** was seen at York R. SP, *James City* 21 & 28 Jun (ph. GD, m. obs.). For the second summer in a row, **Pied-billed Grebes** bred at Dutch Gap/Henricus. As many as 2 juvs. were seen with an ad. 1–14 Jun (m. obs.). An **American Avocet** was at Hog 17–25 Jul (ph. NB, m. obs.). A **Western Willet** was spotted from the Jamestown Is. Causeway, *James City* 19 Jul (ph. NB, BT). A winter-plumaged **Common Loon** was on Swift Cr. Res., *Chesterfield* 6 Jun (EO). A **WOOD STORK** was

an excellent find in a swampy area along Chinquapin Rd., *Sussex* 19 Jul (BC). The bird remained in the same area through 24 Jul (m. obs.). A first for the Colonial Historic Triangle was the documentation of a **Double-crested Cormorant** colony discovered at Cheatham Annex, *York* 16 May (DY), finding 6 incubating birds plus an estimated 30 birds nest-building. By 28 Jun, there were at least 150 birds present (ads. and recently fledged young) and twelve visible



Rob Bielawski's photograph of a **Wood Stork** from Piney Grove Preserve in *Sussex*, 24 Jul 2021.

active nests (BW, DY). Not as common in summer as in other seasons, up to 7 **American White Pelicans** lingered at Hog through 31 Jul (m. obs.). Up to 4 juv. **White Ibis** were seen at Jamestown Is., *James City* 19–30 Jul (ph. NB, m. obs.). Another southern wader spotted in the Region this season was a **ROSEATE SPOONBILL**, seen flying with 2 **Great Egrets** from Ragged Island WMA, *Isle of Wight* 30 Jun (TC). Following the large winter irruption, a single **Pine Siskin** lingered at Governor's Land, *James City* 2 Jun (CO). A late **White-throated Sparrow** was seen at Fort Boykin Historic Pk., *Isle of Wight* 13 Jun (TC). An early **Black-**

throated Green Warbler was spotted at Pocahontas SP, *Chesterfield* 19 Jul (SR). Up to 2 **Dickcissels** were encountered along Rte. 633, *Surry* 15 & 23 Jun (TC). This is the same general location where 2 birds were singing last summer.

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EAST



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FALL 2021

A total of 223 species was recorded this fall, including 28 warbler species. Some waterfowl and passerine numbers were low this autumn, perhaps due to the unseasonably warm fall weather to our north. The most notable find was the Region's first Roseate Spoonbill. This fall was highlighted by high counts of Ring-Necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Ruddy Duck as well as the first fall record of King Rail for the Region. Data was sourced from eBird, the VA Birds listserv, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv), Middle Peninsula Bird Club Facebook page, and VSO's Gold Book: "Virginia's Birdlife An Annotated Checklist Fourth Edition" (Rottenborn and Brinkley, 2007).

Abbreviations: Beaverdam (Beaverdam Pk., Gloucester); Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, Mathews); Birthplace (George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland); Guinea (Guinea Marsh, Gloucester); Hughlett (Hughlett Pt. NAP, Northumberland); Hutchinson (Rappahannock River Valley NWR--Hutchinson Unit, Essex); K. G. Ponds (private sand quarry ponds near the Rappahannock R., mostly along Rte. 3, King George); LaGrange (LaGrange Ln., one of the K. G. Ponds, view from road only, King George); Leedstown (Westmoreland); Machicomoco (Machicomoco SP, Gloucester); New Pt. Comfort (New Pt. Comfort NAP, Mathews); The Pocket (in Pamunkey Indian Reservation along the Pamunkey R., King William); Wilna

(Rappahannock River Valley NWR--Wilna/Wright Unit, Richmond).

GEESE — COOTS

Eight **Snow Geese** were seen at three locations. A **Cackling Goose** was not a surprise near The Pocket 6 Nov (FA). All three species of scoters were seen for only the second time in the eBird fall records; however, there were lower-than-usual numbers of **Black Scoter** and only average numbers of **Surf Scoter**. A relatively rare **White-winged Scoter**, seen from a boat in Lancaster 27 Oct (BD), was only the fourth Regional fall



Maeve Coker's photograph of 4 **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** from Gwynnfield Rd. Pond in Essex, 3 Jun 2021.

record in eBird. The Region had its highest fall count of **American Black Duck** since 2009: 72 at Leedstown 26 Nov (FA). A count of 9100 **Ring-necked Ducks** at LaGrange 26 Nov (FA) was a new all-time high for the Region. An additional 915 birds were noted in private lakes within two miles that same day, amounting to a total of 10,015 at K. G. Ponds (FA). Continuing the decline noted in previous years, scaup were

scarce this fall with only three records of **Lesser Scaup** and no records of **Greater Scaup**. **Redhead** was absent from the East Region for the first time since 2009. A **Long-tailed Duck** near The Pocket 6 Nov (FA) was *King William's* second fall record in eBird. Another Long-Tailed Duck at Hughlett 21 Nov (JH) was *Northumberland's* fourth fall record. A report of 200 **Hooded Mergansers** at Beaverdam 29 & 30 Nov (JS) was a new fall high count for the Region in eBird. This fall was the first since 2008 that **Red-breasted Mergansers** were not recorded. Usually there are two to six reports each fall. A count of 1104 **Ruddy Ducks** at Bryant Bay, *Gloucester* on 27 Nov (DY) was one of the highest fall counts. **Northern Bobwhite**, a declining species, was well represented by a total of 70 individuals at 26 locations, with a high of 12 birds each at Machicomico 2 Aug (CS) and Bushfield Rd., *Westmoreland* 20 Nov (MG). A

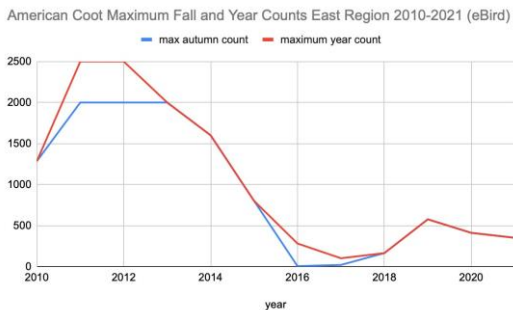


Fig. 1

count of 34 **Pied-billed Grebes** at Beaverdam 29 Nov (RS) was impressive, though several other fall high counts ranging from 37 to 79 have been reported in the Region in past years. The third Regional fall record of **Eastern Whip-poor-will** came from *Northumberland* 28 Aug (TM). There were two new late dates on eBird for **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, from Hayes, *Gloucester* 20 Oct (AW) and *King William* 22 Oct (DC). Before these, no Regional reports had been submitted past 15 Oct. The high count for **Chimney Swift**, a flock around 100 strong, tallied at N. Glebe Road, *Westmoreland* 7 Oct (TW), was good news for this common but declining species. This high count has only been surpassed once, when 200 birds were noted 28 Jul

2021 at Caret, *Essex* (BC). The first *Northumberland* record and the first Regional fall record of **King Rail** was seen and heard at Hughlett 21 Nov (JH). There were a few more reports of **Virginia Rail** and **Sora** than usual. Though there were more Sora reports than usual, fewer individual birds were reported. High counts of 18–32 Sora are often recorded at the peak of migration from mid-Sep through early Oct. However, this year the high count was 6 near Chance, *Essex* 5 Oct, along with a **Common Gallinule** (MC, JC). The gallinule was the 4th fall record for the Region and the first record for *Essex*. **American Coot** has continued its decline, with this fall's high count being 350 at Beaverdam 29 Nov (RS) as compared to tallies as high as 2000 in 2011–2013 (Fig. 1).

