



VIRGINIA BIRDS

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



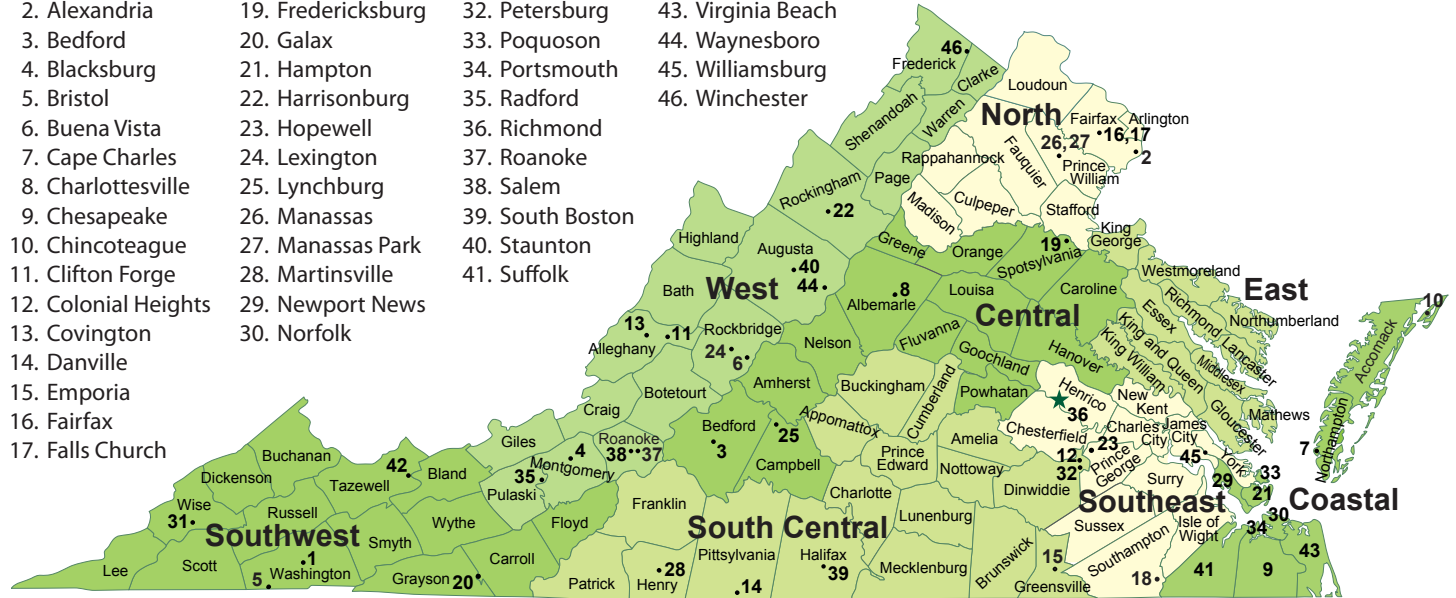
Volume 14 • Number 4

Spring Records • March–May 2018

Virginia Birds Regions

Cities/towns numbered on map

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Abingdon | 18. Franklin | 31. Norton | 42. Tazewell |
| 2. Alexandria | 19. Fredericksburg | 32. Petersburg | 43. Virginia Beach |
| 3. Bedford | 20. Galax | 33. Poquoson | 44. Waynesboro |
| 4. Blacksburg | 21. Hampton | 34. Portsmouth | 45. Williamsburg |
| 5. Bristol | 22. Harrisonburg | 35. Radford | 46. Winchester |
| 6. Buena Vista | 23. Hopewell | 36. Richmond | |
| 7. Cape Charles | 24. Lexington | 37. Roanoke | |
| 8. Charlottesville | 25. Lynchburg | 38. Salem | |
| 9. Chesapeake | 26. Manassas | 39. South Boston | |
| 10. Chincoteague | 27. Manassas Park | 40. Staunton | |
| 11. Clifton Forge | 28. Martinsville | 41. Suffolk | |
| 12. Colonial Heights | 29. Newport News | | |
| 13. Covington | 30. Norfolk | | |
| 14. Danville | | | |
| 15. Emporia | | | |
| 16. Fairfax | | | |
| 17. Falls Church | | | |



Virginia Birds

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Send reports and photographs to the Regional Editors. Photographs should be the highest electronic quality possible. Send with release form, which can be found on the VSO web site:
<http://www.virginiabirds.org/publications/photography-release-forms/>
 Articles for consideration can be sent to billwilliams154@gmail.com

Season

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

Reports due to Regional Editors

Terms and Abbreviations

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

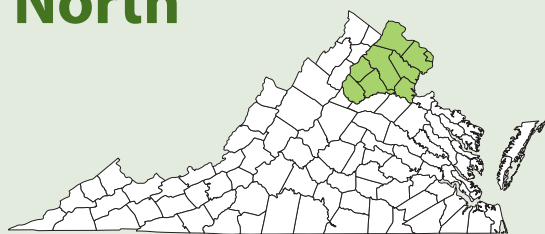
Abbreviations

ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
et al.	and others
f.	female
<i>fide</i>	vouched by
FOS	First of Season
Ft.	Fort
Gold Book	<i>Virginia's Birdlife, An Annotated Checklist</i> . Virginia Avifauna No. 7, Fourth Edition, 2007.
Hwy.	Highway
Is.	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
junc.	junction
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile(s)
L.	Lake
Ln.	Lane
MAPS	Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship
m.	male
m. obs.	many/multiple observers
Mt.	Mountain, Mount
NAP	Natural Area Preserve
NP	National Park
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	photographed by (initials)
Pk.	Park
Pt.	Point
R.	River
Rd.	Road
Res.	Reservoir
RP	Regional Park
Rte.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
VARCOM	Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDGIF	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
v. r.	voice recording
VSO	Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
*	specimen collected

On the cover: Jim Lessel photographed this Brown Booby on the James R. in *Henrico* 2 Apr.

Regional Reports

North



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

It was an unusually cool spring with average moisture, until May, when temperatures were approximately 4° F above average and rainfall was nearly twice the monthly average at both Dulles Int'l and Reagan Nat. Airports. The highlights this season were a Little Gull seen flying over the Lowes Island ponds, a Least Tern at a pond in *Loudoun*, and a flock of Anhingas seen at the Int'l Conservation House. The Northern Shrike continued at Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax*.

Abbreviations: Algonkian RP (Algonkian RP, *Loudoun*); Belvoir Pond (Belvoir Pond, *Fauquier*); Bles Pk. (Bles Pk., *Loudoun*); C.M. Crockett Pk. (C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier*); Dyke Marsh (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, *Fairfax*); Huntley Meadows (Huntley Meadows Pk., *Fairfax*); Int'l Conservation House (International Conservation House, *Fauquier*); Leesylvania (Leesylvania SP, *Prince William*); Lowes Island (Lowes Island, *Loudoun*); Mason Neck SP (Mason Neck SP, *Fairfax*); Occoquan Bay (Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William*); Phelps WMA (Phelps WMA, *Fauquier*); Woodward Turf Farm (Woodward Turf Farm, *Culpeper*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

A **Cackling Goose**, a fairly rare winter visitor whose late date is 5 Mar, appeared at Algonkian RP 3 Mar (BHe). A pair of **Gadwalls** was observed flying over Huntley Meadows 28 May (HG), well past the inland 20 Apr late date; the species is a rare summer visitor in the Region. Two **Canvasbacks** made a late appearance at Mason Neck SP 24 May (PSi), with 5 seen on 28 May (KG), well past the Coastal Plain 10 Apr late date. One to 2 **Greater Scaup**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were seen at L. Brittle, *Fauquier* 6 Mar–4 Apr (GS), while a single was reported at Victory Ls., *Prince*

William 9 May (ph. TH), past the species' Piedmont extreme late date of 6 May. A late **Lesser Scaup** was observed at Mason Neck SP 28 May (KG); the Coastal Plain late date is 20 Apr. There were several reports of **White-winged Scoters**, a rare transient inland, including singles at Pohick Bay RP, *Fairfax* 11–17 Mar (MR); Occoquan Bay 13 Apr (MR); and Belmont Bay Marina, *Prince William* and adjacent Mason Neck SP 13 Apr, 5 May, and 28 May (KG, RR); this species' Coastal Plain late date is 15 Apr. Reports of **Long-tailed Ducks**, a rare visitor inland, included a f. at Daingerfield Is., Alexandria 7 Apr (EW) and a m. at Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax* 21 Apr (ph. AN, ph. MM). A **Bufflehead** was observed well past the species' extreme Piedmont late date of 27 Apr at the Int'l Conservation House, *Fauquier* 6 May (PSa), lingering through 22 May. Single **Common Mergansers** were seen outside of the species' mid-May extreme late date on the Thornton R., *Rappahannock* 20 May (BH_a), near the Mountain/Valley area where the species is still a rare transient and summer visitor, and on a lake at G.R. Thompson WMA, *Fauquier* 21 May (ph. ADra), in the w. Piedmont where its summer occurrence is still not as frequent as it has become in the e. A **Red-breasted Merganser** at Leesylvania 19 May (PSi) was much later than this species' Coastal Plain late date of 30 Apr. A late **Horned Grebe** in full breeding plumage was found on a small pond near Rt. 7, *Loudoun* 22 & 30 May (GG); this uncommon transient's Piedmont late date is 20 Apr. Single **Red-necked Grebes**, a rare transient inland, were observed at Dyke Marsh 1 Mar (CC), continuing from late February; Burke L. Pk., *Fairfax* 23–24 Mar (NN); and Belvoir Pond 19 Apr (GS). Reports of **Black-billed Cuckoos**, a rare transient in the Coastal Plain, included singles at Monticello Pk., Alexandria 3–4 May (WY); Brooke Rd. rail station, *Stafford* 8 May (SK); and Huntley Meadows 12–15 May (QE, HM). A **Chuck-will's-**

widow, rare in the Piedmont n. of the James R., sang for 10 min. at Walker Nature Center, *Fairfax* 20 May (v.r. SS). An impressive 6 **King Rails** were encountered at Occoquan Bay 13 May (RV). A **Sora**, a fairly rare transient and rare summer resident in the Piedmont, was observed at Belvoir Pond 31 May (GS); the late date is 20 May. A **Common Gallinule**, a rare transient and summer resident in the Piedmont, was seen at Bles Pk. 24–26 May (PN); one was also seen there 19 Apr (DN), which may or may not have been the same one but was not found during the intervening period despite several attempts. The pair of **Sandhill Cranes** that spent most of the winter at Algonkian RP was seen on several occasions in March (m. obs.), with the last report of a single on 18 Mar; last year these birds apparently didn't remain past late February. Reports of **Black-bellied Plovers**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, included 2 in Lowes Island 10 May (DCz) and 2 at Woodward Turf Farm 19 May (CH). Five **Whimbrels**, rare w. of the Chesapeake Bay, were observed at Leesylvania 19 May (EW); 13 were reported on the same date at Woodward Turf Farm (TD, ph. JF, CH); the Gold Book shows only 3 Piedmont records. A **Dunlin**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was observed at Woodward Turf Farm 19 May (TD, JF), a day past the species' Piedmont extreme late date.

