Editors' Notes

Most regions reported a warmer than normal spring, following a fairly mild winter, with the early arrival of migrants and early nesting and egg dates noted from many places. The Coastal Region proved the exception where the songbird migration was of lower volume and lower diversity than expected. The summer was reported to be very hot and dry in most regions. However, the Coastal Region experienced average rainfall and the Southwest had the wettest July on record.

Good Birding,

Alan and Linda

On the Cover: These American White Pelicans were part of the group that appeared in record breaking numbers at Hog Island. Photograph by Adam D’Onofrio.
Virginia Birds Regions

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

Reports Due to Regional Editors
15 Aug
15 Dec
15 Mar
15 Jun
March continued the trend of very warm and dry weather in the Region, the average temperature being a full 10 degrees above normal. This above-average warmth was maintained through the season, though to a lesser degree. May was the third-warmest on record and dry as well with precipitation 2.5 inches below average. Whatever stress relief the temperate winter gave the birds of Virginia might have been mitigated by the impact to the food supply brought on by the dry and warm spring. A total of 214 species were reported this season.

Abbreviations: Dulles Greenway (Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, Loudoun); Huntley (Huntley Meadows Park); Occoquan (Occoquan Bay NWR, Prince William); Shenandoah (Shenandoah SNP); Thompson WMA (G. R. Thompson WMA, Fauquier).

SWANS — IBIS
The Cygnus genus was represented by reports of 100 Tundra Swans in Prince William 6 Mar (PB) and 4 Mute Swans there 16 Mar (TD), though no Trumpeter Swans were reported. A home in Arlington was visited by 500 Canada Geese 2 Mar (CB). Two Cackling Geese were found near Belvoir Pond in Fauquier 5 Mar (TD). With the Cackling Goose still a relatively new species in the state, the occasional sightings reported help establish its habits. During the last ten years, Cackling Goose spring reports in the Region tended to be clustered in Fairfax and Fauquier counties. The Dulles Greenway was host to 20 Green-winged Teal and 20 American Black Ducks 10 Apr (JN) as well as 30 Northern Pintail 10 Mar (MM). Blue-winged Teal reports came from various places: one in Culpeper 27 Mar (TD), eight at the North Fork Wetlands, Prince William 11 Apr (DL), and nine in Fauquier 12 Apr (TD). The high counts of 20 Northern Shovelers and 50 Gadwall were achieved on 10 Mar at the Dulles Greenway. Loudoun was also home to the sighting of a single White-winged Scoter 29 Apr (RD). Merganser sightings were of 3 Hooded Mergansers in Rappahannock 27 Mar (TD) and a high count of 220 Red-breasted Mergansers in Fairfax 5 Mar (DL). Despite its name, the Common Merganser is not very seasonally common throughout much of the Region, so a lack of reports of this species is not necessarily significant. Ruffed Grouse were seen at the Thompson WMA 7 May (KR) and along Skyline Drive in Shenandoah, Rappahannock 15 May (TD). Common Loons were very common, with reports coming from Prince William (AC), Culpeper (TD), Fairfax (DB), Fauquier (TD), Loudoun (JC), and Alexandria (JC) throughout April and May. Three Pied-billed Grebes were at Lake Pelham, Culpeper 27 Mar (TD). Horned Grebes were very commonly seen this season and were reported in Alexandria (TB), Culpeper (TD), Loudoun (GHo), Fauquier (TD), Prince William (TD), Rappahannock (TD), and Fairfax (PR) from late-March through the entire month of April. A Double-crested Cormorant seen near Woodbury Forest in Madison 7 Apr (TJ), was a good distance from the river areas where they are common as demonstrated by the seasonal high count of 250 in Fairfax 31 Mar (GM). Two Least Bitterns were observed at Occoquan 24 May (DB). Glencarlyn Park in Arlington was host to 3 Great Egrets 15 May (TB) and 2 Snowy Egrets.
were at Fairfax 26 Apr (RS). The high-count of Green Herons was five in Loudoun 5 May (GH). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was on Four Mile Run in Alexandria 13 May (JC). A Glossy Ibis was at Bles Park, Loudoun 5 May (GHo).

HAWKS — VIREOS
Noteworthy Buteo sightings include: 3 Red-shouldered Hawks at Daniel’s Run Park in Fairfax City 12 May (EM); 7 Broad-winged Hawks in Fauquier 15 Apr (TD); 3 Red-tailed Hawks on Old Rag Mountain, Madison 11 Mar (WB); and a Rough-legged Hawk at Sky Meadows, Shenandoah 19 Mar (TD). Rallidae sightings included 5 King Rails at Occoquan 4 May (PS); 2 Virginia Rails at Huntley 26 Mar (HG); and 44 American Coots at the Dulles Greenway 10 Mar (MM). Reports of large numbers of plovers were scarce this season, though 5 Semipalmated Plovers were at the Woodward Turf Farm, Fauquier 26 May (LC). Two Killdeer made the high count for those plovers seen at Woodbury Forest, Madison 7 Apr (TJ). Yellowlegs were represented by counts of 51 Greater Yellowlegs on Neabsco Creek, Prince William 14 Apr (LC) and 16 Lesser Yellowlegs at Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge 28 Apr (RW). Solitary Sandpipers were the most abundant and common sandpipers, with 15 individuals sighted at Huntley 17 Apr (PS) being the high count, though observations also came from Arlington (AS), Loudoun (GH), Prince William (EM), and Rappahannock (RR) during the first two weeks of May. Spotted Sandpipers were almost as abundant and quite widespread with the species being seen from late-April to mid-May in Alexandria (EM), Arlington (AS), Fauquier (TD), Loudoun (GH), Prince William (KR), and Rappahannock (RR). The highest count was nine birds at Lake Fairfax Park in Fairfax 13 May (MV). Other sandpiper counts were a Semipalmated Sandpiper at the Woodward Turf Farm in Culpeper 21 May (TD); a Least Sandpiper at Broadlands Wetlands Nature Preserve in Loudoun 5 May (GHo); and a Pectoral Sandpiper in Loudoun 5 May (GH). Occoquan was the site of the highest gull and tern counts this spring: 250 Bonaparte’s Gulls 29 Apr (SL); 50 Caspian Terns 29 Apr (SL); and a Royal Tern 7 Apr (GK). Eighteen Acadian Flycatchers were at Potomac Overlook Regional Park in Arlington 13 May (AS). Sixteen Bank Swallows were observed at Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge 28 Apr (RW). Interesting thrush counts were two sightings of two Gray-cheeked Thrushes coming from Monticello Park, Alexandria 19 May (RTa) and Manassas Gap Park, Fairfax 20 May (KH), respectively, and 6 Swainson’s Thrushes in Fauquier 12 May (TD). The report of a BICKNELL’S THRUSH # identified by song at Potomac Overlook Regional Park on 12 May was accepted by VARCOM providing the first Piedmont record to be reviewed and accepted since the species was split from Gray-cheeked Thrush in 1995 (AS, LF). Counts of the less-common vireos included 4 Blue-headed Vireos at Thompson WMA 28 Apr (LC) and 4 Yellow-throated Vireos observed both at Prince William Forest Park in Prince William 21 Apr (GK) and in Fauquier 2 May (TD).

WARBLERS — ORIOLES
A Blue-winged Warbler was found at Sky Meadows, Fauquier 28 May (SB), but the high count of five occurred at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship 26 May (GHo). The closely-related Golden-winged Warbler was seen at the Blue Ridge Center, Loudoun 6 May (PWB). A Nashville Warbler was found at Daniels Run Park in Fairfax City 12 May (LM). Three Blackburnian Warblers were seen at Monticello Park in Alexandria 3 May (FV). Yellow-throated Warblers turned up throughout the Piedmont with the highest count being 17 along Possum Point Road in Prince William 15 Apr (LC). To summarize other notable warbler sightings and high counts: 22 Blackpoll Warblers Glen Carly Park, Arlington 15 May (TB) and a seasonal high count of 35 Occoquan 18 May (LC); 14 Cerulean Warblers Thompson WMA 20 May (LC); 12 Prothonotary Warblers Occoquan 5 May (JF); 12 Worm-eating Warblers near the intersection of Possum Point Road and Cockpit Point Road Prince William 6 May (RTa); 18 Ovenbirds Prince William Forest Park, Prince William 21 Apr (GK); 5 Northern Waterthrushes Occoquan 4 May (TD); 7 Louisiana Waterthrushes Blue Ridge Center for Economic Stewardship, Loudoun 26 May (NVBC); 40 Common Yellowthroats at Occoquan 5 May (NVBC); 20 Canada Warblers Hawk hill Mountain in Shenandoah 13 May (CL); and 12 Yellow-breasted Chats Occoquan 5 May (CL). A BREWER’S SPARROW # was seen at Occoquan 17 Mar (LM). Reports of Rusty Blackbirds came from Arlington (JB), Culpeper (RR), Loudoun (NH), and Stafford (AmS) throughout the course of March. Twenty-eight Orchard
Orioles were seen in one day at Occoquan 4 May (TD).


West

GESE — RAILS
Thirteen Greater White-fronted Geese were at farm ponds at Stuarts Draft, Augusta (m. ob.) 1-13 Mar. Two Mute Swans were found at Mt. Solon, Augusta 22 Apr (WL). A female Wood Duck with five ducklings was observed in Roanoke 3 May (EB). On farm ponds near Stuarts Draft, 23 Northern Shovelers were found 1 Mar (AL & PW), providing a new local spring peak count. One Redhead was on Greenfield Pond, Botetourt 3 Mar (BD & BG) and one was also seen and heard at Bent Mountain, Roanoke 27 Apr (RA). A Virginia Rail was in rehabilitative care in Roanoke 14 Apr (ME) and was released at Gala Wetlands, Botetourt 10 May. One Short-billed Dowitcher was found 28 Apr at the Days Inn Pond, Staunton, (DL, WL & GMo). Noteworthy gull and tern reports were of 46 Bonaparte’s Gulls at Riverview Park in Radford 10 Apr (CK) and 2 Forster’s Terns at Greenfield 30 Apr (KD). A Sandhill Crane was seen at Beahms Gap on Skyline Drive 25 Apr (JL & BJL), and one was also seen and heard at Bent Mountain, Roanoke 27 Apr (RA). A Rufous Hummingbird, present from 1 Mar to 20 Apr, at Middle Brook, Augusta was banded by Bruce Peterjohn on 10 Mar. Ten Red-headed Woodpeckers were tallied on Augusta County’s Big Spring Day 6 May, for a new local spring peak count. A hybrid or intergrade Northern Flicker with characteristics of both Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted was observed 6 May near Dublin was with two Yellow-shafted Flickers (CK).

CUCKOOS — BOBOLINKS
A Black-billed Cuckoo was present at Woodpecker Ridge, Botetourt 29 Apr (BK). One was heard in Troutville, Botetourt 1 May (WT) and another heard 3 May on Poor Mountain Road, Roanoke (EB) and one was present near Dublin, Pulaski 6 May (CK). Two Chuck-will’s-widows were heard near Stuarts Draft 21 Apr (BT) and one was heard in Blacksburg, Montgomery 27 Apr (TD). A Ruffus Hummingbird, present from 1 Mar to 20 Apr, at Middle Brook, Augusta was banded by Bruce Peterjohn on 10 Mar. Ten Red-headed Woodpeckers were tallied on Augusta County’s Big Spring Day 6 May, for a new local spring peak count. A hybrid or intergrade Northern Flicker with characteristics of both Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted was observed 6 May near Dublin was with two Yellow-shafted Flickers (CK).

A Merlin was found near New Hope, Augusta 8 Mar (GM) and another was seen “hurrying north” at Swoope, Augusta 31 Mar (JLa & VL). A Philadelphia Vireo was reported on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Augusta 15 Apr (BT). A tally of 195 Horned Larks in vicinity of Stuarts Draft provided a new local spring peak count 1 Mar (GM & MM). Nine Brown Thrashers were counted along a short section of the Huckleberry Trail, Montgomery 13 Apr (RC). Wabler reports included a Blue-winged found along Stony
Like most springs, migrants provided many of the reported highlights in the Region. Whether due to better reporting, more observers in the field, actual changes in migration, or a combination of these and other factors, early arrival dates for many migrants were reported. Many reports mentioned below were gleaned from the Va-bird listerv and reports to eBird.

