



VIRGINIA BIRDS

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



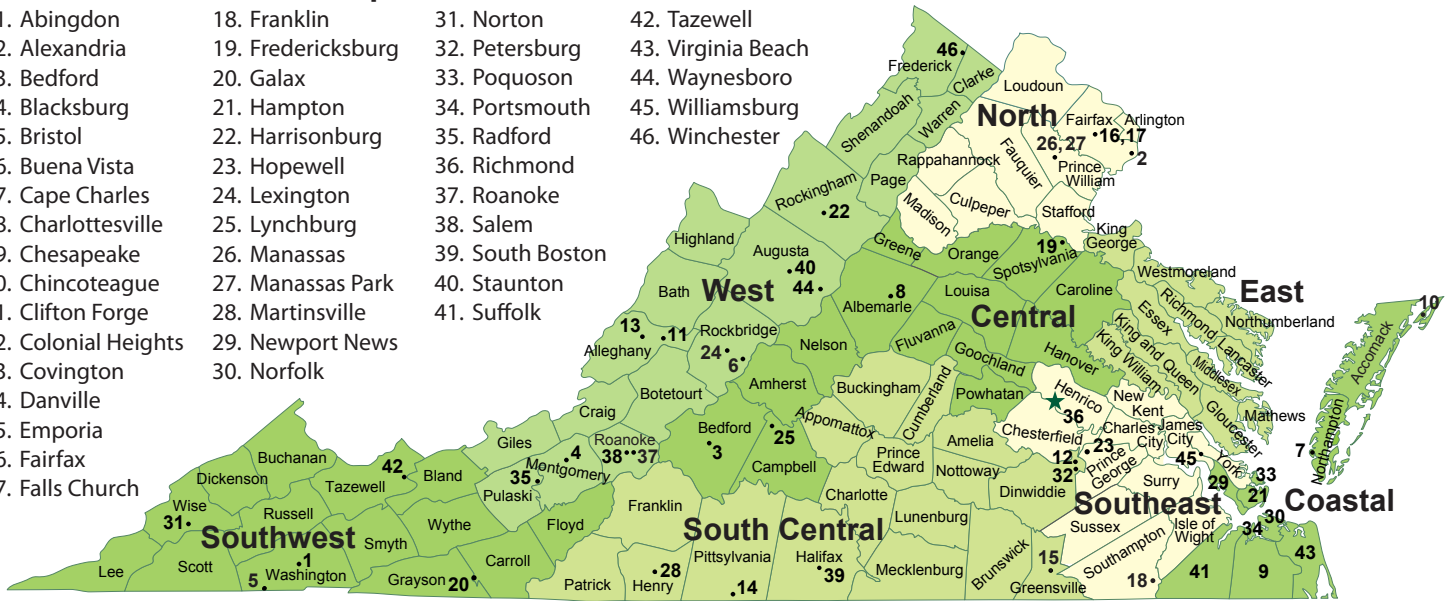
Volume 15 • Number 1

Summer Records • June–July 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: Zack Grasso photographed this Roseate Spoonbill 29 Jul at Hog Island WMA, *Surry*.

Blue Ridge Young Birders Summer Birding 2018

Ezra Staengl, August 2018

Blue Ridge Young Birders Club (BRYBC) members love to bird! Formed in 2012, there are roughly 15–20 active members in the group. Club members' summers have been filled with birding activities individually, in small groups, or with our families. Some of the most memorable birding moments this summer were during young birder camps, family vacations, and citizen science activities. Although we don't always bird as a club, the club's influence strongly affects our birding experience because we share so much information with each other. As we head into fall, our club, based in Charlottesville and surrounding counties, is planning lots of field trips and new outreach efforts to bring more kids into our group.

Club president Baxter Beamer attended the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine while his younger brother Tucker birded Maine with his mom. Vice-president Max Nootbaar went to the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado, where he enjoyed meeting and spending time with other young birders. He saw many classic birds of montane Colorado, including Black Swift, Brown-capped Rosy Finch, and White-tailed Ptarmigan. Camp Colorado and Hog Island had been attended previously by Blue Ridge Young Birders, who shared their experiences during club meetings and informally, encouraging other club members to attend. Baxter also attended the extremely competitive Cornell Lab Young Birder Event this summer, a weekend at the Cornell Lab for high school students hoping to pursue careers in ornithology. Club members have applied previously, and in 2017 Logan Anderson was the first club member to attend.

Many club member's family vacations this summer included birding to a large extent. Shea Tiller went to New York state, where he enjoyed seeing and photographing many northern birds. One of his best memories from the trip was listening to Bicknell's Thrushes on the high reaches of Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks. Drew Chaney's trip to Minnesota was primarily to attend the Dragonfly Society of the Americas' annual meeting, but he also spent time birding. He was most excited about getting to see his favorite sparrow, LeConte's, as well as Eared Grebes on their nests, Sedge Wren, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and Gray Jay. Charlotte Clements went to Alaska, where she saw many awesome birds, including nesting Tufted and

Horned puffins, Parasitic Jaeger, Northern Hawk Owl, Barrow's Goldeneye, and a Gyrfalcon. In a few weeks, my family is going to the Monterey Bay area of California. I am especially excited about the seabirds we'll see on the two pelagic birding trips we've scheduled.

Many club members worked hard this summer to contribute to the ornithological community through volunteer efforts such as the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2. A few club members signed up for atlas blocks near their houses, and many more contributed breeding evidence when they encountered it in the field. Max was very excited to discover a local population of Cerulean and Kentucky warblers in his atlas priority block east of Charlottesville at Wolfpit Mountain, at about 1500 feet.

I signed up for two atlas priority blocks near my house in Nelson County this summer. To my surprise and delight, I discovered a location where Cerulean Warblers breed at less than 800 feet—even lower than at Wolfpit Mountain. I also found Cerulean Warblers at above 3000 feet in the mountains, which was fun to confirm, as I had suspected the species would be there. I also discovered a large population of breeding Kentucky Warblers fairly close to where I live, which was exciting because I had not previously known a reliable spot for them in Nelson County. Walker Catlett, another club member, spent most Sunday mornings this summer volunteering rehabilitating baby birds at Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary.

The BRYBC just held its first ever election at its August meeting. We elected a new Field Trip Coordinator, Club Journalist, Girls' Outreach Coordinator, Secretary, and Treasurer. We hope having new club officers will help people feel invested in how the club is run and help us plan and organize our field trips and meetings more efficiently. The club office of Girl's Outreach Coordinator was added for the first time this year, in an effort to get more girls to participate actively in the club and increase the club's overall membership. The recently elected Girls' Outreach Coordinator Charlotte Clements' goal is to "encourage girls to feel comfortable participating in meetings, mentor each other, and expand on their birding skills. I would also like to increase the club's publicity so more girls that are interested in birding and nature could learn about the club and join."

Coming out of a fairly slow summer for organized club activities, the BRYBC has many great field trips scheduled for the fall season. In August and early September, we've planned trips for shorebirds to the Shenandoah Valley, Hog Island Wildlife Management Area, and Staunton River State Park. Later, we have scheduled trips to State Route

610 and Pocosin Cabin along the Blue Ridge Parkway to look for warblers migrating through the mountains, and to more local destinations such as Rockfish Valley Trail, Wolfpit Mountain, and Belvedere. In November, we are looking forward to our annual trip to the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding station in Rockingham County.



Five enthusiastic young birders!

From left to right are Tucker Beamer, Paul Buckley, Ander Buckley, Theo Staengl, and Drew Chaney.

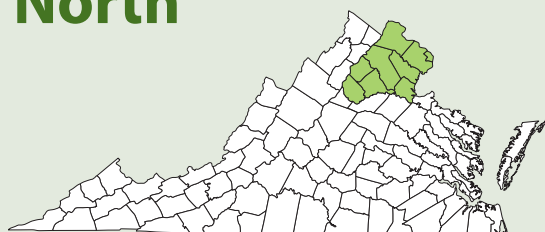


Ezra Staengl's 9 June 2018 photo of a Kentucky Warbler, *Nelson*



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

Temperatures averaged about normal through the period but ranged from very hot to cool. Rainfall was above normal through the period, particularly in July. The highlight of the season was a European Goldfinch that was reported in early and late June in *Prince William*.

