Editors’ Notes

The widespread dispersal of Roseate Spoonbills this season resulted in sightings not only from the Coastal Region, as might have been anticipated, but in the West Region as well. Even more out of range was the West Region’s Violet-crowned Hummingbird, a first for Virginia; the species’ summer range extends only into Arizona and New Mexico.

In other parts of the state breeding bird surveys and other summer bird counts produced some interesting finds. In the Central Region the Lynchburg Breeding Bird Count recorded both Western Grebe and Mississippi Kite for the first time and in the East Region Yellow-throated Warbler was a new bird for the Port Royal Breeding Bird Survey. Anhinga breeding in Virginia was finally confirmed in the Southeast Region when a nest was discovered in a Great Blue Heron rookery by a person checking Prothonotary Warbler nesting boxes.

This year’s VSO Foray covered parts of the Southeast and South Central Regions with a focus on locating Bachman’s Sparrow, a species not recorded in Virginia in nearly a decade. While the sparrow was not found participants did observe Anhiga, Loggerhead Shrike, Mississippi Kite and Swainson’s Warbler.

Good birding,

Linda and Alan

CORRECTIONS: In Virginia Birds 5, No. 4, (spring records March – May 2009) the White-eyed Vireo report from Amelia WMA, which appeared under the Central Region (page 12) should have been under the South Central Region where Amelia WMA is located. Also in the Central Region report the Merlin at Powhatan on 30 April should have been credited to John Ealding. We would like to thank the readers who made us aware of these errors.

Cover Photo: A Roseate Spoonbill in Waynesboro. Brenda Tekin
Summer Reporting Period Jun 2009–Jul 2009

North


Editor — Kevin Shea 5041 36th St N
Arlington, Va 22207
shea.kevin@mac.com

No report submitted.

This Bobwhite was one of a small flock that showed up at a feeder in Stafford.  Bill Underwood.

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.

EDITOR — John Spahr, 234 West Frederick St., Staunton, VA 24401
jspahr@yahoo.com

Regional rainfall was adequate over the summer with only a few scattered extremely hot days. The usual breeders were reported from expected locations. Highlights for this season included some widely wandering waders like White Ibis, Wood Stork and, most amazingly, a Roseate Spoonbill. Even more amazing was the first ever Violet-crowned Hummingbird in Virginia.

Abbreviations: IBA (National Audubon’s Important Bird Areas program); M&V (Mountains and Valleys physiographic region).

SWANNS—SPOONBILLS

A TUNDRA SWAN in a pond near Lyndhurst, Augusta 15 Jun provided the first summer record for the county and maybe the first for the M&V (DQ). A drake COMMON MERGANSER was spotted in the Shenandoah R., Clarke, 9 Jul only the second summer M&V report of this duck (DC). Neither bird was seen flying and both may have been injured, preventing their northern migration. A female HOODED MERGANSER was seen on a farm pond near Mill Gap, Highland 4 Jun (JS). This is an uncommon summer duck and rare breeder in the western highlands. Post-breeding visiting waders included an immature WHITE IBIS, Stuarts Draft, Augusta 9 Jul (AI, ph BT), a WOOD STORK, Milboro Springs, Bath 7

Terms and Abbreviations

Species name in bold first time mentioned (RARITIES bold and all caps)
County names in italics
Abbreviations:
ad. (ads.) – adult(s)
BBS – breeding bird survey
CBC – Christmas Bird Count
Cr. – Creek
e et al. – and others
fide – vouched by
FOS — First of Season
Ft. – Fort
Hwy. – Highway
I. – Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.) – immature(s)
Jct. – Junction
juv. (juvs.) – juvenile(s)
L. – Lake
MAPS – Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship
m.ob. – many/multiple observers
Mt. – Mountain, Mount
NWR – National Wildlife Refuge
ph. – photographed (by + initials)
Pt. – Point
R. – River
Res. – Reservoir
Rte. – Route
SF – State Forest
SP – State Park
VARCOM – Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDGIF – Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
VSO – Virginia Society of Ornithology
v.t. – video taped (by + initials)
WMA – Wildlife Management Area
VARCOM Review List Bird
† – written details submitted
* – specimen collected

Submissions

Send reports and photographs to the Regional Editors. Photographs should be the highest electronic quality possible. Send with release form, which can be found on the VSO web site: www.virginiabirds.net
Articles for consideration can be sent to vsoeditors@comcast.net

A Pine Siskin was discovered at George Washington’s Ferry Farm in Stafford County on 1 July.  Paul Nasca.
Jul (GK, AB) and a ROSEATE SPOONBILL, Waynesboro 15 Jun (GH, AM fide BT). The ibis and stork were noted on a single day only. The spoonbill, witnessed by many birders and photographers from across the state, was feeding in the residuum of a partly flooded field next to the South River for several days. This was only the second time a Roseate Spoonbill was recorded in the state and the first away from the Virginia coast. The previous documentation was a photograph taken at Back Bay in 1996 that was not reviewed by VAR-COM. Immature spoonbills often disperse great distances from their breeding colony but rarely stray north of the Gulf Coast states. There were also reports of spoonbills in Delaware and New Jersey this summer.