**DUCKS—TERNS**

Two Redhead, generally uncommon in the Region, were in Amherst on 3 Mar (MJ), as were two Common Mergansers, also uncommon regionally, with four there on 4 Mar (MJ); two Common Mergansers were also on the James R. at Warren Ferry, Albemarle, on 20 Apr (JP, TJ). One American Bittern, locally rare, was calling at a marsh in n. Albemarle, 18 Apr (SM). A Swallow-tailed Kite flying over a home in Evington, n. Campbell, on the evening of 16 Apr was completely unexpected (JD, TD). An apparent vocalizing Virginia Rail at Bentivar Marsh, Albemarle, on 27 Mar (SM), was of note especially because of the early date (no previous county record for March). Both Semipalmated Plovers and Semipalmated Sandpipers, uncommon to rare migrants in the Region, were photographed at Lickinghole Cr. Pond, Albemarle, on 26 May (MF, PM). An early Caspian Tern was reported at Mill C. Lk. Amherst, 18 Mar (MJ), and one was at the same location on 19 Apr (JL). A Black Tern photographed in Crozet, Albemarle, 15 May, was the first reported in the county in several decades.

**VIREOS—DICKCISSEL**

White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireos were found at Powhatan Lakes WMA, Powhatan, 8 April, a relatively early date for the area (WE). Two singing Marsh Wrens, presumably migrants, and seldom detected in the county, were at a marsh in n. Albemarle, 18 April (SM). Singing Louisiana Waterthrushes were heard 17 Mar along Dutch Creek, Nelson (AH), and 18 Mar along Rocky Mt. Rd., Bedford (RB), both early even for this early-returning species. A Prothonotary Warbler also made an early return to Powhatan Lakes WMA, Powhatan, 8 Apr (WE). A male Dickcissel was found on recently logged land west of Woodstock, Shenandoah 8 Apr (JL & BJL). A male Dickcissel was found in the same location where nesting occurred last summer in Fredrick County 12 May (BJL & JL). One was also found near Swoope 17 May (JS). Near New Hope 45 Bobolinks were found 30 Apr (GM).

A total of 215 species were observed in the Region including such exciting birds as Black-necked Stilt, American White Pelican, Tricolored Heron, Common Gallinule, American Golden-Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black Skimmer, Least Flycatcher, American Tree Sparrow, and Painted Bunting. Following such a mild winter and with a warmer than usual Mar, many of the winter birds cleared out early and many of the spring migrants and breeding passerines arrived early.

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**Abbreviations:** Beaverdam (Beaverdam Park, Gloucester); Bethel (Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, Mathews); Beulahville (upper King William); Dameron (Dameron Marsh Natural Area Preserve Northumberland); Hughlett (Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve, Northumberland); John’s Pt. (John’s Point Landing, Gloucester); K. G. Ponds (ponds along route 3 near Sealston, King George; Leedstown; Mulberry (Mulberry Island Private Hunting Preserve Richmond); Muse (end of Muse Rd, Rte 624 overlooking the Potomac River, Westmoreland); New Point Comfort (New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve, Mathews); NNAS (Northern Neck Audubon Society); The Pocket (in Pamunkey Indian Reservation along Pamunkey River, King William); Rapp. R. NWR. (Rappahannock R. Valley National Wildlife Refuge); South Haven (South Haven Beach, Mathews); Walkerton, King and Queen; Wilna (Wilna unit of Rapp R. NWR, Richmond); VIMS (Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Gloucester).

**WATERFOWL — PELICANS**

_Cackling Geese_ were reported twice during the period. One bird was seen in the last notable-sized flock of 2250 _Canada Geese_ at a farm near The Pocket 3 Mar (FA). Numbers of Canadas plummeted after that date, the highest count being only 63 in Walkerton 20 May (FA), which included several downy chicks. The other _Cackling Goose_, of the _hutchinsii_ subspecies, was spotted 31 Mar John’s Pt. (G&RH).

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Essex, Gloucester, King George, King William, King and Queen, Matthews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties. Note that the northern and eastern shores of the Northern Neck overlook Maryland waters.

early (KH). A singing _Dickcissel_ was present for several days at the junction of Red House and Nowlin’s Mill roads, _Campbell_, beginning 10 May (RB, MF).
Teal was found in Leedstown (FA) breaking previous maxima noted in eBird for the Region. Four lingering Northern Shovelers were spotted 28 Apr in Leedstown (FA). Green-winged Teal gave a strong showing with a high of 235 individuals at Sweet Hall Marsh, King William on 3 Apr (DY). The only report of Redhead this spring was of three individuals on the K. G. Ponds 11 Mar (FA). The last of the late-staying waterfowl was a single male Ring-necked Duck in Walkerton 20 May (FA). A group of 275 Lesser Scaup was reported with 250 Canvasbacks in the Potomac R. from Wayside Park King George 11 Mar (FA). Bufflehead put forth a strong showing this spring with 185 reported from Western Shores Marshes IBA Gloucester (DY) 11 Mar. Singles and pairs of Northern Bobwhite were reported from 13 locales this spring (m. obs). A total of 42 Red-throated Loons was spotted in the Potomac River off of Muse (FA). One late Common Loon was observed flying and calling over Suggett’s Point Richmond 27 May (LA). The high count for Northern Gannet was 50 seen from VIMS 29 Mar (DW). At least 650 Double-crested Cormorants were roosting on the spans of the Rte 301 bridge over the Maryland waters of the Potomac R. near Wayside Park King George 11 Mar (FA). One of the most exciting sightings of the season was a flock of 5 American White Pelicans flying north over Bethel 3 Apr (G&RH). The high count for Brown Pelican was 32 birds sitting on the piers and pilings along the West Point shore of the Mattaponi R., King William, 3 Mar (FA). Other substantial counts included 20 at Windmill Pt., Lancaster 7 Apr (GC) and 29 at Hughlett 28 Apr (PD).

**HERONS — GULLS**

The only Least Bittern this season were three at Mulberry 5 May (FA). The highest count for Great Blue Heron was 22 at West Point, King William 3 Mar (FA). The first Great Egret of the spring was sighted 22 Mar at VIMS (DW), the peak count being nine at Maryus-Guinea 5 May (MB). The first Snowy Egret arrived 28 Apr at Dameron (PD), with a high count of seven at Bethel 3 May (HL). Two Little Blue Herons were found this spring, one at Bethel 21 Apr (G&RH) and one in King George 28 Apr (PD). A Tricolored Heron was at Bethel 19 Apr (WT). A very early Green Heron was seen at Jones Creek, Gloucester 22 Mar (EB). It was a weak season for night-heron reports with just a single report of each species, one Black-crowned Night-Heron in Gloucester 3 May (HL) and one Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at VIMS 19 Apr (DW). A total of 19 Glossy Ibis were observed at four locations between 3 Apr and 5 May. The high counts were six each at Bethel 19 Apr (WT) and at Leedstown 5 May (FA). The high count for Osprey was 25 in Colonial Beach Westmoreland 5 May (TB et al.). The last seen Northern Harrier was a female near Newtown, King and Queen 5 May (FA). Only three Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported, all from Gloucester, the last one lingered at VIMS 3 May (DW). Merlin was reported twice, one north of Hughlett 28 Apr (PD) and one 5 May at Mulberry (FA). Single Peregrine Falcons were noted in King William 2 Mar (MH), Gloucester 1 Apr (G&RH), and Bethel 3 Apr (G&RH). Bethel had the high count of Clapper Rail once again with 16 on 23 Mar (RA). Sora was reported once from Ware House Landing Gloucester 19 May (GH, FR). A nervous Common Gallinule was a great find at K. G. Ponds 15 Apr (FA). American Coot continued to congregate at Beaverdam with 550 on 1 Apr (G&RH). A single American Golden-Plover was seen at Leedstown 18 Apr (FD). The high count of Black-bellied Plover was 10 at Bethel 23 Mar (RA), and the high for Semipalmated Plover was 23 at Maryus-Guinea 11 May (MB). The first Killdeer egg was found 6 Mar at VIMS (DY). A sole Black-necked Stilt was seen by canoeists along Oyster Creek Northumberland 25 Apr, a rare find for the Region (IH, NF). Solitary Sandpiper numbers peaked at 25 at Leedstown 5 May (FA). A high of 75 Greater Yellowlegs was tallied from a boat in Sweet Hall Marsh along the Pamunkey R. King William 3 Apr (DY). The first Willet arrived at Bethel 3 Apr (G&RH). The high count for Lesser Yellowlegs was 90 in Leedstown 28 Apr (FA). A high of 14 Ruddy Turnstones was at Bethel 23 Mar (RA). A trip to Leedstown 5 May yielded the first 4 Semipalmated Sandpipers, the most Least Sandpipers (52), and the only White-rumped Sandpiper of the spring (FA). Only 4 Pectoral Sandpipers were noted this spring: single birds at K. G. Ponds 15 Apr and Walkerton 20 May, and two in Leedstown 28 Apr (FA). Dunlin peaked at 300 at Bethel 23 Mar (G&RH). High river levels forced 28 Wilson’s Snipe to high, exposed ground at a farm near The Pocket. American Woodcock was reported only twice this season: three at Beulahville King William 3 Mar (FA) and five checking out a warbler “trap” bird bath in King George 13 Apr (TC). Bonaparte’s Gulls were scarce this spring with a total of only ten birds seen in four locations on...
four dates 11 Mar – 20 May (TB, FA). **Ring-billed Gulls** congregated at K. G. Ponds near the landfill with a high count of 2200 11 Mar (FA) where a single **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was also found 28 Apr (FA, FD). A **Least Tern** arrived at South Haven 21 Apr (G&RH) and the high count was 35 at the nesting colony at Bethel 27 May (AB).

The only three **Common Terns** of the spring were seen at Bethel 19 Apr (WT). **Caspian Terns** passed through the area 12–28 Apr when a total of 6 birds were seen at VIMS (DW), Leedstown (FA) and Bethel (WT, G&RH). **Royal Terns** arrived by 23 Mar with a single seen at Bethel (Robert Ake) and peaked at 39 at Colonial Beach Westmoreland 8 Apr (TB). **Sandwich Terns** were seen three times, all in Mathews; one each at Bethel and South Haven 21 Apr (G&RH), and three more at Bethel 27 May (AB). **Black Skimmer** was reported only once, with three at Bethel 3 May (HL).

**DOVES — WOODPECKERS**

The high count of **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was six at Beulahville 22 Apr (FA). No unusual owl species were observed, with **Eastern Screech-Owl**, **Great Horned Owl**, and **Barred Owl** all reported. The first **Chuck-will’s-widow** called 21 Apr in Gloucester (EB), and the high count was 10 in Westmoreland 5 May (FA). **Eastern Whip-poor-will** was reported four times: Westmoreland State Park, Westmoreland 5 Apr (m. obs.), Lancaster 27 Apr (PD), Northumberland 5 May (IH), and Westmoreland 20 May (FA). The first **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** of the spring was a male seen in Gloucester 7 Apr (EB). Thirteen **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported from eight locations. The last two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were noted in Leedstown 28 Apr (FA).

**FLYCATCHERS — WAXWINGS**

Of the seven species of flycatchers seen: **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Eastern Wood-pewee**, **Willow Flycatcher**, **Least Flycatcher**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Kingbird**, the most notable were the two sightings of **Willow Flycatcher**, one being very early at Totuskey Cr., Richmond 30 Apr (LA), and one at Maryus-Guinea 27 May (M&LB); and 2 **Least Flycatchers** 12 May in Westmoreland (R&SM). Several **Great Crested Flycatchers** (22 reports) arrived earlier than the expected arrival date (20 Apr). One even arrived before the Gold Book’s extreme early date of 7 Apr at VIMS 3 Apr (DW).

