Editors’ Notes

W
ith this issue we bid farewell to David Spears who has been our South Central Region editor since 2008. David took on the job of compiling reports for that region just as he was completing his second term as VSO President, at a time when he still faced many duties as the Past President. We were very fortunate that he was willing to take on the additional work. He has provided many excellent reports and expanded the network of contributors and the coverage of the region. David’s final accomplishment as regional editor was to recruit a very able replacement in the person of Wendy Ealding. We sincerely thank David for all of his contributions to Virginia Birds and look forward to reading his sighting reports since he will now have more time to bird.

Wendy Ealding, our incoming editor, has lived in Virginia for 34 years, 30 of those in Chesterfield County and the last 4 in Powhatan County, just outside the northeast border of the South Central region where she moved after retiring from her job as a scientist with the state government. She has birded throughout the United States and internationally on five continents and is heading for her sixth, Africa, next month. Wendy is on the VSO Board of Directors, organized the 2009 VSO Foray and participated in the Breeding Bird Atlas.

Good Birding,

Linda and Alan

CORRECTION: In the last issue of Virginia Birds (Volume 6, No. 2) in the Southwest Region Report, page 9, the farm referred to in sightings of Mourning Dove, Common Nighthawk, Red-headed Woodpecker and Loggerheaded Shrike is located in Grayson county not Carroll county.
Winter Reporting Period Dec 2009–Feb 2010

North


No report this period.

New Editor—Lenny Bankester 4113 33rd St S. Arlington, VA 22206 vsonorthvirginia@yahoo.com

West

This Region includes the Shenandoah Valley, south to the New River Valley, and is part of Virginia’s Mountains and Valleys physiographic region. It is comprised of the counties of (from North to South) Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Shenandoah, Page, Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Alleghany, Craig, Giles, Roanoke, Montgomery and Pulaski.

No report this period.

New Editor—Clyde Kessler, P.O. Box 3612 Radford, VA 24141 ckessler@vt.edu

Central

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

Editor — Tim Hodge, 5134 Cub Creek Road, Roseland, VA 22967, tim@hodgeproductsinc.com

Following a snowy winter, with snow lingering through March, temperatures rose to above average and the trees leafed out quickly making spring migration somewhathardtoview. Nevertheless birders reported 176 species in the Region.

WATERFOWL—RAPTORS

Four late Gadwalls spent a day at a pond on Rt. 250 Albemarle, 25 Apr (TH). Two Hooded Mergansers passed through Stoney Creek, Nelson, a little late on 24 Apr (EC). Three female Common Mergansers were noted at Mill Creek Lake, Amherst 2 May (MB). Great Egrets, fairly rare during the spring, were in Bedford 1 May (KD), in Amherst 2 May (MB), and two were at King Family Vineyards, Albemarle 23–25 May (CM, PM). Also a rare transient, an American Bittern was detected at a small wetland in Albemarle on both 15 Apr and 4 May (SM). A third rare transient, a Black-crowned Night-Heron was spotted in the vicinity of Nellysford, Nelson 24 Apr (EC). Two new Great Blue Heron colonies were discovered: one with 10 nests in Campbell (TD), and one with four nests in Nelson (TH). Both newly discovered colonies are the first for their county. Osprey were observed as early as 10 Mar on Palmore Rd, Powhatan (WE) and again at the same location 15 Mar (WE). Early Osprey were also observed at Lake Shawmee, Powhatan 25 Mar (PE) and on the Moormans River, Albemarle 24 Mar (MC) and 27 Mar (CM). A nesting pair was photographed at Smith Mountain Lake, Bedford 27–28 May (DB). Bald Eagles, a rare and local resident and transient, were noted in Powhatan, Amherst, Fredericksburg, Albemarle, and Hanover, with pairs seen on the Canal Path, Fredericksburg 24 Apr (SC) and at Lake Shawmee, Powhatan 29 Apr (PE). Late Northern Harriers were viewed from Rt. 811, Albemarle 1 May (TH, PD) and at a private residence in Albemarle 11 May (HS). A Golden Eagle, a rare transient, was reported from Afton Mt., Nelson 27 Mar (JB). Another rare transient, a Merlin, was noted near Nellysford, Nel-
Coots—Hummingbirds

Albemarle had its first reported Virginia Rail since 1956 on 28 Apr (SM). Old Trail Golf Course, Albemarle, had an interesting day on 15 May when both a late American Coot and a rare Short-billed Dowitcher presented themselves (CM). The latter provided a first spring record for the Region. A Black-bellied Plover was seen beside a farm pond in the northeast section of Albemarle 23 May (SM); there are very few records of this species in Albemarle, and it is a rare transient throughout the Region. Black-billed Cuckoos, uncommon transients, were noted at three locations in Albemarle (SM, PM, KF et al.) and in single locations in Amherst (MB), Nelson (GD), and Bedford (WT). The first Ruby-throated Hummingbird arrived on Palmore Rd., Powhatan 16 Apr (WE).

Flycatchers—Catbirds

Rare flycatchers included two Alder Flycatchers, one at James River WMA, Nelson 20 May (CM) and another on Rt. 778, Amherst 15 May (MB). A Willow Flycatcher was at Fulfillment Farms, Albemarle 14 May (PB). Reports of Least Flycatcher were from Spotsylvania 20 May (CS), Albemarle 28 May (KF), and at least seven late individuals in northwestern Amherst 22 May (MB). Between 1 and 29 May, seven sightings of one to two individuals were noted at Pocosin Cabin, Greene (GM, DL, RM), three of these sightings were late. A very early Great Crested Flycatcher, arrived at Pilot View Lane, Nelson 6 Apr (E&PM). As in previous years Loggerhead Shrikes, a rare local resident, were seen on Parker Rd., Bedford (RB). Five early White-eyed Vireos were noted at Belmead Plantation, Powhatan 10 Apr (WE, RM, et al.). Blue-headed Vireos were reported both earlier and later than the normal migration dates (10 April – 10 May) with seven reports of one to four individuals in the White Hall area west of Albemarle, beginning 24 Mar (MC, PM, CM) and eight reports of late individuals extending through 28 May (PM, CM, KF). There were also reports of late birds from Nelson (CM), Greene (GM, RM), and Bedford (MH) through 18 May. A single drab Philadelphia Vireo was a good find on 2 May at Rt. 617, Amherst since the species is not an annual visitor to the Region (MB, MJ). A wandering Common Raven was at St. Frances, Powhatan, 3 Apr (WE). A lone Northern Rough-winged Swallow was observed at Boar’s Head, Albemarle, 23 Mar (PM). Tree Swallows arrived early at Old Trail Golf Course, Albemarle 6 Mar (PM) and the count grew to 13 individuals by 18 Mar (PM). Tree Swallows arrived at Powhatan Lakes, Powhatan 10 Mar (WE). A Barn Swallow at Lake Albemarle, Albemarle 28 Mar was slightly early (PM).