PLOVERS — FALCONS

Four **American Golden-Plovers**, uncommon migrants in the Region, were reported: 2 in Leedstown 19 Sep (FA), and single birds at Bethel 10–12 Oct (FA, MS, HC) and K. G. Ponds 17 Oct (FA). A threatened **Piping Plover** was spotted 1 Aug at Bethel (JS). All but two Regional reports of this species on eBird have been from the strip of coastline running from New Pt. Comfort through Bethel to the area around North Haven Beach, *Mathews*. Single **Whimbrels** were reported from Bethel 16 & 23 Aug (RC, HC), possibly the same bird. A juvenile **Red Knot** at Guinea 29 Aug (JS) constituted the first record of this species in *Gloucester* on eBird. Two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at Leedstown 9 Sep (FA) were in the same farm field as two birds recorded the previous fall on 5 Sep (FA). From 1–3 **Western Sandpipers** were reported on five dates 16 Aug–10 Oct at Bethel, where this is a regular but uncommon migrant. Three others were noted at Guinea 29 Aug (JS) and Naxera, *Gloucester* 24 Sep (JS). No **Baird's**, **White-rumped**, **Stilt**, or **Upland Sandpipers** were reported this year. A large group of 300 **Dunlin** at Guinea 15 Nov (JS) was the highest fall count since 2008. Only 7 **Solitary Sandpipers** were noted in six locations. The sighting of a late **American Oystercatcher** at Bethel 10 Oct (FA) is only the second Oct eBird record, the other being slightly later, 18 Oct 2015 at Muse Rd.,

Westmoreland (FA). The high count for the declining **Laughing Gull** was only 400 individuals at Birthplace 17 Oct (HT). Counts of this species peak in the fall and have exceeded 1500 in 11 of the last 18 years, with the highest count of 9250 in 2009. The accompanying graph using eBird data shows the decline of this species (Fig. 2). Most high counts were at K. G. Ponds

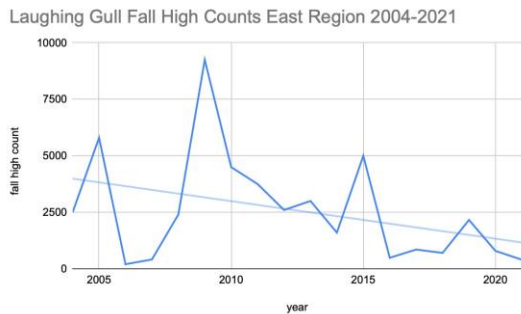


Fig. 2

where they bathe, drink, and rest after visiting the nearby landfill. Five **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, a western Palearctic species that has been wintering in increasing numbers along the Atlantic seaboard, were seen at four locations, including the first eBird records for *Middlesex* at Cedar Point, 31 Aug & 6 Sep (MC, JC). One **Black Skimmer** was seen 14 Aug (AB) and two 4 Sep (BH) at Bethel, where they have appeared, usually in similar numbers, almost annually during the post-breeding season since 2014. All but seven Regional reports of this species on eBird have been from the strip of coastline running from New Pt. Comfort through Bethel to the area around North Haven Beach, *Mathews*. **Red-throated Loon** was completely absent from the Region this fall, the first autumn miss since 2010. An incredible 1000 **Double-crested Cormorants** at Colonial Beach, *Westmoreland* 21 Nov (MP) is the 2nd highest fall count since 2012. The accompanying graph shows the dramatic increase of this species over the past two decades (Fig. 3). This is consistent with a trend evident in many parts of the country. Another species that appears to be increasing in the Region is **American White Pelican**; the first was reported here in 2016, and there have already been four autumn records since then, including 4 seen soaring over a pond in Hayes, *Gloucester* 24 Oct (KS). A new Regional high count of 196 **Great Egrets** at Bryant Bay, *Gloucester* 15 Sep

(DY) more than doubled the previous eBird high. Fall high counts from 2004 to 2020 have ranged from 12 to 70 with an average of 31. These egrets appeared to be heading to a communal night roost. According to the observer, from 6:30 PM to 7:15 PM a continuous stream of egrets flew in from the mouth of Mobjack Bay, heading for a point south of the Severn River. A total of 8 **Little Blue Herons** was recorded from four locations, including the first eBird records for *Essex* at Bowler's Rd., 17 & 26 Aug (MC, JC, DCh). Thirty-one **Tricolored Herons**, an uncommon breeder in the Region, were tallied at eleven locations this year. **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** turned up a total of 20 birds at eleven locations, a striking number for a species which in some years does not have any records at all. No **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were seen this fall. Nine **White Ibis**, a southern wader whose range has been expanding northward, were

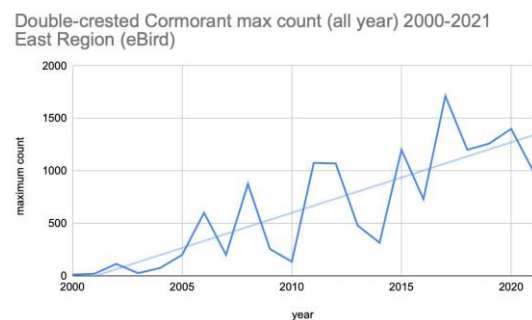


Fig. 3

counted at Mobjack Ln., *Gloucester* 3 Aug (JS); New Pt. Comfort 2 & 19 Sep (GB); Guinea 4 Sep (CS); and Old Garden Cr. Rd., *Mathews* 14 & 22 Aug (AB, MS). A single **Glossy Ibis** appeared at K. G. Ponds 9 Sep (FA). According to the Gold Book, this species began breeding in the Coastal Plain during the 1950s. Its numbers peaked during the 1970s, but have declined since. The majority of sightings are in the spring and early summer; usually only one or two birds are encountered in the Region during the fall. Constituting the first eBird records for the Region, two sightings of a **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** in *Gloucester* 17 Aug (ph. MR) and Hughlett 19 Aug (ph. NW), may have been the same bird. This year's remarkable explosion of reports of spoonbills from the northern states, including as far afield as New Hampshire and Michigan, may be linked to an exceptional

breeding season for waders in the Southeast, followed by heavy spring rains. The resulting competition among the birds, exacerbated by the flooding of many of their traditional feeding grounds, may have forced many north in search of food. Spoonbills forage by touch, so they are most successful when their prey is concentrated in pools, as is usually the case in their wetland habitats. Flooding connects these pools, diffusing their prey and making it more difficult to catch. Most of the vagrants were young birds, although the two sightings in the Region were too far away to be identified as such. A new Regional high for the fall season of 64 **Bald Eagles** was reported on



Maeve Coker's picture of a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** from Cedar Pointe in *Middlesex*, 6 Sep 2021.