**OSPREYS—TERNS**

Summer Ospreys are rare in this part of the state, with no breeding records. Therefore, a bird carrying and dropping sticks onto a crossbar of a communication tower along the South River near Staunton near Blue Grass, Highland 19 Jul (JS) furnished the first summer record for this county and one of only a handful from the Region. Three Peregrine Falcons were spotted in the Big Meadows area of Shenandoah NP, 22 Jul (GW, DW). This falcon, although no longer on the Endangered Species List, is still considered threatened in western Virginia where only a few successful nest sites are known, one of them in Shenandoah NP thanks to an active recovery program by the USFWS. Larids of any type are rare summer visitors here so finding three tern species is noteworthy. Two CASPIAN TERNs, providing the second summer record for the M&V, were reported from Claytor Lake, Pulaski, 25 Jul (ET). Two Black Terns were seen along the New River, Pulaski 26 Jul (BC fide CK); 10 Forster’s Terns were reported from the same site and two more were seen near Staunton near Blue Grass, Highland 5 Jul (AI).
HUMMINGBIRDS—SWALLOWS

Virginia's first VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD showed up at a Bed & Breakfast near Newport, Craig 25-28 Jun (CB, RB, fide JV & BiA; ph BT). This hummingbird rarely radiates north of its Mexico/Arizona/New Mexico summer range, and there are no previous records east of Texas. Five species of Empidonax flycatcher were reported this summer. As expected, ACADIAN and Willow Flycatchers were most common and reported throughout the Region. Least Flycatchers were sparsely reported from multiple higher elevations of the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. A single Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, 3 Jun in Douthat SP, Bath (BH) was most likely a late migrant. Alder Flycatchers were noted for the second consecutive summer along Straight Fork in northwest Highland 1-7 Jun (JS) & 10 Jul (GS). Another singing male was heard west of Hightown, intersection US 250 & VA 600, Highland 6 Jun (JS, BoA). Both locations are wetland habitats above 2800 ft., consistent with possible breeding sites for this flycatcher. Reports of Bank Swallows have been scant to absent in recent years, especially during the summer months, but four were seen 21 Jul over a farm pond in Rockingham (CM), flocking with three common species of swallow.

WARBLERS—SPARROWS

Golden-winged Warblers are uncommon but known breeders in the higher elevations of this region, most notably in Bath and Highland. This fact is a major determinant for IBA designation for these Alleghany Highlands. As part of a survey conducted through the Virginia IBA program, multiple volunteers located 11 Golden-winged Warblers and 2 Brewster's (Golden-winged X Blue-winged Warbler) as well as one active nest in Highland, 1-7 Jun (fide ME). In Hidden Valley, Bath three male and one female golden-wingeds were reported 8 Jun as well as one Blue-winged Warbler carrying food (CC). A late White-throated Sparrow was reported in Rockingham, 13 Jun (HH). From the Radford Army Ammunition Plant near Dublin, Pulaski 3 Henslow's Sparrows were reported, 29 Jul (CK). These birds are part of a known remnant breeding population, perhaps the only one in the state.

Contributors: Bob Ake (BoA), Bill Akers (BiA), Carol Baker, Rod Baker, Allen Boynton, David Carr, Ben Case, Mary Elfer, Henry Hawkins, Gale Heffinger, Bill Hubick, Clyde Kessler, Gale Kuebler, Allen Larner, Andy McGann, Clair Mellinger, Dave Quillen, Gene Sattler, John Spahr, Ed Talbott, Brenda Tekin, Greg Wendelken, Dave Wendelken, Jerry Via.

References:

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.

O n the whole the summer was cooler and wetter than average, allowing for more pleasant birding. A total of 132 species were reported for the period.

Abbreviations: LBBC (Lynchburg Breeding Bird Count); MCL (Mill Creek Lake); RVTS (Rockfish Valley Trail System)

WATERFOWL—WOODPECKERS

On 27 May, one ROSS’S GOOSE (TD) showed up with a small flock of Canada Geese on the Old Concord Turnpike near downtown Lynchburg. This sighting provided only the second for the Region, and the first for Lynchburg. The bird remained through 1 Jun. A Green-winged Teal at MCL, Amherst on 25 Jul was over two months earlier than the previous Region early date (RB, TD). A lone WESTERN GREBE provided a second record for Bedford and a first for the LBBC, The Summit, 6 Jun (JW). Residing through the summer at Palmore Road, Powhatan, were a pair of Ospreys (WE), rare and local summer residents. The LBBC recorded a single Mississippi Kite near Percival’s Island, Lynchburg, 6 Jun (PL, JP); although there are a few other summer records for the area, this was the first for the count. Another Mississippi Kite was spotted 2 Jul and again 3 Jul southern Campbell (RB, TD). Bald Eagles, rare and local summer residents, were seen in Campbell, 2 Jul (RB) and in Caroline 21 Jul (CG). The rare summer resident, Black-billed Cuckoo, was spotted for the fifth time on the LBBC, Bedford, 6 Jun (MB). A pair of Barn Owls had a nest in a silo in southeastern Campbell, that produced three chicks 7 Jun (RB).