Abbreviations: Clifton Institute (Clifton Institute, *Fauquier*); C.M. Crockett Pk. (C.M. Crockett Pk., *Fauquier*); Trump Nat. Golf Course (Trump Nat. Golf Course, *Loudoun*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Well past the species' 10 Apr Coastal Plain late date was a m. **Bufflehead** at Occoquan Bay NWR, *Prince William* 1 Jun (PWB). A **Red-breasted Merganser** tangled in fishing line was observed at C.M. Crockett Pk. 10–11 Jun (ph. KK), one of just a handful of summer records (usual Piedmont late date of 30 Apr, but known to linger into late May). A **Ruddy Duck** was seen from Aquia Cr. Rd., *Stafford* 9 Jun (KG, DL), much later than the Coastal Plain 15 Apr late date. Two **Northern Bobwhites**, a severely declining permanent resident species in the Piedmont, were heard near Bluemont, *Loudoun* on and off throughout the second half of July (JC).

A **Horned Grebe** in full breeding plumage, first seen 17 May on a small pond near Rt. 7, *Loudoun* (GG), continued through 6 Jun (m. obs., ph. GH). The Piedmont extreme late date is 20 Apr; only 2 or 3 summer records are listed in the Gold Book. Two **Chuck-will's-widows**, rare in the n.



Gerco Hoogeweg's Horned Grebe photo taken in *Loudoun* 6 June

Piedmont in summer, were heard along Richards Ferry Rd., *Culpeper* 4 Jun (m. obs., v.r. JF), while a single was heard along Snake Castle Rd., *Fauquier* 13 Jun (TDa). Single **American Avocets**, rare in the Region and particularly in the Piedmont, were seen at the Trump Nat. Golf Course 14 Jul (ph. DC) and Belle Haven Pk., *Fairfax* 15 Jul (ph. DL). Three **Semipalmated Plovers**, rare in summer this far inland, were seen at Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 5 Jun (ph. DS).



3 Semipalmated Plovers documented by Dixie Sommers at Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 5 June

Four **Stilt Sandpipers**, rare inland even as a fall transient, were observed at Bristow Rd. Sod Farm, *Prince William* 22 Jul (ph. MR), a week before the species' 30 Jul extreme early date. A **Solitary Sandpiper** reported at Algonkian Nature Preserve, *Loudoun* 14 Jul (BHe) preceded the Piedmont early date of 25 Jul.

TERNS–NUTHATCHES

Five **Forster's Terns**, a fairly rare transient (beginning 22 Jul) in the Piedmont, mostly at larger lakes, were seen at the Lowes Island Pond within Trump Nat. Golf Course 25 Jul (DC). A **Snowy Egret**, a rare post-breeding summer visitor in the Piedmont, was also seen in the ponds at Trump Nat. Golf Course 29 Jul (ph. DC). A **Cattle Egret**, a rare inland summer visitor, was seen at Mt. Vernon, *Fairfax* 10 Jun (ph. CK). There were numerous sightings of single **Ospreys**, a rare and local summer resident in the Piedmont: the Clifton Institute 4 Jun (CH, SG) and 27 Jul (TDa, MA); Algonquin Tr., *Culpeper* 4 Jun (TDa, IT); Mt. Vernon Farm, *Rappahannock* 6 Jun (BHa); C.M. Crockett Pk. 13 Jun (KK); Bleak Hill Rd., *Culpeper* 14 Jun (ph. KK); and L. Ashby, *Fauquier* 22 Jul (GS). Besides appearances at what are becoming traditional hangouts or nesting sites for the **Mississippi Kite**, a breeding pair was observed farther n. in Ashburn, *Loudoun* in late Jul (ph. GH). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was reported from Wind Fields Ln., *Loudoun* 25 Jun (LM, ES) far from the species' highland summering grounds; even there it is rare and local. Two **Peregrine Falcons** were seen together at Loudoun Water Authority, *Loudoun* 14 Jun (AG, BHe). An **Alder Flycatcher** was reported based on its call at White's Mill Tr., *Fauquier* 17 Jun (GS); there are only a handful of Piedmont summer records given in the Gold Book. A **Bank Swallow**, a rare summer visitor in the Piedmont, was seen at the Clifton Institute 4 Jun (CH, SG). A nesting colony of **Cliff Swallows**, discovered in 2017, was observed with 5 nests under the bridge at Bull Run Marina RP, *Fairfax* 3 Jun (PWB). There were also multiple sightings of 1–2 individuals again this year beginning 15 Jun (KR) along the Potomac Heritage Tr., *Arlington*, where the species is nesting under the bridge in the commuter parking lot. The **Brown-headed Nuthatch** present at Mountain Run L. Pk., *Culpeper* since winter was observed again 5 Jul and several more times through the month (KK).

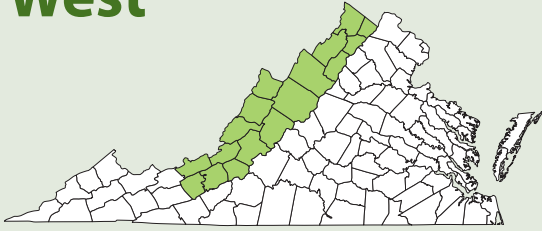
GOLDFINCHES–DICKCISSEL

There were two reports of a **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** within 5 mi. of each other, the first at a private residence in Quantico, *Prince William* 2 Jun (ph. AR) and the second along Danridge Manor Dr., *Prince William* 30 Jun (BS). One to 2 **Savannah Sparrows**, a rare summer resident in the extreme n. Piedmont and increasingly rare southward, were observed at Woodward Turf Farm, *Fauquier* 24–27 Jul (TDa) and a single near a private residence, *Loudoun* 26 Jul (JC). There were several widely separated reports in

Fauquier of **Bobolinks**, a rare summer resident in the nw. Piedmont (late date of 25 May), including multiple birds along Whitewood Rd. 11 Jun (KG); 2 m. at the Clifton Institute 19 Jun (CD); and 2 birds on Mill Reef Rd. 20 Jun (AD, BB). A **Blackburnian Warbler**, a fairly rare and local summer resident in the Mountains, was observed along Rapidan Fire Rd., *Madison* 8 Jul (TK), with 3 seen and well photographed there 14 Jul. A rare but increasing summer resident in the Mountains, a m. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was seen in Big Meadows, *Madison* 14 Jul (ph. TDo). Single **Yellow-throated Warblers**, a rare and very local summer resident in the n. Piedmont, were reported at three widely separated locations in Fauquier: C.M. Crockett Pk. 2 Jun (KK); along Crest Hill Rd. 14 Jun (BHa) (where it was heard the previous summer); and North Wales 27 Jun (BHa). A **Wilson's Warbler**, a fairly rare and late transient (the extreme late date in the Coastal Plain is 3 Jun), was observed at Franconia Forest Pk., *Fairfax* 4 Jun (RR). A f. **Summer Tanager**, a fairly rare summer resident in the n. Piedmont, was seen near Upperville, *Fauquier* 30 Jun (DL). Making a rare summer appearance were a duo (probably a pair) of **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** near Freezeland Rd., *Fauquier* 4 Jul (KG). There were several reports of up to 15 **Dickcissels**, historically a rare summer resident in the Piedmont, within a 4-mile radius of Nokesville, *Prince William* throughout the period (with many of the reports from Bristoe Station Battlefield Pk.). Two were also seen along Whitewood Rd., *Fauquier* 11 Jun (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*); RSTP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke)