The first **Eastern Kingbird** 15 Apr at K. G. Ponds (FA) arrived five days before its normal arrival date. The first sighting of **White-eyed Vireo** came from Gloucester 4 Apr (R&EB), and the highest count was 13 at Beaverdam 19 May (EW). Yellow-throated Vireos arrived right on time this spring, with the highest count being six at Beulahville 22 Apr (FA). Both a **Blue-headed Vireo** and a **Warbling Vireo** were seen and heard singing in Leedstown 28 Apr (FA). At Walkerton 20 May a murder of 115 **American Crows** was seen (FA). **Fish Crows**, which had a high of 145 the previous August, dispersed, with the largest group being 10 in Gloucester 14 Apr (FR). Fourteen **Horned Larks** were seen from six locations (m. obs). The earliest occurrence of **Tree Swallow** was one bird at K. G. Ponds 14 Mar (VK); the largest flock of this species numbered 630 near Moscow Cr. **King William** 22 Apr (FA). The first two **Bank Swallows** were reported 22 Apr Walkerton (FA), and the high was 40 at K. G. Ponds 28 Apr (FA). **Cliff Swallows** numbered 66 birds from five locations, the earliest being 22 Apr, where they continued to nest on the Walkerton bridge over the Mattaponi R. with about 15 active nests 22 Apr and 20 May (FA). **Barn Swallows** were first reported 3 Apr Gloucester (MM) and Bethel (G&RH) and the high count was 300 at K. G. Ponds 18 Apr (FA). Fourteen **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were seen in Gloucester 11 Mar (DY). Only four single **Brown Creeper**s were reported throughout the Region 3 Mar – 6 Apr (m. obs.). The highest count for **Carolina Wren** was 36 along East River Rd., **King William** 3 Mar (FA). The advent of **House Wrens** was a few days early at Bethel 3 Apr (G&RH). The last **Winter Wren** was seen 9 Mar Westmoreland (m. obs.), though the species more typically stays until mid-Apr. At Mulberry 16 **Marsh Wrens** were counted 20 May (FA). Two **Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers** were spotted a week early, 21 Mar, at Beavardam (G&RH). The only **Swainson’s Thrush** reports were two from Beulahville 5 and 20 May (FA). The last **Hermit Thrush** was reported 27 Apr at Beavardam (G&RH) and the first **Wood Thrush** was heard singing in **King William** 22 Apr (FA). The largest concentration of **American Robin** was a mere 230 in King William 3 Mar (FA). The high count of **Brown Thrasher** this spring was 12 at Maryus-Guinea 27 May, which was higher than last year’s high count (M&LB). There were two reports for **American Pipit**: one from Leedstown 28 Apr, noting 60 birds, and the other from Mulberry, 5 May, numbering six birds (FA). From seven reports in four locations in Gloucester and Mathews 19 Mar–27 May, 451 **Cedar Waxwings** were spotted (m. obs).
WARBLERS — FINCHES
Twenty-five species of warblers were observed this spring. None of them arrived before the extreme early-dates on record, but many arrived 3–8 days earlier than the usual expected arrival dates. Some of the most notable warbler sightings were: Blue-winged at Leedstown 28 Apr (FA) and Lancaster 25 Apr (FS); a single Nashville singing at K. G. Ponds 28 Apr (m. obs); Single Chestnut-sided Wilna 3 May (LB) and Beulahville 5 May (FA); 2 Magnolia in Beulahville 22 Apr (FA), a week early; a Black-throated Green at Chilton Woods SF, Lancaster 25 Apr (m. obs); a Black-throated Blue a week earlier than usual in Middlesex 17 Apr (G&RH) and two late birds passing through at Beaverdam (G&RH) and Mt. Airy Millpond Richmond (LA) 23 May. The highest count for Yellow-throated Warbler was 10 at Wilmont Landing, King George 15 Apr (FA). The first migrant Pine Warblers arrived in the area in February and the highest count was 12 along East River Rd., King William 3 Mar (FA). The earliest sighting of Prairie Warbler was 31 Mar at John’s Pt., Gloucester (G&RH). Single Palm Warblers were spotted at four different locations 8–27 Apr (m. obs). The earliest Prothonotary Warbler was noted 6 Apr at Beaverdam (G&RH). High counts of 11 Prothonotaries occurred at Beaverdam 19 May (EW) and Beulahville 5 May (FA). Beaverdam was also the location of the earliest Worm-eating Warbler 12 Apr (G&RH). Kentucky Warblers continue to be a challenge to find. and were only reported from three locations 5–13 May with a high of two in Northumberland (TS). Two Ovenbirds were recorded 7 Apr at Wilna (LA) a week earlier than usual, and the high count for the season was 17 at Beaverdam 19 May (EW). Three early Northern Waterthrushes were counted at Beulahville 22 Apr where one still lingered 20 May (FA). Two early Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen at Beaverdam 21 Mar (G&RH). The highest count of Hooded Warbler was 11 at Beulahville 5 May (FA). High counts for Northern Parula were 13 at Beaverdam 20 Apr (MB) and 13 in Beulahville 5 May (FA). The first Yellow-breasted Chat showed up three days early 22 Apr near Mundy’s Bridge King and Queen (FA). Summer Tanagers first arrived 22 Apr at Beulahville (FA) and the highest count was 10 at Beaverdam 19 May (EW). Scarlet Tanager came about a week early in Lancaster 18 Apr (CJ). This season observers reported 15 species of sparrows. Six American Tree Sparrows were seen at Belle Isle 4 Mar (KR). Three Vesper Sparrows were spotted passing through Westmoreland 15 Apr (R&SM). The highest count for Seaside Sparrow was 18 at Guinea Marsh 28 May (G&RH). Nelson’s Sparrows were found at only two locations: one at John’s Pt., Gloucester 21 Apr (G&RH) and six to eight at Bethel 21 Apr – 3 Apr (G&RH, RA). One sighting of Lincoln’s Sparrow came from Belle Isle SP Lancaster 10 Apr (FS, NNAS). Eleven Swamp Sparrows of the Coastal Plain subspecies were singing on territories at Mulberry 5 May (FA). Twelve White-crowned Sparrows were found 3 Mar in Gloucester (G&RH) and the last two of the season were reported in Leedstown 14 Apr (FA). Other last sightings of the season included 2 Savannah Sparrows 5 May Leedstown (FA); 2 White-throated Sparrows Beaverdam 2 May, departing a week earlier than usual (G&RH); one Dark-eyed Junco 17 Apr Lancaster (CJ); and 2 Fox Sparrows Leedstown 11 Mar (FA). One to four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at the same location in Gloucester on six different dates 25 Apr - 5 May (R&EB). Three Blue Grosbeak sightings came before the Gold Book average expected date 30 Apr. The earliest was 19 Apr in Gloucester (G&RH) and the highest count was eight in Beulahville 22 Apr (FA). The Painted Bunting that stayed the winter was last seen 14 Apr at Wicomico Church Northumberland (JC). Dickcissel was seen twice at Wilna: 29 May (LA) and 31 May (LB). On four bird lists from 28 Apr-20 May, 157 Bobolinks were seen, including 100 at Westmoreland Berry Farm Westmoreland 12 May (R&SM). A total of 139 Rusty Blackbirds were seen in eight locations from 11 Mar-22 Apr (m. obs) with a high of 95 along Peedee Cr. Leedstown 11 Mar (FA).

The Region for the three month period had 31 days of rain and three days of snow. The average temperature during the months of March and April was 58° F with May having an average of 70° and two days above 90°. The unusually early warm weather seemed to be responsible for early arrivals of migrants and for early nesting. The highlights of the period were early nesting Wild Turkeys, Common Loons in Dickenson, a large Great Blue Heron rookery in Russell, a Cattle Egret also in Russell, thirteen Ospreys in Wythe, Green Heron at Williams Orchard on Rte 11, Wythe 13 Apr (JM).

**WATERFOWL — DOVES**

Three Blue-winged Teal, not common in the area, were found near Lebanon in The Mill Pond 28 Mar (JT), and eight were at The Mud Hole 10 Apr (JT), both sites in Russell. An early Wild Turkey nest containing seven eggs was discovered in Wythe 10 Apr (JM). Eight Common Loons were observed at John Flanagan Reservoir 5 Apr (D&G B). At the established Great Blue Heron rookery at the confluence of the S. Fork Powell R. and Butcher Fork, six active nests were observed 15 Mar (BC) and a new rookery with 32 nests, nearly all active, was discovered on Clifton Farm Rd. in Russell 29 Mar (TH). On a 2 May visit to the Great Blue Heron rookery in Dungannon, Scott 23 nests were counted (JeM). Two Great Egrets and a Green Heron were observed near the high water of the Little R. at Wardell in Tazewell 26 Apr (PH). In Russell a lone Cattle Egret was found in a pasture near The Mudhole 22 May (J&JT). A flock of nearly 100 Black and Turkey Vultures was observed over Powell Valley at Big Stone Gap, Wise 15 Mar (BC). Also in Wise an Osprey was seen along the Powell River 17 Apr (BC). An Osprey was observed on Big Cedar Crk., Russell 5 Apr (JT). Thirteen Ospreys were counted along a rural road in Western Wythe 28 Apr, six in one tree (S&MB). A subadult Bald Eagle was observed by a kayaker on the Russell Fork R. at BP 3 Apr (JaR). An American Kestrel, a species unusual to the area, was discovered on Compton Mt., Buchanan 9 Mar (R&LM). Peregrine Falcons were observed from BP overlooks on 3 May and 6 May—two birds (PH) and 2 Jun—an adult carrying a bird (BCBC). Virginia Rails were heard at the ponds at Saltville, Smyth 9 Mar (PM). An American Coot, not common to the area, was discovered at Elk Garden, Russell 26 May (D&DW). A FOS American Woodcock was heard at a Breaks home, Buchanan 27 May for the first time in five years. (DR). A rare find for the county, a Eurasian Collared Dove was observed at Stuart’s Pond in Rosedale, Russell 30 Mar (TH, DW). Another was found at Williams Orchard on Rte 11, Wythe 13 Apr (JM).

**CUCKOOS — CATBIRDS**

A Black-billed Cuckoo appeared at a home in Baywood, Grayson 27 Apr (MD). A FOS Whip-poor-will was heard near a farm in Wythe 18 Apr (JM). At least 3 Whip-poor-wills were calling at a home in Breaks, Buchanan 27 May (DR). FOS Ruby-throated Hummingbirds appeared in Buchanan 14 Mar (JR), Wythe 17 Apr (JM) and Grayson 26 Apr (AH). A male Downy Woodpecker was observed repeatedly feeding an adult female Northern Cardinal at a suet feeder on Compton Mt., Buchanan 22 Apr (RM). A FOS Eastern Wood Pewee was heard at a farm in Wythe 30 Apr (JM). A FOS Great Crested Flycatcher and FOS Acadian Flycatcher were calling at the same farm 25 Apr and 28 Apr respectively (JM). A FOS Willow Flycatcher was heard at Baywood 7 May (MD). A Loggerhead Shrike was observed in Russell 30 Mar (TH, DW). The species has been nesting...
in the county for several years. Two Warbling Vireos were singing near Rocky Knob Campground, Floyd 12 Apr (TD). A FOS Red-eyed Vireo was heard on Compton Mt, Buchanan 21 Apr (RM). Two FOS Purple Martins arrived there 13 Mar (RM), and later the same day were seen in the Grundy area Buchanan (JR). Arriving Tree Swallow was reported in Wythe 8 Mar (JM), and at Breaks 10 Mar (DR). FOS Northern Rough-winged Swallows were discovered at the Saltville Ponds, Smyth 11 Mar (E&H M) and at Cox’s Chapel, Grayson 4 Apr (SJR). Fifteen Cliff Swallow nests were reported in a barn near Chilhowie, Smyth 25 May (LT). Arrival of Barn Swallows was observed at Breaks 24 Mar (DR) and in Wythe reported 13 Apr (JM). House Wren was heard in Wythe Apr (JM). A Sedge Wren was at a home in Baywood, Grayson 28 Apr and a Marsh Wren was there the day before (MD). Arriving Blue-gray Gnatcatcher were found at the Beaver Pond in the BP 30 Mar (DR) and in Wythe 4 Apr (JM). Due to cold, rainy weather 24 Eastern Bluebird nestlings were found dead in nest boxes in Buchanan 26 Apr (RM). Two FOS Wood Thrushes were heard at Breaks in Buchanan 16 Apr (DR), one in Wythe 18 Apr (JM), one in Grayson at Rugby 19 Apr (AH) and one in Washington 22 Apr (MS, GC). Two FOS Gray Catbirds were discovered at Rugby 26 Apr (AH).