FLYCATCHERS—SISKINS

Two Willow Flycatchers were noted during the LBBC in Bedford, 6 Jun (JW, et al.). One was also spotted along the James R. in Amherst, 1 Jun (GS). In the Shenandoah NP, Pocosin Cabin, Greene a Least Flycatcher was observed, 16 Jul (CM). Both of these flycatchers are rare...
over the RVTS, Jun (RC). Six late summer records at the higher elevations. Over 200 Purple Martins were seen at Wood Martin Farm in Lunia 27 Jun (RC). Six late Bank Swallows were over the RVTS, Nelson 4 Jul (TH). Although a breeder at high elevation around Mount Rogers and other scattered locations, it is very unusual to find Winter Wren along the Blue Ridge Parkway during the summer. So one spotted in Nelson, 22 Jul was interesting (JS). Veery are not confirmed breeders in the Region, but multiple individuals were spotted in Shenandoah NP, Greene 1 Jul and 3 Jul (ND). Dickcissels, rare summer residents, were present in southern Campbell on Red House Rd. near Gladys. Four seemed to be present throughout June and July (TD, et al.). Three Bobolinks were found in southeastern Campbell where there are only four previous summer records 7 Jun (RB). A new species for the LBBC was a very late Pine Siskin at Rexanne Bruno’s feeder, Bedford 6 Jun.

Contributors: Mike Boatwright, Rexanne Bruno, Thelma Dalmas, Nathan Davis, Wendy Ealding, Mary Foster, Crystal Grey, Tim Hodge, Mark Johnson, Peggy Lyons, Robert McLemure, Clark Moseley, Joanne Pierce, Gene Sattler, Kate Shulgina, Jeff Skevington, Jo Wood.

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 R. is the boundary between King William and King and Queen and it joins with the Pamunkey R. to form the York R. 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.

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

SUMMER EDITOR—Nick Flanders, 208 Dogwood Drive, Newport News, VA 23606, flicknanders@hotmail.com

A total of 128 species were reported during the summer season by 20 observers. Highlights included Anhinga, Peregrine Falcon, Black-Billed Cuckoo, Barn Owl, Common Nighthawks, Blue-headed Vireo, and Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrows. Some of these reports were gleaned from the VA-Bird and Northern Neck Audubon Society e-mail lists, eBird records, and survey results provided by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and U.S. Geological Survey.

Abbreviations: BBS (Breeding Bird Survey); Beaverdam (Beaverdam Park, Gloucester); Bethel Beach (Bethel Beach area, Mathews); Dameron (Dameron Natural Area Preserve, Northumberland); Hughlett (Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve, Northumberland); K.G. Ponds (Route 3 ponds, King George).

Waterfowl—Rails
Mute Swans were reported in the Region this season, with three at Bethel Beach 21 Jun (EM) and three at Coles Point, Westmoreland 11 Jul (TF). The downward trend in Northern Bobwhite numbers on the Gloucester BBS continued this year with only one reported 7 Jun (KS). However, the total of 10 Bobwhites reported on the Port Royal BBS on 7 Jun suggests a stable population on this route (FA). A male ANHINGA was discovered at Betts Pond on Betts Bottom Road, Northumberland 18 Jul (RD). The same pond hosted 2 Anhingas 1 May 2008, representing the first record for the Northern Neck pending VARCOM acceptance. The highest count of Snowy Egrets reported from Bethel Beach was four on 6 Jun (G&RH). Although the Region did not host any unusual post-breeding herons this July, a Cattle Egret on the Gloucester BBS was interesting 7 Jun (KS). A group of three unidentified imm. night-herons flew over observers at Hughlett 29 Jul (T&SS). The only Cooper’s Hawk report came from the Gloucester BBS 7 Jun (KS). A Peregrine Falcon spotted outside of the Riverside Health and Fitness Center in Gloucester was a surprise 27 Jul (G&RH). A nice count of 10 Clapper Rails was tallied at Bethel Beach 6 Jun and 12 Jul (G&RH).