WATERFOWL-GULLS

A **Ring-necked Duck** was observed at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 1–9 Jun and 26 Jul (GR). A **Long-tailed Duck** was at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 9 Jun (GR) and a m. **Bufflehead** was at L. Holiday, *Frederick* 1 & 2 Jun and 2 on 9 Jun (GR). **Common Merganser** reports included a f. with 7 ducklings at Richardson's Gorge, *Bath* 8 Jun (JS); a f. with 6 young on the Cowpasture R., *Bath* 6 Jun (PR); and a f. with 4 young at the Cowpasture R., *Bath* 27 Jul (MA, TD). Eleven were found on the James R., *Botetourt* 19 Jul (EW) and 9 on the Shenandoah R., *Warren* 21 Jul (JF). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was seen at Greenfield L., *Botetourt* 23 Jul (BE). Single **Black-billed Cuckoos** were found at Mountain L., *Giles* 2 Jun (SK, AP), in Blacksburg 2 Jun (DP, SP), in *Shenandoah* 2 Jun (MW, RW), on Paddy Knob, *Highland* 5 (KB, TB) & 16 Jun (SM), on the Appalachian Trail, *Giles* 8 Jun (MD), in Blue Grass Valley, *Highland* 14 (SG) to 17 Jun (SM), on Bald Knob, *Bath* 25 Jun (EO), on Elliott Knob, *Augusta* 7 Jul (AL), at Warm Springs, *Bath* 18 Jul (PR), at Mill Mountain Pk., Roanoke 21 Jul (JU), and in *Augusta* 29 Jul (VL). Two **Chuck-will's-widows** were heard in *Botetourt* 24 Jun (BE, MJ) and 2 Jul (JD, KD), and one at Union Springs, *Rockingham* 26 Jun (DL, GMo). Eleven **Virginia Rails** (8 ads., 3 young) were found in *Augusta* 22 Jul (AL). A **Sora** was seen in Blacksburg 5 Jun (RM), one heard at Nazarene Church Rd. Wetlands, *Rockingham* 7 (RK) & 10 Jun (DL, GMo), and one was at a beaver pond in *Rockbridge* 4 Jul (GB). Observations in *Augusta* were one seen or heard 1 Jun (AL) to 22 Jul (DH). Two **Sandhill Cranes** were first seen 16 Jun (MG) and last seen 25 Jul (GMo) near Broadway, *Rockingham*; one was also seen near Singers Glen, *Rockingham* 16 Jul (CT). A **Semipalmated Plover** was found at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 26 (JP) & 27 Jul (HH). Five or perhaps

more were found and photographed in *Frederick* 23 Jul (JF, DG); one was also seen and photographed in a flooded field in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (GMo). Four **Stilt Sandpipers** were in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (ph. GMo). Observations of **Least Sandpipers** included 3 near Riner, *Montgomery* 22 Jul (PL, DW), 3 at the RSTP 31 Jul (GRh), 7 in a flooded field in *Frederick* 31 Jul (GR), and 10 in a flooded field in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DL). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** was observed in a flooded field in *Frederick* 31 Jul (GR). **Pectoral Sandpiper** observations included 3 in *Frederick* 23 Jul (GR), one at the RSTP 24–25 Jul (KD), one at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 27 Jul (HH), one near Riner, *Montgomery* 29 Jul (PL, DW), and 4 in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DL). **Semipalmated Sandpiper** reports included 10 in *Frederick* 23 Jul (GR), one at Swoope, *Augusta* 26 Jul (HH), one at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 27 Jul (HH), 3 at the RSTP 30 Jul (WFa), and 2 in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DL). Two **Western Sandpipers** were at the RSTP 23 Jul (KD) and 8 **Short-billed Dowitchers** were photographed in a field in *Frederick*, also 23 Jul (JF, DG). **Spotted Sandpiper** high counts included 6 in *Augusta* 12 Jul (AL) and 9 at the RSTP 29 Jul (MA, KD, TD). **Solitary Sandpiper** peak counts were 6 in *Augusta* 12 Jul (AL), 7 at Swoope, *Augusta* 22 Jul (VL), 6 in *Frederick* 23 Jul (JF), 9 at the RSTP (MA, KD, TD), and 5 in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DH). **Lesser Yellowlegs** observations included 6 in *Frederick* 23 Jul (GR), one at the RSTP 23 Jul (KD), one at Blandy 24 Jul (DC), one at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 29 Jul (VL), and 2 in *Rockingham* 31 Jul (DL). A **Greater Yellowlegs** was seen at Leonard's Pond, *Rockingham* 3 Jul (HH), 3 at the Luray Caverns Airport, *Page* 22 Jul (DH) and 19 in *Frederick* 23 Jul (GR). A **Ring-billed Gull** was found in Harrisonburg 20 Jul (WB).

WADERS–DICKCISSEL

Four **Least Bitterns** were found in *Augusta* 8 Jun (AL, PV). A juv. **Little Blue Heron** was photographed at Swoope, *Augusta* 22, 24 (AL), and 29 Jul (VL). A **Cattle Egret** was seen near Snowville, *Pulaski* 28 Jul (AK, CK). **Black-crowned Night-Heron** reports included one at Silver L., *Rockingham* 11 (DH) & 17 Jun (HH), 3 at Newman L., Harrisonburg 11 Jun (MN), 8 in *Page* 16 Jun (JSw), one in *Frederick* 8 Jul (SS), one in *Shenandoah* 12 Jul (JF), and one at Hillandale Pk., Harrisonburg 19 Jul (DH). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** observations included 12 on the Roanoke R. Greenway, Roanoke 27 Jun (MB), 6 at Smith Pk., Roanoke 4 Jul (KD), one at Greenfield L., *Botetourt* (KD), and one at Claytor L., *Pulaski* 28 Jul (DG). A **ROSEATE SPOONBILL** was seen at a pond in Christiansburg, *Montgomery* 8 & 11 Jun (BKy). An imm. **White Ibis** was photographed in *Botetourt* 28 Jul (MS). Three **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were observed in *Highland* 6 & 15 Jun (JS), and one at Paddy Knob, *Highland* 9 Jun (WF). Single **Merlins** were in *Warren* 16 Jul (JF) and at the RSTP 30 (WfA) & 31 Jul (GRh). Single **Peregrine Falcons** were noted in Shenandoah NP, *Page* 11 (RL) & 15 Jun (JSw), in Harrisonburg 25 Jun (MG), near Greenville, *Augusta* 8 Jul (GD), in *Page* 13 Jul (AW), in *Rockingham* 20 Jul (CT), in *Pulaski* 25 Jul (GRh), and at the RSTP 30 Jul (WfA). One **Loggerhead Shrike** was found in Sinking Cr. Valley, *Craig* 5 Jun (KD, BK, BW), 2 in *Warren* 5 Jun (JF et al.), and 2 in *Clarke* 8 Jun (BL, JL). Recently fledged **White-eyed Vireo** young were noted at Elkton, *Rockingham* 8 Jul (DL, DW) and near Draper, *Pulaski* 18 Jul (LS). A juv. **Horned Lark** was seen with 2 ads. at Stuarts Draft, *Augusta* 12 Jul (AL). A flock of 20 was found 22 Jul in *Augusta* (VL). Three **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were seen on the Blue Ridge Parkway, *Roanoke* 12 Jun (TDv), one in Dublin, *Pulaski* 24 Jun (KD), and 4 at Longwood Pk., Salem 29 Jul (MA, TD). Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were observed in *Rockingham* 10 Jun (DL, GMo), one on the Appalachian Trail, *Clarke* 23 Jun (MD), 4 on Elliott Knob, *Augusta* including one young begging for food 7 Jul (AL), and 2 in *Pulaski* (DP, SP). Reports from *Highland* included 5 on 15 Jun (JS), 9 on 25 Jun (SH) and 8 on 9 Jul (SH). **Red Crossbills** were reported as follows: 2 at Poverty Hollow, *Montgomery* 9 Jun (RM); one on Butt Mt., *Giles* 13 Jun (EO); one on Bald Knob, *Bath* 25 Jun (EO); and 6 at Switzer Dam, *Rockingham* 21 Jul (DL, GMo). The Briery Branch area of *Rockingham* continued to have many reports, including ten 8 Jun (LC), and eight 21 Jun (KC, MBr). A **Pine Siskin** was seen at