WARBLERS — ORIOLES
Wabler arrivals included: Northern Parula at Bridle Crk., Grayson Apr (SJR), and in Wythe 13 Apr (JM); Yellow Warbler (male) Compton Mt. 11 Apr (RM); Black-throated Green Warbler BP, Dickenson 1 Apr (DR); Yellow-throated Warbler and Pine Warbler BP 6 Apr (E&T); Yellow-throated Warbler Compton Mt. 22 Apr (RM); Cerulean Warbler Guesses Fork of Hurley, Buchanan 5 Apr (SJ) —10 days earlier than the previous early date; Black-and-white Warbler BP 30 Mar (DR); and (male) American Redstart Compton Mt 21 Apr (RM); Black-and-white Warbler Grayson 26 Apr (AH); Ovenbird BP 6 Apr (E&MT) - one day earlier than the previous early date, and Woodlawn, Carroll 14 Apr (RP); Wythe 14 Apr (JM), Bridle Crk Grayson 20 Apr (SJR). A FOS Louisiana Waterthrush was found in Grayson 31 Mar (SJR), a month early for that species in the area (SJR). The FOS Common Yellowthroat for Grayson was observed 20 Apr at Rugby (AH) and for Wythe 25 Apr (JM). Early by six days, a Hooded Warbler made an appearance at BP 6 Apr (E&MT). The FOS Hooded for Wythe was 26 Apr (JM). Yellow-breasted Chat was observed on Compton Mt 30 Apr (RM). A Scarlet Tanager was found at Guesses Fork of Hurley, Buchanan 7 Apr (SJ). This bird arrived two days earlier than the previous early date. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrivals on 26 Apr included Buchanan (RM), Carroll (RP), Grayson (AH), and Wythe (JM). Other arriving migrants were an Indigo Bunting Compton Mt 21 Apr (RM) and Orchard Oriole at a home in Bristol, Washington 20 Apr (MS). Ninety species were found in Buchanan 13 May during a Breeding Bird Survey (BCBC).

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March 2012 temperatures were almost 10 degrees above the long term average, which appeared to influence the arrival dates of early short distance spring migrants by as much as four or five days. The first two weeks of April were warm with a predominantly southerly wind pattern and arrivals of longer distance migrants such as Red-eyed Vireo and Wood Thrush were as much as one to two weeks ahead of what is typical. This was followed by a cooler than average period with northerly winds later in the month, which appeared to hold back the remaining migrants. May was warmer than average. Lower than average rainfall was also a feature of the period.

**Abbreviations:** ARP (Appomattox Riverside Park, Dinwiddie); Banister River (Banister River WMA, Halifax); BCL (Briery Creek Lake, Prince Edward); Dick Cross (Dick Cross WMA, Mecklenburg); HBTSP (High Bridge Trail SP, Prince Edward); JRSP (James River State Park, Buckingham); Kerr (Kerr Reservoir, Mecklenburg); Riverwalk (Dan Daniel Memorial Park Riverwalk, Danville); SRSP (Staunton River State Park, Halifax); White Oak (White Oak Mountain WMA, Pittsylvania); Wilck’s (Wilck’s Lake, Prince Edward).

**WATERFOWL—HUMMINGBIRDS**

After the mild winter with low waterfowl numbers, there was a noteworthy report 3 Mar of 2 Northern Shovelers, 16 Green-winged Teal, 4 Redheads, 60 Lesser Scaup, 12 Buffleheads, 5 Hooded Mergansers, and a female Red-breasted Merganser at Riverwalk (MFr, MF). This is particularly striking for this location, which is far inland. **Northern Bobwhite** is a species of concern given the precipitous decline in its numbers in recent years and the numbers reported from around the Region were disturbingly low with singles at Dick Cross 1 Apr (AD, PG), Nottoway 16 Apr (ES), HBTSP 20 Apr (MS), SRSP 28 Apr (RB) and Buckingham 6 May (ES). Three were reported 12 May in Pittsylvania (MF), four were reported 5 May at JRSP (ES) and six was the highest count 2 May at a private location in Buckingham (MS). A late Red-throated Loon was at Buggs Island Lake, Mecklenburg 20 May (JB). The **PACIFIC LOON** which has wintered at Kerr every year since 2003–2004 (with the exception of 2009–2010), but was not seen during the 2011–2012 winter season, finally put in an appearance 1 Apr († AD, PG) and continued through 13 April (RA). This report is being reviewed by VARCOM. An **American Bittern**, which is fairly rare anywhere in the Piedmont, was at Banister River 8 Apr (PG). Also relatively rare in spring, **Great Egret** was reported from a number of locations with singles 26 Mar at Greenfield, Charlotte (MS), 24 Apr at Riverwalk (MF), 26 Apr at Dick Cross (AD, PG) and two at JRSP 28 Apr (ES). An **Osprey** was back on its nest at Riverwalk 1 Mar (MF) and three **Mississippi Kites** were in Greensville 19 May (AB). A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was calling 3 Apr at its usual location in South Boston, Halifax (PG) and a report of one in Keysville, Charlotte 23 Apr (MS) suggests that the species may be expanding its range in the Piedmont. A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was in Franklin 1–12 May (AQ). A **Common Nighthawk** was an unusual spring migrant in Pittsylvania 2 and 20 May (MF). A **Chuck-wills-widow** was heard 25 Apr at Chatham High School, Pittsylvania and on a number of occasions from 27 Apr through 30 May in Dry Fork, Pittsylvania (MF). An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** was heard 28 Mar in Chase City, Mecklenburg (GM) with subsequent reports 7 Apr in Nottoway (ES) and 20 Apr at HBTSP (MS). Four **Chimney Swifts** at Chatham High School, Pittsylvania 2 Apr (MF) and one in South Boston, Halifax (JB) were slightly early. The earliest reports of **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** 4 Apr were from...
Keysville, Lunenburg (SD, fide AD), Dinwiddie (AD) and South Boston, Halifax (JB). The overwintering female Rufous Hummingbird, first noted in the Winter 2011–2012 region report, continued in Dinwiddie through April (AD).

**PASSERINES**

A Loggerhead Shrike, at Palmer Springs, Mecklenburg 9 Apr (MF), may be the same individual reported during the Winter 2011–2012 period. Among early arriving passerines were a White-eyed Vireo 31 Mar at Riverwalk (MF) and Banister River (JB), and two Yellow-throated Vireos at Banister River 8 Apr (PG) and a Blue-headed Vireo 18 Mar in Pittsylvania (MF). A Warbling Vireo, rare anywhere in the Region, was at Riverwalk 13 Apr (MF) and a Red-eyed Vireo 4 Apr at ARP was two weeks earlier than is usual (AD). Common Raven continued its breeding range expansion to the south and east with a report of a nest with an adult incubating 14 Mar in Prince Edward. At least one hatched by 20 Mar; there were at least three nestlings 9 Apr and the fledglings were out of the nest and heard nearby by mid-April (MS). A very early Northern Rough-winged Swallow was at Kerr 4 Mar (PG). The Staunton River basin is one of the few parts of the Region where Cliff Swallow occurs with any regularity, and five at Kerr 1 Apr were somewhat early (AD, PG). Uncommon at any time in the Piedmont, a Marsh Wren was at JRSP 28 Apr (ES). A Wood Thrush at ARP 31 Mar was almost three weeks earlier than normal (AD). A Louisiana Waterthrush was at BCL 21 Mar (MS), a week earlier than is typical in this part of the Region. A Black-and-white Warbler first heard then seen 24 Mar in Buckingham was four days earlier than any previous record for this location (ES) and a high count of seven was notable at ARP 5 May (AD). Almost two weeks earlier than usual, two Prothonotary Warblers were at Banister River 8 Apr (PG). Kentucky Warbler, which is not common in the Region, was reported 20 May at White Oak (MF) and 25 May at Holliday Lake SP, Appomattox (MS). The first Magnolia Warbler of the season was at BCL 5 May (MS). Blackburnian Warbler is an unusual spring migrant in the Region, and one at White Oak 28 Apr was early (MF). Also early, a Northern Parula was at Banister River 31 Mar (JB). The earliest reported Yellow-throated Warbler was at Banister River 17 Mar (PG). Canada Warblers, a species which is uncommon anywhere in the Region, were reported at Wilck’s 1 May (ES) and 2 May (MS), 5 May at ARP (AD) and 9 May in Pittsylvania (MF). A Wilson’s Warbler at Wilck’s 1 May (ES) may represent only the third county record. Unusual so far south in the Region were 10 Bobolinks in Pittsylvania 2 May (MF). Notable high counts of Rusty Blackbirds were 31 at Wilck’s 16 Mar (MS) and 70 at Banister River 17 Mar (PG). Baltimore Oriole is not common in the southern Piedmont and among the few reports were six at JRSP 28 Apr and one at Wilck’s 1–2 May (ES).

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The average temperature for the period was 5.4 degrees above normal with March being the most abnormally warm month with an average temperature a whopping 9.7 degrees above normal. Precipitation averaged 1.24 inches below normal. The strong southerly winds and abnormally high temperatures in March and the first half of April seemed to account for the early migration this spring with some birds coming in two weeks or more ahead of schedule during this time. By mid-April more northerly winds and lower temperatures slowed down migration considerably to the point where on time arrivals were more the norm rather than the exception.

The Richmond Peregrine Falcon pair returned to their traditional nesting site on the 21st story ledge at Riverfront Plaza in downtown Richmond in March. By the end of the period the falcons had raised three chicks which were being held in a cage by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to avoid premature fledging in this very dangerous environment. Rarities this season included Swallow-tailed Kite, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Western Tanager and Painted Bunting.

Abbreviations: CCHW (College Creek Hawkwatch, James City); Crewes (Crewes Channel, Henrico); Dutch Gap (Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chesterfield); Harwood’s Mill (Harwood’s Mill Reservoir, York); Henricus (Henricus Park, Chesterfield); Hog (Hog Island W.M.A., Surry); JRP (James River Park, Richmond); Ragged Island (Ragged Island W.M.A., Isle of Wight); Shirley (Shirley Plantation, Charles City); WiSBC (Williamsburg Spring Bird Count).

WIGEONS — FALCONS
A lingering m. American Wigeon was at Hog 6 May (AD, PG). Also lingering was a m. Green-winged Teal at Shirley 19 May (AD). A Common Loon was noted at Harwood’s Mill 25 May (DY). A first year Northern Gannet was seen from the CCHW heading up the James R. 26 Mar (TA, BT). Thirty minutes later the bird was seen again heading back downriver. It’s very unusual for a Northern Gannet to be that far upriver and this likely established a first county record for James City and possibly a first county record for Surry. A flock of 24 American White Pelicans was first seen from the CCHW circling over Hog 4 Apr (BW, TA, FB, SD, DL), establishing a new state high count. The birds continued to be seen sporadically from this site and on 13 Apr another new state high count of 33 birds was set (TA, FB, SD, BW). The birds remained in the area until at least 8 May with 22 seen at Hog 6 May (AD, PG) and five counted there 8 May (ph. BHo). The Brown Pelican that was originally found at the Hopewell Yacht Haven, Prince George 23 Feb was seen there 1 Mar (ph. by HB) and for the last time 3 Mar (LB). A pair of Anhingas was noted at Harwood’s Mill again this year, last reported 25 May, marking the fourth year in a row that this species has been seen at this location, the site of Virginia’s first documented nesting in 2009 (DY). Another Anhinga was a flyover at Dutch Gap 15 Apr (JK, BH). An American Bittern was heard calling along Carter’s Mill Rd., Henrico 9 Apr (AB). Another was heard at Crewes 9 Apr (MI). Least Bittern reports included one at Hog 6 May (AD, PG), two there 20 May (AD) and one at the Henricus marsh 5 May (LB). There were three Cattle Egret reports this season which included two individuals at Mainland Farm, James City 25 May (BW) six at the CCHW 25 May (BT) and a single bird in a field near Spring Grove, Surry 6 May (AD, PG). Three Glossy Ibis, uncommon inland, flew over the CCHW 26
May (BW, BT). Two SWALLOW-TAILED KITES were seen soaring over a residential yard in Mechanicsville daily for three days 10–12 Apr (R&BP). A Mississippi Kite cruised the CCHW 12 May. Another Mississippi Kite was recorded there 25 May (BT). A late migrant Northern Harrier was noted at the CCHW 25 May (BW, BT). An ad. Northern Goshawk, a rare winter visitor and very rare in spring, was seen in flight on I-295 and I-64 6 Mar (ABr). Six migrant Broad-winged Hawks flew over the CCHW 25 May (BW, BT). A count of five Merlins was a new single day record for that species at the CCHW 4 Apr (fide BT).