Several Black-capped Chickadees, more common to the west but rare in this Region, were seen regularly near Blue Ridge, Bedford, between 2 and 28 Mar (PP). A late Brown Creeper was spotted near Beaver Creek Reservoir, Albemarle 1 May (TH). Marsh Wrens were noted twice this season: one early at North Anna Power Station, Louisa, 5 Apr (MB) and one in Albemarle 4 May (SM). South River Trail, Greene hosted a late Golden-crowned Kinglet 7 May (DW). A first of season Gray Catbird was found in a private yard in Fredericksburg 3 Mar (JG).

Warblers—Buntings

Many Warblers arrived earlier than usual. Two Northern Parulas were at the Belmead Plantation, Powhatan 7 Apr (WE). Another was at Sugar Hollow Reservoir, Albemarle, 13 Apr (PM). A Chestnut-sided Warbler came through Jarman Gap, Albemarle, 25 Apr (CM). Two Black-throated Green Warblers arrived at Turk’s Gap, Albemarle, 4 Apr (PM) and there were five individuals by 13 Apr (CM). A couple of early Palm Warblers passed by Keene Rd., Albemarle 3 Apr (JF). Raven Hill Farm, Albemarle, hosted a slightly early Blackpoll Warbler for a day 1 May (TH, PD). Worm-eating Warblers arrived as early as 17 Apr at Chanco Volante, Albemarle (PM), and 19 Apr at Ivy Creek Nature Area, Albemarle (CM). An Ovenbird was noted at Belmead Plantation, Powhatan, 7 and 10 Apr (WE, RM, et al.). Another early Ovenbird was observed at Fighting Creek Park, Powhatan, 13 Apr (WE). A Louisiana Waterthrush passed through Chanco Volante, Albemarle, 28 Mar (PM). Both early and rare, a Mourning Warbler was photographed at a private residence in Albemarle, 26 Apr (CM). Another Mourning Warbler remained at Mint Springs Park, Albemarle for several days, 16 – 21 May (CM, PM, RM). Common Yellowthroats arrived early at Powhatan Lakes, Powhatan, 5 Apr (WE), Belmead Plantation, Powhatan, 7 Apr (WE), Ivy Creek Nature Area, 8 Apr (CM), and Long Island, Campbell, 10 Apr (MF). A few late warblers were also observed, including a Chestnut-sided at Pocosin Cabin, Greene, seen through 29 May (GM, RM, DL) and one at Royal Orchard, Albemarle, 28 May (KF); and a Black-throated Green Warbler at Turk’s Gap, Albemarle, through 28 May (PM). A Clay-colored Sparrow visited a yard in downtown Fredericksburg, 27 Apr (JG). A lingering Dark-eyed Junco visited some feeders in Goochland, 30 Apr (RM), and 19 May (LD). Some early Scarlet Tanagers were at Mint Springs Park, Albemarle, 18 Apr (CM) and at Chancellorsville Battlefield, Spotsylvania 20 Apr (TK). A rare transient, Dickcissel, was seen on Red House Rd., Campbell 16 May (PL). An early Indigo Bunting was noted at the Belmead Plantation, Powhatan, 10 Apr (RM).

East

The Northern Neck, composed of King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Northumberland, and Lancaster Counties, is bordered by the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. The Middle Peninsula includes King William, King and Queen, Essex, Middlesex, Gloucester, and Mathews Counties and is bordered by the Rappahannock and Pamunkey/York Rivers. The Mattaponi River is the boundary between King William and King and Queen and it joins with the Pamunkey River to form the York River in West Point. Even though the northern and eastern shorelines of the Northern Neck overlook the Maryland waters of the Potomac River those Maryland birds are reported here since they are not reported anywhere else.

EDITOR—Fred Atwood, Flint Hill School, 10409 Academic Drive, Oakton, VA 22124 fredatwood@yahoo.com

Guest Editor: Spring Season 2010

GUEST EDITOR—Tiffany Corsello, tiffany corsello@hotmail.com

During the 2010 spring season 227 species were recorded. Highlights included Eurasian Wigeon, Anhinga, Tricolored Heron, White Ibis, Whimbrel, Merlin, Red Knot, Black-necked Stilt, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sandwich Tern, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Painted Bunting.

Abbreviations: Balls Neck (Balls Neck area, Northumberland); Beaverram (Beaverram Park, Gloucester); Bethel (Bethel Beach area, Mathews); Birthplace (George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland); Dameron (Dameron NAP, Northumberland); Fletcher’s Chapel (Fletcher’s Chapel area off Route 218 in King George), Haven (Haven Beach, Mathews); Hughlett Point NAP, Northumberland), K. G. Ponds (Route 3 ponds in King George); Leedstown (Westmoreland), Mulberry (Mulberry Private Hunting Preserve, Mulberry Pt, Richmond); Muse (end of Muse Rd near Pope’s Creek, Westmoreland, overlooking the Potomac R.); Rapp R. NWR. (Rappahannock R. Valley National Wildlife Refuge); Wilna (Wilna tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond).