GULLS AND TERNS–PELICANS

There were several sightings of **Bonaparte's Gulls** considerably past the Regional late date of 30 Apr: one at Little Marsh Rd. and Impoundments, *Fairfax* 15 May (KG); 3 at Algonkian RP 15 May (ph. BHe); and one at C.M. Crockett Pk. 16 May (KK). A **Laughing Gull**, rare in the Piedmont in spring, was observed at the Lowes Island ponds 16 Apr (DCz). Very rare in the Piedmont, with a single Piedmont record in the Gold Book, was a **LITTLE GULL** seen at the Lowes Island ponds 19 Apr (DCz, MT). (One was seen nearby 2 weeks earlier, over Maryland waters of the Potomac R.) Also rare in the Piedmont was a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Trump Nat. Golf Course, *Loudoun* 1 Apr (DCz). A **LEAST TERN**, a sighting confirmed in eBird of a species with no prior spring records in the Piedmont and only 3 summer records in the Gold Book, was well seen at a pond popular with gulls and terns on Middlesex Dr., *Loudoun* 17 May (SJ). The earliest of the 3 summer records was 10 Jun (1978), also in *Loudoun*. There were numerous reports of **Caspian Terns**, a usually rare transient in the Piedmont, beginning 30 Mar and throughout April at scattered locations in s. and e. *Loudoun* (as many as 8) and e. *Fauquier*, including an impressive 16 near L. Ashby, *Fauquier*

20 Apr (ph. TD). Two **Forster's Terns** observed at Belmont Bay Marina, *Prince William* 11 Mar (KG, MR) and a single at Meadowood Recreation Area, *Fairfax* 14 Mar (LC) were considerably earlier than the Regional 5 Apr extreme early date. Four others made a rare Piedmont appearance (usually appearing at larger lakes) at C.M. Crockett Pk. 9 Apr (TD), with a single also at Belvoir Pond 16 Apr (GS). Rounding out the spate of rare spring gull and tern sightings were several reports of **Royal Terns**, rare inland especially in spring, including one at Crow's Nest NAP, *Stafford* 5 Apr (ML, JG); 5 at Dyke Marsh 18 Apr (CB); and singles at several locations in *Prince William* on 21 Apr: Veterans Memorial Pk. (BL, GB); Possum Pt. Rd. (KG); and Cherry Hill Rd. (KG). **ANHINGAS**, a rarity in the state, with few records n. of the James R., made a surprise incursion into the Region. First was 4 seen flying sw. over Grist Mill Pk., *Fairfax* 4 May (BS); an hour later 12 were observed 35–40 mi. w. on the pond at Int'l Conservation House (GW), with 17 well photographed there the following morning (GW), and at least one lingering through 13 May (GW). On 20 May, 18 were observed flying high over L. Accotink Pk., *Fairfax* (ph. MIM), and on 21 May, 2 flew over Huntley Meadows (HG, GM). **American White Pelicans**, a rare visitor this far inland, were photographed at two locations, including 13 flying over Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 3 Apr (ph. DE, *fde*) and 32 feeding offshore of Crow's Nest NAP, *Stafford* 6 Apr (ML, ph. GA).

HERONS–CATBIRD

Reports of **American Bitterns**, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, included singles at Bles Pk. 5 Apr–7 May (BHe, ph. MD, m. obs.); vocalizing on Potts Ln., *Loudoun* 28 Apr (JC, MG); and Phelps WMA 20 May (TD). Rare away from the coast, **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** made several appearances: singles at L. Accotink, *Fairfax*, near the site of a known past nest 15 Apr (SE) and at Cub Run Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 18 Apr (PSi); 4 at Leopold's Preserve, *Prince William* 22 Apr (ph. TH); and one at Julie J. Metz Wetlands Bank, *Prince William* 9 May (ph. BD). A **Glossy Ibis**, a rare spring transient in the Piedmont, was seen at the Lowes Island ponds 5 May (ph. DCz), and 2 were seen at Occoquan Bay, where fairly rare, 13 May (MR). **Mississippi Kites** were reported returning to many of the species' habitual Regional haunts in May, continuing the trend of recent years. A **Merlin**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, flew over a private residence in Taylorstown, *Loudoun* 28 Apr (GH). **Peregrine Falcons** had several sightings in the Piedmont, where rare: one was photographed

eating an apparent pigeon in a farm field near Middleburg, *Loudoun* 10 Mar (ph. LV); one was seen over the Lowes Island ponds 11 May (ph. DCz); 2 were kettling together over Towerview Rd., *Fairfax* 11 May (SJ); and 2—one a juv.—were hunting over a field at Harrison Rd., *Fauquier* 19 May (ARo). Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Region, especially in spring, were observed at Great Falls NP, *Fairfax* 20 May (KL, ph. PM) and Phelps WMA 20 May (TD). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, a rare transient in the Region, was reported at Huntley Meadows 8 May (RR). Reports of **Alder Flycatchers**, a rare spring transient in the Region, included one heard at Northside Pk., *Fairfax* 29 Apr (CF); one at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 12 May (MG, v.r. BHe); one at Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk., *Prince William* 14 May (MR); one at Huntley Meadows 14 May (Voice); 2 at Algonkian RP 15 May (AG, BHe) and again 20 May (v.r. ARa); and one at Wolftrap Stream Valley Pk., *Fairfax* 27 May (v.r. PK). A **Willow Flycatcher's** distinctive call was heard by multiple birders at Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 14 Apr (JW); this species is a fairly rare spring transient in the n. Coastal Plain. Reports of **Least Flycatchers**, a rare transient in the Region, included singles at Franklin Pk., *Loudoun* 22 Apr (anon.) and Algonkian RP 23 Apr (PL). There was a fairly credible report of a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** along Hwy. 29, s. *Madison* 5 May (anon.); this is a very rare late spring visitor whose extreme early date in the Piedmont is 19 May. The **NORTHERN SHRIKE** first observed 1 Nov 2017 continued at Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax* through at least 28 Apr (m. obs.). Single **Philadelphia Vireos**, a rare spring transient in the Region, were reported at Monticello Pk., *Alexandria* 15 May (SG) and Leesylvania 19 May (EW). **Common Ravens**, continuing the species' eastward move, have been documented successfully nesting every year including this one (except for 2014, unknown) under a bridge in a restricted area of n. Fort Belvoir, *Fairfax* since May 2012 (GF). A **Cliff Swallow**, a fairly rare transient in the Coastal Plain, was seen with a few **Bank Swallows** at Leesylvania 21 Apr (MR). A **Black-capped Chickadee** was reported based on field marks and song at Great Falls Forest, *Loudoun* 15 & 17 Mar and possibly 23 Apr (PL). The **Brown-headed Nuthatch** present at Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper* throughout the winter was seen again 1 Mar (KK) and may have remained throughout the spring, seen again 25 May (KK). Early **House Wrens** were reported at Sully Woodlands, *Fairfax* 23 Mar (QE) and Algonkian RP 25 Mar (RH) (the Piedmont early date is 10 Apr). A **Sedge Wren**, a rare transient in the Region,

was reported at Huntley Meadows 30 Apr (RR). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** observed at L. Royal, *Fairfax* 18 Mar (ADri) was nearly 2 weeks prior to the 30 Mar early date for the Piedmont. Reports of **Gray Catbirds** well before the species' 25 Apr Piedmont early date included singles at an Ashby Ponds Court Yard residence, *Loudoun* 18 Mar (DH); a Mt. Gilead Rd. residence, *Loudoun* 29 Apr (LMc); and a Taylors town residence, *Loudoun* 30 Mar (JST).

GOLDFINCHES-DICKCISSEL

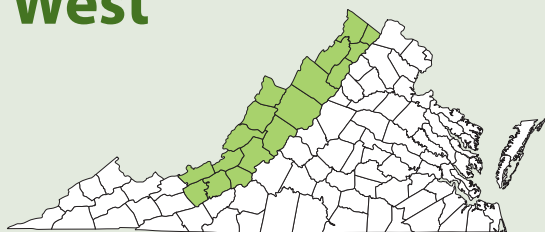
A **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH**, possibly an escapee because no plumage wear was evident, was at Cockpit Pt. Rd., *Prince William* 29 Apr (ph. BHo). Five **Chipping Sparrows** observed along Shenandoah Path, *Fauquier* 1 Mar (CL, DL) were 2 weeks prior to the species' 15 Mar Piedmont early date. A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was reported at Laurel Hill Equestrian Ctr., *Fairfax* 4 Mar (Voice). A **LECONTE'S SPARROW**, a very rare visitor to the Region, was observed at Trump Nat. Golf Course, *Loudoun* 25 Mar (BHe), where one was also seen twice the previous winter, most recently on 9 Feb. A relatively rare visitor in the Region, a **Lincoln's Sparrow** was observed at Huntley Meadows 18 Mar (BJ). A **Prothonotary Warbler**, rare in the w. part of the Region, was observed at Phelps WMA 11 May (TD). There were too many **Tennessee Warbler** sightings to list, belying its status as a fairly rare spring transient in the Region. An **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was spotted by a group at Great Falls NP, *Fairfax* 22 Apr (KL). **Mourning Warblers**, a rare transient through the Region, were observed at multiple locations, including 2 at the banding station at Occoquan Bay 12 May (WT) and singles at Clark's Crossing Pk., *Fairfax* 13 May (LMe); Bles Pk. 13 & 14 May (ph. EM); Algonkian RP 14 & 15 May (v.r. ARa, ph. AG, BHe); and Upper Occoquan Service Authority, *Fairfax* 20 May (DM). A rare transient in the Coastal Plain, a **Cerulean Warbler** made an appearance at Huntley Meadows 27 Apr (EE). Reports of **Yellow-throated Warblers**, a rare transient in the n. Piedmont, included 3 at C.M. Crockett Pk. 11 Apr (ph. DCa) and 5 there 13 Apr (ph. GS) and singles at Phelps WMA 13 Apr (TD) and as late as 28 May (KK). While not considered rare in the Piedmont, several uncommon warblers made pushes through the area in high counts, notably **Cape May Warblers**, with 14 to as many as 20 seen on three 2- to 3-hour walks during the 5–7 May period in *Prince William*, *Loudoun*, and *Fauquier*, and 10–11 **Bay-breasted Warblers** counted on two walks during the

12–15 May period in Alexandria and *Fairfax*. **Dickcissels**, still a fairly rare but increasing transient and breeder in the Piedmont, returned again this season to Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk., *Prince William*, with 6 observed 13 May (TH) and other sightings through at least 28 May. Two others were reported along Brookfield Rd., *Prince William* 28 May (CL, DL) and a single at the Lorton landfill, *Fairfax* 28 May (KG).