13 Nov at K. G. Ponds (FA), near the King George landfill where many eagles spend the winter. Previous fall highs for this species have normally been in the forties. Falcons were well accounted for this season. Observers tallied 1–4 **American Kestrels** in 84 sightings at 27 locations. Since many of these were probably resident birds arriving for the winter, it is likely that this represents about 40–50 individuals. There were also 31 sightings of **Merlins** at 15 locations, all of singles except one list reporting 2 birds; and 9 sightings of single **Peregrine Falcons** at nine locations.

FLYCATCHERS — TANAGERS

As with last year, the only species of *Empidonax* flycatcher reported was **Acadian Flycatcher**. A **Common Raven** was observed along Barefords Mill Rd., *Essex* 1 Oct (MC, JC). This is only the second county record in eBird for this species, which has recently been expanding into the

Virginia Birds

Coastal Plain, including this Region. A continuing trend noted was a general scarcity of **Horned Larks**: 148 were recorded in 14 locations with a high count of 50 at a private farm in *Essex* 18 Nov (MC, JC); this is dwarfed by past single location counts of up to 150. Strangely, only a single sighting of **Northern-Rough Winged Swallows** was noted the whole season: a group of 6 near Ditchley, *Northumberland* 6 Aug (JD). There were also no **Cliff Swallows**, a species which usually lingers in small numbers into late Aug and early Sep. There were fewer **Bank Swallows** than usual, with a total of 83 over 6 locations, and a high count of 27 in Walkerton, *King and Queen* 28 Aug (ST) which was also the last sighting of the season. In some years, post-breeding Bank Swallow numbers have peaked over 1000. **Purple Martins** were once again scarce with a total of 607 over 31 locations with a high count of only 130 near The Pocket 19 Aug (FA). This total is miniscule compared to past

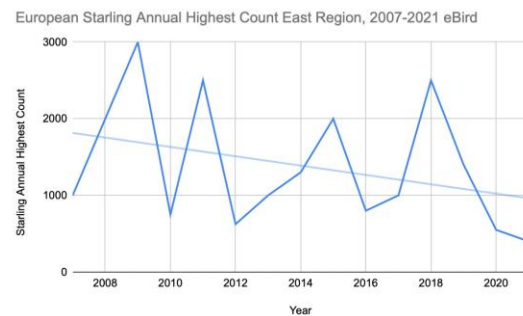


Fig. 4

counts as high as 2400. Somewhat expected post-irruption year, but still notable, was a lack of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. Just 8 were recorded in seven locations. Very healthy numbers of **Marsh Wrens** were noted, with 31 sightings of 1–6 birds at 6 locations and an impressive high count of 6 at Hughlett 11 Sep (JD), a new county high. **Sedge Wrens**, a hard-to-detect scarce migrant, are usually at least annual in the Region, but none were reported this fall. Perhaps a welcome downward trend is the slight decline of **European Starlings**. Though numbers fluctuate from year to year, the trendline in the accompanying graph shows an overall decline in the last 15 years (Fig. 4). In particular, this year's

maximum count over 110 locations was only 300, with an average count of 14. **Eastern Bluebird** was well represented with a new seasonal high count of 61 at Machicomico 11 Nov (MC, JC) as well as a slew of other high counts from the same location. **American Pipits** were again scarce in the Region, with only five sightings in five locations. This includes a nice high count of 100 near The Pocket 6 Nov (FA). Like the nuthatches, post-irruption **Purple Finch** numbers were low with a total of 8 birds in six locations. Only one **Gray-Cheeked Thrush**, a scarce migrant, was seen all season: at Woodville Park, *Gloucester* 1 Oct (JS). Following the trend of low thrush numbers, just 2 **Veeries** and 3 **Swainson's Thrushes** were seen all season. The last **Wood Thrush** reports were as usual in the first week of Oct, right when the first **Hermit Thrushes** arrived on schedule. However, the high counts for Hermit Thrushes stayed below 10 in November, when previous high counts have usually ranged from the teens through the thirties, and even on occasion into forties. This may be a result of birds lingering in the north during this warm fall. **Grasshopper Sparrows** seem to be clinging on in the Region despite continued decline of natural grasslands in recent years. Twenty-five were found at nine locations with a high count of 10 at Machicomico 2 Aug (MC, JC), which is slightly lower than past high counts of 12 and 17 from different locations. Possibly resulting from warm weather this fall, the arrival of **Dark-eyed Juncos** seemed to be delayed by about two weeks. The first juncos were only spotted 23 Oct at Cedar Pointe, *Middlesex* (JeC), which is well after the typical arrival date of 6 Oct. Such was not the case with **White-throated Sparrows**, whose arrival dates were typical of the overall trend of the past 20 years. The first two reports this year were each of 2 birds on 12 Oct in *Essex* (MC, JC) and *Middlesex* (JeC). However, the fall 2021 high counts of 68 White-throats and 30 Juncos were significantly lower than previous high counts of 200 and 185, respectively, all in Nov, suggesting that many birds stayed north longer than usual. Not unprecedented, but getting all three “grass sparrows” is notable, with especially good numbers of **Seaside Sparrows** with 29 at 7

locations and high counts of 9 at Guinea 29 Aug (JS) and Bethel 23 Aug (HC). Fewer than most years, but at least still recorded, were 2 **Nelson's Sparrows** at Hughlett 21 Nov (JH). Also somewhat lower than other years were counts of 1–2 **Saltmarsh Sparrows** at Hughlett 12–13 Nov (JD). These grass sparrows are under extreme pressure from rising sea levels, habitat destruction from both development and agricultural conversion, and habitat degradation from pollution. It is heartening to see that all three species continue to utilize the invaluable pockets of protected bayshore. Not seen every year in the Region, 2 **Lincoln's Sparrows** reported at, respectively, K. G. Ponds 17 Oct (FA) and Hutchinson 4 Nov (MC, JC) were solid finds. More than in recent years, but nothing compared to the hundreds seen as recently as the early 2000s, 94 **Rusty Blackbirds** were seen over six locations. The high count of 43 in Leedstown 26 Nov (FA) was in the same floodplain forest where 220 were noted 29 Oct 2006 (FA). There were also 35 Rusty Blackbirds at Caledon SP, *King George* 19 Nov (JB). A healthy variety of 28 species of wood warblers was noted in the Region this fall. Only one each of **Worm-Eating Warbler**, **Louisiana Waterthrush**, **Blue-Winged Warbler**, **Tennessee Warbler**, **Nashville Warbler**, **Kentucky Warbler**, and **Black-Throated Green Warbler** was seen in the Region. An impressive congregation of 50 **Pine Warblers** was seen at North Glebe Rd., *Westmoreland*, Oct 7 (TW). This new Regional eBird high dwarfs the previous high of 38 and average fall counts of 3–4. The observer wrote: “Absolutely everywhere. 15-20 on ground in one yard at one time, with several more in trees in that same yard, and several in adjacent yards. Dozens of trees had 3+ Pine Warblers in them at a time along 1 mile round trip walk.... Actual count likely much higher than 50.” Another impressive warbler count was 20 **Cape May Warblers** at Blenheim Organic Gardens, *Westmoreland* 1 Oct (RL). This count was one away from the previous Regional eBird high. Two **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported: one at West Point 14 Nov (ABr) was the second fall record for *King William*; and the other, Canoe Ln. 18 Nov (JS),