WATERFOWL—GREBES

A large flock of 825 Tundra Swans was reported at Occupacca Creek, Essex 9 Mar (HW, fide BP). Later that evening six additional large flocks were heard migrating over Sparta area, Essex (BP). A nice high count of 50 Snow Geese was reported at Bethel 17 Mar (G&RH). K. G. Ponds held the last Northern Pintail and Gadwall on 25 Apr (FA). The high count for Common Goldeneye was a raft of 55 at Muse 14 Mar (TC).

EURASIAN WIGEONS were seen in Leedstown 7 Mar – 8 Mar (FA, TC). The two beautiful drakes were mixed in with American Wigeons on a flooded depression in a farm field. A Long-tailed Duck was an unusual sighting at K. G. Ponds 28 Mar (KG, RR). The last report and season-high for Canvasback was 270 at Muse 14 Mar (TC). A high count of 23 Redheads was reported in Dague, King George 7 Mar (FA); the last season report was of six at K. G. Ponds 12 Mar (TC). The last report for Red-breasted Merganser was at Beaverram 20 Mar (SD). The season-high for Surf Scoter was 125 at Bethel 17 Mar (G&RH). The last Red-throated Loon was at Muse 7 Mar (FA). A good count of 16 Horned Grebes was seen at Birthplace 7 Mar (FA). Five Brown Pelicans were observed at Hughelett 11 Mar (TC). Three Northern Gannets were reported 28 Mar at Coles Point, Westmoreland (FD) and 56 were at Gloucester Point Beach, Gloucester 25 Mar (MS). An ANHINGA was seen and photographed for the third year in a row at Betts Bottom Rd., Heathsville, Northumberland 6 May (RD).

HERONS—GULLS

The first Great Egret arrived in Gloucester 25 Mar (EB). A Tricolored Heron was reported in Leedstown 25 Apr (FA). One Cattle Egret was noted in Northumberland 7 May (T&SS) and three were seen in full breeding plumage in a plowed field on Mark Pine Rd., Gloucester 17 Apr (M&LB). The earliest sighting for Snowy Egret was in Gloucester 11 May (DW). An American Bittern was flushed from marsh grasses in Leedstown 25 Apr (FA). Two Least Bitterns were reported in Cat Point Creek, Richmond in early May (SS). A wonderful report of 2 WHITE IBIS came from Bethel 29 May (G&RH, DW). The last report for Northern Harrier was at Beaverram 15 May (DR). A total of 45 Red-tailed Hawks and 33 Red-shouldered Hawks were reported throughout the Region this season. The high count for American Kestrel was four at John’s Point Landing, Gloucester 9 Apr (G&RH). A late Merlin was seen during a walk led by the Northern Neck Audubon Society at Belle Isle SP, Lancaster 10 May (FS, NNAS). A good season-high of 13 Clapper Rails was reported at Bethel 17 Mar (G&RH). Beaverram held 155 American Coots on 8 Apr (G&RH). Gwynn’s Island, Mathews, saw heavy traffic on 30 May with 200 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 3 Black-bellied Plovers in full breeding plumage, 3 Semipalmated Plovers, 4 American Oystercatchers, 40 Sandpipers, 125 Dunlin, and 2 RED KNOTS, rare here (BP). On the evening of 31 May, a migrating flock of 140 WHIMBRELS was reported flying over Dameron furnished a very high count for the Region and a rare sighting so far inland (T&SS). A high count of 15 Ruddy Turnstones was seen at Bethel 29 May (G&RH). Two BLACK-NECKED STILTS were observed flying upriver over Drake’s Marsh in Leedstown 25 Apr (FA). A season-high of 17 Willets were noted at Maryus-Guinea Plantation, Gloucester 23 May (M&LB). Leedstown saw high counts for Solitary Sandpiper 8, and Spotted Sandpiper 4, on 15 May (FA). A high count of 40 Least Sandpipers was seen flying in tight formation.
at Haven 9 May (JS). A Short-billed Dowitcher was noted at Dameron 1 Apr (BP). An early Pectoral Sandpiper was seen in Leedstown 13 Mar (FA), and one at Hughlett 23 May (T&SS). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen and nicely photographed in Leedstown 10 Mar (BP), probably the same bird seen at the same location on the Birthplace CBC 2 Jan. There was a good “tern-out” at Bethel on 27 Apr with 11 Least Terns, 100 Royal Terns, and 2 Sandwich Terns (G&RH). The high count for Common Terns was 5 at Bethel 9 May (JS).

CUCKOOS—VIREOS

The first Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Beaverdam 1 May (AM). The first Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were seen on 9 Apr in Jones Creek, Gloucester (EB), and Mallard Bay, Northumberland (J&WG). A Least Flycatcher was seen at Fletcher’s Chapel 11 May (TC). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was seen and heard at Fletcher’s Chapel 14 May (TC). A season-high of 13 Eastern Kingbirds was reported in Gloucester 23 May (M&LB). A Willow Flycatcher was seen and heard at Ferry Farm, King George, on 14 May and 21 May (PN). A big flock of 115 Tree Swallows was observed flying over the river at Mulberry 13 May (FA). The first report for Northern Rough-winged Swallow was of 15 at Beaverdam 28 Mar (G&RH). K. G. Ponds saw high counts for Bank Swallow 20, and Barn Swallow 145 on 25 Apr (FA). At Walkerton Bridge, King and Queen, 15 Cliff Swallows were seen building nests 1 May (FA). Last sightings for some winter residents included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 28 Mar at Beaverdam (G&RH), Golden-crowned Kinglet 17 Apr at Fletcher’s Chapel (TC), Ruby-crowned Kinglet 29 Apr at Fletcher’s Chapel (TC), Winter Wren 11 Mar at Hughlett (TC), and Hermit Thrush 8 Apr at Beaverdam (G&RH). A high count of 46 Marsh Wrens was reported singing merrily at Mulberry 23 May (FA). Two flocks totaling 60 Cedar Waxwings were seen at Birthplace 15 May (FA). Two Swainson’s Thrushes were seen and heard at Fletcher’s Chapel 14 May (TC). The first Veery was sighted in Gloucester 11 May (DW). A sizable flock of 150 American Robins was seen in Leedstown 13 Mar (FA). The first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher of the season arrived in Gloucester 2 Apr (G&RH). A Brown-headed Nuthatch was reported at Belle Isle SP, Lancaster 10 May (FS, NNAS). There were no reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches, not surprising since few were reported during the winter season. First spring sightings of vireos include Yellow-throated 20 Apr, White-eyed 8 Apr, Red-eyed 20 Apr, and Blue-headed Vireo 26 Apr, all at Beaverdam (G&RH). A Warbling Vireo was reported at Fletcher’s Chapel 13 May (TC). K. G. Ponds had a Philadelphia Vireo 15 May (FA).