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West



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

Abbreviations: Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, *Clarke*); Nazarene Church (Nazarene Church Rd. Wetlands, *Rockingham*); RSTP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Snow Goose sightings included one at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 4–18 Mar (m. obs.), one at Luray, *Page* 21 (JF) & 25 Mar (DG), and 3 in Waynesboro 14 Apr (DP). Three **Ross's Geese** were found in *Rockbridge* 2–22 Mar (KK) and one in *Rockingham* 12 Apr (DH). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Greenfield L., *Botetourt* 9–10 Mar (m. obs.), then 26 (BE) & 30 Mar (LD, PD). One was also found at Nazarene Church 18 Apr (MG). **Tundra Swan** sightings included 3 at White Post, *Clarke* 6 Mar (SA), 2 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 17 Mar (AB, DB) and 32 near Mint Springs, *Augusta* (AL, PW), and 112 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 17 Mar (GR). The last report of the season was one in Roanoke 11 Apr (PL). Two **Trumpeter Swans**

were seen on the Shenandoah R., *Clarke* 22 Apr (JF). One with wing tag P61, present during the winter, continued in *Augusta* 1–29 Mar (AL, GM). One hundred sixty-four **Lesser Scaup** were tallied in *Augusta* 2 Apr (EC, AL, PW), for a new spring peak count in that county. Single **White-winged Scoters** were photographed at L. Merriweather, *Rockbridge* 16 Mar (BE, JP), at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 3 Apr (DL), and L. Holiday, *Frederick* 6 Apr (JF, GR), the latter seen again 9 Apr (GR). A new peak count for *Augusta* of 13 was set 2 Apr (EC, AL, PW). **Long-tailed Duck** sightings included one at Silver L., *Rockingham* 1–19 Mar (m. obs.); 5 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 20 Mar (LN); 2 in *Augusta* 2 Apr (SS et al.); 12 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 2 Apr (DC, BW); 15 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 2 Apr (GR); and 6 at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 19 Apr (JF). Two hundred thirty-five **Ruddy Ducks** were in *Augusta* 19 Apr (AL). **Northern Bobwhite** detections are infrequent these days. Among the few reports that reflect this species' scarcity were one at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 10 Apr (KF) and

5–6 May (m. obs.); 3 near Broadway, *Rockingham* 15 May (DH); one in Rockbridge 20 May (DM); one at Blandy 23–28 May (m. obs.) with 2 there 30–31 May (DC); one in Maurertown, *Shenandoah* 30 May (DH); and one in *Bath* 31 May (JSp et al.). **Horned Grebe** observations included 11 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 2–3 Apr (MM); 16 at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 2 Apr (BE); 19 in Staunton 2 Apr (PW); 20 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 2 Apr (DC); 40 in *Clarke* 2 Apr (DC); 72 at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 2 Apr (EC); 25 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 3 Apr (KK); 15 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 3 Apr (GR); and 19 at L. Arrowhead, *Page* 19 Apr (JF). A **Red-necked Grebe** was seen in *Clarke* 4 May (JL) and an **EARED GREBE** was found at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 9 Mar (BE, MJ). A **Virginia Rail** was at Abrams Cr. Wetland Preserve, *Frederick* 26 Apr (JF). Elsewhere, one was at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 28–29 Apr (KD, BE, BK), one was in Blacksburg 19 May (RM), and one to 5 were at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 21 Apr–22 May (m. obs.). **Sora** records included one to 5 at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 21 Apr–24 May (m. obs.), one at Bent Mt., *Roanoke* 23 Apr (JD, KD), one in Blacksburg 22, 29 Apr and 5 May (RM), and one at the Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 28–29 Apr (KD, BE, BK). A **Common Gallinule** was observed in Staunton 27 Apr (AL, PW). Two **AMERICAN AVOCETS** were seen at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 5 May (GR, NR). A **Black-bellied Plover** was found near Dublin, *Pulaski* 5 May (AK, CK). **Semipalmated Plover** reports included 4 in *Rockingham* 13 May (BB, VL), 2 at RSTP 15 May (PL), 4 in *Frederick* 21 May (SM), and 5 in *Rockingham* 23 May (MG). An **Upland Sandpiper** found near Swoope 31 Mar (BWr) was *Augusta*'s 5th spring record and set a new early date for the county. A flock of 57 **WHIMBRELS** was photographed at the Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch, *Augusta/Nelson* 20 May (JDy et al.). **Dunlin** reports included 3 at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 1 May (VL, GM); one in Bridgewater, *Rockingham* (HS) and one at Oakwood Dr., *Rockingham* 5 May (DL, WL, ph. GMo); one at Cook's Cr. Rd. Pond, *Rockingham* 11 May (CT); and one in *Frederick* 14–16 May (DG). There were 5 **Least Sandpipers** at Smithleigh L., *Augusta* 9 May (m. obs.), 10 in *Rockingham* 12 May (DL), 9 at Nazarene Church 13 May, 4 at RSTP 15 May (PL), and 4 in *Frederick* 21 May (SM). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** was in *Rockingham* 9–13 May (ph. m. obs.); another was at Nazarene Church 15 May (GMo), and one was near New Market, *Rockingham* 23 May (MG). **Pectoral Sandpipers** were noted as follows: one in *Shenandoah* 17 Mar (DH); one in *Rockingham* 2 Apr (MG); 2 in *Rockingham* 14 Apr (m.

obs.); one at Smithleigh L., *Augusta* 3 May (JR et al.); 3 in *Rockingham* 10 May (WL); and one at Nazarene Church 13 May (DL). The single-day **Semipalmated Sandpiper** high count total was 22 in *Rockingham* 23 May with 5 near New Market and 17 near Dayton (MG). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen at Swoope, *Augusta* 1 May (VL, GM), and one was in *Rockingham* 12 May (MG, DH). There were many reports of **Spotted Sandpipers** this season; higher tallies included 7 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 1 May (CKy), 6 at Smithleigh L., *Augusta* 9 May (m. obs.), 9 at RSTP 11 May (KD), and 9 at Abrams Cr. Wetland Preserve, *Frederick* 17 May (DC). The following **Solitary Sandpiper** counts were noteworthy: 16 near Dublin, *Pulaski* 21 Apr (AK, CK); 22 at Blandy 30 Apr (DC); 13 at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 3 May (GR); and 19 at RSTP 5 May (KD). Peak **Lesser Yellowleg** totals included 8 at RSTP 18 Apr (KD); 11 in *Rockingham* 27 Apr (DH); 6 at Blandy 30 Apr (DC); and more than 35 among several locations in *Augusta* 1 May (VL, GM, EO). Two **WILLETS** were found at Gala Wetlands, *Botetourt* 28 Apr (BE, BK) and 2 in *Montgomery* 29 Apr (DW). High counts of **Greater Yellowlegs** included 14 in *Pulaski* 8 Apr (GR), 9 in *Rockingham* 27 Apr (DH), 17 at Swoope, *Augusta* 1 May (VL, GM), and 7 at L. Arnold, *Clarke* 29 Apr (AN). A **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** was photographed on the New R., *Montgomery* 19 May (LR, JS).

GULLS–DICKCISSEL

There were 92 **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* (PW) and 36 on L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 2 Apr (MG, DL). Additional counts had 66 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 3 Apr (MM), 38 in Radford 8 Apr (CK), 50 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 11–12 Apr (GR), 35 in *Giles* 15 Apr (GRh), 41 in *Montgomery* 15 Apr (PL), and 62 at L. Frederick, *Frederick* 16 Apr (DC). A **Laughing Gull** was at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 18 May (ph. PL). **Caspian Terns** were reported as follows: one at Silver L., *Rockingham* (DL) and one at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 2 Apr (MG) then 2 there 9 (GMo) & 19 Apr (MG); 4 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 7 Apr (BE, MJ); 2 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 3 Apr (TS); 3 at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 18 (MM) & 20 Apr (PL); 2 at Silver L., *Rockingham* 26 Apr (LY); and 2 at Swoope, *Augusta* 27 Apr (AL). Two **Common Terns** were at L. Moomaw, *Bath* 21 Apr with one there 3 May (PR). Two **Forster's Terns** were observed at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 31 Mar (Mab, JSm), 3 at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 11 Apr (DH), 2 at Willow L., *Rockbridge* 16 Apr (JP), and 5 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 10 May (GR). A **Red-throated Loon** was seen

and photographed at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 6–7 Apr (JF, GR, NR). Fifteen **Common Loons** were seen at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 1 Apr (PL, GRh, KZ), 6 at Carvins Cove, *Botetourt* 2 Apr (BE), 16 at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 3 Apr (GR), and 5 at Willow L. *Rockbridge* 9 Apr (LN, JP). Two **ANHINGAS** were found in Crimora, *Augusta* 14 May (AW), and one was photographed at Sunset View L., *Augusta* 25–26 May (EC, AL, VL). An **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** was observed at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 11 Apr (GR). Single **American Bitterns** were seen at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 21 Apr (AL, PW), Silver L., *Rockingham* 2 May (DH), and at Glen Alton, *Giles* 4 May (MS). Four to 5 **Least Bitterns** were heard and seen at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 22 May (AL) with 4 there 23 May (GM). A **SNOWY EGRET** was seen near Dublin, *Pulaski* 30 May (MB, SB) and a **CATTLE EGRET** was seen near Fishersville, *Augusta* 24 Apr (GM). A **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** was photographed in Hollins, *Roanoke* 31 Mar (BJ, KJ), and one was seen in *Augusta* 5 May (EL, NL). A **Mississippi Kite** was observed at Weyers Cave, *Augusta* 13 May (BB, VL, BM), and one was at Hillandale Pk., Harrisonburg 19 May (DH). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** pair was near a partially constructed nest in *Rockingham* 28 Apr; one was beside that nest 12 May (ph. MG). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** nest with 3 young was found in *Montgomery* 11 May (ph. RM). A **Brown Creeper** was seen feeding young in Poverty Hollow, *Montgomery* 13 May (RM). Seven **Red Crossbills** were seen in Poverty Hollow, *Montgomery* 15 Apr (RM), 4 at Paddy Knob, *Highland* 13 May (BB, VL), and 4 in *Highland* 27 May (JR, JSp). There were also several reports from the Briery Branch Gap area, *Rockingham*, including six 3 Mar (WL), fourteen 10 May (JP), and seven 26 May (NA, SS). There were many reports of **Pine Siskins** with numbers less than 10, but reports of twenty-six 1 Apr and thirty 9 Apr at L. Holiday, *Frederick* (GR) were the exception. An **American Tree Sparrow** was seen in *Augusta* 6 Mar (EC), and one was at Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 13 (BW) & 14 Apr (ph. JF). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was in Blacksburg 22–24 Apr (ph. m. obs.) and 5 May (RM). A **Lark Sparrow**, continuing from November, was photographed near Riner, *Montgomery* 1 Apr (PL, GRh, KZ). **Vesper Sparrow** sightings included one in *Augusta* 22 Mar (GM); one in *Rockingham* 30–31 Mar and 6 Apr (MG); 3 at Blandy 30 Mar (DC) and 6 Apr (DB); 2 to 5 in *Montgomery* 31 Mar–14 Apr (m. obs.); one in *Rockbridge* 9 Apr (LN); 2 at Third Winchester Battlefield, *Frederick* 13 Apr (BW); one in *Pulaski* 13 Apr (SH); and, one in Winchester 14 Apr (JF). Nineteen **Rusty**