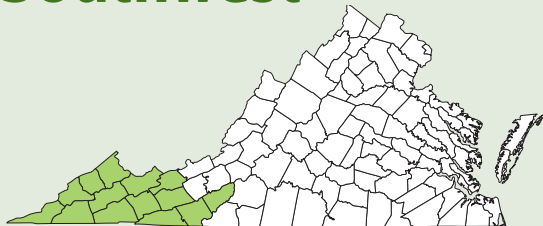
a feeder in *Alleghany* 9 Jul (SJ, LR) and 2 were at Glen Alton, *Giles* 22 Jul (CL). **Vesper Sparrow** observations in Blue Grass Valley, *Highland* included one 5 Jun (m. obs.), two 9 Jun (WF), and one 15 Jun (MBr, KC). Other reports were singles in *Warren* 6 Jun (MC) and at Middletown, *Frederick* 26 Jun (MG, DK). A straggler/late migrant **White-throated Sparrow** was in Bridgewater, *Rockingham* 1–3 Jun (WB). Among numerous **Bobolink** observations were 7 in *Highland* 2 Jun (m. obs.), 12 in *Warren* 5 Jun (JF), 12 in *Rockingham* including one f. carrying food 4 Jul (MG), 6 in *Frederick* with at least one recently fledged young 7 Jul (BL, JL), and 7 in *Bath* 28 Jul (MA, TD). **Golden-winged Warbler** observations included one in *Highland* 2 (SSc), 3 (m. obs.), and 14 Jun (SG). A m. and f. were seen there 7 Jun (SHg). A **Blue-winged Warbler** was heard in *Highland* 8 Jun (SHg), 2 in *Bath* 20 Jun (EO), one on the Appalachian Trail, *Warren* 21 Jun (WD), 2 in *Botetourt* 24 Jun (BE, MJ), and one photographed at Middletown, *Frederick* 26 Jun (MG, DK). Three **Prothonotary Warblers** were observed in *Clarke* 1 Jun (JF), one in Shenandoah NP, *Warren* 15 Jun (JW), one in *Page* 16 Jun (JSw), one at Solitude Swamp, *Botetourt* 24 Jun (BK), and one in *Clarke* 29 Jun (DC). A slightly late migrant **Blackpoll Warbler** was found in *Augusta* 1 Jun (EJ, JJ). Recently fledged **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found on Elliott Knob, *Augusta* 7 Jul (AL), and a f. was observed carrying food three times to a pine tree on Bother Knob, *Rockingham* 21 Jul (MG); a nest was not located. Multiple **Dickcissel** reports included 3 in *Shenandoah* 2 Jun (DH); 2 in *Warren* 5 Jun (JF); one in *Frederick* 7 (DGGr) & 13 Jun (BL, JL); 3 in *Augusta* 7 Jun (BB et al.); 8 in *Rockingham* 10 Jun (MG); one in New Hope, *Augusta* 13 Jun (GM); 2 in *Clarke* 5 Jul (BL, JL); 3 in *Pulaski* 25 Jun (MBy, SB), two 6 Jul (AK, CK), 8 Jul (KD), and one 25 Jul (GRh); one f. in *Montgomery* 22 Jul (PL, DW), and one recently fledged young 26 Jul (SK). Two, probably 4 young successfully fledged from the nest found in May near Blacksburg; 2 of the 6 babies were found dead in the nest, but the f. was observed feeding 2 fledged young nearby 19 Jun (RM).

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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

The Southwest Region benefited this summer from increased coverage for the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, with many interesting breeding records documented. The most outstanding find in this regard was a Chuck-will's-widow nest in *Lee*, apparently only the second documented nest in the Mountains and Valleys. Dickcissels again made a strong showing throughout the Region, being documented in 5 different counties. As is often the case, a few migrant shorebirds began to appear at the end of the season, with the highlight being a flock of 9 American Avocets at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth*, an apparent first record for this county. After an exceptionally dry summer last year, a return to more normal levels of precipitation was a welcome change. Rainfall in both June and July was right around the historical average of 4.57 inches. Temperatures were slightly above normal, with the average highs of 83°F in June and 85°F in July, both two degrees above the historical average for those months.

WATERFOWL—HERONS

A **Mute Swan** of uncertain origin was on Nicewonder's Pond, *Washington* 6 Jul (GR). An ad. m. **Ring-necked Duck** was at Breaks Interstate Pk., *Dickenson* 5 Jul (ph. JF), providing the first summer record for the Region and the fourth summer record for the Mountains and Valleys. Sightings of **Common Mergansers** in the Mountains and Valleys of Virginia during the summer months have increased markedly in recent years, but they are still fairly

unusual this far south in the state. This summer there were two sightings, 3 f. birds at N. Fork River Rd., *Washington* 1 Jun (RH) and an ad. f. at River Bridge Church, Rte. 772, *Washington* 20 Jun (ph. SH). **Northern Bobwhites** were reported at only 3 locations this summer with most reports coming from the Southern Gap Business Pk., *Buchanan*, 7 Jun–8 Jul (m. obs., ph. DO), with a high count of 8 on 7 Jun (GR). Elsewhere, the only reports were 2 at Blue Ridge Parkway—Comb's Farm, *Carroll* 1 Jun (TD) and 2 at Branscome Cemetery, *Carroll* 21 Jul (BL). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** seem to have colonized *Lee* in the last few years. After first being reported to eBird from Jonesville in 2017 (D&JK), this species was recorded in Jonesville again 7 Jul (ph. JF). An additional bird was discovered in Pennington Gap 9 Jun (EC, ph. MA) and again 7 Jul (ph. JF). The species was also reported several times from a known area in *Washington*; one 7 Jul Greenway Rd., *Washington* (GR); one in Meadowview, *Washington* 8 Jul (ph. JF). A 2-egg **Chuck-will's-widow** nest was found at The Cedars NAP, West Tract, *Lee* 9 Jun (EC, ph. MA). This is the second Mountains and Valleys breeding record. Later that evening 3 were singing at the same location, a new high count for *Lee* (MA, EC). Nine **American Avocets** were found at the beach at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 22 Jul (ph. TH), providing what appears to be the first record for the county. A handful of **Great Egrets** were reported in the Region this summer, including 2 at Cavitt's Creek Pk., *Tazewell* 17 Jul (CD); one at Falls Mills

Lake, *Tazewell* 31 Jul (JP); one along the Big Stone Gap Greenbelt, *Wise* 13 Jul (ES); and one at Hungry Mother SP, *Smyth* 22 Jun (F&KZ). Two **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were seen in Cumberland Square Pk., Bristol 4 Jul (GR); presumably the same birds were seen there 7 Jul (JF, GR). The only report of **Black-crowned Night-Heron** in the Region was a juv. at the Whitaker Hollow Park Boat Ramp, *Washington* 9 Jun(DL).