was the fifth fall record for *Gloucester*. A **Yellow Warbler** at Hutchinson 11 Oct (NN) was one of only six historical sightings in eBird later than the first week of Oct, the latest date being in Leedstown 18 Nov 2018 (FA). Most Yellow Warblers leave by early Oct. Fourteen **Palm Warblers** at a private farm near Walkerton, *King and Queen* 12 Oct (MC) tied the second highest count for the Region throughout the year. Reports of **Summer Tanagers** outnumbered **Scarlet Tanagers** 149 to 19 this season.

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COASTAL



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SUMMER 2021

Temperatures in the early summer averaged in the mid-70s, with only a few days reaching into the upper-80s or low-90s. Even in July, as things heated up, the peak temperature only reached 97°. It was a dry summer, with few precipitation events; both months barely registered an average rainfall. Though a few migrants lingered into early June, birding by-and-large settled predictably into the breeding season routine. Few unexpected species put in appearances, and there were no unusual breeding records. Lingering waterfowl were no more than a smattering, but represented a fairly diverse assortment of species. Shorebird migration bookended the season, with the spring stragglers in June nearly overlapping with the earliest southbound birds in July; species-wise, however, there were no surprises. A pair of roseate birds were the clear highlights of the season: Roseate Tern and Roseate Spoonbill. The latter were seen at multiple spots in the Coast as part of a larger influx that spanned not just all of Virginia, but much of eastern North America and saw birds reach as far north as Michigan, New York, and New Hampshire. In Virginia, spoonbills were recorded in at least a dozen counties and cities during the summer months, and the invasion continued into August – a remarkable phenomenon for a species that was still listed as “hypothetical” in the state as recently as the last annotated checklist in 2007. Also of note was Virginia’s first summer record of Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, *Virginia Beach*); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, *Virginia Beach/Northampton*); Chincoteague (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, *Portsmouth*); Dismal (Great Dismal Swamp NWR, *Chesapeake/Suffolk*); ESB Nature Preserve (Edward S. Brinkley Nature Preserve, *Northampton*); Ft. Story (Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, *Virginia Beach*); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, *Hampton*); Langley AFB (Langley Air Force Base, *Hampton*); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, *Virginia Beach*); Saxis (Saxis WMA, *Accomack*).

WATERFOWL

Summer reports of **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** on the coast were scant, with only a single record – 2 on Salem Rd., *Virginia Beach* 5 Jun (ph. KR). **Blue-winged Teal**, always uncommon in summer, were only reported from three locations this year: 3 at Chincoteague 16 Jun (LGa) and 9 there 27 Jul (JL); up to 2 at Back Bay 8–10 Jul (ph. CH, m. obs.); and 2 at Union Camp Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA). **Gadwall** went unrecorded in the region this summer away from Chincoteague, where reports were numerous and included high counts of 4 on 8 Jul (DH) and 24 Jul (SS). True oversummering waterfowl records were fairly few this year, but comprised a nice diversity of species including all three scoters, two *Aythya*, and a few others. Indubitably, this summer’s waterfowl highlight was a **MOTTLED DUCK** that spent the better part of a month at Craney;

first sighted 10 Jun (BW, RLA, DY, LS), it remained until at least 24 Jun (ph. BW). This is the same location that hosted Virginia's first



Bill Williams's photograph of a **Mottled Duck** from Craney Island Disposal Area in *Portsmouth*, 24 Jun 2021.

record of Mottled Duck in the summer of 2018. A single **Lesser Scaup** spent the summer at Craney, with sightings between 24 Jun and 29 Jul (BW, DY, LS). The only **Ring-necked Ducks** were a group of 4 at Union Camp Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA). Reports of **Surf Scoters** dotted the coast from *Virginia Beach* up to *Accomack*, with a peak count of 8 at Metompkin Is., *Accomack* 12 Jun (BB, ST, DCh, TC). Elsewhere, 3 were at Ft. Story 9 Jul (ph. SM, AM); 2 remained at this location through 25 Jul (ph. SK, K&TB). All other reports were of single birds, including an ad. m. at the CBBT North Overlook, *Northampton* 18–25 Jul (ph. MG, ph. MA, ph. DH, m. obs.) and a f. at Mariner's Pt., *Accomack* 21 Jul (ph. DH, m. obs.). **White-winged Scoters** were scarce by comparison, with only a single record from Rudee 23 Jun (AB, SK). Of the three scoters, **Black Scoter** was far and away the most numerous (as is typically the case), with a smattering of reports across the Region including from *Hampton*, *Portsmouth*, *Norfolk*, *Virginia Beach*, and *Accomack*. **Bufflehead** lingered into the summer at two locations, with reports from Chincoteague 2 Jun (AR) and Lynnhaven Inlet, *Virginia Beach* 25 Jun (ph. K&TB). More evident were **Red-breasted Mergansers**, with just over a half-dozen reports spread across *Poquoson*,

Hampton, *Virginia Beach*, and both Eastern Shore counties. **Ruddy Ducks** lingered in decent numbers at Craney, where observers recorded a peak count of 14 on 22 Jul (BW, DY, LS), with 13 remaining through 29 Jul (DY). Elsewhere, all reports were single birds at locations including ESB Nature Preserve 8 Jun (ph. DC, ph. MM); Back Bay 13 Jun (ph. RB, LR, MA, TMD); and Union Camp Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA).