WARBLERS—FINCHES

The season hosted a good showing of warblers with 31 species reported. Species included Northern Parula, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Yellow-breasted Chat; Yellow, Prairie, Blackpoll, Palm, Yellow-rumped, Pine, Black-throated Blue, Black-and-white, Prothonotary, and Hooded Warbler. The only reports for Cape May Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler came from Wilna (SS). The first Chestnut-sided Warbler was found at Beaverdam 1 May (AM). The first sighting for Yellow-throated Warbler was at Westmoreland SP, Westmoreland 4 Apr (TB). The earliest Magnolia Warbler was spotted in Gloucester 9 May (DW). The Fletcher’s Chapel area saw a good variety of first arrivals with Black-throated Green 11 May, Blackburnian 13 May, Kentucky 13 May, and Canada Warbler 13 May (TC). Wilmont Landing, King George was productive on 15 May with sightings of a Bay-breasted, Wilson’s, and Cerulean Warbler (FA). A Mourning Warbler was glimpsed at Stratford Hall Plantation, Westmoreland 15 May (TC). Early sightings in Gloucester included a Worm-eating Warbler at Beaverdam 30 Apr (G&RH), and a Louisiana Waterthrush at White Marsh 29 Mar (H&JW). A Northern Waterthrush was seen in Riverwood, King William 1 May (FA). Scarlet Tanagers were first seen 26 Apr at both Fletcher’s Chapel (TC), and Beaverdam (G&RH). The first Summer Tanager was at Beaverdam 23 Apr (G&RH). The last observation for Savannah Sparrow was at Mulberry 23 May (FA). Other last sightings for winter residents were White-crowned Sparrow Leedstown 25 Apr (FA), and White-throated Sparrow Gloucester 13 May (DW). The first report of Grasshopper Sparrows was at five at K. G. Ponds 25 Apr (FA). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks moved through the Region with a first report at Fletcher’s Chapel 7 May (TC), and a last report in Gloucester 15 May (DR). The first Indigo Bunting was at Balls Neck 25 Apr (T&SS). Two Painted Buntings were a great find at Wicomico Church, Northumberland (J&C). The male there 15 Mar was probably the same one seen over the winter season. A female appeared on 26 Mar, and was last seen 12 Apr. There was a good sighting of 450 Bobolinks, 90 percent of which were female 15 May (FA). Only 16 Rusty Blackbirds were reported, 13 in Mulberry and 3 in Leedstown 13 Mar (FA). The first Orchard Oriole was heard singing at K. G. Ponds 25 Apr (FA). The last Purple Finch departed Gloucester 2 Mar (MM).

Southwest


EDITORS – Roger and Lynda Mayhorn, HC 67 Box 44A, Pilgrims Knob, VA 24634 rmayhorn@hughes.net

The season started with 11 days of rain and three days of snow in March followed by nine days of precipitation in April and 11 in May. The average temperatures were 46° F in March, 62° F in April and a very warm 80° F in May. Highlights for the period were seven American White Pelicans in Washington, a pair of nesting Virginia Rails at RRL, Bald Eagles with young at three separate nests and Eurasian Collared-Doves in Washington.

Abbreviations: BP (Breaks Interstate Park, Dickenson); HVI. (Hidden Valley Lake, Russell); NR (New River, Grayson); RRL (Rural Retreat Lake, Wythe); SHL (South Holston Lake).

Waterfowl—Raptors

Along Lake Rd., Washington 323 Redhead Ducks were observed 8 Mar (WC). Six Hooded Mergansers were found at the confluence of Bridle Creek and the NR 23 Mar (SJR). AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN ♀ is a rare visitor to the region; so seven on SHL, Washington was an unexpected find 18 May (Mal S). The birds remained there for several days. Two Double-crested Cormorants were on the NR near Cox’s Chapel, 30 Mar (SJR). Ospreys were numerous in the area during the spring with one at RRL 24 Mar (AB), another on South Fork River Rd., Washington 26 Mar (WC), one on Reed Creek, Wythe 1 Apr (SB), six along Trout Farm Road near Cedar Springs, Wythe (SB), and one on Big Cedar Creek in Lebanon, Russell (T&L H). The pair of Bald Eagles nesting near Avens Bridge, Washington hatched two eaglets this spring (B&SL). This was the second year of nesting at the site where one eaglet was raised last year. The Bald Eagle pair nesting in Burkes Garden, Tazewell hatched two eaglets, but only one survived. It was banded 23 May (TH). The third nest discovered within the last two years in Southwest VA was found near the Powell R., Lee in 2009. The pair did not raise any young that year but nested successfully in 2010 and raised one eaglet (WC). The first Bald Eagle nest to be discovered on the Big Sandy Watershed was found atop a cliff over the Levisa R. Although the nest was located across the state line in Kentucky, it is of interest because the Big Sandy Watershed originates in Buchanan and Dickenson Counties in VA. Ad. eagles were observed on and around the nest throughout the early spring but there is no data as to eggs or young. (RM, DR). Bald Eagles were in Russell on Big Cedar Creek of Lebanon 1 Apr (PH), along Rich Mt. 10 Apr (T& L H), at HVI 25 Apr (GC, MS, Mic S) and an adult was observed being harassed by crows and ravens at the Mouth of Wilson in Grayson 20 Apr (AF). A Golden Eagle was in Russell along Rich Mt 10 Apr (T & L H). Another was in Wythe at the intersection of Rose and Major Graham’s Rd. (SB). A Merlin was found and photographed at Graham’s Forge, Wythe 5 Apr(SB).