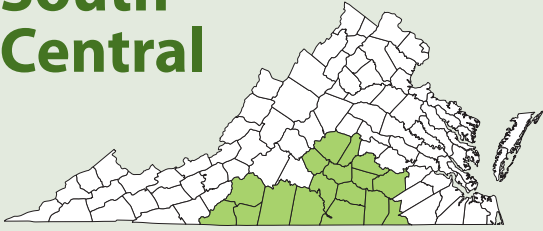
FALCONS–DICKCISSEL

A **Peregrine Falcon** pair was noted within a mi. of Breaks Interstate Pk., *Dickenson* 12 Jul (DR). **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** are usually only reported from the Grayson Highlands, *Grayson* area during the summer, so one along the Appalachian Trail at Garden Mtn., *Bland* 6 Jun (MD) was notable. The only report of **Alder Flycatcher** came from the Elk Garden Trail, *Smyth* 6 Jun (ph., v.r. SH). **Loggerhead Shrikes**, always a species of concern, were reported from multiple locations. One was present along Flatwoods Rd., *Lee* 9 Jun (EC, ph. MA); one was along Hideaway Ln., *Floyd* 23 Jun(JS); 2 were visiting a probable nest site in Elk Garden, *Russell* 4 Jul (ph. JF, GR); one was at the Virginia Highlands Airport, *Washington* 3 Jul (GR). There were two reports of **Horned Lark**; one near US 58 east of Jonesville, *Lee* 29 Jun (CN), and a f. defending a nest with eggs at the Southern Gap Business Park, *Buchanan* 4 Jul (ph. DO). **Swainson's Thrushes** were recorded near Massie Gap at Grayson Highlands SP, *Grayson* throughout the summer. The species were first reported 27 Jun(GR), a peak of 4 was recorded 30 Jun (GM), and the last report was 29 Jul (LA). A **Pine Siskin**, very unusual in the summer months, was on Compton Mt., *Buchanan* 19 Jun (v.t. RM). **Bobolinks** were recorded at a handful of locations. As usual, most reports came from *Tazewell* with reports of 2 at Burke's Garden 2 Jun (MA, EC), one at the same location 24 Jun (DS), and one at The Cove, *Tazewell* 12 Jul (CD). Less expected were 2 displaying m. at Elk Garden, *Russell* 4 Jul (JF, GR). **Blue-winged Warblers** were found in several locations. Four were at Horn Mt., *Buchanan* 2 Jun (RM); one at Rte. 641, *Buchanan* 5 Jun (GR); one at Little Fox Cr., *Buchanan* 20 Jun (JD); one at The Lake Rd., *Dickenson* 6 Jun (GR); one at Dale Ridge Rd., *Wise* 10 Jun (MA, EC); and 2 at McCall Fork Rd., *Wise* 13 Jun (GR), one of which continued through at least 6 Jul (ph. JF). The only report of **Prothonotary Warbler** in the Region was one on Fall Hill Rd., *Washington* 1 Jun (RH). In addition to being recorded at their usual spots at Roaring Branch Trail, *Wise*, and Breaks Interstate Pk. and other nearby locations in *Dickenson*,

Swainson's Warblers were found in several other locations. Up to 4 were recorded at several locations in se. *Washington* (m. obs.). One was singing along FR 234, *Scott* 7 Jul (v.r. JF). One was along the Appalachian Trail near Ceres, *Bland* 5 Jun (MD). Two were found at Jefferson NF, Hurricane Campground, *Smyth* 26 Jun (GR). This summer proved to be a good one for **Dickcissel** in the Region yet again. Up to 5 were recorded for the third straight year at Southern Gap Business Pk., *Buchanan* throughout the summer (m. obs., ph. DO, JF); one on Flatwoods Rd., *Lee* 9 Jun (MA, EC); one off US 58 west of Sticklelyville, *Lee* (CN); 3 along Curt Russell Rd., *Lee* 7 Jul (ph.,v.r. JF); one on Bishoptown Rd., *Scott* 7 Jul (v.r. JF), which may represent the first record for that county; one on Hideaway Ln., *Floyd* 23 Jun (JS); one on Debusk Mill Rd., *Washington*, 10 Jun (DL); up to 3 at the Virginia Highlands Airport, *Washington* 8–12 Jul (m. obs., ph. JF, GR).

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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

The dominant feature of the summer weather was abundant rainfall. While some observers commented that this hampered birding throughout the season, Breeding Bird Atlas work and other birding did result in a few noteworthy records. Water levels at Kerr Reservoir were generally high, reducing or eliminating shorebird habitat around the upper lake and leading to fewer wader reports than normal. Birds that were unreported Regionally this season included Common Nighthawk and Swainson's Warbler.

Abbreviation: Staunton View (Staunton View Public Use Area), *Mecklenburg*

SWANS—OWLS

A **Mute Swan** of unknown provenance appeared at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward* 25 Jun (AD, ph. JD, ES) but was not refound later. An imm. **Common Merganser** on the James R. at Bent Cr. 26 Jun (TS, ES) was about the third one reported for *Appomattox* and perhaps the first June record for the Region, and another Common Merganser was reported from the Dan R. at Danville 17 Jul (JB); these sightings were more evidence that the species continues its recent breeding range expansion in Virginia. Two Regionally rare **American Avocets** were seen in flight at Staunton View 14 Jul (JB). Six **Least Sandpipers** at Staunton View on 23 Jul (AD, JD) were the only ones reported. The earliest **Spotted Sandpiper** report was at Holliday Lk. SP, *Appomattox/Buckingham* 11 Jul (ES), followed by 4 at Staunton View 14 Jul (JB). An imm. **Laughing Gull** that appeared at Briery Cr. Lk. 31 Jul (TS) was remarkable since the species had only been recorded in *Prince Edward* previously after tropical storms had passed through the Region; the gull continued into Aug. The season's first and only **Caspian Tern** was at Staunton View 14 Jul (JB). Three **Mississippi Kites** at Twin Lks. SP, *Prince Edward* 19 Jun (TS) were north of their normal range in the Region. **Barn Owls** were reported at High Bridge SP,

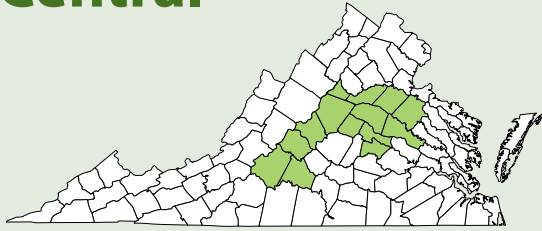
Cumberland (just across the river from *Prince Edward*) from at least mid-June (*fide* ES) until 10 July (TS, ES); this is the first report from *Cumberland* or *Prince Edward* for several years.

PASSERINES

Single **Loggerhead Shrikes** seen along Ramble Rd., *Halifax* 7 Jun (JB) and VA Rte. 45 in central *Cumberland* 29 Jun (DS) provided the only reports; both were continuing at known locations. **Cliff Swallows** attempted to breed on the Marrowbone Cr. causeway bridge at Sandy R. Res., *Prince Edward*, with the first reports there 20 Jun (ES, WR) and an ad. seen carrying nesting material 27 Jun (CMS); this was the first known nesting attempt for the county, though it's not clear if it was successful. This was also the only Regional report in the area between known colonies along the James R. to the north and the Roanoke (Staunton) R. and its impoundments to the south. A flock of over 4500 **Common Grackles** was seen flying overhead in South Boston, *Halifax* the morning of 5 Jul (JB); this would be a more typical sight in the fall months. An **American Redstart** believed to be an early fall migrant was in South Boston, *Halifax* 22 Jul (JB). At least 2 of the **Dickcissels** reported in the spring along Swan Rd. in *Appomattox* continued there until 23 Jul (ES) despite mowing of the fields where the species was nesting.

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Central



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

Abbreviation: SML: Smith Mountain Lake, *Bedford*

Stormy weather in the early part of the period made for an excellent showing of coastal birds at Smith Mountain Lake, *Bedford*. Several notable southern wanderers graced the Central Region this summer, including Mississippi Kite, Brown-headed Nuthatch (even farther north than usual), and a one-day-wonder duo of Roseate Spoonbills that delighted local birders.