RAILS — THRUSHES

Two King Rails continued to be heard at Crewes 18 Mar (ABr). A single bird was heard 8 Apr (AB) and one was photographed 15 Apr (PB). A Sora was heard calling from the second platform at Henricus 30 Apr (CC). A lingering American Coot was at Hog 29 May (AD). Four American Avocets, rare inland, were seen at Hog 1 Mar (DC). A count of 38 Solitary Sandpipers made in the Skimino sector of the WiSBC was noteworthy (NF, EE, GB). Six Willets of the subspecies semipalmata, also known as “eastern” Willet, were seen on Bay Tree Beach Rd., York flying between a salt marsh and shoreline 15 May (DY). Eastern Willets are rarely seen on the western side of the Chesapeake Bay. A late ad. Bonaparte’s Gull was viewed close to shore from Jamestown Island, James City 17 May (OG). Two Royal Terns at Ragged Island 18 Mar were early (NF). A group of 20 Chimney Swifts over downtown Richmond 28 Mar was early (PB). A female Rufous Hummingbird originally banded at Ford’s Colony, James City 15 Jan remained there until at least 17 Mar (G&GT). Another Rufous Hummingbird, a male banded 16 Jan in the Varina section of Henrico, remained until late March (NS). Two Alder Flycatchers, a rare spring migrant, were reported from Piney Grove Preserve, Sussex 19 May (AB). A Willow Flycatcher, also a fairly rare spring migrant, was at the 42nd St. entrance of JRP 9 May (LB). A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER was a one day wonder at Dutch Gap 7 May (ph. HB). An early singing White-eyed Vireo was reported from Charles City 24 Mar (ABr). Also early was a Blue-headed Vireo in a Chesterfield yard 23 Mar (PB). Warbling Vireos become rarer as transients the further east you go so two reports from the coastal plain were noteworthy. One was located at Dutch Gap, where breeding has been suspected in the past, 10 May (LB, KA) and another was found in the Skimino sector of the WiSBC 29 Apr (NF, EE, GB). Common Ravens have established a presence in the Richmond area and reports of this species have become expected. This season was no different as several reports of Common Ravens were noted throughout the area. A m. Purple Martin was an early arrival at Bryan Park, Richmond 8 Mar (AW). Purple Martins were reported to have arrived over two weeks earlier than normal at the Defense Supply Center, Chesterfield (AC). An Eastern Bluebird hatch along a bluebird trail in the Varina section of Henrico 23 Mar was the earliest hatch ever recorded on that trail (JK). A Wood Thrush at York River S.P. 28 Mar was extremely early (DJ, BE).

A somewhat late American Pipit was observed at Hog 6 May (AD, PG). Early Northern Parulas included one in Sussex 25 Mar (ABr) and another in a residential yard in Chesterfield 31 Mar (PB). The earliest Yellow-throated Warblers reported this spring were two at the Wetlands section of JRP 16 Mar (PB, B&BBS). An early “yellow/eastern” Palm Warbler was noted in a yard in Chesterfield 31 Mar (PB). Early Black-and-White Warblers included two at Pocahontas S.P., Chesterfield 23 Mar (PB) and one in Charles City 24–25 Mar (ABr, AB). An exceptionally early American Redstart was first heard singing and then seen in a residential yard in Chester, Chesterfield 24 Mar (JK). Three Prothonotary Warblers at White Bank Park in Colonial Heights 2 Apr were early (RS). A Swainson’s Warbler, rare away from its stronghold in the Dismal Swamp, was heard singing loudly on Cabin Point Rd., Sussex 6 May (NF). An exceptionally early Ovenbird was heard singing at the Wetlands section of JRP 11 Mar (JF). Another early Ovenbird was in Charles City 25 Mar (AB). Two early Louisiana Waterthrushes were singing at Rockwood Park, Chesterfield 20 Mar (WE). An exceptionally early Wilson’s Warbler was singing in a residential yard in Richmond 15 Apr (AB). The m. WESTERN TANAGER that spent the winter at Settler’s Mill, James City was last reported 8 Mar (BW). A Vesper Sparrow, an uncommon-rare transient, was noted in Charles City 8 Apr (AB). Up to four Nelson’s Sparrows were singing at New Quarter Park, York 26 May (BW). A female type PAINTED BUNTING was discovered at
The warmer-than-average conditions that preceded, then extended into, this season heightened expectations there would be an early and exciting avian spring for the Region. Unfortunately, nothing of the sort came to pass. Birders and banders alike were frustrated by what turned out to be a strikingly low volume, low diversity songbird migration. Empirical reality to support the anecdotal record resonated from the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory’s eighth annual spring songbird banding operation at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach. A total of 988 birds of 65 species were banded from 2 March through 28 May during 8,960 net hours. The number of banded birds was 21% below the 7-year average of 1250 and the species diversity was 9% less than the previous low of 76 in 2010. Head bander, Calvin Brennan, posited that 39 days of significant northeast wind during the period was a contributing factor for the reduced volume and species composition, at least at First Landing. Such conditions certainly compromised the effectiveness of the station’s mist nets. More intriguing though, as Brennan postulates, was whether those persistent winds steered birds inland away from the coast. Close examination of the state’s other regional reports may affirm that hypothesis. Quite unusual for the season were two named storms both of which proved inconsequential for the Region. The first, Tropical Storm Alberto, formed off South Carolina 19 May, the 11th earliest in recorded history, then weakened considerably as it headed out to sea off North Carolina. The second, Tropical Storm Beryl developed off Georgia 26 May, came ashore near Jacksonville, Florida 28 May then tracked inland to the northeast as a rain maker. The data from the Center for Conservation Biology’s extensive shorebird research efforts plus the regularly conducted surveys at Back Bay NWR/False Cape SP, Chincoteague NWR and Craney Island form the glue that binds these seasonal reports. Among the Region’s high-five birds were Red-necked Grebe, three shearwater species, Leach’s Storm-Petrel, Brown Booby, Swallow-tailed Kite, Black Rail, Reeve, and both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers.

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**Coastal**

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Accomack and Northampton Counties; Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel; Pelagic area; and the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

Dutch Gap 11 May (PB, GW, GS). It was seen again later that day in the same location (AD) but appeared to be another one day wonder as searches on subsequent days came up empty. Up to three **Boat-tailed Grackles**, rare away from the immediate coast, were at Ragged Island this season (NF, WT). A pair of **Baltimore Orioles** building a nest at Dutch Gap provided possibly the first known nesting record for Baltimore Orioles at that location (PB, GW, GS, AD).

**Abbreviations:** Beasley (Beasley Tract, Princess Ann WMA, Virginia Beach); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); CCCHNAP (Cape Charles Coastal Habitat Natural Area Preserve, Northampton); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); Craney (Craney Island dredge disposal site, Portsmouth); Dismal
(Dismal Swamp NWR, Chesapeake/Suffolk); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Northampton); False Cape (False Cape SP, Virginia Beach); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, Hampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/Norfolk); KSP (Kiptopeke State Park, Northampton); VCR (Virginia Coast Reserve of The Nature Conservancy).

**WATERFOWL — CRANES**

An HRBT bird research team was surprised to find a **Snow Goose** there 30 Apr (DY, RB, ph. V&GB). The 2 **Richardson’s Cackling Goose** discovered at the Woodlawn Cemetery, Norfolk 17 & 18 Feb (ph. RH, JY) remained through at least 7 Mar (JM). A **Red-necked Grebe** was at Ft. Monroe, Hampton 8 (ph. V&GB) & 14 Apr (EE). Of great interest was a 30 May report from Norfolk Canyon (~ 130 mi. e. of the southern tip of Northampton) that included one **Cory’s Shearwater**, 2 Great Shearwaters, 4 Sooty Shearwaters, 8 Wilson’s Storm-Petrels and 2 Leach’s Storm-Petrels (JW). A Sooty Shearwater passed off the beach at Chinc. 25 May (SK). Without question the season’s most remarkable avian event was the 25 Mar arrival in Wachapreague, **Accomack** of an apparently healthy imm. **BROWN BOOBY** aboard Capt. Tom Smith’s “Ella” (fide NB). There was an **Anhinga** at Stumpy Lake, Virginia Beach 15 May (MP, WT) and an **American White Pelican** cruised over Willoughby Bay, Norfolk 4 Apr (AB). A (the?) black-billed **Great Egret**, potentially an **African Great Egret** *Areda alba melanorhynchos* (fide HDP), was once again at Chinc., this time 30 Mar (JE) through at least 3 Apr (ph. BH). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was near KSP 21 Apr (MM).

**Mississippi Kite** reports included an adult at Jericho Ditch, Dismal 1 May (DG, BA, TD, RH) and one, then possibly a second, along the Nansemond River, Suffolk 5 & 19 May, respectively (DM). A **Black Rail** heard at Saxis, **Accomack** 15 May (BA, CB) was a voice hope for this species in Virginia. A lingering **American Coot** was at Back Bay 25 May (BA, GM, CS). A single **Sandhill Crane** was near Seaview, **Northampton** 10 Mar (AW fide NB).

**SHOREBIRDS — Icterids**

A **Wilson’s Plover** on Metomkin Island, **Accomack** 1 Apr (RK) was one day ahead of the species’ previous 2 Apr extreme date; another was at False Cape 16 Apr (DH, JG). Two **Piping Plovers** at Chinc. 7 Mar (ph. IC, V&GB), preceded the species’ 15 Mar arrival praxis by eight days. An HRBT **American Oystercatcher** pair was attending two chicks by 30 Apr (RB et al.). **Black-necked Stilts** were detected at four locations; 2–7 were at the Chincoteague causeway, **Accomack** of an apparently healthy imm. **BROWNBBOOBY** aboard Capt. Tom Smith’s “Ella” (fide NB). There was an **Anhinga** at Stumpy Lake, Virginia Beach 15 May (MP, WT) and an **American White Pelican** cruised over Willoughby Bay, Norfolk 4 Apr (AB). A (the?) black-billed **Great Egret**, potentially an **African Great Egret** *Areda alba melanorhynchos* (fide HDP), was once again at Chinc., this time 30 Mar (JE) through at least 3 Apr (ph. BH). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was near KSP 21 Apr (MM).

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Virginia Beach Loggerhead Shrike was last reported 18 Mar (JB). A Warbling Vireo was at ESVNWR 30 Apr (VL). A female Painted Bunting was at Chinc. 29 (DC) & 30 Apr (MR). The peak reported Swainson’s Warbler count was five along Washington Ditch, Dismal 24 Apr (BA, TB, RH, JM). A late Swamp Sparrow was at Mariner’s Museum Park, Newport News 10 May (NF). Among 27 active Boat-tailed Grackle nests at Grandview 19 Apr (BW , BT) were at least four that had one to two day old chicks. This species’ 13-day incubation period indicates eggs had to have been laid 4–6 Apr. The previous known early egg date for this species was 22 Apr.