Rails—Blackbirds

Two Virginia Rails and a Sora were at RRL 4 May (AB). On 31 May an ad.Virginia Rail with three downy chicks was found at the same site. (RR). Two EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES ♀ were seen and heard at Brown’s Dairy Farm, W'ton 14 Mar (RK). Reports of seasonal arrivals included: 2 Black-billed Cuckoos in Elk Garden, Russell 29 Apr (TH); Yellow-billed Cuckoo near Galax, Grayson 4 May (MD); Whip-poor-will heard in the Breaks area, Buchanan 14 Apr (DR); Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at a farm in W'th 13 Apr (JM), at Peach Bottom Creek, Grayson 18 Apr (BS), and in Woodlawn, Carroll 19 Apr (RP). In W'th a Redheaded Woodpecker was on Wyrick Springs Rd. 13 May (JM). A Loggerhead Shrike was in Tazewell near Rt. 623, the Burkes Garden Rd. 8 Mar (S&M B). Blue-headed Vireo arrival was noted near Galax, Grayson 26 Mar (MD) and near Grayson Highlands State Park 5 Apr (AH); Returning swallows were noted with the first Tree Swallow for Lebanon, Russell 20 MAR (JT); two Northern Rough-winged Swallows in Bristol, W'tho 8 Apr (MS) and one near Rt 601 in Grayson 12 Apr (KM); and Barn Swallows near the NR, 5 Apr (HB) and one at Bear Creek Reservoir, W'tho 7 May (GC, MS). A Red-breasted Nuthatch continued to visit a feeder in Breaks, Buchanan 14 Mar (DR), and one visited a feeder in W'th 25 Mar (JM). A Brown-headed Nuthatch was found at Washington County Park 14 Mar (RK); the species is not common to that area. Season arrival of House Wren was noted with one singing at a farm in W'th 10 Apr (JM) and one checking out nest boxes in Woodlawn, Carroll 26 APR (Ro P). Other arriving birds included: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher W'th 4 Apr (JM); Veery at HVI, 25 Apr (GC, MS, Mic S); Wood Thrush at Bridle Creek, Grayson 27 Apr (SJR); Northern Parula at BP 13 Apr (ER,DR) and Bridle Crk Grayson 12 Apr (SJR); Black-throated Blue Warbler at HVI. 25 Apr (GC, MS, Mic S); and Black-throated Green Warbler in Russell 5 Apr (MS), in W'th 6 Apr (SB), and in Washington 7 May (GC, MS). A singing Pine Warbler was in Breaks, Buchanan 13 Mar (DR), one was in W'th 29 Mar (JM) and another was found at HVI, 25 Apr (GC, MS, Mic S). Ovenbird was first heard in W'th 16 Apr (JM). A Swainson’s Warbler was observed at Flag Rock, W'tho 7 May (GC, MS). A Northern Waterthrush was found at RRL 13 May (AB, JM). Louisiana Waterthrush was reported arriving at the Pinnacle, Russell 31 Mar (R Kr). One was heard on the NR 4 Apr (HB). Other reports of season arrivals were of Kentucky Warbler near Galax, Grayson 29 Apr(MD); Common Yellowthroat singing from some willows in W'th 24 Apr (JM), Yellow-breasted Chats in...
Southeast

Henrico, Charles City, Chesterfield, James City, New Kent, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Southampton, Isle of Wight, and York Counties; and the cities of Richmond, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg.

EDITOR — Adam D’Onofrio, 25118 Smith Grove Road, Petersburg, VA 23803
bigadfromlb@comcast.net

Temperatures averaged 4.8 degrees above normal for the period and precipitation was slightly below normal. The overall feeling was that spring migration got off to a slow start as birders were unimpressed with late April flights. Migration seemed to pick up in May but reports from the field during this time were fewer than in years past.

The Center for Conservation Biology and The Nature Conservancy completed their annual spring survey of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the Piney Grove Preserve in Newport in late April. They observed a record high count of 38 individuals within a record eight potential breeding groups. This number was also the highest modern count of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia since the early 1980s when the overall population was in steep decline. The hope is that the two new potential breeding groups will successfully reproduce and help continue the increase of the red-cockaded population that has been seen in recent years. The 14th consecutive season of the College Creek Hawk Watch, located on the James River along the Colonial Parkway in James City, ended on May 30. The total of 1550 raptors counted was the third best in count history. Highlights of the count appear throughout the text. The Williamsburg Bird Club held their 33rd annual spring count on May 2 under less than ideal conditions with moderately strong winds and temperatures that rose to 91 degrees by midday. Nevertheless, 39 birders found a total of 7496 individuals of 148 species (average is 8280 individuals of 153 species) including two species new to the cumulative list which now stands at 241 species. Highlights of the count are in the text.

Rarities this season included American White Pelican, Anhinga, Hudsonian Godwit, Wilson’s Phalarope, Rufous Hummingbird and Western Tanager.

Abbreviations: CCHW (College Creek Hawkwatch); Dutch Gap (Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chesterfield); Green Springs (Green Springs Trail, James City); Henricus (Henricus Park, Chesterfield); Hog (Hog Island W.M.A., Surry); JRP (James River Park, Richmond); WiSC (Williamsburg Spring Bird Count).