WATERFOWL-SPOONBILL

Hooded Mergansers continued after their nesting at the usual spots in the Region: Reusen's Dam in Lynchburg 31 Jul (LA) and King Family Vineyard, *Albemarle* 2 & 3 Jun (ph. GG, JP). **Common Mergansers** also lingered on the upper James R. in western *Amherst* 6 Jul (AR, LA) and 29 Jul (BE, MJ). A rare summer resident in the Region, a **Black-billed Cuckoo** was heard singing at Grant's Hollow Rd, *Amherst* 26 Jun (LA). Two **Laughing Gulls** were produced in the sw. of the Region at SML 8 Jun (ph. BE, MJ, MH.) This sighting comes exactly one year after the Laughing Gulls were found nearby in *Amherst* last summer! Notable larids at SML also included a fallout 5 Jun, consisting of 2 **Ring-billed Gulls**, 3 **Black Terns** and 10 **Forster's Terns** (ph. BE, LA.) In addition, up to 2 **Common Loons** were seen there 5 thru 15 Jun (KC, m. obs.). To top off the already remarkable SML assortment, a single **Brown Pelican** was observed 4 & 5 Jun (MC, KC), and an astounding count of 4 was caught as they departed 8 Jun (ph. BE, MJ, MH), possibly representing the highest count of the species in the Piedmont! Two **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS** were at Stonehouse L. Pk., *Amherst* 9 Jun (JG, BE, MH, ES, ph. m. obs.).



Bob Epperson's 9 June photo of one of the 2 Roseate Spoonbills at Stonehouse L. Pk., *Amherst*

Another large scale irruption of this species took place this summer, and these represented not only an incredible first Regional record, but the first for the entire Piedmont!

RAPTORS-DICKCISSEL

An imm. **Mississippi Kite** was found 16 Jun at South R. Preserve, *Greene* (FA); this species is not known to nest in the Region although it almost certainly will in the coming years. A **Barn Owl** continued in the Scottsville area in s. *Albemarle*; one was seen 24 Jun (WC). Four **Bank Swallows** were observed at James R. Visitor Center, *Amherst* 3 Jul (AB.) The breeding status of this species in the Region and in the state at large is relatively poorly understood. **Brown-headed Nuthatches** continued their northerly expansion; 2 were at Overton, *Albemarle*, representing the 2nd record in the county and the 1st for more than a decade. A **Brown Creeper** was at Humpback Rocks, *Nelson* 14 Jun (EL, NL), possibly suggestive of breeding. A difficult species to pin down summering in the Region, a **Winter Wren** was located at Calf Mt., *Albemarle* 13 Jul (GB, SB). **Dickcissels** were reported somewhat more widely than usual this spring, but reports trailed off in the summer. Singing males were present in *Campbell* and multiple pairs were confirmed breeding in *Bedford*.

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Southeast



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The most remarkable thing about climate conditions in the Region this summer was how closely they hewed to historical averages. Overall temperatures averaged in the mid-70s during both June and July, with average high temperatures in the 80s during both months. Despite this relatively mild heat, however, there were a few outliers that made for brutal birding days, including a summer peak of 96.1° on 19 June. Precipitation in June was minimal, averaging 3.56 inches and holding very close to the historical average of 3.35 inches. However, July was marked by much heavier precipitation, with an average of 10.24 inches that nearly doubled the historical average of 5.47 inches. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the best birding in the Region this summer was at Hog Island, *Surry*, which hosted several major state and Regional rarities as well as astounding concentrations of many shorebird species. Highlights from Hog this summer included a stunning m. Ruff that was seen by many, a Roseate Spoonbill that was part of a larger continent-wide invasion, and a Gull-billed Tern far from its usual coastal haunts. Most of the action this summer revolved around shorebirds and waders, leaving little else of note but still providing ample respite from the summer birding doldrums.

Abbreviations: CCB (Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Hog (Hog Island WMA, *Surry*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIDS

This summer was an excellent nesting season for **Wood Ducks** at Harwood's Mill, *York*. Combined clutches from seven nest boxes totaled 200 eggs, of which 153 young survived to fledging (DY). Although **Ring-necked Pheasants** were once considered established in Virginia, those populations are now viewed as extirpated and occasional free-ranging birds likely represent releases or escapees. Nonetheless, a m. provided a fun surprise for several

birders visiting Hog this summer. It was first sighted 20 Jul (AB, TT) and continued to be seen until at least 22 Jul (ph. CC). Hog was bustling with shorebird activity this summer, and for many birders it was the place to be when seeking out locally uncommon species. Two **American Avocets**, rare but somewhat regular in the Region, were there 22 (DS) & 23 Jul (ph. BW). One of the highlights of the summer was a m. **Ruff** first spotted 20 Jul (AB, m. obs., ph. K&TB), which remained through at least 22 Jul (m. obs.).



Allen Bryan's photo of a Ruff spotted on Hog Island, *Surry*

Two carefully-described **Long-billed Dowitchers** were spotted amongst large concentrations of other species 22 Jul (AR, BB, LA, CC), providing the sixth local record. An occasional visitor to the Region, a "**Western**" **Willet** was there 18 Jul (ph. NN), while a Willet of unspecified subspecies was there 26 Jul (ES). In addition to these notable records, a number of more expected shorebird species yielded impressive counts, including peak totals of 1650

Semipalmated Sandpipers, 331 **Western Sandpipers**, 951 **Short-billed Dowitchers**, and 1342 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, all 20 Jul (AB, TT).

TERNs-WADERS

Beyond the shorebirds, another star of the show at Hog this summer was a **GULL-BILLED TERN** 28 Jul (ph. AD, PG, EA, TC). This provided only the third local record for a species rarely seen away from the immediate coast. For a second consecutive season and second consecutive summer a **BROWN BOOBY** was documented in the Region, this one perched on the railing of a sailboat at Yorktown, *York* 29 Jul (ph. RA). The CCB documented 163 **Double-crested Cormorant** nesting pairs in June at a colony site near Hopewell (BWA, BP). The status and distribution of **Anhingas** breeding in Virginia has been the source of much conjecture since a nesting pair was documented at Harwood's Mill Res., *York* in 2009 and a pair raised young in Virginia Beach in 2014. This summer 7 were detected at Harwood's Mill 6 Jun (DY), although no nesting evidence was found. However, breeding was confirmed at nearby Big Bethel Res., *York* with a pair at a nest (one bird incubating) 27 Jun (ph. BWA, ph. BW, BP). Subsequent visits to that location and others in the Region by the CCB revealed 3 nests at the Big Bethel site 12 Jul (MS, BWA), one active nest in *Charles City*, 7 active nests plus one pair at a partial nest in *Prince George*, and 2 active nests in *Isle of Wight* (BWA, BP). A **Least Bittern**, seldom seen in the summer and difficult to detect even when present, showed for a few lucky birders at Hog 20 Jul (AB, TT), and again 29 Jul (EA, ph. TC). Although the species has become essentially annual at Hog in recent years, **White Ibis** are still notable enough locally to merit a mention. Two were first seen at Hog 22 Jul (ph. AR, m. obs.), and continued throughout most of the summer and into Aug. Adding to the spectacle of birds at Hog this summer was a **ROSEATE SPOONBILL**, part of a larger northward movement that saw birds in locations as far-flung as Minnesota, Iowa, and Maine. This bird, which provided the second local record, was first detected 25 Jul (ph. NB, ph. TB), and continued into Aug.

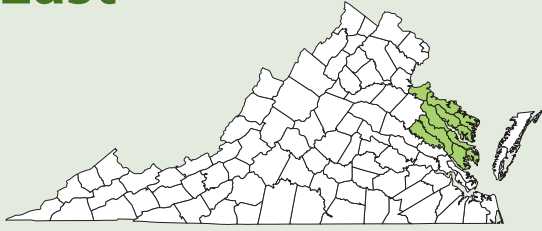
KITES-DICKCISSELS

Though the species continues to expand its range in Virginia, **Mississippi Kites** are still fairly rare in the Region, especially in summer. One was seen just northwest of Richmond, on Mapleton Rd., *Henrico* 13 Jul (ABO). Another was off Seaford Rd., *York* 31 Jul (JS), providing the first *York* record and first summer record for the Colonial

Historic Triangle area. Highly unusual in the summer, 2 **Pine Siskins** joined a group of **American Goldfinches** at a private residence in *Henrico* 27 Jul (ph. PM). **Dickcissels** turned up in a variety of locations scattered across the state, but were in relatively short supply locally. The only records this time came from *Isle of Wight*, with one at the intersection of Burwells Bay Rd. and Purvis Ln. 10 Jun (ph. JS, NN), as well as at least 2 continuing from late May at a location on Petersburg Rd. through 19 Jun (AF).