Shorebirds—Woodpeckers
A group of 3 lingering Semipalmated Sandpipers was still at Bethel Beach 6 Jun (G&RH). Other shorebirds reported from Bethel Beach included a single Semipalmated Plover 6 Jun, 2 American Oystercatchers 6 Jun and 12 Jul, and 20 Willets 6 Jun (G&RH). The fall migration of shorebirds through the Region was evidenced by 3 Spotted Sandpipers at Hughlett 27 Jul (T&SS) and 7 Lesser Yellowlegs, 3 Least Sandpipers, and 30 Pectoral Sandpipers present at Dameron 30 Jul (TS). The only report of Sandwich Terns was of two birds at Bethel Beach 6 June (G&RH) and the only reported Common Terns were single birds at Bethel Beach and New Point Wharf, Mathews 21 Jun (EM). A high count of 40 Forster’s Terns was present at New Point Wharf, Mathews 21 Jun (EM). A late season count of Least Tern nesting activity in Mathews con-
ducted by the VDGIF yielded 13 active nests at New Point Comfort and 82 adults with 18 active nests and 17 fledglings at Sandy Point off of Gwynn’s Island 9 Jul (RB). A Black-billed Cuckoo was a very interesting find at Maston’s Wharf, Lancaster 13 Jun (SP). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported to be unusually scarce during the breeding season with two of the five regional BBS routes failing to produce any; this status may have been due to a larger pattern of cuckoo distribution related to regional caterpillar abundance (FA). A Barn Owl was observed foraging along Route 669, Northumberland 12 Jun at 10:04 PM (T&SS). A group of 3 Common Nighthawks along Hockle Rd., King and Queen 7 Jun was notable (BD). Other nightjars found near Walkerton in central King and Queen 7 Jun included 9 Whip-poor-wills and 2 Chuck-will’s-widows. Red-headed Woodpeckers were present with two recorded on the Whitestone BBS 7 Jun (TS) and one recorded on the Sharps BBS 14 Jun (WP).

Vireos—Warblers

A Blue-headed Vireo was an interesting find on the Sharps BBS 14 Jun (WP). Although the counts of Red-eyed Vireos and Yellow-throated Vireos on the Gloucester BBS were low this season at 17 and one respectively, the White-eyed Vireo count was high at 14 on 7 Jun (KS). Horned Larks were recorded on four of the five BBS routes with a high count of four on the Port Royal BBS 7 Jun (FA). Tree Swallows were also present in small numbers with six found at Bethel Beach 6 Jun and 12 Jul (G&RH) and five reported on the Port Royal BBS 7 Jun (FA). The only Cliff Swallow report came from the Port Royal BBS, where five were noted near the Port Royal Bridge 7 Jun (FA). A total of 7 House Wrens at Bethel Beach 12 Jul was the highest count reported this season (G&RH). An impressive count of 24 Marsh Wrens was tallied at Mulberry Island, Richmond 7 Jun (FA). A leucistic Eastern Bluebird was a visually stunning find in West Point, King William 13 Jul (TB, LB, BH). The Wood Thrush numbers on several BBS routes were low this year, with two recorded on the Truhart BBS 16 Jun (FA) and four recorded on the Sharps BBS 14 Jun (WP). A tally of 16 Cedar Waxwings on the White Stone BBS 7 Jun was the season high count (TS). Thirteen warbler species were reported. Yellow-throated Warbler was new for the Port Royal BBS with two recorded on 7 Jun (FA). A Worm-eating Warbler on the White Stone BBS 7 Jun provided the only breeding season report of this species (TS). Kentucky Warblers were recorded on two of five BBS routes, with one on the Truhart BBS 16 Jun and two on the Port Royal BBS 7 Jun (FA).

Sparrows—Orioles

A count of 24 Grasshopper Sparrows was impressive on the Sharps BBS 14 Jun (WP). A Grasshopper Sparrow on the Truhart BBS was a good find for that route 16 Jun (FA). Seaside Sparrows were reported in Mathews throughout the breeding season, with a high count of 15 present 12 Jul (G&RH). Two fledgling Seaside Sparrows at Hughlett 27 Jul indicated local breeding success (T&SS). Eleven Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrows were singing at Mulberry Island, Richmond 7 Jun (FA). A high count of 8 Eastern Meadowlarks was present at Bethel Beach 6 Jun (G&RH) and seven was a good total for the Port Royal BBS 7 Jun (FA). A group of 2000 Common Grackles encountered at K.G. Ponds 15 Jul was the largest blackbird flock reported this year (T&SS). Thirteen warbler species were reported. Yellow-throated Warbler was new for the Port Royal BBS with two recorded on 7 Jun (FA). A Worm-eating Warbler on the White Stone BBS 7 Jun provided the only breeding season report of this species (TS). Kentucky Warblers were recorded on two of five BBS routes, with one on the Truhart BBS 16 Jun and two on the Port Royal BBS 7 Jun (FA).

Contributors: Frederick Arwood, Lynda Blair, Ruth Boettcher, Teresa Bohannon, Joe Coleman, Tiffany Corsello, Brad Davis, Richard Davis, Tom Fletcher, George and Rosemarie Harris, Barbara Houston, Elton Morel, Sandra Peterson, William Portlock, Tom and Sylvia Saunders, Kimberly Smith.