WATERFOWL—FALCONS

A very late m. Northern Shoveler was beautifully photographed at Hog 26 May (BH). A few lingering Green-winged Teal were seen at Hog 25 Apr (EE). A f. Common Merganser continued near the Great Blue Heron rookery on the James R. in downtown Richmond as late as 4 May (AD,TT). Two Northern Bobwhites, a declining species, were heard at Hog during the WiSC. Six AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS were spotted from the CCHW circling over Hog 17&21 Apr (BT) and then seen on the ground at Hog 25 Apr (EE). Three ANHINGAS were encountered in the region this season: an ad. m., near Roxbury, Charles City 6 Apr (ph. BW); one at the Harwood’s Mill Reservoir, York, the site of last year’s first confirmed nesting of this species in Virginia, 19 Apr (DY); and one found during the WiSC at a pond near the Warhill Sports Complex, James City, furnishing the fifth local record. American Bitterns were noted at Hog 13 Mar (HRBC) and at the Wetlands section of J.R.P. 7 Apr (JF). A Least Bittern was photographed from the second observation deck at the Henricus Marsh 15 May (HB). Over 40 Great Blue Heron nests were counted this season in the rookery discovered in 2008 on the James R. in downtown Richmond. A new local early date for an incubating Great Blue Heron came from College Creek, James City on 6 Mar (BW). The previous early

South Central


EDITOR — David Spears, 3928 Bell Road, Dillwyn, VA 23936-8510
Merlin2752@yahoo.com

No report this period.
date was 10 Mar. Two **Cattle Egrets**, a declining species in Virginia, were spotted at Dutch Gap 5 Apr (ph. JK). Five more Cattle Egrets were seen at Harrison Lake, **Charles City** 23 May (ph. BH). A **Glossy Ibis**, an uncommon transient inland, was photographed at Hog 26 May (BH). A **Mississippi Kite** was seen at Green Springs 12 May (BW). Two Mississippi Kites flew across the James R. and past the CCHW 16 May (BT). A large **Bald Eagle** flight at CCHW produced a new daily record of 34 birds 19 May (BT). Just three days later, another big flight of 25 Bald Eagles sailed past the CCHW (BT, T&A). Eight **Cooper’s Hawks** counted at the CCHW 10 Mar also furnished a new daily record (BT, SD). An **American Kestrel** was noted on the William and Mary Campus in Williamsburg during the WiSC. The **Peregrine Falcons** pair that has nested in downtown Richmond since 2003 chose to nest on the 21st story walkway at the Riverfront Plaza for the fifth consecutive year and were successful in raising three chicks. A Peregrine Falcon seen at Hog during the WiSC marked a second count record for that species.

**SHOREBIRDS—RAVENS**
The highlight shorebird of the season, by far, was the **Hudsonian Godwit** discovered at Hog during the WiSC (ph. by BT). Extremely rare in spring, this sighting marked only the third spring record for Virginia and becomes the fifth local record overall with all other sightings occurring in the fall. Three **White-rumped Sandpipers**, more uncommon in spring than in fall, were seen at Hog 9 May (EE, NF, SS). Two **Stilt Sandpipers**, an uncommon to rare transient in spring, were found at Hog during the WiSC. A late displaying **American Woodcock** was recorded near Roxbury, **Charles City** 4 May (BW). Another rare spring sighting was the two **Wilson’s Phalaropes** found at the Shirley Plantation, **Charles City** during a Richmond Audubon birdathon (LB, KH, LK, BS, PW). Up to three **Caspian Terns** were seen around the James R. in downtown Richmond from 10 Apr to 28 Apr (AB).

An early **Royal Tern** was noted from the CCHW 10 Mar (BT, SD). Four **Chuck-will’s-widows** were recorded on the WiSC, the first ones since 2005. Two Chuck-will’s-widows and four **Whippoorwills** were heard near Roxbury, **Charles City** 4 May (BW). Six Chuck-will’s-widows were tallied during a nightjar survey in *Southampton* 31 May (NF). The ad. f. **Rufous Hummingbird** that frequented a backyard feeder in Richmond since late Jan was last reported 10 Mar (JF). **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, a rare spring transient, were reported on two occasions. Both were reported to ebird with the first seen 22 May at the James R. N.W.R., **Prince George** (LB). A second bird was located at Crewes Channel, *Henrico* 27 May (GC, GS). **Common Redpolls** seem to be moving further east each year. There were two sightings in the Region with the easternmost sighting of one bird so far with three **Turkey Vultures** over Monticello Marketplace near Williamsburg 23 Apr (BT). This provided only the third local record and the first since 1996. Two Common Ravens were calling and flying over a borrow pit at the corner of Puddledock Rd. and the Vulcan Materials entrance, **Prince George** 14 Mar (AB).

**LARKS—SPARROWS**
Two **Horned Larks**, found on the WiSC, represented the fifth count record. A singing **Gray-cheeked Thrush** was at Bandy Field, Richmond 19 May (AB) and 20 May (LB). A silent **Gray-cheeked/Bicknell’s Thrush** was photographed at a backyard water drip 16 May (NR). Five lingering **American Pipits** were seen in the field adjacent to Crewes Channel, *Henrico* 9 May (AD, TT). A f. **Blackburnian Warbler**, a fairly rare transient, was observed during a field trip at York R. S.P., York 16 May (HRBC). A new high count of 75 **Yellow-throated Warblers** was achieved on the WiSC. The previous high count was 71 recorded on 26 Apr 2009. A **Bay-breasted Warbler**, another fairly rare transient in the region, was seen singing at Bandy Field, Richmond 13 May (LB). Two **Prothonotary Warblers**, a male and a female banded at Dutch Gap this spring, proved to be at least eight years old, tying the Bird Banding Lab’s official longevity record for the species (BR). A m. **Wilson’s Warbler**, a fairly rare transient, was noted at Bandy Field, Richmond 10 May (AB). The m. **Western Tanager** that frequented a residential feeder in Settler’s Mill, *James City* since 25 Jan was last seen 15 Mar (BW). A **Grasshopper Sparrow**, recorded on the WiSC, was the first one since the 2005 count. A **White-crowned Sparrow**, seen on the WiSC, was a fifth count record.