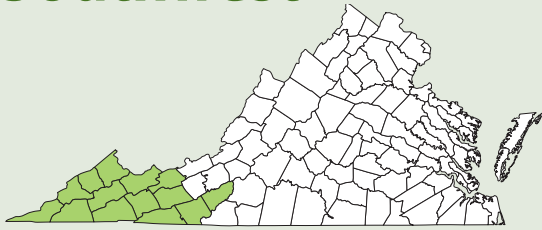
Blackbirds were in Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 7 Apr (BT) and 16 in Radford 7 Apr (CK). Reports of **Golden-winged Warbler** were one near Mountain L., *Giles* 5, 20 & 26 May (m. obs.); one at Monterey, *Highland* 6 May (ME); 2 in Blue Grass Valley, *Highland* 9 & 26 May (m. obs.); and 4 in *Highland* 13 May (BB, VL), then 5 there 29 May (PH, DLb). Sightings of **Blue-winged Warblers** included one in *Clarke* 1 May (SBr); singles at Humpback Rock Visitor Center, *Augusta* (EL, NL); Paul SF, *Rockingham*, (WL, GMo) and near Zepp, *Shenandoah* 3 May (ET); one at Hillandale Pk., Harrisonburg 3 & 8 May (m. obs.); one near Toms Brook, *Shenandoah* (ET); and one in Staunton 5 May (AL); 2 at Natural Bridge SP, *Rockbridge* 10 (KD, BWt), 14 (JP) & 20 May (DM); and, one at Garden Mt., *Botetourt* 20 May (ABo). **Prothonotary Warbler** observations were one in *Shenandoah* 15 Apr (DD); one at L. Shenandoah, *Rockingham* 22 (DY, JY, LY) & 26 Apr (JSh); one at Wildwood Pk., *Rockingham* 23 Apr (m. obs.); one at Crimora, *Augusta* 2 May (AW); 2 in *Clarke* 16 May (DC); one at Abrams Cr. Wetlands Preserve, *Frederick* 17 May (DC, JF); one at Glen Lyn Town Pk., *Giles* 17 May (JPh); one near New Market, *Rockingham* 23 May (MG); 2 in *Warren* 25 May (RK); one in Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 27 May (RS); and one at L. John, *Warren* 30 May (JF). **Mourning Warbler** reports included one at Paul SF, *Rockingham* 10 May (WL, GMo); one at Hillandale Pk., Harrisonburg 15 May (GMo); one at Augusta Springs, *Augusta* 27 May (AL, VL); and 3 at Sapling Ridge, *Highland* 29 May (m. obs.). A 3-egg **Dickcissel** nest was found near Blacksburg 27 May (RM). The nest contained 6 eggs 30 May. Other sightings included 4 birds in *Augusta* 15 (EO), 20 (NN), & 26 May (VL), and a maximum of 10 in *Rockingham* 28 May, including a f. carrying nesting material (MG).

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Southwest



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

WATERFOWL-WARBLEDERS

A **Ross's Goose** was at Cavitt's Cr. Pk., *Tazewell* 1 Apr (ph. Anonymous). The **TRUMPETER SWAN** that was near Hansonville, *Russell* during the winter season was last reported there 3 Mar (ph. AD). A **Virginia Rail** was a surprise visitor to a parts trailer at a surface mine on Conaway Rd. in the Big Rock area of *Buchanan* 26 Mar (CB *fide* DO). An incapacitated **Purple Gallinule** was found on the road in Richlands, *Tazewell* 18 Apr (ph. KS *fide* JP). It was taken to a veterinarian in Lebanon, Virginia where it was stabilized before being transferred to the Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center in Roanoke. After making a full recovery it was returned to the wild (*fide* SG).



Kenny Schmidt's photo of the Purple Gallinule he rescued from the road in Richlands, *Tazewell* 18 Apr

Two **Sandhill Cranes** were at Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 6 Mar (DS). The highest reported **Wilson's Snipe** count was 51 at Spring Cr., Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 30 Mar (ph. DS). A **Great Egret** was at Clear Cr. L., Bristol 2 Apr (RH) and one was at The Cove, *Tazewell* 4 Apr (ph. CD). A **Golden Eagle** was at Spring Cr., Burke's Garden, *Tazewell* 2 Apr (ph. WT). An **Eastern Kingbird** found on Good Hope Rd., *Washington* in the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Abingdon SE Priority Block 11 Apr (RH) was well ahead of this species' Mountains and Valleys 20 Apr average arrival date and just shy of the 8 Apr extreme early date. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was discovered at a previously unreported site in *Bland* 29 May (DM). Forty **Grasshopper Sparrows** were tallied at Southern Gap Business Pk., *Buchanan* 19 May (CC). Breaks, *Buchanan* hosted 21 **Rusty Blackbirds** 4 Apr (DR). There were 4 **Swainson's Warblers** reported at Whitetop Laurel Fishing and Viewing Area, *Grayson* 25 May (RR, SR). A **Mourning Warbler** was video recorded on Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 15 May (RM)

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South Central



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Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Greenville, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward counties; the cities/towns of Colonial Heights, Danville, Emporia, Martinsville, Petersburg, and South Boston

Numbers of many waterfowl species were low, though last season's surprising Brant lingered until late March near Crewe. A few unusual water birds appeared, highlighted by a Brown Booby at Kerr. A Snowy Egret and a Glossy Ibis were found the same day, 25 April, about 9km apart, though neither lingered. Low numbers of once-common species such as Northern Bobwhite and Common Nighthawk continued to disappoint observers, while songbird migration was mixed, with a few species appearing in encouraging numbers though others were scarce. Some songbirds, including several warbler species, are found more frequently in the western part of the Region along the Blue Ridge but seldom away from there, and that was the case again this season; a few exceptions are noted.

Abbreviations: Kerr (John H. Kerr Reservoir, *Mecklenburg* [lower lake], *Charlotte*, and *Halifax*); SRR (Sandy River Reservoir, e. *Prince Edward*)

GEESE-GREBES

The Region's first **BRANT**, reported in the winter, lingered until 25 Mar in w. *Nottoway* (ph. AB, TJ, CMS).



Adam D'Onofrio photographed this Brant in *Nottoway* 3 Mar.

Migrant **Northern Shovelers** were scarce, reported only in pairs in the narrow date range 4 Mar, at SRR (ADy, JDy, TS, ES), through 11 Mar, on the *Franklin* side of

Hales Ford Bridge, Smith Mt. L. (BE), and only at those locations. The only **American Wigeons** reported were 5 at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg*, 17 Mar (JB, AD, PG), and the only report of **Northern Pintail** was 2 at Palmer Pt., Kerr, *Mecklenburg*, 17 Mar (JB, AD, PG). A single male **Redhead** that lingered, perhaps injured, below Kerr Dam for much of the season was last reported 18 May (ph. AB) and was the only report for that species. A single **Surf Scoter** at SRR 3 Mar (TS, ES) was the only scoter reported, and **Common Goldeneye** was also reported only at SRR, from one on 4 Mar (TS, ES) to one on 15 Mar (ES), with a pair seen 13 Mar only (ADy, JDy, ES). A single **Red-necked Grebe** above the dam at Kerr 4 (TS, ES) & 11 Mar (PG), perhaps continuing at this location from the winter, was the only one reported. Unexpected, though not unprecedented at this location, a **BROWN BOOBY** visited Kerr Dam 31 Mar (m.obs.) & 1 Apr (ph. BE, MJ).



Brown Booby photographed at Kerr Dam 1 Apr by Bob Epperson

A **Snowy Egret** found 25 Apr near Crewe was a first for *Nottoway* (ph. AB, m.obs.) and our only spring report; it was on the Piedmont Geriatric Hospital property, the same

location as the Brant mentioned above. Prince Edward's second **Glossy Ibis** appeared the morning of 25 Apr at SRR (ph. ES, m.obs.) but apparently departed later that day.

DOVES-FALCONS

Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported from Crewe, *Nottoway* 29 Mar (MAn, TD) and 31 May (LA), and at Amelia Court House 22 Apr (MAM), but only from those (previously-known) locations. The only **Common Nighthawk** report was a group of 4 over Farmville, *Prince Edward* 9 May (ADy, JDy); few individuals of this species have been reported in the Region in recent years. The only **American Coots** reported were 3 on lower Kerr, 11 Mar (PG). A single molting **Dunlin** photographed at Dick Cross WMA, *Mecklenburg* 2 Apr (ph. NN) was the shorebird highlight for the season. **Red-throated Loons** were reported only from Kerr, in *Mecklenburg*; the maximum count was 3 seen from Palmer Pt. 17 Mar (JB, AD, PG) and the last report was one above the dam 2 Apr (NN). A **Barn Owl** near Randolph, *Charlotte* 16 Mar (ph. JB) was the first Regional record for some time. The only **Peregrine Falcon** noted was one seen over SRR 5 May (ES).

WRENS-DICKCISSEL

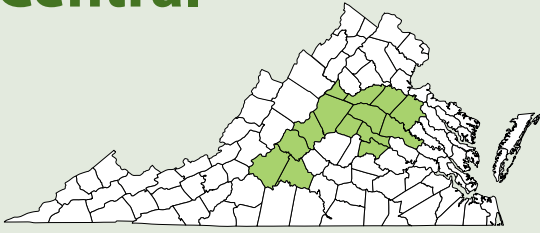
A **Marsh Wren** was found and photographed below the dam at Bear Cr. L. SP, *Cumberland* 22 Apr (MAn, ph. NN) but not relocated; the species is a rare transient in the Region. The earliest **Veery** was found in se. *Prince Edward* on 2 May (ph. TS), one of only a handful of reports for that species, and the earliest **Swainson's Thrush** was also found 2 May at Boydton, *Mecklenburg* (ph. JB). **American Pipits** were reported only twice, both times from *Prince*

Edward; 170 were found in the w. part of the county 24 Mar (ES), and 30 in the e. part of the county 7 Apr (TS). Both **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** were present into mid-April in modest numbers at scattered locations in the Region (m.obs.). A **Vesper Sparrow** was at James R. SP, *Buckingham* 2 Apr (BB, ph. TB, DC), and another was in Farmville, *Prince Edward* 9 Apr (ES, ph. CMS); the species is a scarce migrant in the Region. A singing male **Cerulean Warbler** was at Banister R. WMA, *Halifax*, 29 Apr (PG), while single **Canada Warblers** were reported from Banister R. WMA, *Halifax* 6 May (PG), Wilck's L., *Prince Edward* 9 May (ES), and High Bridge Tr. SP, Farmville, *Prince Edward* 14 May (ES); both species are much more easily found in the Blue Ridge w. of this Region. Single **Wilson's Warblers** were at Boydton, *Mecklenburg* 6 May (JB), and Wilck's L., *Prince Edward* 9 May (ES), the only reports. The only **Dickcissels** found were a group of at least 5 along Swan Rd. in e. *Appomattox* beginning 8 May (ES) and remaining through the end of the season, apparently nesting.

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Corrigenda: In the previous winter report, two observers were credited using the initials JB. The **Ross's Goose** in *Cumberland* 27 Dec 2017 was found and photographed by Jessica Bowser, while the other winter reports attributed to JB should be credited to Jeff Blalock.