GREBES — SHOREBIRDS

Records of **Pied-billed Grebes** were largely concentrated at the beginning and end of the season. Lingered birds in the early summer included singles at Queen Sound Landing, *Accomack* 1 Jun (AR); Thomas Jefferson Rollins Nature Area, *Poquoson* 2 Jun (ph. LM); and Craney 10 Jun (ph. BW, RLA, DY, LS). At the tail end of the summer, a noteworthy high count of 5 was at Union Camp Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA), while 2 were at Chincoteague 27 Jul (JL). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were mostly recorded at their known haunts in *Virginia Beach*, *Northampton*, and *Accomack*, but a well-described report of a single bird at Rudee 9 Jun (NB, BHo, JJ) was notable for its distance from any known population. Regrettably, **Common Nighthawks** were almost entirely absent from the Region this breeding season, with the exception of Craney, which hosted up to 3 from 3 Jun–15 Jul (BW, m. obs.). A report from here 3 Jun noted that the female “appeared to be incubating” (BW, RLA, DY). The only other report was at a private residence in nearby *Norfolk*, where one was heard giving “peent” calls the evening of 23 Jun (RLA). Nearly all of the summer **Virginia Rails** in the Region were in *Accomack*, with reports of single birds from Saxis 16 Jun (TG) and 31 Jul (JRC); Chincoteague 16 Jul (MAR); and Hopkins Compound 18 Jul (MB). The only other location where this species was detected was Grandview, where one was found 7 Jun (DC) and continued through 19 Jun (SW&TSA). The peak count of

Common Gallinules was 5 from Union Camp Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA), while the only other record was a single bird at Back Bay 26 Jul (JMa). **American Avocets**, as is nearly always the case, were only present at Craney, where numbers built from just 3 on 3 Jun (BW, DY) to an impressive end-of-summer peak of 463 on 29 Jul (DY). Though an **American Oystercatcher** is hardly a notable summer species on the Virginia coast, records away from the immediate coast and western shore of the Bay are so scant as to be almost nonexistent, adding a layer of notability to an oddly displaced bird at L. Meade Pk., an inland location in *Suffolk*, 27 Jun (ph. CMi). Reports of **Stilt Sandpipers** trickled in from a handful of locations including Back Bay and Saxis, but particularly noteworthy counts of these low-density migrants were 26 at Craney 29 Jul (DY) and a whopping 53 at the Wash Flats at Chincoteague 28 Jul (AB, JMc). **White-rumped Sandpipers** were sparse in the summer months. The only records from Craney were Jun birds that likely represented straggling spring migrants, including 2 on 3 Jun (BW, RLA, DY) and one 10–17 Jun (BW, DY, LS). At Chincoteague, 3 on 10 Jul (AB, JMc) were likely at the vanguard of fall migration, while a single bird 31 Jul (JoG, JeG, AF, KE) was certainly a southbound migrant. Chincoteague also accounted for the only **Long-billed Dowitchers** of the season, with 3 on 28 Jul (AB, JMc). **Wilson's Phalaropes** were present at Craney 17 Jun–29 Jul, with a peak count of 6 there 22 Jul (BW, DY, LS). At Chincoteague, up to 2 birds were present both 12 Jun (LGa, NB) and 21–22 Jul (ph. ML, JL).

TERNs — HAWKS

Certainly, one of the more noteworthy reports of the summer was an obliging **ROSEATE TERN** that put in an appearance at Swan Cove on Chincoteague 10 Jul (v. r. BH). Though not definitive breeding evidence, an **American Bittern** sighting at Back Bay 13 Jun (RB, TMD, LR, MA) certainly raised an intriguing

possibility. Owing to its cryptic nature, the breeding status of this species in Virginia is difficult to gauge, but there are few recent records in the Coastal Plain. For many birders, the most exciting avian event of the summer was the major invasion of **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS**. This year's invasion yielded dozens of reports across all of Virginia's physiographic provinces, and it continued more or less unabated into the early fall. During the summer months, the Coastal Region notched reports of these elegant Southern waders from four locations in four jurisdictions. Kicking off the excitement was a single bird on a private dock off the Back R. in *Hampton* 1 Jul (CJ); presumably the same bird was seen later that day by an observer viewing from across the river at Langley AFB (EF). Birders who were disappointed by this more or less inaccessible sighting did not have long to wait; another was found at Back Bay 6 Jul (ph. DC). This bird was eventually joined by 2 more, and all 3 were present through 31 Jul (ph. SM, m. obs.). A single bird was also at Craney 15 Jul (ph. BW, DY, AH), where the numbers steadily built until there were 7 by 29 Jul (DY). Rounding things out was a single bird on Wayne Cr., *Norfolk* 27 Jul (FS). Summer **Broad-winged Hawks** are fairly rare and sporadic in the Coastal Plain, particularly further east, making one at Cavalier WMA, *Chesapeake* 5 Jun particularly surprising (ph. RB).

PASSERINES

Though they breed abundantly on bridges along the James R., **Cliff Swallow** colonies thin out dramatically as one moves further east in the Coastal Plain. Thus, a single bird among a congregation of other swallow species at Craney 1 Jul (BW, DY, LS) was notable; this bird may have been a disperser or an exceptionally early migrant. **Baltimore Orioles** are very thinly-distributed breeders along the coast, so a well-described sighting of an ad. m. and a f. or imm. at Chincoteague 6 Jul (DH) merits a mention. An ad. m. **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Union Camp

Holding Pond (restricted access), *Suffolk* 24 Jul (MA, EA) was a surprise and apparently represents Virginia's first summer record, though this species has a strong pattern of summer records in the Northeast as well as in neighboring states including Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, and North Carolina. **Kentucky Warbler** is yet another species that is a rare, low-density breeder in the Coastal Region, though somewhat more regular on the Peninsula. A territorial bird at Newport News Pk., *Newport News* 6 Jun (ph. JS) conformed to this pattern – and at the extreme nw. edge of the Region, it was proximate to a handful of other records from neighboring *York* and *James City* counties. Bookending the passerines, a handful of **Black-throated Green Warblers** were reported this summer. While one with a mixed feeding flock in a private yard in *Norfolk* 11 Jun (RLA) may have been a late migrant, reports of 2 from both the *Chesapeake* and *Suffolk* portions of Dismal, 2 Jun (LG) and 13 Jun (KH, CS) respectively, could be breeding birds from the so-called **Wayne's Warbler** subspecies.

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FALL 2021

On the whole this was a warm, mild fall in the Coastal Region. August brought plenty of holdover summer heat, with temperatures averaging around 85° and peaking at 94° on 13 Aug. Things cooled off noticeably in September, with temps never reaching the 90s and averaging around 78°. October brought some fluctuation – though the average temp hovered around 75°, twice it reached a peak of 85°. Only in November did things really show signs of cooling, with temps averaging about 64° and only peaking at 76°. The end of the month brought the first freezes of the fall as well, with temperatures dipping below freezing on 25 and 30 Nov. Precipitation was quite low for the duration of the season; though August had a cumulative 6.23 in., no other month had over 3 in. In October and November, precipitation was nearly nonexistent, with averages approaching zero. Fall migration was solid, if somewhat unremarkable, though it did bring a few surprises included Olive-sided and Alder Flycatchers. There were two offshore outings: one on 8 Aug and a second on 31 Aug. Both brought expected pelagics including Cory's, Great, and Audubon's Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-Petrels, along with some rarities including White-faced Storm-Petrel and Cory's Shearwater (Scopoli's). The late fall was quite disappointing for rarities, particularly after the banner rarity season in fall 2020. Even more "expected" vagrants such as Ash-throated Flycatcher were hard to come by, and there were essentially no significant rarities along the coast. One exception to this was a Heermann's Gull in *Virginia Beach*, perhaps the same individual that was sighted there in the spring as well as at other locations along the east coast. Other species of note included Wood Stork, frigatebird sp., Brown Booby, and Bullock's Oriole. The remarkable influx of Roseate Spoonbills also continued, with records from across the Region this fall.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, *Virginia Beach*); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, *Virginia Beach/Northampton*);

Chincoteague (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, *Portsmouth*); ESB Nature Preserve (Edward S. Brinkley Nature Preserve, *Northampton*); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, *Northampton*); Kiptopeke (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); Pleasure House Pt. (Pleasure House Point, *Virginia Beach*); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, *Virginia Beach*); Stumpy (Stumpy Lake Natural Area, *Virginia Beach*).