**Contributors:** Tom & Jeanne Armour, Lewis Barnett, Arun Bose, Harry Brown, Carolyn Coe, Shirley Devan, Adam D’Onofrio, Elisa Enders, Nick Flanders, Janice Frye, Hampton Roads Bird Club, Kim Harrel, Barbara Houston, Julie Kacmarcik, Laurie Kam, Bob Reilly, Naseem Reza, Bob Schamerhorn, Grace Suttle, Stuart Sweetman, Brian Taber, Tina Trice, Pete Walker, Bill Williams, Dave Youker.

**Coastal**

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

EDITOR — Bill Williams, Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187 jwwil2@wm.edu

The period began with a 3 March northeaster that covered Hampton-Newport News with three to four inches of heavy, wet snow, delivered a dusting elsewhere across the Region, and brought strong winds to the south and along the coast. Summer-like conditions dominated the first week of April as high temperatures reached the upper 80s to low 90s inland. As May exited the annual rainfall was 1.3 inches above normal at Norfolk. The moisture surplus
coupled with the early season warmth prompted rapid vegetative growth. Ongoing field studies across the Region contributed significant data for this report highlighted by the Center for Conservation Biology’s multi-year effort to elucidate site fidelity, species/subspecies composition, and migration timing of coastal marsh birds, and its long-term partnership with the Virginia Coast Reserve to investigate Whimbrel and Red Knot migrations. Constant monitoring of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach waterfront combined with the regular Back Bay/False Cape and Craney Island surveys to present a more comprehensive overview of the Region’s southside coastal birdlife. Almost without precedence was the brief early May influx of Hudsonian Godwits into the Region (and elsewhere). The proximate causes for this await scrutiny across broader geographic vantage points. Also intriguing was the diversity of species with early egg dates. It is not clear whether this was this a momentary anomaly or was the result of ob-
diversity of species with early egg dates.

Variety was the brief early May influx of Hudsonian Godwits into the Region (and elsewhere). The proximate causes for this await scrutiny across broader geographic vantage points. Also intriguing was the diversity of species with early egg dates. It is not clear whether this was this a momentary anomaly or was the result of observers afield in the right places and times to catch what has been going on all along. Species which boosted local economies this season were Eurasian Wigeon, King Eider, Common Eider, Sooty Shearwater, White-faced Ibis, Hudsonian Godwit, California Gull, Black-headed Gull, Sooty Tern, Roseate Tern, Arctic Tern, and Painted Bunting.

**Abbreviations:**

- Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); CCBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, s. of Northampton); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); Craney (Craney Island Disposal Area, Portsmouth); Dismal (Dismal Swamp NWR, Chesapeake/Suffolk); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Northampton); False Cape (False Cape State Park, Virginia Beach); First Landing (First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach); Grandview (Grandview Nature Preserve, Hampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (Hampton/Norfolk); KSP (Kiptopeke State Park, Northampton); Nansemond (Nansemond NWR, Suffolk); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach); USFWS (United States Fish and Wildlife Service); VCR (Virginia Coast Reserve of The Nature Conservancy); VSO (Virginia Society of Ornithology).

**Waterfowl— Shorebirds**

The Ridgeway Park, Hampton Eurasian Wigeon remained through at least 17 Mar (BW). A Mallard hen with a quartet of week-old chicks was at Craney 15 Apr (RB, SD, BW). An adult male Canvasback lingered at Craney through at least 29 Apr (BW). A male King Eider was at 28th Bay Street, Norfolk 5 Mar (AD, SH); likely the same bird was near the CCBT southern terminus 6 Mar (ph. RK). An imm. male Common Eider was near Ocean View, Norfolk 4 – 9 Mar (SH, AB, ABr, KK, WM). Exceptionally late was one at KSP 21 May (BT, AL et al.). The only Harlequin Duck report was of an imm. female off #1 CBBT 6 Mar (AB, WM). Particularly exciting was a Pied-billed Grebe pair tending 3 chicks in the KSP borrow pit 21 May (BT). Sooty Shearwater reports included two off Rudee 19 May (AB) and two off Chinc. 29 May (fide WM). A feeding aggregation of about 20,000 Northern Gannets spread out over several square kilometers off Hungars Creek, Northampton 20 Mar (MB, BWa) was assessed by CCB as being a “significant percentage of the western Atlantic population”. An American White Pelican was at Craney 8 Apr (RB, ph. SD, AM, ph. BT, BW). A 22 Apr survey of the no. Acomack Shanks/Cheese-