Summer Reporting Period  June 2009–July 2009

Southwest


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

It was wet and cool over the 14 western most counties throughout June and July with twelve days of rain in June and an average temperature of 68.9°F. July was the wettest and coolest on record with 21 days of rain, a record low of 52°F and, also a first, the temperature never reached 90°F.

Some of the interesting reports for the period included a rare sighting of a Brown Pelican, Bald Eagles in three counties, Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawks, Loggerhead Shrikes and Golden-winged Warbler.

Abbreviations: BP, (Breaks Interstate Park); SHL (South Holston Lake)

Pelicans—Grosbeaks

A BROWN PELICAN was observed from Interstate 81 just north of SHL in Washington 30 Jul (TH). A Brown Pelican was also found shortly afterwards on Boone Lake in Tennessee just south of the I-81 location. Three young Great Blue Herons were on a nest in Elk Garden, Russell 3 Jul (TH). Six Great Blue Herons were discovered at Deel on the Levisa R., Buchanan 13 Jul (R&L M). Though no rookeries have been found in Buchanan, it is possible that great blues are nesting there. A Green Heron, not common to the area, turned up near Lebanon, Russell 16 Jun (R & I. M). Bald Eagle sightings included a Basic I bird reported at Volney, Grayson 6 Jun (RP, B&M D, CM, JK), an adult in Burke’s Garden, Tazewell 7 Jul (JM) and one fishing near Music’s Campground, Washington 6 & 7 Jun, which may have been one
of the pair that successfully nested on SHL this breeding season (VC). A Black-billed Cuckoo was seen at a farm in Baywood, Grayson 22 Jul (MD). Several visitors were treated to two Barred Owls that responded to natural owl imitation calling during the Coalfield Folk Life Festival in the BP 6 Jun (DR). Two juvenile Barred Owls were discovered perched near the road on Compton Mt., Buchanan 7 Jun (R&LM, ph. RM). The uncommon sighting during breeding season of three Common Nighthawks took place in Bristol, Washington 6 Jun (WC). Both Willow and Alder Flycatchers were reported at Whitetop Station, Grayson 6 Jun (RP, B&M D, CM, JK). Nine Loggerhead Shrikes were found in the Elk Garden, Clifton Road area of Russell 3 Jul (TH). Six of the birds were juveniles and three were adults. More than 500 Tree Swallows were observed in Burkes Garden, Tazewell 7 Jul (JM). A Golden-winged Warbler was seen on Comer’s Creek in Grayson 4 Jul (WC). Worm-eating Warblers, Yellow Warblers, and Yellow-breasted Chats came regularly during the period to a small yard stream on Compton Mt. in Buchanan (RM). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak came daily to a feeder at Rosedale, Russell, reported 24 Jun (JT).

Contributors: Virgil Carr, Wallace Coffey, Bill & Margaret Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Tom Hunter, Jim Keighton, Roger & Lynda Mayhorn, Roger Mayhorn, Cecelia Mathis, Jim Minick, Robert Perkins, David Raines, Jerry Thornhill

South Central


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

The 2009 VSO Foray took place in the southeastern extremity of the South Central Region, bringing an unusually large number of birders to the Region for a brief period, 12-17 Jun. The focus of the Foray was Bachman’s Sparrow, which had historically occurred in the area but had not been seen in Virginia since 2002. While that species was not found, the effort produced some interesting reports, including Loggerhead Shrike, Mississippi Kite, and Swainson’s Warbler. This period also produced good shorebird reports, especially from Staunton View Park at the western end of Kerr Reservoir.

DUCKS—SANDPIPERS

Two male Ring-necked Ducks at Clyde’s Pond, Dick Cross WMA, Mecklenburg, 27 Jun (AD, TT) were unusual in that this species is not known to breed in the area and typical occurrence dates range from early Nov to early Apr. A late Common Loon was present on the Hatcher Creek impoundment in eastern Buckingham 13 Jun (DS). This species normally leaves the Region by the last week of May. One report of Pied-billed Grebe was received for the period, a single bird at Clyde’s Pond, Dick Cross WMA, Mecklenburg 25 Jul (AD, TT). Breeding records of this species in the Region are sparse, although two pairs with broods were reported from this location in Jul 2003. A report of more than 30 Great Egrets at Staunton View Park, Mecklenburg (AD, TT), exceeded the previous high of 28 in the Region at Kerr Res., 27 Apr 1975. Two immature WHITE IBIS, a rare and irregular post-breeding wanderer, were reported from the same location 31 Jul (JB). Two Mississippi Kites were seen in Emporia 7 Jun and at least five were present the same day along Low Ground Road at the Meherrin River, Greensville (TD). Other reports included a single bird, reported as an adult, 4 Jul at a private farm in Halifax...
where they’ve been seen every summer for over ten years (JB). Reports of Spotted Sandpiper in summer always raise the question of whether or not the species breeds in the Region. While breeding has not been confirmed, most summers produce a few reports and this year was no exception, with one bird at Staunton View Park 27 Jun and “several” from the same location 25 Jul (AD, TT). This species was also observed from the same location 31 Jul, along with two more species rare in summer, Pectoral Sandpiper and Sanderling, but counts were not reported (JB).