WATERFOWL

Though **Snow Geese** were present in good numbers at Chincoteague by the end of Nov, records elsewhere in the Region this fall were few and far between: the only reports were a lone bird at the ESB Nature Preserve 13 Nov (AD) and again 28 Nov (MP); 3 at Christopher Newport University, *Newport News* 16 Nov (BR); and a flock of 50 off Rudee 27 Nov (PM, ML). **Cackling Goose** nearly went unreported, with only a single sighting of 5 with a large goose flock in farm fields opposite Cape Charles Brewing Company, *Northampton* 12 Nov (MA). **Mute Swan** continued to be scarce in the Region; apart from a handful of undocumented reports from Chincoteague, there was a young bird that put in a brief appearance at Pleasure House Pt. 30 Nov (ph. KS, ph. SM, ph. RR). The only **Eurasian Wigeon** of the fall was at Craney, where an ad. m. was spotted 4 Nov (ph. BW, DY). Craney likewise accounted for the only report of **GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)**, with an ad. m. seen 18 Nov (BW, RLA, BT, LS). Perhaps speaking to the overall paucity of waterfowl this fall, some of the less-common *Aythya* ducks were barely encountered in the Region. **Redhead** was nearly entirely absent, with a handful of reports each coming from Chincoteague; Hoffler Cr. Wildlife Preserve, *Portsmouth*; and a lake off Suffolk Meadows Boulevard, *Suffolk*. **Greater Scaup** were a bit more evident, but still sparse – apart from a few sightings at Chincoteague, the only reports this fall were from *Virginia Beach*, *Norfolk*, and

Portsmouth. Yet both these species made a better showing than **Canvasback**, which went entirely unreported in the Region this fall. Sea ducks were likewise not bountiful; while all three scoters were around in various numbers, less common species including **Harlequin Duck** and **King Eider** were unreported – no doubt, partially a result of the continued inaccessibility of the CBBT. **Common Eider** fared better, but only barely, with just a handful of reports: CBBT North Scenic Overlook, *Northampton* 14 Nov (PW, JM, LA); Chincoteague 17 Nov (MW); 2 off Guy Ave., *Virginia Beach* 23 Nov (AB, JMc); Rudee 23 Nov (ph. TM) and again 30 Nov (PS); and Dam Neck Naval Annex, *Virginia Beach* 30 Nov (ph. PB). **Common Merganser** rarely lives up to its name in this Region, and this fall was no exception – the only reports were a single at Chincoteague 20 Nov (HD) and up to 6 at Munden Pt. Pk., *Virginia Beach* 27–28 Nov (ph. C&RC, CB).

GREBES — SHOREBIRDS

Coastal birders were treated to two occurrences of **Eared Grebes** this fall, though in neither case did the birds linger. The first of these sightings was 2 spotted by boat in the Chincoteague inlet on a VSO field trip, 11 Sep (AR, ph. NB, m. obs.). A single bird also put in an appearance at Sherwood Lakes, *Virginia Beach* 25–26 Oct (ph. DC, m. obs.). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were reported only from long-established spots in lower *Northampton*, southern *Virginia Beach*, and Chincoteague Is., *Accomack*. The latter population, which has gradually dwindled, only turned up a single report the entire fall, in a private yard 30 Aug (JMa). Never a particularly common migrant in the Region, **Black-billed Cuckoo** was only spotted twice this fall, both at ESVNWR – the first on 4 Sep (ph. SM), and then again 24 Sep (TMD, IT). Rare hummingbirds were not to be had in the Region this fall, with only a single report of a **Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird** that briefly buzzed the platform at Kiptopeke 5 Sep (SD) but did not stay long

enough for a species-level identification. Only one **Common Gallinule** was seen this fall, putting in a brief appearance at the ESB Nature Preserve 27–28 Nov (ph. NB, m. obs.). **Black-necked Stilt** went unreported away from reliable spots at Craney and Chincoteague, though there were ample reports from these two locations. **American Avocets**, on the other hand, were seen at a smattering of locations across Hampton Roads and the Eastern Shore. While they were most in evidence at Craney, which recorded a peak count of 720 on 30 Sep (BW, RLA, DY), other reports of single individuals and small flocks came in from Chincoteague; Kiptopeke; Back Bay NWR; Pleasure House Pt.; and Stumpy. The only report of **Long-billed Curlew** this fall was from the *Northampton* barrier islands, seen on a Nature Conservancy boat trip that departed from Wise Pt. 28 Sep (ph. PR, JG, MH). **Hudsonian Godwits** popped up twice this fall, first at Craney 19 Aug (BW, RLA, DY), then later at Back Bay 31 Aug (ph. CH, CJ, m. obs.). A **RUFF** at Craney, also 19 Aug (BW, RLA, DY), was the second report there this year after a spring bird 22 Apr (ph. BW, ph. BT, et. al.). Though **Stilt Sandpiper** is an expected fall migrant across the Region, a lingering bird at Chincoteague 28 Nov (ph. LK) was impressive for the late date. This was not the only late shorebird of the fall; a **Baird's Sandpiper** at Burtons Shore Beach, *Accomack* 18 Nov (ph. MA) was likewise notably late and one of few Nov records for the state. On the other side of the Bay, a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Craney, also 18 Nov (ph. BW, RLA, BT, LS) was likewise significantly late. Though expected in low densities, **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** is uncommon enough to merit a mention, and this fall birders in the Region were fortunate enough to turn up several records. The first report of the fall was at Back Bay, where as many as 7 birds were present 30 Aug–1 Sep (AB, ph. SM, m. obs.). Later in the season, singles were present here 25 Sep (SM, DC, RLA) and 8 Oct (AB, JMc). At Chincoteague, as many as 3 were reported at the Wash Flats 7–14 Sep (ph. G&HS, VK, ABo, AB, JMc). Two were in a field at the

corner of Indiantown Road, *Northampton* 14 Sep (ph. MA), while two were also at Craney 16 Sep (BW, DY). Rounding out the reports, a single bird put in an appearance at Langley Air Force Base, *Hampton* 25 Sep (KS). The only **Long-billed Dowitcher** reports of the fall came from Princess Anne WMA, *Virginia Beach*; Back Bay; and Chincoteague, with a high count of 14 at the latter location 6 Nov (ARe, EE, RV). **Wilson's Phalaropes** were seen at multiple locations in or near Chincoteague during Aug and Sep, including the Chincoteague Rd. causeway, Wildlife Loop, and Wash Flats, the last of which produced a high count of 6 on 27 Aug (AB, ph. JMc). This species was likewise reliably present at Craney from Aug–Oct, with a peak count of 10 on 16 Sep (BW, DY). Away from these locations, the only sightings were single birds at Back Bay 4 Sep (ph. RB, TM) and 1 Oct (ph. RVa). **Red-necked Phalarope** reports dotted the Region this fall. At Craney, where the species is quite regular, multiple individuals were present throughout nearly the entirety of Aug and Sep, with a truly impressive peak count of 21 on 2 Sep (BW, DY, LS). The only offshore report was a single bird at Norfolk Canyon, *Northampton* 8 Aug (DC). Onshore reports away from Craney came in from three locations: the Rte. 175 causeway, *Accomack* 25 Aug (v. r. BH, ph. SM); Back Bay 3 Sep (ph. RB, ph. SM); and Kiptopeke 3–5 Oct (ph. AC & HR, ph. ABo, JMCC).