- egg clutches (HA, RBr, CS, JW). Among 70 Double-crested Cormorant nests on North Shanks Island, Accomack 22 Apr was one with five eggs (HA, RBr, CS, JW), establishing a new early egg date for this species in Virginia (previously 1 May). The enigmatic black-billed “Great White Egret” was at Chinc. 14 (LM, et al.) & 23 May (AL, et al.) and 2 WHITE-FACED IBIS were there 1 May (AL). Two Swallow-tailed Kites in Chincoteague, Accomack 5 Apr (MR); another was at Dismal 8 May (DS, NF). An American Golden Plover was reported at Craney 25 & 27 Apr and 4 May (AB, FD). A Killdeer was incubating four eggs at Craney 18 Mar (BW, SD). At least 17 American Oystercatcher nests (14 on Clump Island; three on Shanks/South Cheeseman Island) were discovered during a 22 Apr survey of no. Acomack Chesapeake Bay islands (HA, RBr, CS, JW). Black-necked Stilt reports included one near the Chincoteague Causeway, Accomack 20 Apr (MR), 12 there 23 May (AL, et al.), and four at Craney 28 May (AB). There were three American Avocet reports, all from Craney, including one 11 Mar (BW, RB,
SD, BT); one 23 May (AB); and 4 on 27 May (AM, BT, BW). An estimated 850 Greater Yellowlegs and 2300 Lesser Yellowlegs were at Craney 25 Apr (AB). The latter significantly exceeded the region’s previous spring peak count of 800 set at Craney 29 Apr 1979. A total of 6467 Whimbrels was recorded at Box Tree Creek, Northampton 21 – 29 May with a peak of 1765 posted 24 May (FS, BTr, AF, ALm). This spring at Box Tree the CCB deployed two satellite tags and 18 radio tags on Whimbrels. One of the satellite-tagged birds, banded 22 May, flew non-stop to the Mackenzie River Delta, Northwest Territories, Canada, the second time such an uninterrupted transit for Whimbrel has been documented via satellite tags. Three tagged Whimbrels from previous years continued to have working transmitters. Prior to this season there had only been two spring Hudsonian Godwit records for Virginia: one at Chinc 22 – 24 May 1982 and one in Puslaski 4 May 1984. A single Hudsonian Godwit was at Box Tree Creek, Northampton 3 May (FS) and 15 were on no. Mockhorn Island, Northampton 7 May (BWA). (Note also the 2 May report of one at Hog Island, Surry in the Southeast Region report). The CCB/VCR Red Knot survey peak count was 8172 on 24 May (BWA, BTr), about 18% above the 2005-2009 survey mean of 6950. Red Knot re-sighting efforts found 600+ marked birds including several with 1 gm solar positioning geolocators (TB, AW fide FS). Wilson’s Phalarope reports included one at Craney 30 Apr (DC); 4 (3 females, one male) there 4 May (AB, FD) & 6 May (BT, SD, AM, BW); one at Back Bay 4 May (DH, GM, TT); and 2 at Craney 29 May (AB, FD, WM). Two Red-necked Phalaropes were at Craney 20 (BW, RB, BT), 27 (BT, AM, BW) & 29 May (AB, FD, WM).

Gulls—Blackbirds
An adult Little Gull was at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 6 Apr (AB). The Black-headed Gull noted at Little Creek Inlet, Norfolk in the winter report was observed there 2 Mar (AB, TJ) and 5 Mar (AD). Two Black-headed Gulls were there 6 Mar (ph. KK, AB, WM, BTk); then one 7 Mar (TD) and 9 Mar (AB). An adult CALIFORNIA GULL was at First Landing 14 – 18 Mar (ph. AB, ph. AD, DH, BW). Single first cycle Iceland Gulls were at 85th Street, Virginia Beach 14 Mar (AB) and at First Landing 16 Mar (AD, BW). The peak Lesser Black-backed Gull count was 337 at False Cape (150)/Back Bay (187) 25 Mar (DH). A first cycle Glaucous Gull was at Craney 4 Mar (RB, SD, AM, ph. BT); another was at Little Creek Inlet, Norfolk 6 Mar (AB). At least nine probable Great Black-backed Gull nests were on Chesapeake Bay Islands, northern Arcosake 22 Apr (HA, RBt, CS, JW). The state’s early egg date for this species is 25 Apr. An adult SOOTY TERN was reported off #4 CBST 14 May (TH). A Least Tern incubating two eggs at Craney 6 May (BW, SD, AM, BT) was two days beyond the species’ 4 May early egg date. A Black Tern passed by 85th Street, Virginia Beach 13 May (AB). A Roseate Tern made a brief appearance at Rudee 19 May (AB). Also at Rudee on 19 May were two (AB) to four (EE) adult Arctic Terns; two were there 20 May (EE, NF) and 21 May (ph. JL). Well ahead of the species normal 15 Apr arrival date were 2 Black Skimmers at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 6 Apr (AB). At least 3 Monk Parakeets were at the Stoneybrook, Newport News nest site 21 May (ph. JL). Common Nighthawks were reported from two separate locations 3 May: one in Portsmouth (NF) and one at Red Wing Lake Golf Course, Virginia Beach (fide KB). A Common Nighthawk incubating one egg at Craney 6 May (ph. BW, SD, AM, BT) reset the state’s previous early egg date (17 May) by 11 days. There were 4 Willow Flycatchers at Grandview 14 May (BT). Highly unusual was a singing Warbling Vireo at Craney 27 May (BW), then two were there 29 May (AB, FD, WM). Two Orange-crowned Warblers were at Newport News Park, Newport News 21 May (MB). Quite noteworthy was a Cerulean Warbler at Dismal 14 May (NF). The first reported Swainson’s Warbler was at Dismal 7 Apr (BA). A lingering Fox Sparrow was at Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk 27 Mar (EE). Among 22 Ammodramus sparrows banded on ES-VNWR 25 – 29 Apr were 9 Nelson’s Sparrows, 6 Saltmarsh Sparrows, and 7 Seaside Sparrows (FS). Painted Bunting reports from the Rouse Drive, Virginia Beach site included a male 7 Mar (J&MB) and a female 14 Mar (GW, BL, JF). A male Dickcissel was at Nansemond 20 May (NF). The highest reported Rusty Blackbird count was 181 at Dismal 31 Mar (NF). Six Boat-tailed Grackle nests (five with three eggs, on with two eggs) on Clump Island, Arcosake 22 Apr (HA, RBt, CS, JW) tied the species’ early egg date.

Contributors: Bob Ake, Harry Armstead, Tom Badger, Andrew Baldelli, Joyce and Michael Bathke, Ruth Beck, Karen Beatty, Ruth Boettcher (RBt), Allen Bryan (ABt), Mitchell Byrd, David Clark, Fenton Day, Shirley Devan, Todd Dixon, Adam D’Onofrio, Elisa Enders, Anna Fasoli, Nick Flanders, Jen Folts, Tim Hodge, Sandy Holton, David Hughes, Terry Jenkins, Karen Kearney, Ryan Kelly, Alex Lamereaux (ALm), Allen Larner, Bev Leeuwenburg, Jeff Lemons, Will McPhail, Alex Minarik, Geralyn Mireles, Marvin Rubin, Don Schwab, Carissa Smith, Fletcher Smith, Brian Tabor, Tiffany Taylor, Brenda Tekin (BTk), Barry Truitt (BTr), Bryan Watts (BWA), Gerry Weinberger, John Weske, Amy Whithe, Bill Williams