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Summer Reporting Period
June — July 2012

The warm and dry trend that began in the Spring continued through the Summer, though temperatures did not deviate from the norm as strongly as they had in March. Both June and July broke the 100-degree mark with July 4.2 degrees above average. June was the drier of the two months, as precipitation declined by almost 1.5 inches from normal. For Virginia’s birdlife, the drier weather’s likely consequence was a decrease in food supply, possibly impacting breeding, and general stress from a lack of moisture. A total of 112 species were reported this season about half what was reported last summer. However, the decline is more closely related to a lack of reporting rather than a notable drop in avian biodiversity in Virginia, year-on-year.

Abbreviations: Dulles Greenway (Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project); Huntley (Huntley Meadows Park); Mason Neck (Mason Neck SP); Occoquan (Occoquan Bay NWR); Shenandoah (Shenandoah SNP); Thompson WMA (G. R. Thompson WMA).

SWANS — FALCONS
There were no noteworthy reports of swans or geese this season. Mallards were represented by a species high of 27 at Cannon Branch Cemetery in Manassas 30 Jul (GG). Fifteen Wild Turkeys were sighted at Mt. Vernon Farm, Rappahannock 16 Jul (AD). Two Northern Bobwhite were seen on the Lauren Hill Golf Course, Fairfax 23 Jun (SF). Least Bittern were the only bitterns reported, with one seen at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax 15 Jul (FV). A Cattle Egret was seen at Dulles International Airport 2 Jun (SB). Reports of Green Herons were scattered across the Region, with the
high count of 10 coming from Ben Brenman Park in Alexandria 28 Jul (JC). Five Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Glencarlyn Park, Arlington 18 Jul (TB). There was only one report of a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, which was seen on Daniels Run in Fairfax City 10 Jun (P&JW). Black Vultures were less-common than Turkey Vultures, as usual, with respective high counts of 20 and 30 coming from Old Rag Mountain 4 Jul (PK). Mississippi Kites turned up in a couple of places in the Piedmont-Coastal Plain transition area, with one seen at Flint Hill School, Fairfax 13 Jun (JB) and four at Lake Montclair in Dumfries, Prince William 30 Jun (PB). A Broad-winged Hawk was at Hume Springs Park, near downtown Alexandria 17 Jun (JC). Peregrine Falcons were reported both in Fairfax 15 Jun (DL) and Rappahannock 28 Jun (SB), with the high count of three being in along the Potomac in Fairfax.

KILLDEER — SWALLOWS
The high-count for Killdeer was 135 in Fauquier 21 Jul (PB), which must have been an astonishing sight, though not matching the historical Piedmont high count of 500. The high count of American Avocets was tied at six this season, as the same individuals appear to have been seen from both Jones Point Park (JC) and the Hunting Creek Bridge (AB) along Hunting Creek, which forms the boundary between Alexandria and Fairfax 28 Jul. Four species of sandpiper were reported: 2 Solitaries in Culpeper 21 Jul (PB), 7 Uplands in Prince William 29 Jul (GK), 8 Semipalmateds in Loudoun 14 Jul (JCo), and 3 Pectorals in Fairfax 29 Jul (ML). Jones Point Park in Alexandria was host to 4 Least Terns 25 Jul (JC). A Forster’s Tern was seen on the Potomac in Loudoun 23 Jun (DC). Two Black-billed Cuckoos were at Sky Meadows SP, Fauquier 15 Jun (MF). Reports of Yellow-billed Cuckoos came from across the Region during the latter half of Jul, though the highest count of 10 occurred 9 Jun at C. F. Phelps WMA, Fauquier (CL). A Great Horned Owl was observed in the Madison part of Shenandoah 8 Jun (PS). Fifteen Chimney Swifts were flying above Hidden Pond in Fairfax City 12 Jul (RT). The high count for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was four in Rappahannock 28 Jul (SB). A flock of 200 Purple Martins was seen along St. Clair Lane in Loudoun 10 Jun (GH). Five Bank Swallows were in Remington, Fauquier 14 Jul (TD). Cliff Swallows were comparatively more numerous elsewhere in Fauquier, when 20 were spotted at the Rectortown Road Bridge 2 Jun (PK).

VEERIES — DICKCISSELS
Six Veeries were observed on the Mount Marshall Loop in Shenandoah, Rappahannock 21 Jul (SL). Brown Thrashers were numerous at Occoquan with 15 were seen 9 Jul (DB). Notable vireo counts were: 2 White-eyed in Culpeper 1 Jun (DG), 10 Blue-headed at Big Meadows 10 Jun (GK), 3 Yellow-throated at Banshee Reeks at Big Meadows 10 Jun (GK), 3 Yellow-throated at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Loudoun 9 Jun (JC), and 2 Warblings at the Rectortown Road Bridge in Fauquier 2 Jun (PK). Notable warbler counts were: 14 Chestnut-sideds at Big Meadows 10 Jun (GK), 4 Blackburnians in the Madison part of Shenandoah 7 Jun (PS), a Pine at Sage Hill Farm in Loudoun 17 Jun (SD), 2 Ceruleans on Skyline Drive in Shenandoah 19 Jul (SM), 3 Black-and-Whites near the West Virginia line in Loudoun 22 Jul (TH), and 7 Yellow-Breasted Chats at C. F. Phelps WMA 9 Jun (CL). Sky Meadows SP, Fauquier, had a couple of interesting Cardinalid sightings with 4 Blue Grosbeaks found 31 Jul (SB) and the seasonal high count of Indigo Buntings at 42, 16 Jun (SB). The high count for Dickcissel was nine 14 Jul (TD), coming from Fauquier, which is more than three times higher than the than the average count of 2.5 for the season. Other Dickcissel high counts were tied at three (PB, GH), indicating that this seasonal high count was from an exceptional day.

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Abbreviations: Greenville (Greenfield Lake, Botetourt).

**DUCKS — FLYCATCHERS**

A **Wood Duck** with eight young was at Greenfield 6 Jun (BK) and 26 Wood Ducks tallied 17 Jun provided a new peak count for Augusta (VL & GM). A female **Gadwall** was found in Swoope, Augusta 1 Jun (AL). An adult male and a female or immature **Blue-winged Teal** were at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Stuarts Draft, Augusta 14 Jun VL & GM). A **Lesser Scaup** was observed at Greenfield 14 Jun (BK) and a **Pied-billed Grebe** and a **Great Egret** were seen there 24 Jul (KD & BK). A **Lesser Scaup** was observed at Greenfield 14 Jun (BK) and a **Pied-billed Grebe** and a **Great Egret** were seen there 24 Jul (KD & BK). A **Little Blue Heron** was found at Steeles Tavern, Augusta 21 & 22 Jul (MV). An immature **White Ibis** was observed in Swoope, Augusta 15 & 19 Jul (AL). A **Glossy Ibis** was present in Staunton 1 Jun (AL, DM & GM). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was at Sherando Lake, Augusta 26 Jul (JM & MM). A **Common Gallinule** was at Greenfield 7 Jun (BK). The **Spotted Sandpiper** at Greenfield 6 Jun could have been either a late spring or a very early fall migrant (BK). One **Solitary Sandpiper** was also seen there 12 Jul (BK & JP). A **Least Sandpiper** was observed in New Hope, Augusta 12 & 14 Jul (EG, VL & GM). **Pectoral Sandpiper** observations were of one in New Hope 17-18 Jul (GM) and seven found 29 Jul at the sewage treatment ponds in Roanoke City (KD). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was near Riner, Montgomery 12 Jun (KB & CH).

**SWALLOWS — SPARROWS**

Five **Bank Swallows** were seen along the New River near Narrows, Giles 18 Jun (RD); one was near the Paint Bank General Store, Craig 17 Jun (BK), and two were found at the Stuarts Draft Wastewater Treatment Plant, Augusta 17 Jun (VL & GM). A tally of 100 **Cliff Swallows** at Mt. Meridian 29 Jul was the 2nd highest count for Augusta (HH). However, the high count in Bisset Park, Radford was 46 on 7 Jul, slightly more than half the high tally for the previous two summers. The number of nest structures had also decreased, some nests were in disrepair and more nests were occupied by House Sparrows than in the previous three summers (CK). A **Sedge Wren** found at New Hope, Augusta 3 Jun provided the third local summer record of the species (AL). Five **Veeries** were found on Reddish Knob 24 Jun (EC & AL). A **Hermit Thrush** was singing at Glen Alton, Giles 9 Jul (RC & CK). Warbler observations were of a **Blue-winged in Highland 23 Jun (WL), 2 Prothonotaries** along the New River near Pearisburg, Giles 19 Jun (RD); and a female **Yellow-rumped** feeding one of two immatures on Reddish Knob, Augusta 24 Jun - total of eleven Yellow-rumps were observed that day (EC & AL). A **Dickcissel** was photographed at Claytor Lake, Pulaski 23 Jun (MMu). One was singing near the New River Valley Airport, Pulaski 15 Jul (CK) and last reported 28 Jul (SB). Three singing males were found in a location where successful nesting has occurred in previous summers, north of Winchester, Frederick. Many reports were received noting Dickcissels at several locations throughout Augusta with a high count of nine on 29 Jul (HH). A **White-throated Sparrow** was found on Reddish Knob 24 Jun (EC & AL). A new summer peak count of 57 **Dark-eyed Juncos** was set for Augusta at Reddish Knob 24 Jun. Most of these were hatch-year immatures (EC & AL).

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Relatively few reports were received for summer 2012 and most involved expected species of breeding birds which are not included here. Several birds mentioned in this summary were first reported to the online Monticello Bird Alert.

A Black-crowned Night-Heron was at the pond at Oakencroft Farm, Albemarle, 20 Jul (SM). A White Ibis was at a private pond in Crozet, Albemarle, 10-14 Jul (PM, SM). Single Spotted Sandpipers were found at Lickinghol Cr. Res., Albemarle, 8 Jul (PM), and along the James R. upstream from Scottsville, also Albemarle, 14 Jul (AM), perhaps early fall migrants. A Solitary Sandpiper was also at Lickinghole Cr. Res. on 8 Jul (PM). A Northern Harrier, unexpected in June, was seen in flight 22 Jun in c. Albemarle along Courtenay Glen Way, e. of Blenheim Rd (SM). Two Dickcissels were singing along route 635 just SW of Gladys, Campbell, on 26 June (GS), and two were found singing in Greene, n. of Ruckersville, 21 Jul (TJ); these birds were apparently local representatives of a major movement of this species into eastern North America during summer 2012.

Contributors: Thomas Jones, Alex Merritt, Pete Myers, Stauffer Miller, Gene Sattler.
Ponds 13 Jul (FA), three at New Point Comfort Preserve, Mathews 6 Jun (DT), and four at Reedville, Northumberland 15 Jul (SL). Like last summer a lingering TUNDRA SWAN was observed in the Region, with this year’s report of one from K.G. Ponds 13 Jul (FA). One Mallard on the Truhart BBS 11 Jun was a rare find on that survey (FA). A male BLUE-WINGED TEAL at Leedstown 10 Jun was a great find (FA). A visit to K.G. Ponds 13 Jul really produced in the duck department, with one BUFFLEHEAD, one HOODED MERGANSER, and 4 RUDDY DUCKS present (FA). Three Ruddy Ducks were there 9 Jun (FA). Widespread reports of low numbers of Northern Bobwhites were received, with high counts of six on the Port Royal BBS 10 Jun and five on the Truhart BBS 11 Jun (FA). The latter count was low for that route relative to recent surveys. Pied-billed Grebes are scarce at best in the Region in summer but two were reported at K.G. Ponds 13 Jul (FA). Even more exciting was a HORNED GREBE in breeding plumage observed sporadically at Ferry Cr. off the Plankatank R., Gloucester 18 Jun–5 Jul (JP). This sighting makes three consecutive summers with reports of this species. The only Snowy Egret report came from Guinea 30 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). Yellow-crowned Night-herons are not reported every summer, but one adult was photographed near the mouth of the Great Wicomico R., Northumberland (BW, fide PB). A check of Mothershead 10 Jun yielded an imm. NORTHERN HARRIER (FA). Three Cooper’s Hawks were found in King William 28 Jul (AB). High Clapper Rail counts included six at Guinea 24 Jun (EE) and six at Bethel Beach 12 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). One AMERICAN COOT was found at K.G. Ponds 13 Jul (FA), marking the second consecutive summer with a coot at this location.