JAEGERS — FRIGATEBIRDS

Parasitic Jaegers were spotted at only a handful of locations. Multiple reports came in from the reliable seawatching locations at Rudee and Little Is. Pk., *Virginia Beach*. Little Island had reports on 24 Sep (AB), 11–13 Nov (ES, TS, m. obs.), and 23 Nov (AB), while Rudee only had reports 27–28 Nov (PM, ML, ph. SM, m. obs.). An offshore trip turned up the only **Long-tailed Jaegers** this fall, 3 juveniles in *Northampton* waters 31 Aug (ph. BB, ph. MA, TMD, IT, WT, JF). Bucking recent trends, **Razorbills** were in extremely short supply this fall, with only three

reports. The first – and highest count, with 20 birds – was from a Rudee Tours trip in the Atlantic Ocean off *Virginia Beach* 17 Nov (RT). Apart from this, the only other reports were 4 at Chincoteague 24 Nov (JGr) and 4 from Rudee 28 Nov (JFI, PM, ML). There were two reports of **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**, both from shore in the wake of a strong nor'easter that saw good movements of this species further north. The first was at First Landing SP, *Virginia Beach* 3 Nov (DC), while the second came from the beach at Chincoteague 6 Nov (ARe, EE). One rather exciting occurrence was the possible return of the celebrity **HEERMANN'S GULL** that has been spotted up and down the east coast this year, including in *Virginia Beach* this spring. An ad. was first spotted at 33rd St. 4 Nov (ph. D&SO). This bird ranged as far north as 42nd St. before eventually finding its way south to Rudee Inlet, where it remained through 30 Nov (ph. LSi). While it may not be possible to prove this is the



Rob Bielawski's photo of an ad. **Heermann's Gull** from 37th Street Beach, *Virginia Beach* 5 Nov 2021.

same wide-ranging bird that was seen in the spring, circumstantial evidence suggests it could be. The lone **WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL** report was a single bird well offshore in *Northampton* waters 31 Aug (TMD, IT) that put in a frustratingly brief appearance for only some of the birders on a pelagic outing, much to the chagrin of the others onboard! This same boat also yielded a report of **CORY'S SHEARWATER (SCOPOLI'S)**, also in *Northampton* waters (ph. BB, MA, TMD, JF, WT, IT). This appears to be the first documented record of this taxon for Virginia, though it is

regularly encountered on pelagic trips out of North Carolina. While currently treated as a subspecies, some authorities recognize this form as a separate species and it is a candidate for a future split. This same boat also yielded the only reports of the expected **Cory's Shearwater** subspecies, as well as **Audubon's Shearwater**. **Great Shearwaters** were encountered in *Northampton* waters on both the 31 Aug boat and an 8 Aug trip with Rudee Tours, as well as in *Accomack* waters at Washington Canyon 15 Oct (AW). The only **WOOD STORK** of the fall was seen at the 64th St. entrance of First Landing SP, *Virginia Beach* 11 Aug (ph. HP). A high-flying **FRIGATEBIRD SP.** was studied at Kiptopeke 8 Sep (SD, TT), but could not be conclusively identified to species.

BOOBIES — OWLS

In Maryland, **BROWN BOOBY** has become an annual species on the Chesapeake, so perhaps it is not surprising that Virginia has also had more records of late. This fall, they were especially evident in *Virginia Beach*, with records across several months pertaining to multiple individuals. The excitement began with an ad. spotted off Back Bay 1 Aug (ph. DC), followed by two ads. seen near the Chesapeake Light Tower on a Rudee Tours survey 5 Aug (ph. RT). On 26 Nov, an ad. was spotted off Sandpiper Rd. (ph. CS) and apparently hung around the area, with sightings of what was likely the same bird at Back Bay 27 Nov (TT) and Little Is. Pk. 29 Nov (DC). To the north, a juv. hung around Rudee during the same timeframe, with sightings beginning 27 Nov (ph. BB, ph. RB, m. obs.) and continuing through 29 Nov (JM, SC, PS). Away from *Virginia Beach* there was only a single sighting – the only pelagic occurrence this fall – with a subadult spotted by a NOAA boat well out to sea in *Accomack* waters 19 Oct (ph. TJ, ABI, AP). **American White Pelican** records were too numerous for individual enumeration, spanning the Region with sightings in *Suffolk*, *Portsmouth*, *Virginia Beach*, *Northampton*, and *Accomack*. Of particular note

was a large flock that was spotted in various locations across southern *Northampton* during the annual Rarity Roundup on 13 Nov; some observers counted 54 individuals in this flock (CF, JW, m. obs.). **Least Bitterns** were present at their normal haunts in Back Bay, but of particular note was a nocturnal migrant detected in Cape Charles, *Northampton* 10 Oct (a. r. BB). Perhaps one of the most stunning developments was the continued invasion of **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS**; for a species that was still listed as “hypothetical” in the 2007 edition of the Annotated Checklist, these graceful waders have showed no signs of abating in their northward wanderings to Virginia. This fall produced records from no less than six jurisdictions in the Region! Three holdovers from the summer continued at Back Bay on 1 Aug (ph. DC, m. obs.) and remained through 5 Aug (ph. C&RC, m. obs.). After an absence of over two months, a single bird (perhaps a new individual) was detected here 15 Oct (ph. RR, m. obs.). At Chincoteague, a single bird was present in Swan Cove 2 Aug (KK) and remained through 5 Aug (ph. FC). Another was present on the Rte. 175 causeway 26 Aug (BH) through 28 Aug (JS, m. obs.). Rounding out the Chincoteague roster, two were spotted off Fisherman's Pt. 15 Sep (ph. BH). The only other report for *Accomack* was an exceptionally late juv. at Parkers Cr. Landing 3 Nov (ph. LB, CBa). In *Portsmouth*, the Craney survey team turned up 7 birds 13 Aug (BW), though Army Corps staff reported seeing these birds at unspecified dates the preceding week. Varying numbers continued, with the last report of 4 individuals coming 7 Oct (ph. BW, RLA, LS). During this period, multiple spoonbills also showed up sporadically at nearby Hoffler Cr. Wildlife Preserve and elsewhere on the Hoffler Cr. drainage, prompting speculation that these could be wanderers from the Craney flock. The first sighting in the area was a single bird 28 Aug (ph. KJ), with sightings continuing occasionally through 23 Oct (YC). The peak count during this time was 4 at the Preserve 24 Sep (LG). There were two sightings for *Norfolk* this fall – the first of 2 birds from a private residence on Wayne Cr.