Central



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

This spring was very high in species diversity. After a somewhat slow and cold start migrants flooded in in the late part of April. The late part of the season was punctuated by rainstorms that brought several migrant fallouts, namely shorebirds. The Region saw higher densities of mainly midwestern migrants, such as Traill's Flycatchers and Black-billed Cuckoos. Highlight species for the period included Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, American White Pelican, Least Bittern, Black-bellied Plover, Red-necked Phalarope, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Orange-crowned and Golden-winged warblers, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Abbreviations: MCLP (Mill Creek Lake Park, *Amherst*); RVT (Rockfish Valley Trail, *Nelson*); SNP (Shenandoah National Park, *Greene*)

WATERFOWL-NIGHTJARS

Seven **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** were found at L. Louisa, *Louisa* 26 May (ph. RyP, RiP) providing the first record for the Central Region! A **Trumpeter Swan** present at L. Albemarle, *Albemarle* 15 (ph. AC) thru 18 Apr was later relocated at Sugar Hollow Res., *Albemarle* 7 & 8 May (LM, ph. PM, DS). A **Tundra Swan** was late at Penicks Mill Rd., *Bedford* 25 Apr (ph. BE). Five **Northern Pintails** were observed flying up the James R. at Powhatan SP, *Powhatan* 25 Apr (BN, JR, LS, LB, MD). A f. **Long-tailed Duck** was found during a rainstorm at Ragged Mt. Natural Area, *Albemarle* 6 Apr (ph. DS, m. obs.) and a pair was later discovered at MCLP 17 Apr (ph. BE, m. obs.). Most spring occurrences of this species in the Region are weather related. A f. **Common Goldeneye** lingered from the winter period at the Georgia Pacific Settling Ponds, *Bedford* until 20 Apr (MS). A f. **Common Merganser** with 7 ducklings was observed at the Bedford Hydro Plant, *Bedford* 29 April (ph. BE, MJ). A pair and a single f. were observed on the Rivanna R. at Riverview Pk., Charlottesville 2 & 4 May (ph. MN) and another at the Rivanna Trail Holmes Av., Charlottesville

5 May (ph. WC), suggesting the possibility of nesting in the area. **Hooded Mergansers** nested again at King Family Vineyard, *Albemarle*, with a f. and 11 ducklings observed 11 Apr (PM). Four **Horned Grebes** were found at Chris Greene L., *Albemarle* 19 Apr (ph. PM). A high count of 3 **Black-billed Cuckoos** was very notable at Observatory Mt., *Albemarle* 7 May (PM, m. obs.). A **Chuck-will's-widow** was at Joshua Falls Rd., *Amherst* (BE). The usual breeding birds in *Albemarle* at Secretary's Rd. returned 28 Apr and continued to the end of the period, and one returned to Blue Bell Ln., *Fluvanna*, 4 thru 16 May.

RAILS-RAPTORS

Two **Virginia Rails** were seen and heard at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 30 Apr (ph. DS, PM). Also at Hidden Swamp were 2 **Sora** 30 Apr (DS, PM, JP) and another 16 May (BB, MN). Rainstorms 18 & 19 May brought a fallout of scarce shorebirds to *Albemarle*: 7 **Black-bellied Plovers** in a flooded field on Langhorne Rd. (ph. DS); a **Semipalmated Plover** on Langhorne Rd. 18 May (ph. DS, m. obs.) with 3 there 19 May (DS) and another at King Family Vineyard 19 May (GB); a **Dunlin** at Langhorne Rd. 18 May; and, 6 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** at Langhorne Rd. 18 May (DS, m. obs.); and one at King Family



Black-bellied Plovers documented by David Shoch near Scottsville, *Albemarle* 18 May

Vineyard 19 May (PM, GeB). A **Red-necked Phalarope** was found at Penicks Mill Rd., *Bedford* 25 Apr (ph. BE) and another 26 May at Ryan's Pond, *Amherst* (ph. DMS, BE, MB). Both birds were associated with rainstorms.



Mike Boatwright's 26 May photo of a Red-necked Phalarope at Ryan's Pond, *Amherst*

Two **Herring Gulls** were spotted over Jefferson Pk. Av., Charlottesville 2 Apr (ph. BB, TB, DC) and another was at L. Louisa, *Louisa* 14 Apr (RiP, ReP). Rare transients in the Region, **Caspian Tern** reports included one at Kinloch L., *Goochland* 22 Apr (MA, NN), 4 at Virginia Episcopal School, Lynchburg 25 Apr (LA), and 2 at Chamberlayne Swamp, *Hanover* 26 Apr (CV). Very rare for the Region, a large flock of 9 or more **American White Pelicans** was seen soaring over Piney R. Trail, *Nelson* 12 Apr (ph. HM). Four **American Bitterns** were found at two locations, both in *Albemarle*: one was at Hidden Swamp 31 Mar (SM); one at King Family Vineyard 21 thru 23 Apr (ph. AC, m. obs.); and 2 more at Hidden Swamp 30 Apr (ph. PM, DS, JP).



David Shoch's American Bittern photo at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 30 Apr



A Least Bittern photographed by Baxter Beamer at *Albemarle's Hidden Swamp* 23 May

The only report for the period, a **Least Bittern** was at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 23 May (ph. BB, TB, DS). Rare for the Region, an imm. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was found on the river at Alexander Berger Memorial Sanctuary, Fredericksburg 21 May (ph. AR). Remarkably, 2 **Mississippi Kites** were found; one migrating over Jones Mill Rd., *Albemarle* 29 Apr (PM) and one at Courthouse Rd., *Spotsylvania* 20 May (FA). The latter report was within breeding season for the species, but there are no confirmed breeding records in the Region.

FLYCATCHERS–DICKCISSEL

Alder Flycatchers were present well above average density: one was at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 12 (audio recorded PM, DS) & 16 May (ph. ar. BB, MN); another was at Moore's Ck., *Albemarle* 20 May (ph. AR); 2 were detected at Tucker Pk., *Goochland* 17 May (audio recorded AR) & one there 19 May (audio recorded NN). **Willow Flycatchers** were also more abundant than usual, with totals of 7 in Charlottesville, 5 in *Albemarle*, and singles in *Bedford*, *Hanover*, Lynchburg and *Spotsylvania*. Extremely rare for the Region, a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** made a brief appearance at Phelps Rd., *Bedford* on May 20 (ph. JE.) A **Loggerhead Shrike** was present at Ambrose Rucker Rd., *Amherst* 1 thru 3 April (MH). Given the date, it seems likely this bird was a northbound migrant. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** continued to establish their foothold in the Region, with reports from *Bedford*, *Hanover*, *Louisa*, and *Powhatan*. A **Winter Wren** was found singing on territory in SNP 15 May (ML). There were 3 **Marsh Wren** reports: one at James R. WMA, *Nelson* 29 Apr (ph. ES, TB, DC, PB, AB), 4 at Hidden Swamp, *Albemarle* 30 Apr (ph. PM, JP, DS), and one at Reusen's Dam, Lynchburg 1 May (ph. LA, GB). Rare in the spring period, **Lincoln's Sparrows** were found at Chancho Volante, *Albemarle* 22 Apr (PM) and

at Greenbrier Pk., Charlottesville 7 May (ph. DC). Another rare spring transient, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found at Advance Mills Rd., *Albemarle* 8 Apr (ph. MyA, ph. JD, ph. BD). Thirty-four species of wood-warblers were reported this period, including several notables. A **Golden-winged Warbler** was at Mint Springs Valley Pk., *Albemarle* 3 May (AC). There were 3 **Orange-crowned Warblers** reported: one continued from the winter period at a feeder at Cove Trace., *Albemarle* until 9 Mar (ph. PM); another was at Riverview Pk., Charlottesville 17 Mar (ph. MS); and one continuing at Georgia Pacific Settling Ponds, *Bedford* 8 Apr (LA). Transient **Mourning Warblers** were found at RVT 16 Apr (ph. AR) and at Pedlar R. Res., *Amherst* 28 May (MH). **Dickcissels** were again found widely in the Region this year. Up to 5 were at Phelps Rd., *Bedford* 14 thru 21 May (m.

obs.), one along Grasty Ln., *Orange* 15 (ph. AR) thru 20 (LR, JS) May, and one at River Rd., *Goochland* 17 May (AR).

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Southeast



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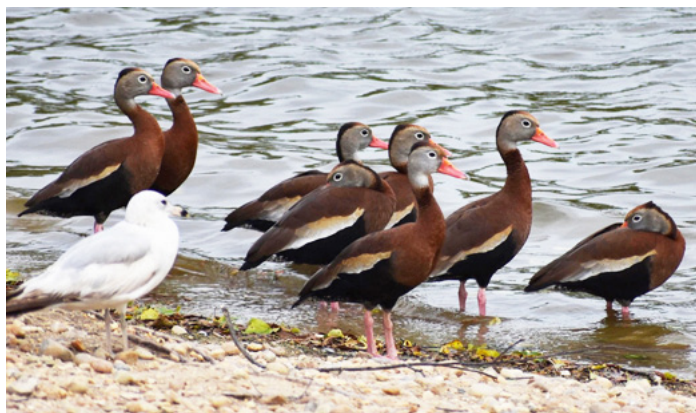
Charles City, Chesterfield, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, New Kent, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, and York counties; the cities of Franklin, Hopewell, Richmond, and Williamsburg

Temperatures in the Region hovered between average and slightly above average for the duration of the spring, while precipitation was slightly below average in March and April, then slightly above in May. Although the average temperature ultimately wasn't significantly different from historical norms, things were somewhat slow to warm up in March, with several days recording low temperatures in the 20s including an overall low for the Williamsburg area of 25°F recorded 17 Mar. While temperatures were slow to rise, by early May things were much warmer and several days peaked in the low 90s, with a high for the Williamsburg area of 92°F recorded 12 May. In terms of avifauna, this spring proved to be good for Anhinga in the Region, with a number of reports widely scattered across the area. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks also turned up in multiple places. The undisputed highlight of the spring was a completely unexpected Brown Booby seen on the James R. Other rarities and highlights included Swallow-tailed Kite and Snowy Owl.