TERNS—WARBLERS
Three CASPIAN TERNS at Staunton View Park 25 Jul (AD, TT) were notable for being a rare summer occurrence, possibly furnishing the first Jul record for the Region. Eleven were later present at this location 31 Jul (JB). This species is listed as a rare transient for the Piedmont, normally not present between early Jun and early Aug. A pair of EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES continued in downtown South Boston, with a report from 13 Jul (PG). The first Region report of the species was from this same location in March of this year. Staff at Amelia WMA reported an active nest of Barn Owls in an abandoned silo (WE). The report came 27 Jul but it is uncertain whether the nest was still active at that date. While not the first breeding record for Amelia, this represents a rare recent nest record for a species that has been declining in the Region. Both Chuck-Wills-Widows and Whip-poor-wills were reported singing at La Crosse, Mecklenburg, the evening of 6 Jun (TD). Both species have been declining in the Region. A report of a single LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE on the VSO Foray 15 Jun along Rt. 633, Greensville was encouraging (JD, TD). This species is in serious decline statewide; most remaining birds are in the northern and western parts of the state. This is the most southeasterly report of the species and the only one from the Coastal Plain in many years. A single SWAINSON’S WARBLER reported by a Foray participant near Claresville, Greensville, 16 Jun (EE) was the only report for the period and probably represents the westernmost occurrence of the Coastal Plain population of this species.


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

The average temperature and total precipitation was near normal for the short two month period. Exciting news came from York County with the discovery of a pair of nesting Anhingas, the first confirmed nesting in Virginia. After a late start due to two nesting failures, Richmond’s Peregrine Falcons ended up laying a total of four eggs producing three healthy chicks Red-cockaded Woodpeckers had a very successful season at the Piney Grove Preserve with six breeding pairs fledging fifteen young, the greatest single year production in the ten years that the Center for Conservation Biology has been closely monitoring the breeding results of these charismatic woodpeckers. Due to intensive habitat management and the translocation of birds from other populations, the Virginia population continues to slowly grow and, as of this writing, stands at 43 birds. Rarities for the season included two additional Anhingas, and Franklin’s Gull.

Abbreviations: 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), Shirley (Shirley Plantation, Charles City).

ANHINGAS—ORIOLES
A pair of ANHINGAS nesting in a Great Blue Heron rookery at the Harwood’s Mill reservoir was discovered on June 11 by Dave Youker while checking Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes. Although nesting has been suspected in other parts of the state, this is the first confirmed nesting for Virginia. One of the adult birds was subsequently photographed on the nest on June 14. By June 22 the nest was unoccupied and two fledgling Anhingas were seen further back in the reservoir. During the VSO foray, which covered Sussex and Greensville counties, participants discovered two additional Anhingas. One, an adult male, was located at a small swamp on Cabin Point Rd., Sussex 12 June (ph. AD). Another male was at a small pond on Hicks Rd., Southampton 16 Jun (EE). Two Least Bitterns were observed in the marsh at Henricus 18 July (AD, TT). A Snowy Egret, uncommon inland, was at Crewe’s Channel, Henrico 25 Jul (La). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was noted at Ragged Island W.M.A., Isle of Wight 28 Jul (NF). At least two juv. White Ibis wandered into the Region this season with one at Green Springs 12&13 Jul (BW, SD) and another at Shirley 22 Jul (LB) and 25 Jul (LBa). Likewise, single juv. Glossy Ibis were found at Shirley 11-25 Jul (LB, LBa) and at Green Springs 12 & 13 Jul (BW, SD). After several nest failures Richmond’s Peregrine Falcons ended up laying a total of four eggs on the 21st story walkway at the Riverfront Plaza in downtown Richmond. Three of the four eggs hatched and all three chicks were banded and appeared healthy. American Kestrels warrant mention here due to their declining status as breeders in Virginia. An ad. male was at Dutch Gap 18 Jul (AD, TT) and a juv. was seen at New Quarter Park, York 26 Jul (CL, BW). Two American Avocets, rare inland, were observed at Jamestown Is-
Piney Grove Preserve in Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and was photographed by each observer cycle. James City across the James R. from Jamestown, Jun (ph. BT). The bird followed the ferry standing find at the Jamestown Ferry 12 Jun (ph. BT), Tina Trice, Bill & Phyllis Lee, Chuck Litterst, Pat Williams.