31 Aug (SW&TSA), and the second a single from the Riverpoint area (ph. RLA, ph. DC). On the Peninsula, *Newport News* had two reports, both singles, first at the James R. Marina 14 Aug (ph. AO) and later at the James R. Country Club 10–12 Sep (CBo, JS). Rounding out reports for the Region, *Poquoson* turned in the high count with 8 at Plum Tree Is. NWR 29 Aug (ph. EM). The only **Golden Eagle** reports this fall were from scattered locations in *Northampton*, where this species is a regular, if low density, part of the fall avifauna. More notable was the Region's only **NORTHERN GOSHAWK**, a carefully described female at Kiptopeke 17 Nov (SD), where the species had previously gone unrecorded at the hawkwatch for several years. Kiptopeke likewise had a very good year for **Swainson's Hawks**, with three reports: a light morph ad. 29 Sep (SD), a light morph imm. 14 Oct (SD, PSh, LAd), and an indeterminate morph 11 Nov (SD). **Barn Owl** remains extremely scarce in the Region, with only a single report of a bird flushed from a barn on Back Bay Landing Rd. in southern *Virginia Beach* 4 Nov (JMc). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were in good evidence at Kiptopeke, with multiple reports scattered across Nov.

FLYCATCHERS — MARTINS

Somewhat unexpectedly, **ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** proved quite difficult to find on the coast this fall, with only a single report of a bird that put in a brief appearance at Little Is. Pk., *Virginia Beach* 12 Nov (ph. ES, TS, DS) and was not relocated despite thorough searching. **Western Kingbird** was likewise represented by only a single report, this one a bird perching on telephone wires along Wardtown Rd., *Northampton* 10–11 Oct (RK, ph. BB). By contrast, **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was well-represented this fall; normally an extremely scarce migrant anywhere on the coast, this fall birders were treated to 3 of them! One was spotted at Sandy Bottom Nature Pk., *Hampton* 10 Sep (ph. MN, ph. EM, JS). The same day, another

was photographed at the Woodland Trail on Chincoteague (ph. PM) and was still present for a VSO trip on 12 Sep (ph. DC, m. obs.). Rounding out the reports was one at Kiptopeke 15 Sep (ph. SM, ph. MA). Another fairly scarce migrant, **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was only reported from two locations a day apart: Beach Garden Pk., *Virginia Beach* 11 Sep (ph. TM) and Kiptopeke 12 Sep (ph. ABo). Traill's-type flycatchers are not always vocal as migrants, making species-level identification difficult; thus, a calling **ALDER FLYCATCHER** at Kiptopeke 26 Sep (ph. and a. r. BB) was a welcome surprise. Though **COMMON RAVENS** continue to expand eastward in Virginia, they are still a very rare sight in the Coastal Region. One was detected at Newport News Pk., *Newport News* 3 Oct (SS, MN) and again 7 Oct (JS). This location is not far from several other relatively recent sightings, suggesting that perhaps a bird (or more) has taken up residence in the area. Quite possibly the most exceptional sighting of the fall was an extremely late **Progne sp.** that put in several frustratingly brief appearances over the hawk platform at Kiptopeke 23–27 Nov (ph. SD). Photographs show a dark-bellied bird, but the images obtained did not permit species-level identification and no vocalizations were heard. While it is possible this bird was an exceptionally late Purple, the date is so far outside the normal window that rarer species such as Southern or Cuban must be considered.



Max Nootbaar's picture of a **Bullock's Oriole** from South Shore Estates in *Virginia Beach*, 11 Nov 2021.

SPARROWS — DICKCISSELS

This fall brought several reports of **Lark Sparrows**, all from *Virginia Beach* or *Accomack*. At Back Bay, the species was sporadically reported through much of the fall, with sightings there 28 Aug (ph. RB, ph. JMc); 4 Sep (TMa, ph. TM); and 3–4 Oct (ph. SM, m. obs.). Elsewhere in *Virginia Beach*, this species was at the St. Simons by the Sea Chapel in Sandbridge 1–3 Sep (BO, ph. SM, m. obs.) and the Larkspur neighborhood 7 Sep (SM, AM). Chincoteague accounted for two reports: 27 Aug (AB) and 15 Sep (ph. KC). **Clay-colored Sparrows** were more numerous, with reports at eight locations scattered across *Virginia Beach* and lower *Northampton*. **White-crowned Sparrows** were uncommon but widely reported, however the only report of the Gambel's subspecies came from what has lately been a somewhat reliable location – the Harris Teeter Retention Pond in southern *Virginia Beach*; reports this fall were few, only coming 31 Oct (ph. TM) and 21 Nov (ph. RB). An ad. m. **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** visited a feeder in *Virginia Beach* that hosted one, possibly the same individual, last year; this bird was present nearly daily from 15 Oct–19 Nov (JM, ph. DC). A second Bullock's, this one an imm. m., kept close company with a pair of **Baltimore Orioles** at a feeder in Great Bridge, *Chesapeake*. All three birds first showed up in “early November,” but the Bullock's was not identified and photographed until 28 Nov (ph. DSh); it remained into the winter. Echoing a now-familiar theme, **Rusty Blackbirds** were tragically scarce this fall, with only about ten reports from five locations for the entire Region. Most were small groups, but a count of 220 at the Kiptopeke hawk platform 9 Nov (SD) was quite high by contemporary standards. One pleasant surprise for local birders was a **Golden-winged Warbler** at Mt. Trashmore Pk., *Virginia Beach* 12 Sep (ph. BB, m. obs.), an apparent county first for this well-birded jurisdiction. Given the rarity of this species as a migrant along the coast, it was even more surprising to have a second sighting at Sandy Bottom Nature Pk., *Hampton* 13 Sep

(MN). In the same camp for low-density migrant warblers, a carefully described imm. f. **Mourning Warbler** at Kiptopeke 12 Sep (MC, LSc, PS) was the only one for the Region this fall. Though typically somewhat more common, if still low density, **Canada Warbler** was also represented by just a single report this fall, from Sandy Bottom Nature Pk., *Hampton* 8 Sep (MN). **Western Tanagers** were fairly scarce this fall, with only two reports in the Region. The first was an ad. m. at ESVNWR 10 Sep (TC), followed by an apparent f. at Mutton Hunk Fen NAP, *Accomack* 14 Nov (ph. AR). Capping things off, the only reports of **Painted Bunting** this fall were up to 2 in the Atlantic Pk. neighborhood of *Virginia Beach* 26 Nov (ph. JMc, AB) and 29 Nov (ph. CH).

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