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

DUCKS-CRANES

While even a single **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** is a notable occurrence in the Region, an amazing count of 18 was at Temple L., Colonial Heights 15 May (JG). The



Andrew Rapp documented these Black-bellied Whistling Ducks at the Walmart ponds, Colonial Heights 15 May.

birds were relocated later that day at the nearby Walmart Ponds, Colonial Heights with a revised count of 19 birds (ph. LB, m. obs.). Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were also spotted on a drainage pond on Barnes Church Circle, *Southampton* 30 May (ph. BR). A **Ross's Goose** was at Hog 4 Mar (ph. JS, LR) and lingered through at least 10 Mar (ph. NB). This may have been the same individual that was later seen from College Cr., *James City* 15 Mar (ph. NB, BT) flying north with a group of **Canada Geese**. One of the more unusual sightings of the spring was an apparent hybrid Mallard × Northern Pintail on Turkey Is. Rd., *Henrico* 3 Mar (ph. AB). A pair of **Northern Shovelers** lingered at the Walmart Ponds, Colonial Heights through at least 17 Mar (JFr). Other lingering waterfowl in the Region included 8 **Ring-necked Ducks** on Swift Cr. Res. viewed from the pull-off on Genito Rd., *Chesterfield* 5 Mar (EO); a single Ring-necked Duck at a pond on Old Wagner Rd., Petersburg 12 May (JS, LR); 9 **Buffleheads** at the Felgates Cr. pull-off of the Colonial Parkway, *York* 20 Apr (NN); and 3 **Ruddy Ducks** seen from two vantage points at Swift Cr. Res., *Chesterfield* 5 Mar (EO). Still more notable was an imm. m. **Long-tailed Duck** at Hog 6 Mar (ph. AD), an irregular species that far up the James R. A single **Common Nighthawk**, an uncommon transient on the Lower Peninsula, was at Yorktown, *York* 11 May (NK). The vanguard of arriving **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** included a few slightly early birds at Kingsmill, *James City* (CJ, SM) and at Shady Bluff Pt., *York* 4 Apr (LL), and a home on Laburnum Ave., Richmond 10 Apr (EO). Three **Sandhill Cranes** were observed flying ne. past College Cr., *James City* 1 May (MB, ph. NB, BT, BW), while another bird was seen on the ground at York River SP, *James City* 15 May (ph. JG), providing a 6th local record.

PLOVERS–PELICANS

American Golden-Plover, though a regular transient, is often infrequently detected, so a flock of 14 at Richmond Airport, *Henrico* 11 Apr (KB) was a good record. The earliest report of **Solitary Sandpiper** for the Region this spring was a bird at Beaver L. Trail, *Chesterfield* 8 Apr (ph. ZG). A **Willet** of undetermined subspecies was at Hog 23 May (NN), just barely missing the local late date of 24 May. A **Bonaparte's Gull** at the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, *James City* 23 May set a new local late date (ph. NN). An **Iceland Gull**, possibly an ad., was seen off Jamestown Is., *James City* 23 Mar (EM, ph. BT), providing the 5th local record. This bird or another was subsequently reported from the same area, viewed from James R. Beach Pk., *James City* 3

Apr (ph. JU). Two **Black Skimmers** were at Hog 23 May (ph. NN), one of only a few records from that location and a new local early date. Without doubt the most stunning and unexpected record in the Region this spring was an ad. **BROWN BOOBY** that was photographed perching in a sycamore during one of Capt. Mike Ostrander's boat tours of Jones Neck, *Henrico* 2 Apr (MO, BS, ph. ML, JL). This spring proved to be phenomenal for **Anhingas** locally, with reports from several counties scattered across the Region. The highest count was a group of 19 observed flying overhead at the intersection of Forge Rd. and Little Creek Dam Rd., *James City* 28 Apr (ph. SP). Elsewhere, notable counts included 15 at Dutch Gap 6 May (ph. LA, JF, et al.), and 11 at Harwood's Mill Reservoir, *York* 14 May (DY). At least 3 were still present at Harwood's Mill as late as 21 May (GM), and this location has had breeding records in past years. Smaller counts of Anhingas included 6 near Walker's Dam on the *New Kent/James City* border 22 Apr (MB, BWa), 8 over Hog 2 May (BW), 4 (2 m. and 2 f.) on Davis Pond, *New Kent* 7 May (SB), and one flying over New Quarter Pk., *York* 15 May (JL et al.). A single Anhinga was also seen at Carson Wetlands, *Prince George* 15 Apr (MA, ph. AR). This spot has hosted breeding Anhingas for several years, and reports of birds at this location, including higher counts, continued into the summer. As has been the case for most recent years, **American White Pelicans** were present at Hog this spring in varying numbers. The first report was 4 at Hog 4 Mar (ph. JS, LR), and reports continued through 23 May including a high count of 69 there 24 Mar (JS, EM).

EGRETS–WAXWINGS

Cattle Egrets, often a sporadic visitor to the Region, were reported on multiple occasions. The first record of the season was a single bird at Gospel Spreading Farm, *James City* 6 (ph. BW) & 7 Apr (ph. MA, NN). One was also observed there 9 May (BT). There was also one at Mainland Farm, *James City* 4 May (ph. BW), which was joined by a second bird 6 May (HB, MB, ph. MA). A **SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** passed over the James R. from *Surry* to *James City* 10 May (NB), providing only the 5th local record. **Mississippi Kites** are occasionally recorded in the Region as migrants, but this spring saw multiple reports. One was over Cedar Grove Cemetery, Williamsburg 7 May (ph. NN); one was at Powhatan Cr. Pk., *James City* 9 May (JA); one was at College Cr., *James City* 12 May (BT); and one was at an unspecified location in *New Kent* 19 May (AB). A **Snowy Owl** was at Richmond Airport, *Henrico* 11 Apr (ph. KB),

providing a nice coda to the minor influx in the state during the winter. The first **Eastern Kingbird** report from the Region, notably early, was from a farm field on Three Creeks Rd., *Southampton* 8 Apr (ph. MA). **Warbling Vireo** is typically a very scarce species in the Region, but this spring saw two reports including one in Windsor Forest, *James City* 9 May (AM) and one at York R. SP, *James City* 14 May (NB). Among the lingering winter passerines, a **Winter Wren** put in an appearance at James R. Pk.—Reedy Cr., Richmond 21 Apr (LB). There were also a few late-staying **Golden-crowned Kinglets** in the Region, with reports from James R. Pk.—The Wetlands, Richmond 17 Apr (JSh) and Chesdin Rd., *Chesterfield* 19 Apr (BP). An amazing count of 490 **Cedar Waxwings** on the College of William & Mary campus, Williamsburg 24 Mar (MEH) was a new local high count.

SPARROWS—DICKCISSELS

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** in the Marlbank neighborhood, *York* 2 May (ph. PW) provided only the 4th local record.



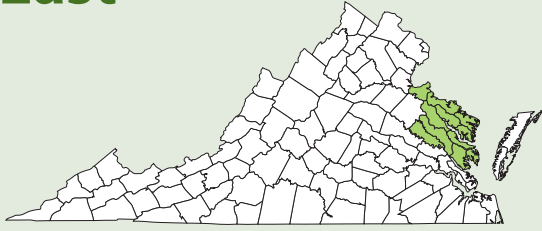
This Clay-colored Sparrow was photographed by Pamela Warren in Marlbank, *York* 2 May.

Dark-eyed Juncos lingered as late as 17 May at New Quarter Pk., *York* (JL, SM). **Boat-tailed Grackles** are highly localized in the Region, and a record of one from Bay Tree Beach Rd., *York* 18 Apr (JS) was one of the few for that county away from the Goodwin Is. The earliest report of **Worm-eating Warbler** came from Cannon Cr. Greenway, Richmond 15 Apr (BN), while another report from Bassett Hall Nature Trail, Williamsburg 19–20 Apr (ph. NB) edged out the previous local early date of 23 Apr for the Colonial Historic Triangle. **Golden-winged Warbler**, though annual as a migrant in the Region, typically passes through in very

low densities and is often quite difficult to detect, so sightings in migration are always special. This spring, there were two reports, including one from James R. Pk.—The Wetlands, Richmond 29 Apr (ph. AB) and a second from North Bank City Pk., Richmond 1 May (MV). An early **Hooded Warbler** was reported from Spring Hill Pond, *Sussex* 7 Apr (CN). A very early **Yellow-throated Warbler** was seen at an unspecified location in Hopewell 3 Mar (ph. AB). **Prairie Warblers** also arrived slightly early, with records from York R. SP, *James City* 2 Apr (m. obs.) and the same day at College Cr., *James City* (BT). Both records were just one day ahead of the previous local early date, 3 Apr. Other early passerine sightings included a **Summer Tanager** at Old Forty Rd., *Sussex* 12 Apr (JS). The long-staying **Western Tanager** at a feeder in Settler's Mill, *James City* was present through 18 Mar (BW). A second m. Western Tanager at Linden Ln., *James City*, which had been observed since Nov, hung around through 5 Apr (DC). Two **Painted Buntings** were present in the Region this spring. A m. visited a home in Rushmere, *Isle of Wight* 11–16 Mar (RJ), while a second m. that had been present at a residence on Penniman Rd., *York* since 10 Feb continued through 20 Apr (ph. MW *vide* DC). A good count of 4 **Dickcissels** was reported from an unspecified location in *Charles City* 19 May (AB).

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East



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

A total of 228 species was recorded this spring, which is about three species above average for recent springs. Highlights were a Mississippi Kite, 2 separate Sandhill Cranes, a new Regional high count of Black Skimmers, Nelson's Sparrows, Western Tanager, and many Dickcissels.

Data was sourced from the Virginia Birds listserv, eBird*, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv), and the Gold Book.

Abbreviations: Bethel (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Dameron (Dameron Marsh Natural Area Preserve, *Northumberland*); Hughlett Pt. (Hughlett Pt. NAP, *Northumberland*); Tayloe (Tayloe unit of Rappahannock R. NWR, *Richmond*); Wellford (Rappahannock River NWR—Wellford Unit, *Richmond*); Wilna (Wilna unit of Rappahannock R. NWR, *Richmond*); Washington's Birthplace (George Washington Birthplace National Monument, *Westmoreland*)

WATERFOWL—RAPTORS

A group of 5 **Snow Geese** was seen resting on a sandbar at Washington's Birthplace 18 Mar, which is typically the last week of this species' push through the Region (LW). A large flock of 225 **Brant** off Heron Pt. Rd., *Gloucester* 1 Mar (JS) set a new high count for the Region in eBird. An impressive count of 160 **Wood Ducks** was tallied on a trip along Dragon Run near Mascot, *Middlesex* 19 Mar (JW). A pair of **Long-tailed Ducks** was seen off Hughlett Pt. 3 Apr, which is the latest eBird record for the Region by two days, although it falls well short of the Gold Book late date of 15 Apr (MA, NN). The latest **Buffleheads** of the season were 2 reported 5 May near Reedville, *Northumberland* (ph. BF). A kayak trip to the barrier island east of Onemo, *Mathews* 20 May yielded a lingering **Red-breasted Merganser** (MS). Associating with the aforementioned Buffleheads 5 May near Reedville, was a late group of 7