Contributors: Fred Atwood, Lewis Barnett (LBa), Lynda Blair, Fred Blystone, Arun Bose, Shirley Devan, Adam D’Onofrio, Elisa Enders, Nick Flanders, Julie Kaemarik, Karen Kearney, Dave & Phyllis Lee, Chuck Litterst, Pat Sgrinia, Brian Taber, Tina Trice, Bill Williams

Coastal

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.

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

Waterfowl

Northern Pintail breeding in Virginia has been documented on at least four occasions, three at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack (BA). Of note was one Northern Bobwhite at Craney 10 Jun (BW), five at Back Bay 16 Jun (DH) and one off Bennett’s Pasture Road, Suffolk 17 Jul (BW). Two summering Common Terns suggest we have much more to learn about Virginia’s seasonal status of that subspecies. The Region was not without its significant others including Anhinga, an unidentified Frigatebird, a probable Eurasian form of Great Egret, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, and Long-billed Curlew.

Abbreviations: Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); Craney (Craney Island Disposal Area, Portsmouth); False Cape (False Cape State Park, Virginia Beach); FINWR (Fishermans Island NWR, Northampton); Grandview (Grandview Beach Park, Hampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel Hampton/Norfolk); SPM/POP (South Point Marsh/Peach Orchard Point, Accomack); VCR (Virginia Coast Reserve of the Nature Conservancy); VDGIF (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries).

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Loons were at Chinc. 18 Jul (JL) and 3 Pied-billed Grebes were at Back Bay 24 Jul (DH, DF, GB, JM). There were 6 Greater Shearwaters and one Sooty Shearwater off FINWR/Smith I., Northampton 29 Jun (FS). Wison's Storm-Petrel reports included a group of six in Sand Shoal Inlet, Northampton 14 Jun (MR fide AW), four off Grandview 20 Jun (BP), about 15 near FINWR/Smith I., Northampton 29 Jun (FS), and six at Plantation Light, Northampton 4 Jul (BP, MR). An emaciated second-year Northern Gannet was captured off FINWR/Smith I., Northampton 29 Jun (FS). Nesting Brown Pelicans were recorded at two locations. A Sandy I., Northampton site, initially colonized by 13 pairs in 2005, supported 740 adults (AW). A total of 1760 Brown Pelican young were banded at the upper Chesapeake Bay SPM/SOP complex; 1434 on POP 8 Jul (451) and 19 Jul (983) and 326 at SPM 18 Jul (HA, JW). A color-banded Brown Pelican observed at Point Lookout, St. Mary's, MD 29 Jul had been ringing as a chick at SMP 12 Jul 2000 (PR fide HA). Also at SPM/POP 8 Jul were “hundreds” of nesting Double-crested Cormorants (HA). An Anhinga was at Stumpy Lake, Virginia Beach 12 Jul (PL fide BA). An unidentified adult female Fregata was at Back Bay/False Cape 12 Jul (DC). A Least Bittern was noted at Back Bay 24 Jul (DH). A Great White Egret, the black-billed Eurasian form of Great Egret, was reported at Chinc. 27 Jun (ph. GK, MAK), 2 Jul (BA, NB), 3 Jul (RH, LS), 10 Jul (NB), 13 Jul (PL fide RH) and 20 Jul (LB). This may be the same individual seen at Chinc. from late May to early Jun 2008 and/or one noted at False Cape 4–24 Aug 2008. White-faced Ibis had not been reported in the Region during summer since 2005. Thus, one at Chinc. 7 Jun (JT) and 13 Jul (PL fide RH) was significant. It was likely the same bird that was there 30 May (AD, TT). A widespread northerly dispersal of imm. ROSEATE SPOONBILLS across the southeast US this season was closely followed in anticipation that one would make an appearance in the Region, especially after one was found mid-June in Virginia’s Mountains and Valleys. There was an unconfirmed report of two at Chinc. 5 Jul (fide NB, FD). Subsequently, one was found at Craney 28 Jul (BW, SD, AM, DR) and was still present into early August (BW et al.). A Northern Harrier was at POP/SPM 8 Jul (HA). The CCB Peregrine Falcon nest monitoring program revealed the Region supported 15 of Virginia's 21 active nesting pairs during the 2009 breeding season (LM). An American Coot was at Back Bay 16 Jun (DH fide JG).