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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

Abbreviations: Beaverdam (Beaverdam Pk., *Gloucester*); Bethel Beach (Bethel Beach NAP, *Mathews*); Dameron Marsh (Dameron Marsh NAP, *Northumberland*); LaGrange Ln. (field is private from road only—LaGrange Lane near Sealston, *King George*)

WATERFOWL–SHOREBIRDS

Mute Swan reports included 2 near Mosquito Pt., *Lancaster* 16–24 Jun (JC); one to 2 in the Colonial Beach area of *Westmoreland* 15 Jun (JL) through 19 Jul (HT); one on Sandy Pt., Gwynn's Is., *Mathews* 23 Jun (MS); 2 at Hughlett Pt. NAP, *Northumberland* 26 Jun (ph. JD); and one at Harrell Pond, *King William* 27 Jun (AR); the season's peak count was 4 at Bethel Beach 5 Jul (CA). An **American Black Duck** was at Dameron Marsh 24 Jun (JD) and 6 were at Beaverdam 19 Jul (HC, MC). A f. **Ring-necked Duck** was at LaGrange Ln. 9 Jun (FA). A m. **Greater Scaup** lingered on Cobb's Cr. near Heathsville, *Northumberland*, 3–7 Jun (ph. LCh), which appears to be a first summer record for the Region, and a m. **Bufflehead** was at the same location 2 Jun (ph. LCh). A female-plumaged **Red-breasted Merganser** was at River Rd., *Lancaster* 9 Jun (ph. NN). Noteworthy **Northern Bobwhite** counts were 7 at Bareford's Mill, *Essex* 13 Jun (MCh, JCo), 13 along the Truhart BBS route, *King and Queen*, the highest count for that route since 2010, and a f. with 5 chicks near Mosquito Pt., *Lancaster* 26 Jul (ph. JC). Overall, it seemed to be an encouraging summer for Northern Bobwhite breeding in the Region, and so it will be interesting to see what numbers from CBCs this winter look like. A **Pied-billed Grebe** was at Fairway Dr., *Lancaster* 17 & 18 Jun (FAn). A **Horned Grebe** was at Sandy Pt., Gwynn's Is., *Mathews* 9 Jun (RB). A **Virginia Rail** was detected near Warsaw, *Richmond* 1 Jul (FA). An apparent family group of 5 **Black-necked Stilts** (2 ads., 3 juvs.) was observed in *Mathews* 28 Jul, initially at Bethel Beach ~8:15 a.m. then at New Pt. Comfort NAP at 11:15 a.m. (ph. AB). There were 4 **American Oystercatchers**

at North Haven Beach, *Mathews* 23 Jun (MS), 5 near Mosquito Pt. Rd., *Lancaster* 24 Jun (JC), and 4 at Bethel Beach 1 Jul (LCa). A **Ruddy Turnstone** foraging along the beach at Kohls Is., *Northumberland* 24 Jul (JW, KH) was only the fifth eBird record for the Northern Neck. There were 32 **Semipalmated Plovers**, 3 **Sanderlings**, 3 **Least Sandpipers**, 8 **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, and 2 **Western Sandpipers** at Bethel Beach 28 Jul (ph. AB). An **American Woodcock** was reported near Saluda, *Middlesex* 15 Jun (HC, MC).

TERNS-DICKCISSEL

A colony of 80 **Least Terns** was on Sandy Pt., Gwynn's Is., *Mathews* 23 Jun (ph. MS). Sixteen **Sandwich Terns** were at Gwynn's Is., *Mathews* 19 Jun (DS). A new eBird Regional high count of 11 **Cattle Egrets** was at Fickle Fen Rd., *Mathews* 3 Jul (ph. MS). Five **Glossy Ibis** were at Barefoot Mills Rd., *Essex* 6 Jun (MCh, JCo). An **American Kestrel** was at Venter & Commons Rd., *King William* 16 Jun (JH). Fourteen **Yellow-throated Vireos** were found along the Port Royal BBS route 17 Jun, *King George*, up from an average of 1–5 birds and a previous survey high



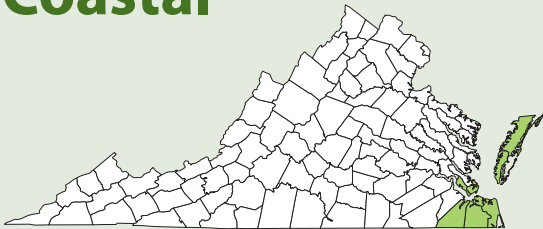
Two Northern Bobwhite chicks Joe Cooney photographed in his Mosquito Pt., *Lancaster* yard 26 Jul

of 8 (FA). A **Warbling Vireo** was at Westmoreland SP, *Westmoreland* 7 Jun (MM, RM). Among the scattering of **Horned Lark** reports was a peak count of 7 at Walkerton, *King and Queen* 29 Jun (FA). A new Truhart BBS high count of 25 **Purple Martins** eclipsed the previous high of 18. One hundred and twenty-five nesting **Cliff Swallows** were counted at Walkerton Landing, *King and Queen* 29 Jun (FA) and the Port Royal BBS high count was raised from 33 to 48, including a new colony of 22 birds at 16 nests, likely an offshoot of the long-present colony at the nearby Rt. 301 bridge over the Rappahannock R. (FA). For the third year in a row, both the Truhart and Port Royal BBS routes reported fewer than 10 **Carolina Chickadees**, with 3 and 4, respectively (FA). On a more promising note, the Port Royal BBS had its second highest **Wood Thrush** count in the past 11 years with 20 birds. **Eastern Towhee** numbers were at their lowest for the past 23 years on the Truhart BBS; the previous low was 17 (FA). **Chipping Sparrows** were at the species' lowest number for the past 11 years on the Port Royal BBS with only 20 individuals, down from the typical tally of 30 or more (FA). The highest reported **Grasshopper Sparrow** count was 10 at the Tappahannock-Essex County Airport, *Essex* 9 Jun (MG). Two **Swamp Sparrows** were detected in a marsh along

the Rappahannock R. near Warsaw, *Richmond* 1 Jul (FA). A singing **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was heard and audio recorded 5 Jul along Spring Garden Rd., *King and Queen* (MCh, JCo); this is apparently the first July record for this species in the Region and one of only very few for the Virginia Coastal Plain. The Port Royal BBS high count of **Yellow-throated Warblers** doubled from 2 in previous years to 4 for 2018 (FA). **Indigo Bunting** numbers were down to 31 along the Truhart BBS, where the previous low was 36 and the high was 71 (FA). After reports of singing m. from five different locations this spring, only two **Dickcissel** observations were filed for the Region, both on 9 Jun; a single bird was near Leedstown, *Westmoreland* (FA) and 2 were at Field Trail Rd., *Lancaster* (NN).