SHOREBIRDS — Terns

A respectable variety of shorebirds were reported given the season; interestingly, a majority of reports came from western counties. The aforementioned trip to K.G. Ponds 13 Jul produced 2 Spotted Sandpipers, 2 Semipalmated Plovers, and 2 Solitary Sandpipers (FA), with the latter two sightings providing the only reports of those species. One Spotted Sandpiper along the York R., Gloucester 3 Jul likely represented an early southbound migrant (HB). The only Greater Yellowlegs report was of a single bird at Guinea 30 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). Four Willets were at Guinea 24 Jun (EE) and two were at Bethel Beach 12 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). One Semipalmated Sandpiper at K.G. Ponds 9 Jun was unusually late (FA). Two Least Sandpipers and one WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER were notable at Singerly Pond, Richmond 29 Jul (NF). Two Pectoral Sandpipers in King William 28 Jul were a sign of things to come (AB). The only Ring-billed Gull report came from Suggett’s Point, Richmond 30 Jul (LA). Two Least Terns were at Bethel Beach 12 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). By the end of the season Caspian Terns were beginning to move through the Region, with reports of single birds from both King George near Sealston 29 Jul (NF) and Suggett’s Point, Richmond 30 Jul (LA). Only two Common Tern sightings were received: two individuals at Guinea 24 Jun (EE) and a report from Heathsville, Northumberland 27 Jun (PE). Forster’s Terns were reported in small numbers throughout the Region. Observations in the western counties were made only at the end of the season, with counts of two along the Rappahannock R., Essex 29 Jul (NF) and three in King William 28 Jul (AB). A count of 7 SANDWICH TERNs off Jenkins Neck Rd., Gloucester 24 Jun (EE) was exceptional.

NIGHTJARS — SWALLOWS

As in years past, a nightjar survey along nine miles of the Truhart BBS, King and Queen was very productive with a final tally of 18 Chuck-will’s-widows and 16 Eastern Whip-poor-wills 11 Jun (FA). Other nightjar survey results included a big count of 28 Eastern Whip-poor-wills near Newland, King and Queen 2 Jun (FA). Two Chuck-will’s-widows were heard at Guinea 24 Jun (EE) and an additional Eastern Whip-poor-will report came from Heathsville, Northumberland 27 Jun (PE). Three American Kestrel reports were received; single birds were observed at Leedstown 10 Jun (FA) and in King William 28 Jul (AB). Two kestrels were associating with each other at K.G. Ponds 13 Jul (FA). A count of 35 White-eyed Vireos on the Truhart BBS was notably high (FA). There were a few reports of Horned Larks in small numbers from King George this season (FA) and an outstanding total of 50 reported from King William 28 Jul (AB). Tree Swallows were only reported from the western counties, with high counts of six individuals in King William 28 Jul (AB) and six at Wilmont Rd., King George 10 Jun (FA). An impressive flock of 550 Bank Swallows was at Wilmont Rd., King George 29 Jul (NF). The only other Bank Swallow

Page 24  Virginia Birds Volume 8 • Number 4 and Volume 9 • Number 1
report came from K.G. Ponds with two individuals 13 Jul (FA). Small numbers of **Cliff Swallows** from the sizable nesting colony on the southern end of the Hwy. 301 bridge over the Rappahannock R., located just south of the westernmost portion of the Region, were noted in adjacent King George 22 Jun (NF). Fourteen Cliff Swallows on the Port Royal BBS 10 Jun were also likely associated with this colony.

**WRENS — WARBLERS**
Surprisingly, one **House Wren** at Bluebird Lane, Gloucester 29 Jul (NF) provided the only report of the species. One singing **SEDGE WREN** near Sealston, King George was an exciting find 13 Jul (FA). Few **Marsh Wren** reports were received this season, but two were singing from Rappahannock R. marshes, Essex 29 Jul (NF) and a count of 33 was made at Mulberry 10 Jun (FA). **Cedar Waxwings** were widely reported in small numbers with a high count of 11 at Mulberry 10 Jun (FA). A private tract in King William produced some nice counts of breeding warblers 2 Jun: 11 **Prothonotary Warblers**, 9 **Hooded Warblers**, 12 **Northern Parulas**, and 6 **Yellow-throated Warblers** (FA). The only **Kentucky Warbler** report received was of a single bird on the Port Royal BBS 10 Jun (FA). **American Redstarts** were reported from Beaverdam Park, Gloucester 11 Jun (NNAS); other restart sightings involved a possible family group of three near Sealston, King George 13 Jul and one on the Truhart BBS 11 Jun (FA). Additional high counts of Northern Parulas came from BBS routes, with totals of 19 on the Port Royal BBS 10 Jun and 13 on the Truhart BBS 11 Jun (FA). A total of four breeding season **Yellow Warbler** reports was a good number for the Region. One individual was at Caledon Natural Area, King George 28 Jun (JS) and two were at Mulberry 10 Jun (FA). Two **Yellow Warblers** near Sealston, King George 29 Jul (NF) and one in King William 28 Jul (AB) likely represented the first southbound migrants. A late **BLACKPOLL WARBLER** made a surprise visit to a yard in Gloucester 27 Jun (G&RH). Thirty-four **Yellow-breasted Chats** on the Truhart BBS was an impressive total (FA).

**SPARROWS — BLACKBIRDS**
A lone **SAVANNAH SPARROW** at Hutchinson 18 Jun was quite unexpected (LA). **Grasshopper Sparrows** were reported in small numbers relatively frequently this season; higher counts were made at Wilna, which held 11 on 14 Jul (DY) and 14 on 22 Jun (NF). Eight Grasshopper Sparrows at K.G. Ponds 9 Jun (FA) was another notable count. A count of 20 **Seaside Sparrows** at Guinea 24 Jun was excellent (EE). Four Seaside Sparrows were reported from Bethel Beach 12 Jul (G&RH, J&MA). Four singing **Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrows** were at Mulberry 10 Jun (FA). A count of 10 **Scarlet Tanagers** on the Port Royal BBS was notably high (FA). **Dickcissels** made their breeding season presence at Wilna known again this year, with multiple reports from this location including a high count of 15 on 13 Jul (LB). Two Dickcissel reports were received from other sites: two singing males near Sealston, King George 9 Jun (FA) and one pair exhibiting breeding behavior at Hutchinson 22 Jun (NF). Thus, this species was much less widespread and less numerous in the Region than last year, with Wilna as the exception. A similar pattern was observed this year with **Bobolinks**; Wilna held the only individuals observed. At least three males were sighted there 13 Jul (LB) and a great count of 15 was made 14 Jul (DY). Forty **Brown-headed Cowbirds** at Leedstown 13 Jul (FA) was the only sizable blackbird flock reported.

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June had eight days of rain with an average temperature of 69.2°F and July had 18 days of precipitation—the wettest July on record, with an average temperature of 77°F. Noteworthy sightings included a Golden Eagle in Tazewell and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a low elevation in Russell.

Abbreviations: BP (Breaks Interstate Park); NR (New River); RRL (Rural Retreat Lake); SHL (South Holston Lake).

BOBWHITES — GROSBEAKS

During a Breeding Bird Survey a Northern Bobwhite was heard in Smyth 28 Jun. (T&L H). An ad. Osprey was observed on the Little R., Russell 13 Jul (T&L H). Bald Eagle observations included one in a confrontation with a Red-tailed Hawk Russell 3 Jun (PH); an adult flying across I-81 north of Exit 7, Washington 3 Jun (KH); and one flying beneath the State Line Overlook in the BP, Dickenson 9 Jun (JR). A Golden Eagle observed on Cove Rd., Russell 9 Jun (RCBC) was unexpected as the species is not unusual found there during the breeding season. An ad. Peregrine Falcon carrying prey was observed as it flew past the State Line Overlook 3 Jun (BCBC). On 2 Jul an American Woodcock was found feeding in a yard stream on Compton Mt., Buchanan (RM). Eastern Screech Owls returned to the Breaks community 1 Aug after having been absent for several months (DR). A pair of Great Crested Flycatchers was found nesting in a piece of square steel tubing near Lebanon, Russell 24 Jun (J&J T). Seven Loggerhead Shrikes in two groups, two ads. and five juvs. were found on Clifton Farms Rd., Russell 13 Jul and two adults were observed at Elk Garden also in Russell the same day (T&L H). Fifteen Cliff Swallow nests were found among Barn Swallow nests at a farm near Chilhowie, Smyth 9 Jun (LT). A Brown Creeper was in a yard in Lebanon, Russell 27 Jul (T&L H). A Cerulean Warbler sang all day on Compton Mt. 13 Jun (RM). In Russell a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared in a yard at a low elevation in Rosedale three times from 13 Jun to 22 Jul (J&J T). A male Blue Grosbeak was found singing on a farm at Baywood, Grayson 21 Jun (BD).

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American Woodcock foraging in a yard stream on Compton Mountain, Buchanan. Photograph by Roger Mayhorn.
Once again, June and July 2012 were some of the hottest on record in the Region, with several days of 100 plus degree temperatures. It was also one of the driest, particularly in the northeastern portion of the region. A rare derecho brought severe thunderstorms with extensive wind damage statewide 29-30 June. The hot dry weather appeared to reduce reports of bird sightings although this may reflect less time spent by birders in the field due to the extreme conditions.

An adult **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was at Steel Bridge Road, *Greensville* 11 Jun (NF, EE). While **White Ibis** is an expected species in summer at Staunton View Public Use Area, *Mecklenburg*, a count of 23 juveniles 31 Jul (AD) was notable. Although **Osprey** is considered rare in the Piedmont in summer, evidence of expansion of its breeding range came from several reports. One was present 27 Jun at The Falls along the Nottoway River on the boundary between *Lunenburg* and *Nottoway* (WE). There was a report of four active nests submitted to [www.osprey-watch.org](http://www.osprey-watch.org) from *Prince Edward* (MS) and a large nestling was observed exercising its wings 20 Jul (PG). For the third time in eight years, **Mississippi Kite** was reported in summer in *Dinwiddie* with three being seen 11 July (AD). The species seems to be an annual summer visitor to *Halifax* with a report 19 Jul (JB). **Broad-winged Hawk** is a fairly rare Piedmont summer resident particularly in the southern part of the state; there were two notable reports from *Henry* 2 Jun (MF) and 11 Jul (PG) and one was reported 8 Jul at Bear Creek Lake SP, *Cumberland* (ES). **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, a species that has been established with a breeding population in *Halifax* for several years, may be expanding its range with a 6 Jun report from Crewe, *Nottoway* (RB). Locally rare in the southern Piedmont in summer, an **American Kestrel** was reported from *Franklin* 20 Jun (BK, KD) and two were reported at Riverwalk Trail, *Danville* 3 Jul (JB). **Horned Lark** is another fairly rare summer resident particularly in the southern Piedmont; a large flock reported 22 Jul in Chase City, *Mecklenburg* (GM) might have been early fall migrants or responding to drought conditions further west. Considered as having “sparse distribution” in the southern Piedmont, two **Kentucky Warblers** were notable 5 and 17 Jun at Bear Creek Lake SP, *Cumberland* (ES), and two were reported from *Franklin* 20 Jun (BK, KD). A late **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was reported 12 Jun along the Blue Ridge Parkway, *Patrick* (TD). Rare in summer particularly in this part of the Region, a **Baltimore Oriole** was present 9 Jun in *Greensville* (TDay)

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The average temperature in June was only slightly above normal but July was very hot with temperatures averaging 4.8 degrees above normal. The average high temperature in July was 92.6 degrees. Despite the drought in many parts of Virginia, the average precipitation in the Region was slightly above normal probably due to the infrequent but heavy downpours accompanying the thunderstorms that popped up sporadically throughout the area. As is usually the case in summer, interesting bird reports were not as numerous as in other seasons partly because of the short two month reporting period but also due to the presence of expected species. As reported in the spring column, the Richmond Peregrine Falcons raised three chicks, one male and two females, this year. All three chicks fledged successfully on June 6. Unfortunately, the male juvenile was found dead on June 20. It has been determined that the bird probably died after colliding with the James Monroe building. According to Mike Wilson of the Center for Conservation Biology, Virginia now supports the largest number of Red-cockaded Woodpecker breeding pairs since the 1980s. Biologists documented ten breeding pairs at the Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex County during the 2012 breeding season. This represents a five fold increase from the low of two breeding pairs in the spring of 2000. Breeding produced 26 young. Along with 45 adults, the population has reached its highest level in 20 years. We hope for continued success in this specie’s dramatic recovery in Virginia.