Ruddy Ducks, a species that lingers most years into early May, however it is still of note so far past that species' peak (ph. BF). **Northern Bobwhites** were reported from all 11 counties except *Middlesex* with a maximum of 12 from a private farm along the Rappahannock R. near Chance 28 Apr (JCoo, HC, LF, E&SD); this is a promising showing for a species that has been generally in decline for many years. The first **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** of the year was found 3 Apr at a private home near Topping, *Middlesex*, which is nearly a week earlier than the average date of 10 Apr of the past 5 years (CNe). A **Virginia Rail** was heard grunting from a marsh at West Point, *King William* 10 Mar (TD), suggesting that it may have wintered in the area as it was found before the main movement of this species. The Middle Peninsula has only one previous record of **Sandhill Crane** from *Gloucester*, noted in the Gold Book with no specific sighting information, so the well photographed individual along Tidewater Tr., *Middlesex*, was an exciting find 20 May (ph. LA). A second Sandhill Crane, possibly the same bird based on its close proximity to the other individual, made the local newspaper after being spotted across from Montague's Farm on Rt. 17 near Laneview, *Essex* 16 May (ph. CG, MB). Additionally, Hughlett Pt. hosted 3 **Black-necked Stilts** 23 Apr (ph. JD), which ties the previous high count for the Region from a flooded field off Ditch Bank Rd., *Gloucester* 4 May 2015 (JS). This spring showed a record number of **American Oystercatcher** reports from the Northern Neck, where this species is generally an uncommon spring and summer visitor: 2 from a private yard in Palmer, *Lancaster* 3 Mar (JCok); 2 at Dameron 9 Apr (HC); 4 at Hughlett Pt. 23 Apr (JD); and a single at Dameron 27 May (GR). A flooded field off Ditch Bank Rd., *Gloucester* hosted a mixed flock of shorebirds for just over two weeks at the end of May, with the highlight being 3 **White-rumped Sandpipers** 28 May (ph. NN) and a high count of 85 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** 30 May (JS). An impressive count of 128 **Wilson's Snipe** 31 Mar at

a private location near Elsing Green, *King William*, along the Pamunkey R., constituted a new eBird high count for the Region (FA). At the same location and date, 106 **Lesser Yellowlegs** also established a new eBird high count for the Region (FA). Naylor's Beach, *Richmond*, hosted 3 late **Bonaparte's Gulls** 21 May (GR); this eclipses the previous eBird late date for the Region 20 May 2012 (FA) by one day. A new Regional high count of **Black Skimmers** was established in dramatic fashion with 93 seen from a kayak on a barrier island south of Bethel near Onemo, *Mathews* 27 May (MS). The observer noted that they appeared not to be nesting at the time. The previous high count for this species was 32 at Bethel 3 Aug 2016 (EO). Additionally, the first eBird record for *Lancaster* was of 3 individuals seen 29 May at Windmill Pt. (GR). A **Red-throated Loon** seen from The Pocket, *King William* 10 Mar represents the furthest upriver sighting for this species on the York R. and its tributaries by nearly 20 mi. (TD). At the Rt. 360 Bridge, *Essex*, a single **Brown Pelican** 10 May marked the only notable upriver appearance of this species in the Region (MA). A steady stream of "hundreds" of **Northern Gannets** was noted during the last week of Mar from Bluff Pt., Colonial Beach, *Westmoreland* (BWa). Additionally, hundreds more Northern Gannets were seen 1 Apr near Callao on the Yeocomico R. and Potomac R., *Westmoreland* (MW, PW). An **American Bittern**, possibly chased by a different individual, was seen 20 May at a private location in Leedstown, *Westmoreland* (FA), which is the final day of the expected window for this species in the Coastal Plain according to the Gold Book. **Cattle Egrets** were discovered at two locations this spring, with 2 at Hopyard Farm, *King George* 20–21 Apr (SB) and a single individual along Strangeway Rd., *Richmond* 15 May where it represented a first county record in eBird (ph. GR). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** in *Gloucester* near Severn 11 May (HC) was one of only a handful of spring records for the Region. A **Glossy Ibis** at a private location near Sealston, *King George* 14 Apr (ph. FA) was one few spring records from the nw. portion of the Region; however, a pattern of mid- and late Apr sightings of this species in *King George* and *Westmoreland* seems to be emerging. At Bowlers Wharf, *Essex*, 3 Glossy Ibis were seen flying 25 Apr (MC, JCok). A **Mississippi Kite**, only the fourth eBird record for the Region, was spotted during a VBBA2 point count s. of Rt. 30 between West Point and King William, *King William* 17 May (BN). This species has increased dramatically over the past few years in the state and may be regular in parts of the Region, although no nests or patterns have yet been

discovered. The only **Broad-winged Hawk** of the season was seen 7 May at Land's End WMA, *King George* (PJ). Continuing from this winter, a **Snowy Owl** was last seen at West Point, *King William* 8 Mar (ph. NG). Transmitter data from a Snowy Owl named "Lenape" indicated that the imm. m. spent a few minutes at the southern tip of New Point Comfort NAP, *Mathews*, around 9:04pm 7 Mar before continuing to *Northampton*, n. of Cape Charles (Project Snowstorm). These were apparently the first spring records for the Region, however, both fell well within the 3 Apr extreme date for the Coastal Plain. The Rt. 360 Bridge at Tappahannock, *Essex* hosted 2 **Peregrine Falcons** 22 Apr suggesting the possibility of breeding, which has occurred there since at least 2015 (EO). Additionally, a single individual was seen less than a mile west of Dameron 17 Mar (CA, JCok, MC), an uncommon sight along the bayside coast of the Northern Neck.

FLYCATCHERS–DICKCISSEL

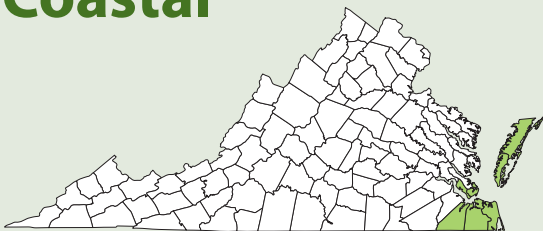
Willow Flycatchers were reported on two occasions this spring, 26 May along Rt. 632 near James Monroe Birthplace, *Westmoreland* (BH) and at Fithians Ln., *Westmoreland* 16 May (ph. GR). A **Least Flycatcher** was found at Greenpoint Landing, *Westmoreland* 16 May (GR). **Common Ravens** continued to cement their presence in the extreme nw. corner of the Region with 2 seen at a private location near Sealston, *King George* 14 Apr (FA). A small group of 3 **Cliff Swallows** was seen investigating probable nest sites underneath the Newland Rd. Bridge over Cat Pt. Cr., *Richmond* 15 May (GR); this would be a first breeding record for the county if confirmed. A **Marsh Wren** was audio recorded singing from a marsh in West Point, *King William* 22 Apr, which is within the VBBA2 expected breeding dates (CNo). Whether or not this bird stayed to breed is unknown; however, such a breeding record would be without precedent in this part of the Region. A single **Pine Siskin** lingered until 9 May at a feeder in Vir-mar Beach, *Northumberland*, well after the rest of its kind had left the residence; the individual was noted as looking unhealthy (E&SD). Perhaps one of the most exciting records was 2 singing **Nelson's Sparrows** at Dameron 27 May (GR). Although this record is quite late, there is precedent for singing migrants of this species lingering through the end of the month; the Gold Book extreme date for this species is listed as 8 Jun. A late **White-throated Sparrow** was heard singing from Mt. Holly Rd., *Westmoreland* 21 May (GR). The high count of **Rusty Blackbirds** for the season was 18 off Custis Millpond Road, *King William* 21 Apr (BWi),

which is about average for the past five years. Overall, occurrences of this species are consistent in number and quantity with other recent years, hopefully suggesting that this species' decline has leveled off. Approximately average for the past 5 years, 27 warbler species were reported this spring. Highlights included 3 separate **Orange-crowned Warblers**, with one banded bird seen at Wilna 4 Mar (AW), one at Tayloe 3 Mar (MD), and an exceptionally drab individual at West Point, *King William* 10 Mar (TD); **Kentucky Warblers** seen in 8 of 11 counties in the Region, a new high mark for the spring season, with a maximum of 2 from Poor Jack Farm, *Westmoreland* 16 May (GR); a singing **Blackburnian Warbler** near Sassafras, *Gloucester* 13 May (EB); and 2 **Wilson's Warblers** at Norwood Rd. Bridge, *King and Queen* 5 May (JCok, MC) and one at Wellford 6 May (JCok, MC). The star of the spring was an ad. m. **Western Tanager** that frequented a private feeder near Topping, *Middlesex* 19 Apr to 6 May (ph. CNe). It proved to be another productive spring for **Dickcissels** with multiple individuals from 6 sites in *Westmoreland*, *Northumberland*, *Lancaster*, and *King William*. The maximum number came from a weedy field off Dabneys Mill Rd. near Manquin, *King William*, which hosted over

a dozen birds 20 May (BN). In *Lancaster*, a single bird was found along Field Trial Rd. near Alfonso 15 May (JCoo), a number which grew to a maximum of 4 by 28 May (JCok, MC, GR). In *Northumberland*, 3 m. were flying in large loops around 2 f. while singing aggressively at Palmer Dr. w. of Harryhogan 26 May, suggesting a breeding attempt. (ph. GR), and 4 were seen at Kingscote Dr., also 26 May (GR). A single Dickcissel was found off Vault Field Rd., *Westmoreland* 22 May (GR). Further w. in *Westmoreland*, 2 m. were singing in Leedstown 20 May (ph. FA).

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Coastal



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Accomack and Northampton counties; Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel; Pelagic area; the cities/towns of Cape Charles, Chesapeake, Chincoteague, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach

The March lion roared over the mid-Atlantic 2–3 March with sustained high winds and rain. An uneventful April was succeeded by the warmest and 8th wettest May on record, a month that saw 27 days of above average temperatures. Undeterred, if not more motivated by the season's weather perturbations and their zeal to pile in to Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 efforts, birders documented numerous species-relevant early and late dates and even took time to put Eurasian Green-winged Teal, Western Grebe, Atlantic Puffins, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-capped Petrel, and Roseate Spoonbill in the record book.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, *Northampton*); CCCHNAP (Cape Charles Coastal Habitat NAP, *Northampton*); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel s. of *Northampton*); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Materials Management Area, Portsmouth); Dismal (Dismal Swamp NWR, Suffolk/Chesapeake); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, *Northampton*); First Landing (First Landing SP, Virginia Beach); KSP (Kiptopeke SP, *Northampton*); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/Norfolk); Little Is. (Little Island Pk., Virginia Beach); Mackay (Mackay Is. NWR, Virginia

Beach); Magothy Bay (Mogathy Bay NAP, *Northampton*); Mutton Hunk (Mutton Hunk Fen, *Accomack*); NNP (Newport News Pk., Newport News); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach); Whitehurst (Whitehurst Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach)