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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 Center for Conservation Biology's quinquennial colonial waterbirds survey topped the roster of comprehensive breeding bird censuses that spanned the entire Region. A significant finding of that multi-partner effort confirmed the long-held belief that more Anhingas bred in this and adjacent Regions than heretofore known. Another intensive project carried out by staff and students from the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program investigated reproductive and foraging ecology of seabirds nesting on the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 volunteers weathered a relatively dry June then the second wettest July

on record to add data to blocks in Regions 6, 12, and parts of 11. Roseate Spoonbills made several media-enriched eBird lists pretty in pink.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bat NWR, Virginia Beach); CCB (The Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, *Accomack*); CVWO (Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory); Craney (Craney Island Dredged Materials Management Area, Portsmouth); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia

NWR, *Northampton*); First Landing (First Landing SP, Virginia Beach); GATR (GATR Tract, Mockhorn Is. WMA, *Northampton*); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (Hampton/Norfolk); Magothy Bay (Magothy Bay NAP, *Northampton*); PHP (Pleasure House Point, Virginia Beach); VBBA2 (Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2); VDGIF (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

WATERFOWL-SKIMMERS

The **Tundra Swan** that was at Back Bay at the end of the spring season continued through 9 Jul (m. obs.). A **Ring-necked Duck** was at Back Bay 5 Jun (BA). **Surf Scoter** reports included one off 85th St., Virginia Beach 8 Jun (AB), 2 at Chinc. 17 Jun (Anonymous) then one there 21 Jun (JL, LB). A **Black Scoter** was at King-Lincoln Pk., Newport News 9 Jun (ph. JS). Another 8 were off Metompkin Is., *Accomack* 3 Jul (JL) and 2 were at Chinc. 31 Jul (m. obs.). A f. **Hooded Merganser** was at First Landing 19 Jun (J. A.). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was at Long Cr./Great Neck, Virginia Beach 2 & 3 Jun (ph. JMc); another was noted at Back Bay 25 Jun (BA et al.) and 18 Jul (ph. SM). An alternate plumaged **Horned Grebe** was at Messick, Poquoson 30 Jun (ph. JJ). A **White-winged Dove** frequented a Chincoteague, *Accomack* yard 11–13 Jun (ph. JM). The 6 Jun VBBA2 survey of the Hallwood SE, *Accomack* Priority Block listed a **Common Gallinule** (HA). An **American Coot** made the 15 Jun and 5 Jul Back Bay survey lists (DH et al.). There were 5 **Black-necked Stilts** at Saxis, *Accomack* 23 Jun (JG, JoG). The species' high count at Queen Sound Channel near Chincoteague, *Accomack* was 12 on 22 Jul (CL). The number peaked at 69 on Craney 7 Jun (AM, LS, BW, DY) where only 3 pairs produced young. Nest failure by other pairs on the facility was attributed to weather related inundations. Four **American Avocets** made a stop at Messick, Poquoson 17 Jul (HC, RC). The Region's high count was 366 at Craney 26 Jul (DY et al.). Preliminary totals from the VDGIF-coordinated annual Virginia Plover Survey tallied 40 **Wilson's Plover** pairs and 227 **Piping Plover** pairs (RBt et al.), all on coastal barrier islands. Seven **Stilt Sandpipers** at Chinc. 7 Jun (JL) provided a rare summer season data point for this species. Single **Long-billed Dowitchers** were at Craney 22 Jun (ESB, AM, LS, BW) and 26 Jul (ph. DY et al.). **Dunlin** are rare in the Region after early June. Thus one at Craney 12 (ph. BW, BA, AH, DY) & 19 Jul (LS, BT, BW, DY) was noteworthy. The season's first reported "**Western**" **Willet** was at Craney 29 Jun (ESB, AM, LS, BW). The largest **Double-crested Cormorant** colony ever recorded in the state, 4606 active nests, was documented

in June on South Pt. Marsh, *Accomack*; another 197 nests were on the transmission towers adjacent to the James River Bridge, Newport News/Suffolk (BP, BWa). The South Pt. Marsh, *Accomack* site also supported 1753 **Brown Pelican** nests (BP, BWa) and once again there was an active colony on Wreck Is., *Northampton* (*vide* RBt, AWi). Extensive monitoring of seabirds nesting on the HRBT documented 3937 **Laughing Gull** nests, 65 **Herring Gull** nests, and 10 **Great Black-backed Gull** nests (*vide* RBt, LS). Two rooftop **Least Tern** colonies totaled ~46 pairs, 21 at Patrick Henry Mall, Newport News and ~25 at Langley Air Force Base, Hampton (MS, RBt). The HRBT's nesting ad. **Gull-billed Tern** count peaked at 25 in late May/early June (LS et al.). An "enormous, near fledgling **Caspian Tern**" was banded near Chincoteague, *Accomack* 16 Jul (JW et al.). A **Black Tern** was at Back Bay 14 Jul (DC); one to 3 were at Chinc. 27–31 Jul (m. obs.). Additional HRBT nesting totals included 527 ad. **Common Terns**, ~3500 **Royal Tern** pairs, ~100 **Sandwich Tern** pairs (the latter estimates derived from banding chicks) and 292 ad. **Black Skimmers** (LS et al.).

LOONS-DICKCISSEL

A **Red-throated Loon** was at Chinc. Jun 27 (JL) and 2 **Common Loons** were near Ft. Monroe, Hampton 11 Jun (EA, TC). An estimated 40 **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** were encountered in the Chesapeake Bay between *Northampton* and *Mathews* 29 Jun (RBt et al.); 2 were at the Cape Henry Wreck, off Virginia Beach 3 Jul (AH) and singles were off Cape Henry, Virginia Beach 4 Jul (ph. JF) and southern *Northampton* 10 Jul (AW). Twenty-one **Snowy Egret** pairs successfully nested on the HRBT (LS, ph. BW et al.) marking the third consecutive year the species has bred on this man-made site. Two **ROSEATE SPOONBILLS** were at PHP 3 Jun (ph. HD *vide* UD). One was observed weekly at Craney 22 Jun (ESB, AM, LS, ph. BW) through 19 Jul after which 2 were recorded 26 Jul into the fall season (LS et al.). The CCB waterbirds survey found two active **Anhinga** nests at an unspecified Virginia Beach site (BWA). Elsewhere, single **Anhingas** were seen at Dockyard Landing, Chesapeake 6 Jun (CO) and at L. Wright, Norfolk 26 Jul (DC). **Mississippi Kites** were detected in lower *Northampton* from Capeville to the ESVNWR 2 (TT) through 13 (ph. ESB) Jun including 9 on 9 Jun—3 at Bull's Dr. (ph. MiP) plus six 40 min. later ~5 km to the n. at Dunton Cove Rd. (MeP, ph. MiP, CO). Later in the month, one was near Cheriton 30 Jun (MeP, MiP). Breeding was confirmed for a fourth consecutive year in Thoroughgood, Virginia Beach where up to 4 birds were tracked during the season (TT).



This Roseate Spoonbill was photographed at Craney 28 June by Bill Williams

One–2 (of the Thoroughgood kites?) were sporadically noted ~4 km se. in the Kings Grant area of Virginia Beach to 8 Jul (ph. M&RF, LW). On the Peninsula, a chance sighting of an ad. Mississippi Kite near Artillery Rd., Hampton 28 Jul (RBi, EM, JS) led to 30 (ph. CK, MN) & 31 Jul (BB, SB) observations of an ad. apparently feeding a juv., which strongly indicated a near-by nesting. Two **Northern Harrier** reports involved singles at Bull's Dr., *Northampton* 2 Jun (TT) and at Craney 12 Jul (BA, LS, BW, DY). A **Warbling Vireo** was in Paradise Cr. Nature Pk., Portsmouth 12 Jun (DG). A second one was audio-recorded at Ashville Pk., Virginia Beach 14 Jun (ph. ML, PM) where it entertained m. obs. through 26 Jun (K&TB). Once again a pale-eyed **Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus alleni/rileyi*) was documented at Back Bay, this one 27 Jul (K&TB). A

Bobolink was at Chinc. 15 Jun (JL). The Northwest R. Pk., Chesapeake **Prothonotary Warbler** nest box monitoring study, a cooperative project of the CVWO and the City of Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism, was conducted for an eighth consecutive year. A record breaking 318 nestlings were banded from 78 of the study site's 83 nest boxes. Fourteen of the banded chicks were the product of three broods raised in a single box! Another box produced a leucistic nestling. A f.



Shirley Devan's 29 June photo of a leucistic Prothonotary Warbler chick in a Northwest River Pk., Chesapeake nest box.

banded on the study site as an ad. in 2012 was recaptured, making her at least 7 years old (SD et al.). A first-summer **American Redstart** was at a Virginia Beach feeder 28 Jul (ph. K&TB). A **Dickcissel** pair was at Bull's Dr./Magothy Bay, *Northampton* 2 (ph. TT) through 10 Jun (ph. WL); a singing m. was off Knott's Is. Rd., Virginia Beach 7 Jun (TT).

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