Shorebirds—Finches

The annual VDGIF plover survey documented 37 Wilson's Plover pairs, all from three northern Acornack Atlantic barrier islands: 13 on Assawoman I., six on Metompkin I. and 18 on Cedar I. (RBT). This season's total exceeded the 2008 total of 31 pairs, yet was well below the 1991 peak of 50 pairs. The survey also located 182 Piping Plover pairs, all on Atlantic barrier islands: 38 on Assateague, 3 on Wallops., 24 on Assawoman, 42 on Metompkin, 44 on Cedar, one on Cobb, one on Wreck, seven on Ship Shoal, five on Myrtle, 14 on Smith, and three on FINWR. (RBT). The 2009 total was 12.5% less than the 2008 peak of 208 pairs. The joint VCR/VDGIF American Oystercatcher monitoring project found 740 adults (AW), four off Grandview 2 Jun (BW, SD, DR, DT) and 23 & 28 Jul (BW et al). Another six were in Swan Cove, Chinc. 2 Jul (BA, NB). An estimated 500 Willets were at Box Tree Creek, Northampton 23 Jul (FS). An adult female Wilson’s Phalarope was at Chinc. 27 Jun (GK, MAK). Laughing Gulls nest at two Hampton Roads sites, Grandview and HRBT. Comprehensive weekly surveys at each location found about 570 pairs on Grandview 2 Jun (BW, SD, DR, DT) and 2546 nests on HRBT by 9 Jun (SD, DR, DT, BW). HRBT also had 112 Herring Gull nests by 9 Jun (DR, DT, BW). Peak Lesser Black-backed Gull counts at Back Bay/False Cape ranged from 197 (190 Back Bay/7 False Cape) 5 Jun (GM, DH et al.) to 201 (159 Back Bay/42 False Cape) 24 Jul (DH et al. fide GM). The Oystercatcher, Northampton Glaucous Gull was still present 26 June (GK, MAK) establishing a fifth summer record for the state and Region. An early Black Tern was at Craney 1 Jul (BW, DR) and three were there 28 Jul (BW, SD, AM, DR).
Royal Terns did not nest on any of the Atlantic barrier islands for the first time since at least 1935. However, 1386 pairs nested at HRBT (BW et al.), more than double the 633 pairs there in 2008. Elsewhere, at least 944 pairs bred on the Clump I./Fox Is. complex, Acomack (JW, HA et al.). A pair of Sandwich Terns was observed defending a space among incubating/brooding Royal Terns on HRBT in Jun (BW et al.) then carrying food to the colony site 22 (DR, BT, DT) & 30 Jul (DR, DT). If the pair did nest as the anecdotal evidence strongly suggests, it would constitute a first for Hampton Roads and a first away from the coastal barrier islands. There were 282 Common Tern ads. at a Grandview colony site 2 Jun (BW, SD, DR, BT) and 369 Common Tern nests were tallied on HRBT by 8 Jun (DY, DT). Although a comprehensive barrier islands lagoon system survey was not conducted this year it was evident that Gull-billed Terns continued to struggle. Only 10 pairs could be located on the barrier islands, two on Cedar Sandbar, Acomack and eight on Wreck I., Northampton. A colony of 79 pairs on a marsh shell pile west of the south end of Wreck I. was washed out as eggs were hatching. Least Terns attempted to nest at Lynnhaven Mall, Virginia Beach for a ninth consecutive year with 41 nests (same as 2008) 17 Jun (RBr). The colony was subsequently abandoned possibly the result of Red-tailed Hawk predation. Least Terns failed to nest at Patrick Henry Mall this summer after three years there (2006-2008). The 18 pairs that were at Grandview 2 Jun (BW, SD, DR, BT) failed to produce young. There were 123 adult Least Terns at Crane 1 Jul (DR, DT) scattered among a loose aggregation of colony sites along the Elizabeth River side of the facility. Among the 59 ad. Black Skimmers on HRBT 8 Jun 23 were incubating (DR, DT). The number of ads. at a Grandview colony peaked 12 Jun at 386 (BW, SD, DR, BT). Two Eurasian Collared-Doves were at the junc. of rts. 645 and 600 near Cedar Grove, Northampton 10 Jul (VK, MR). Single Common Nighthawks were in Olde Towne Portsmouth 4 Jun & 28 Jul (NF) and at Craney throughout Jun to 1 Jul (BW et al.). Peak Seaside Sparrow counts included 30 at FINWR 16 Jul (BA) and approximately at Box Tree Creek, Northampton 23 Jul (FS). Two Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows were at Saxis, Acomack 27 June (GK, MAK).

Contributors: Bob Ake, Harry Armistead, Lewis Barnett, Ruth Boettcher (RBr), Ned Brinkley, Georgia Bush, David Clark, Shirley Devan, Adam D’Onofrio, Daniel Feinberg, John Gallegos, Rob Hilton, David Hughes, Val Kitchens, Glenn Koppel, Mary Alice Koenke, Paul Lehman, Jon Little, Jacob McCaulley, Alex Minarik, Geralyn Mireles, Bart Paxton, Matt Ramah, Dylan Reilly, Patricia Rose, Marv Rubin, Lisa Shannon, Fletcher Smith, Casille Systermans, Brian Taber, Dana Taylor, Josh Taylor, Tina Trice, Barry Truitt (BTi), John Weske, Bill Williams.