WATERFOWL-ALCIDS

One each **Ross's Goose** and **Cackling Goose** were at the Oyster/Cheriton Landfill, *Northampton* 19 Mar (ph. ESB). A **Tundra Swan** was at Back Bay 19 May (ph. AB, TT) into the summer season (m. obs.). One to 2 m. **Eurasian Wigeons** continued at Chinc. to at least 10 Mar (OM). The m. at L. Joyce /Shore Dr., Virginia Beach, present through 26 Mar (m. obs.), was accompanied by a f. 18 Mar (KS). A m. **EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL** was at Craney 8 Mar (LS, BT, BW, ph. DY) through 5 Apr (ph. BT, LS). A **Harlequin Duck** was seen from the CBBT fourth island 30 Mar (CB, CP). A **Red-necked Grebe** was at Ft., Monroe, Hampton 3 Mar (ph. BB, SB). The total of 6 recorded 6 Mar included 2 off the CBBT (AD, JD, ES, TS), 2 at Rudee and 2 at Little Is. (AB). Subsequent reports noted one at Little Is. 10 Mar (AB, TT), 4 at Rudee 16 Mar (AB), and, on 3 Apr, one in Fisherman's Inlet, *Northampton* (ESB) and 2 at Rudee (AB). A **WESTERN GREBE** was off Assawoman Is., *Accomack* 17 Mar (ph. ESB); another hastened birders to Horn Pt. Rd., Virginia Beach 6 (ph. K&TB, ph. KL et al.) through 15 Apr (ph. m. obs.). A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was in the CCCHNAP 21 May (ESB). The season's **Common Nighthawk** portfolio had 2 at Craney 10 May; one at Deep Cr., *Accomack* 12 May (SS); 2 near Woodhouse Corner, Virginia Beach 14 May (K&TB); one at Craney 17 May (AM, BT, BW, DY); one at Weyanoke Sanctuary 16 (DSI) & 17 (AB, TT) May; one in Cape Charles 22 May (ESB); and one in Chincoteague, *Accomack* 23 May (JM). A **Chuck-will's-widow** was a surprise find at Marsh View Pk., Virginia Beach 30 Mar (AB, ph. RBi, ph. MCM). Three **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were heard at Brownsville Seaside Farm, *Northampton* 28 Apr (AP) followed by one there 4 May (KK). **Common Gallinules** were reported at Whitehurst 15 Apr (2) (ph. RBi) through 27 May (one) (RBi); one was at Back Bay 14–24 May (ph. m. obs.). A **Sandhill Crane** was in Locustville, *Accomack* 18 Mar (ph. ESB, ph. LG, ph. JE) through 3 Apr (ph. SB, ph. VK). The Gold Book's extreme early for **Black-necked Stilt** is 5 Apr, so one at Chinc. 31 Mar (DS) was a record setter. Subsequently, 2 were at Craney 12 Apr (LS et al.); one to 2 were at Messick, Poquoson 27 Apr (one)(MN) through 5 May (2) (ph. CK); 4 were at Chinc. 30 Apr (J&HL), and

one was at Back Bay 25 (BA, RBi) & 26 (SM) May. Season high counts were 14 from the Queen Sound Channel area, *Accomack* 25 May (DH) and 67 at Craney 31 May (LS, BT, BW, DY). A pair incubating 10 May (AM, BT, ph. BW, DY) established the state's earliest recorded Black-necked Stilt nesting record. The season's highest **American Avocet** count was 182 at Craney 8 Mar (LS, BT, DY, BW). Elsewhere, one was at Back Bay 15 Mar (DH, LS, DW, TW), one was at Chinc. 22 Mar (DR) with 2 there 30 Apr (CJ, DHr) and 6 were at Anderson Pk. in Newport News 13 Apr (ph. JS). Two **Piping Plovers** at First Landing 9 Mar (AWa) were six days ahead of the species' 15 Mar average arrival. The annual **Whimbrel** "leaving count" was conducted at Box Tree Marsh, *Northampton* 18–27 May. The count's 6815 total included a single-day high 2812 on 22 May (m. obs. *fide* AW). A "worn second-year **BAR-TAILED GODWIT**.... hurtled past" Chinc. 15 May (ph. ESB, J&HL). The bird was refound 22 May (ph. GM, CR) and chronicled by m. obs. through 28 May. The highest reported **Red Knot** count was 44 at Chinc. 23 May (JL). Gold Book wisdom cautions that "most [**Western Sandpipers**] apparently leave in mid-March". Therefore, one photographed (JM) at Long Cr./Great Neck, Virginia Beach 16 May was an important data point. One "**Western**" **Willet** was at Messick, Poquoson 29 Mar (ph. DY). A quartet of **Long-billed Dowitchers** was at Chinc. 15 May (ESB). Four **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at Craney 24 May (AM, LS, BT, ph. BW); 6 were there 31 May (LS, BT, BW, DY); and one was on Ship Shoal Is., *Northampton* 30 May (ph. ZP, AW). Three **Parasitic Jaegers** passed Little Is. 17 Apr (AB); one was noted from that site 19 May (AB, TT). A **Dovekie** was blown to Chesconessex Schooner Bay, *Accomack* 2 Mar (ph. LG); another was off Little Is. 10 Mar (AB, TT). That same day 8 **Razorbills** were seen off Virginia Beach with a high count of 5 from Little Is. (AB, TT). A whale survey team tallied 18 **Atlantic Puffins** off *Northampton* 29 Apr (TP et al.).

GULLS-DICKCISSEL

A **Black headed Gull** continued at Rudee to 2 Mar (AB) and a late-departing **Bonaparte's Gull** was at First Landing 31 May (ph. JM). What was probably the same first-cycle **Iceland Gull** was recorded from 64th St., Virginia Beach 9 Mar (JSc) to 82nd St. 15 Mar (ph. RBi). An ad. was spotted in the 57th St. to 74th St. vicinity 10 & 11 Mar (ph. m. obs.). A first-cycle Iceland Gull was at PHP 13 Apr (ph. AB). The Region's only **Black Tern** report was of one at Chinc. 31 May (ph. LA, SSt). A **Sandwich Tern** on the HRBT 3 Apr (LS) reset the species' extreme early

date, formerly 10 Apr, by a week. A **Black-capped Petrel** was over Norfolk Canyon off *Northampton* 29 Apr (TP et al.). **Anhinga** reports included one to 3 at Stumpy L., Virginia Beach 2 Apr–5 May (m. obs.), one at West Neck Cr. Natural Area, Virginia Beach 19 Apr (ph. CB), one to 2 at NNP 13 (ph. AC) & 20 May (SSw); 3 over Dozier Middle School, Newport News 14 May (ph. AC); and one to 2 at Mariners' Museum Pk., Newport News 19 (ph. AC) & 21 May (ph. JS). Five **American White Pelicans** graced the skies above Shore Dr., Virginia Beach 28 Mar (AS); an even dozen were over Stumpy L., Virginia Beach 1 May (ph. RBi). A **Least Bittern** was at Back Bay 2 Apr (RW), thirteen days ahead of the species' 15 Apr average early date. A **Green Heron** at PHP 25 Mar (ph. NB) was well ahead of the species' 5 Apr average arrival. Equally exceptional was a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at PHP 19 Mar (JeMa, BS); this species' typical arrival is 10 Apr. A **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** at Back Bay 31 May (ph. CB) was part of a broader movement of this species into Virginia that extended into June. A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was at Back Bay 31 Mar (ED). Subsequently, 2 were at Stony Run Athletic Complex, Newport News 1 May (GH, CJ), and singles were on the ESVNWR (KK) and at Dismal's Jericho Ditch (WF) 3 May, respectively. **Mississippi Kites** have become regular from late spring through summer in north central Virginia Beach, with breeding evidence there 2014–2017. The first this year was at White House Ln. 27 Apr (TT) where up to 3 were present 12 May. Nearby, singles were reported from Thoroughgood 14 (ph. ESB, SH) to 28 May (BBu, JmBu, JnBu) and in Kings Grant 15–24 May (M& RF). On the Eastern Shore, 2 were in Mogathy Bay/ESVNWR airspace 22 (GM) to 28 May (ph. RBi) and one (of these?) was at Magotha Rd., *Northampton* 30 May (LA). At least one of the Messick, Poquoson **Short-eared Owls** reported during the winter season was still on hand 4 Mar (AC). Single **Great Crested Flycatchers** in Dismal at Railroad Ditch (DS) and the Canal Trail (DG) 6 Apr edged out the Coastal Plain's previous extreme early date (7 Apr) by a day. An **Eastern Kingbird** was at Windsor Pt., Norfolk 1 Apr (DC); this species' Coastal Plain extreme early date is 27 Mar. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was at Mutton Hunk 5 (ph. JE) through 7 May (JM). A **Warbling Vireo** frequented Back Bay 6 (AB, ph. RBi, MC) through 11 May (m. obs.); another was on the ESVNWR 10 May (JW) and one was on MacKay 27 May (AB, TT). A **Cliff Swallow** at Back Bay Landing Rd., Virginia Beach 17 Apr (ph. RBi) was an unusual mid-spring outer Coastal Plain visitor. The currently acknowledged **Blue-**

gray Gnatcatcher average arrival date is 30 Mar. Thus, 2 at First Landing 10 Mar (EG) added another piece to this species' over-winterer/early migrant conundrum. A carefully assessed thrush in Weyanoke Sanctuary, Norfolk 14 (ESB) & 15 May (DG) proved to be a **BICKNELL'S**. The average late date for **American Pipit** is 25 Ap. Thus one at Back Bay 27 Apr (ph. EA, TC, BS) through 3 May (MP, ph. EA, TC) was noteworthy. Four **Pine Siskins** flew over Jericho Ditch, Dismal 27 Apr (NF). A **Snow Bunting** continued at KSP to at least 17 Mar (ph. JM). A pale-eyed **Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus alleni/rileyi*) was near the same Back Bay area 19 May (ph. DC) that one was documented 28 May 2017 (ph. RBi). A **Vesper Sparrow** was off Grimstead Rd., Virginia Beach 17 Apr (ph. AB) and a **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at Wellington Neck, *Northampton* 29 Apr (RK). A f. **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at Chesconessex Schooner Bay, *Accomack* 16 (ph. LG) to 19 Apr (VK); an ad. m. was at Back Bay 11 May (AB). A **Baltimore Oriole** was noted on Mackay 27 (AB, TT) & 31 May (JMa). An **Ovenbird** in West Neck Cr. Natural Area, Virginia Beach 29 Mar (ph. RBi) preceded the species' Gold Book 31 Mar Coastal Plain extreme early date by two days; one was at Marsh View Pk., Virginia Beach 30 Mar (AB). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** in the Oak Springs section of Virginia Beach through 28 Apr (ph. CPa) extended the species' extreme late date (formerly 25 Apr) by three days. A **Prairie Warbler** in Lago Mar, Virginia Beach 31 Mar (ph. MCM) may have wintered nearby. Two distinctly different **Palm Warblers**, one "Western" (MCM) and one, possibly "Yellow" (TT), were at Back Bay 10 May, five days beyond the species' typical 5 May late date. Three singing **Black-throated Green Warblers**, probably *waynei*, were in Dismal off Douglas Rd., Chesapeake 16 Mar (NF). The ad. f. **Western Tanager** that wintered at Harding Dr., Chesapeake reappeared 15 Mar; it was last seen 7 Apr (ph. EM). Three additional reports for this species were a f. at Loch Haven Pk., Virginia Beach 5 Apr (ph. JSn); a f. at a feeder in Kempsville, Virginia Beach 22 Apr (ph. UD); and one that continued in the Alanton neighborhood, Virginia Beach to at least 24 Apr (MP). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Chinc. 24 May (DHo, LN, WR) was four days past the species' 20 May average late date. A m. **Painted Bunting** continued in Pungo, Virginia Beach to 11 Mar (ph. LH); 2 were off Glendale Ave, Chesapeake 21 Mar followed by one there 2 Apr (CA) and a f. was at Back Bay 2 May (ph. SM). A m. **Dickcissel** was at Mutton Hunk 7 May (JM); another was at Little Is. 23 May (TB) and a pair was at Magothy Bay 28 May (ph. RBi, NN).

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