**Abbreviations:** Branchville BBS (Branchville Breeding Bird Survey); Hog (Hog Island W.M.A., Surry); Newville BBS (Newville Breeding Bird Survey); Ragged Island (Ragged Island W.M.A., Isle of Wight); Shirley (Shirley Plantation, Charles City).

**DUCKS – GRACKLES**

A m. **Ring-necked Duck** in eclipse plumage, rare in summer, was at Hog 24 July (ph. AD). An **Anhinga** was seen in flight on U.S. Route 58 near Courtland, **Southampton** 8 Jun (T'D). Three ad. **Little Blue Herons** were observed at Bellyache Swamp along route 661, **Southampton** 16 Jul (EE). Two juv. **White Ibis**, increasingly present inland in late summer, were at Shirley 21 & 22 Jul (ph. AD, AB). Two **Mississippi Kites** were working a field off Cabin Point Rd., **Sussex** during the Newville BBS 9 Jun (NF, EE, LB). A **Broad-winged Hawk**, a rare but increasing summer resident in the southeastern coastal plain, was heard calling persistently during the Newville BBS on Cabin Point Rd., **Sussex** 9 Jun (NF, EE, LB). Three **American Coots**, rare in summer, were in a marsh at Hog 24 July (ph. AD). An ad. **SANDHILL CRANE** was found near an industrial communication company, **Isle of Wight** 18 Jun (TC). Apparently the bird had been in the area for four to six weeks prior to its discovery by a birder. It was...
subsequently seen 19 Jun (BA) and then again 23 Jun (TD) in the same location. Three ad. **Stilt Sandpipers** were observed at Hog 24 Jul (AD). An **American Woodcock**, an uncommon summer resident, was seen flying at dawn at the start of the Branchville BBS, **Southampton** 10 Jun (NF, EE). Six **Royal Terns** were noted on the James R., viewed from **Charles City** 22 Jul (AB). Fifteen **Common Terns**, less common inland, were counted in the James R., **Isle of Wight** 2 July (NF). A **Black Skimmer**, rare west of the Chesapeake Bay, was seen at Ragged Island 25 Jun (NF). A **Willow Flycatcher**, a rare summer resident, was reported to ebird from York River S.P., **James City** 24 Jun (SH). A pair of **Common Ravens**, apparently nesting near a treetop on Crowncrest Dr., **Henrico**, was reported to ebird on 1 Jul (P&SC). No further details on breeding results were obtained. Four **Horned Larks**, an uncommon to locally common summer resident, were noted on Waller Rd., **Southampton** 16 Jun (NF). Three Horned Larks were counted on the Branchville BBS, **Southampton** 10 Jun (NF, EE). Three **American Redstarts** were near the route 730 bridge that crosses the Meherrin R., **Southampton** 11 Jun (NF, EE). A **Swainson’s Warbler** was heard singing on route 667 at the tributary of Tarrara Creek near Boykins, **Southampton** 17 & 18 Jun (PRW, EE, NF). A **Scarlet Tanager** was at the Newport News Waterworks Property off Richneck Rd., **York** 24 Jun (NF). These areas represent the eastern most portion of the tanager’s range where breeding is uncommon and local. A single **Grasshopper Sparrow** was recorded on the Branchville BBS, **Southampton** 10 Jun (NF, EE). A pair of **Bobolinks**, rare for this location, was at Hog 24 Jul (ph. AD). Five **Boat-tailed Grackles**, rare away from the coast, were at Ragged Island 25 Jun (NF). This species has been regularly reported from this location in the recent past.

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The Region was spared the record setting extreme drought conditions that suffocated most of the continent throughout the summer. Rainfall for the period and year-to-date through July was average at Norfolk. An EF1 tornado with winds up to 98 mph slashed Hampton Roads on June 1 as it raced 3.5 miles from Portsmouth across the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel into Hampton, barely missing the extensive seabird colonies that occupied the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. The avian activity that defined this season was captured by numerous field study teams that studied a spectrum of species from pelicans to Prothonotary Warblers. Agencies that coordinated such research included the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Center for Conservation Biology, and the Virginia Coast Reserve. Their project-focused work was enhanced by the survey teams that chronicled the birdlife at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Grandview, Craney Island, Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Chincotegue National Wildlife Refuge, and False Cape State Park.

**Abbreviations:** Cape Charles (town of Cape Charles, Northampton); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Chinc. (Chincotegue NWR, Accomack); Craney (Craney Island, Portsmouth); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, Hampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/Norfolk); KSP (Kiptopeke SP, Northampton); VCR (Virginia Coast Reserve of The Nature Conservancy); VDGIF (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

**WATERFOWL — SHOREBIRDS**

A molting female Red-breasted Merganser was at Grandview 19 Jun (ph. BW, CJ, BT). As many as 3 Northern Bobwhites were singing at Craney 5 & 12 Jul (RB et al.). A Pied-billed Grebe was at Taylor Pond, KSP 6 Jul (BT) & 20 Jul (SB). Single Horned Grebes were at Chinc. 7 Jun (WT) and at Craney 5-19 Jul (BW et al.). Two Audubon’s Shearwaters and 2 Wilson’s Storm-Petrels were ~125 mi. e. of Hog Island, Northampton 2 Jun (TJ). Other reported Wilson’s Storm-Petrel included six off Grandview 19 Jun (BT, CJ, BW), one off Cape Henry, Virginia Beach 20 Jun (BA), two near Shanks Island, Accomack 12 Jul (JW fide HA), nine near Tangier, Accomack 15 Jul (SL), and one off Chinc. 17 Jul (JB, CM). Breeding Brown Pelicans were recorded at three sites; a guesstimated 900 pairs were on Clump Island, Accomack (HA); 100 pairs nested off the s. end of Wreck Island, Northampton, a first for that site, and, also for the first time, 343 nests were on Chimney Pole Marsh, Northampton (fide AW). The Sandy Island, Northampton colony site, occupied by this species from 2005 to 2011 was not utilized apparently due to habitat loss from erosion. There were 141 Double-crested Cormorant nests on the power transmission towers adjacent to the James River Bridge, Isle of Wight/ Newyor News (NF). Elsewhere, an estimated 800 pairs bred on the Shanks/Cheeseman/Peach Orchard Point complex, Accomack (HA). One male and one female Anhinga were in a pond on Blackwater Road, Chesapeake 19 Jul (ph. K&KR). An estimated 250–300 White Ibis pairs nested on Wreck Island, Northampton and ~50 pairs were in a Wire Narrows, Accomack heronry (RBr). A WHITE-FACED IBIS was at Chinc. 11 Jun (BA, ph. BH). A Mississippi Kite was off Bayshore Rd., Cape Charles 1 Jun (JG). An adult male Northern Harrier was on the Shanks/Cheeseman islands, Accomack 21 Jun (HA) the same day a second-year male was at Craney (BW et al.). The annual VDGIF Virginia Plover Survey located 62 Wilson’s Plovers (30 pairs plus twounpaired singles) and 433 Piping Plovers (207 pairs plus 19 unpaired singles) (RBr). All of the Wilson’s Plovers were found on three
northern *Accomack* coastal barrier islands - Assawoman, Metompkin and Cedar. Those islands also accounted for 59% (122 pairs, 10 singles) of the survey’s Piping Plovers. Additional, Piping Plover nesting concentrations included Assateague Island, *Accomack* (34 pairs, six singles) and Smith Island, *Northampton* (22 pairs, one single). The VCR’s *Accomack*/*Northampton* coastal barrier islands *American Oystercatcher* surveys documented 444 pairs plus 224 unpaired singles. The 444 pairs represent the highest total since the current survey format was adopted in 2000. An American Oystercatcher pair successfully fledged two young on HRBT this season, a first successful nesting for that species at that location. **Black-necked Stilts** were reported throughout the period from Queen Anne’s Landing, near Chincoteague, *Accomack* (LB, AB) and at Craney (RB, SD, BT, BW, DY). The season’s peak count of 40 was at Queen Anne’s Landing 21 Jul (AB). Eleven occupied nests were confirmed at Craney 21 Jun (RB et al.). By 5 Jul only eight breeding pairs could be accounted for there, one of which had three downy young. **American Avocets** were at Chinc. 7 (*fide* WT) through 14 Jun (JB) with a peak count of six there 11 Jun (BA); 14 were at Craney 26 Jul (BW et al.). An Eastern *Willet* pair was attending a single chick at Craney 5 & 12 Jul (RB et al.). The period’s first reported “Western” *Willet* was one at Craney 12 Jul (BW, RB, SD, DY). An *Upland Sandpiper* passed by Picketts Harbor, *Northampton* 29 Jul (LD, HW *fide* HA). The highest reported *Sanderling* count was 4434 at Chinc. 17 Jul (JB, CM). Two *Wilson’s Phalaropes* were at Craney 5 Jul (BW et al.); three were there 26 Jul (BW et al.).

**GULLS — FINCHES**

The HRBT’s south island was once again densely populated by nesting seabirds. Late May-early Jun nest/incubating adult counts tallied 2259 *Laughing Gull* nests, 43 *Herring Gull* nests, 15 Great *Black-backed Gull* nests, 31 *Gull-billed Tern* pairs, 1091 *Common Tern* pairs, 4425 *Royal Tern* pairs, 17 *Sandwich Tern* pairs, and 117 *Black Skimmers* pairs (RB et al.). The peak reported *Lesser Black-backed Gull* count was 131 at Chinc. 26 Jul (JB, CM). The efforts of several VDGIF coordinated field teams located 25 *Least Tern* colonies in the Region including two roof-top nesting attempts. There were 51 occupied nests and an additional 18 broods at Patrick Henry Mall, Newport News 5 June (RBt) and 38 incubating adults atop Lynnhaven Mall, Virginia Beach 13 Jun (RBt). Unfortunately, both of these colonies failed, the latter due to several days of heavy rain. The largest number of nesting pairs was 267 on Assawoman Island, *Accomack* with another 86 pairs on Metompkin Island, *Accomack*. Craney Island’s 180 pairs recorded in late May-early June (RB et al.) represented 21% of the state total (*fide* RBt). Of particular interest were 13 *Least Terns* still incubating at Craney 26 Jul (RB et al.); the species’ latest known egg-date is 28 Jul. A colony of about 60 Royal Terns failed in an attempt to nest on Clump Island, *Accomack* (JW *fide* HA) and there was a small Royal Tern colony on Ship Shoal Island, *Northampton* (*fide* AW). An on-the-ground two-egg *Mourning Dove* nest was encountered on Craney 12 Jul (ph. BW, DY). In addition to the two-egg *Common Nighthawk* nest found at Craney 24 May (BW) a second two-egg nest was discovered there 6 Jun (SD, BW). The latter had two downy young 21 Jun (ph. BW). A single Common Nighthawk was in Old Town Portsmouth 16 Jun (NF). Among five at Craney 12 Jul was at least one recently fledged young (BW, DY, RB, SD). The CCB’s annual *Peregrine Falcon* nest monitoring project revealed the Region supported 14 of the state’s 22 known active breeding territories (SP *fide* LM). As part of a larger CVWO Coastal Plain *Prothonotary Warbler* nest box project, 39 boxes were placed on the Northwest River, Chesapeake in 2009. The number of boxes was increased to 98 in 2011. That year 54 boxes (54%) had nesting activity from which 133 young were banded. This year 67 boxes (68%) had nesting activity with 165 nestlings banded (2 on 31 Jul), a 21% increase over 2011(SD). A *Dickcissel* was at Latimore Siding Rd., *Northampton* 6 Jul (BT).

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