Editors’ Notes

We are working to catch up on some backlogged issues of Virginia Birds while also getting the more current issues out. This double volume covers the summer and fall of 2007. In this mailing you will also have received the double volume covering the summer and fall of 2008.

During 2007 we lost several regional editors. As a result some regions are not covered, which we regret. We are working to recruit replacements for this time consuming task. On that note we wish to thank David Spears, who only took over the South Central Region in 2008, but still developed a column for this issue providing among other things the notation of the first record of breeding Willow Flycatcher in Buckingham.

Other birds of note for the summer included White Ibis in both the southwest and southeast, Greater and Sooty Shearwaters on the coast, and breeding Red Crossbill and Purple Finch in the west.

The fall brought early indicators of the predicted interruption of winter birds in many regions.

Good birding,

Linda and Alan
June 2009

Cover Photo: Roger Mahorn captured this image of Buchanan County’s first Sandhill Crane, feeding in a cornfield on Compton Mountain 22 June.
North

No report this period.

West

This region includes the southern part of the Shenandoah Valley south to the New River Valley. The Blue Ridge Mountain range forms much of the eastern boundary with West Virginia defining the western boundary. The Region includes the counties of (from north to south) Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Alleghany, Craig, Giles, Roanoke, Montgomery, and Pulaski.

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

Abbreviations: Mountains and Valley physiographic region (M&V). There were no dramatic weather variations this summer. Significant avian reports were few but did include breeding Purple Finches and Red Crossbills in Highland. Also some data for summer Golden Eagles presented, implies possible breeding of this eagle in this western county.

WATERFOWL—HERONS

There are few records of HOODED MERGANSER in the M&V region and only a single breeding record – Douthat SP, Bath 11 Jun 2003(3). It’s intriguing therefore that a “very skittish female, flying short distances downstream and staying out of sight” was observed at this same location, 3 Jun (TR). A male merganser was also identified in Heritage Park, Blacksburg, 20 Jun (AG, PO). Follow up observations failed to locate a female or young, however. A summer RED-BREASTED MERGANSER on Lake Shenandoah, Rockingham 3–10 Jun (GM) is even more unusual, with only four previous records from the Region. This particular duck was observed to have a damaged lower mandible, which may have played a part in its lingering.

Common Loons are rare in the summer. Therefore it is especially interesting that three stayed from May into early Jun on L. Shenandoah, Rockingham, and one was seen as late as 28 Jul (CM). A 30 Jul immature Little Blue Heron in a pond on the campus of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg (MH), is a rare occurrence, presumably a post-breeding dispersal from a coastal area.

VULTURES—EAGLES

Turkey Vultures are certainly common throughout the year but nest records are few. One such nesting was documented in a barn on Bell’s Lane, Staunton where two chicks still partly covered by white down were discovered 15 Jun (ph CF). The nest remained active until the young fledged in early August. Golden Eagles are regular migrating transients and uncommon winter visitors in this Region, especially Highland, which historically has had the highest number of state records. Summer eagles are rare but may be increasing. In Highland an increase has been noted, perhaps in part due to an organized eagle watch for the past two years by residents and others interested in the status of this species (see Table).

Intriguing is that four of the ten 2007 summer sightings were of immature birds – 22 Jul (KC), 24 & 29 Jul (SH), 30 Jul 9 (LB). The bird observed on 22 Jul was seen in the general vicinity of a very large stick nest [ph., 1 Jul (TF), 20 Jul (KC)] on an inaccessible cliff. The nest is on the same ridge where a cliff nest “as large as a hay fork load” was reported in the early 1930’s and considered by some as a probable evidence of breeding (2). The size of the present nest and dimensions of some of the sticks suggest construction by a bird larger than a raven, a well-known breeder and cliff nester in this county. If this nest can be accessed it might be possible to collect feather or other contents for morphological and/or Productivity and Survivorship studies.

Table: Summer Golden Eagle Sightings in Highland Co.

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Terms and Abbreviations

Species name in bold first time mentioned (RARITIES bold and all caps)

County names are in italics

Abbreviations:

ad. (ads.) – adult(s)

BBS – breeding bird survey

CBC – Christmas Bird Count

Cr. – Creek

et al. – and others

jude. – 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

VGDIF – Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

v.r. – voice recording (by + initials)

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
DNA analysis that could support Golden Eagle occupancy. Therefore, speculations abound and hopes are high for future discovery and documentation of breeding activity in Highland. To date there is no conclusive evidence of breeding Golden Eagles in Highland, or anywhere else in Virginia.

WARBLERS—CROSSBILLS
A late migrating Blackpoll Warbler was reported in Staunton 4 Jun (AL). The extreme date for this region for northbound migrants is 15 Jun. A singing male White-throated Sparrow 16 Jun (DM) in Blacksburg is one of a few records of this sparrow this late into the summer period—most have departed by early Jun.

PURPLE FINCHES and RED CROSSBILLS are rare summer birds, restricted mostly to the western highlands with only a few breeding records of each species. Bear Mountain Farm (elev. 4400 ft), on the western-most ridge of Highland yielded additional evidence of breeding for both species this summer. Paired adults of both finches, present at feeders throughout the spring, showed up in June with fledged young. Fledged Purple Finches were seen 3 Jun and up to 7 Red Crossbill fledglings were observed on 24 Jun (PR). The young were distinguishable by field marks and begging behavior. This is the second successive year for breeding Red Crossbills at this location (see Summer 2006 Virginia Bird). One of the young Purple Finches died and has been submitted to the Smithsonian Institute Division of Birds.


Central

No report this period.

East

King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, Mathews, King and Queen, King William, and Gloucester Counties. The Northern Neck, composed of King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Northumberland, and Lancaster Counties, is bordered by the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers.

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

During the breeding season in the Northern Neck and the Middle Peninsula 121 species were recorded. Breeding Bird Surveys included Gloucester (SS) and White Stone (RA) 10 Jun, and Truhart 8 Jun (FA). VDGIF also conducted marsh bird surveys along the Mattaponi River and along the Chesapeake Bay shore in Mathews County. Two of the state parks surveyed for the VSO foray were in this region: Belle Isle State Park 6 June (DH, m.o.) and Westmoreland State Park (FA, SS) 4-6 June. The most interesting finds this season were a wonderfully photographed Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, a breeding plumage Black Tern (ph), and a Wilson’s Storm-Petrel.

Abbreviations: BBS (Breeding Bird Survey); Beaverdam (Beaverdam Park, Gloucester); Belle Isle (Belle Isle State Park, Richmond); Birthplace (George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland); Dameron (Dameron Marsh Northumberland); Gwynn’s (Gwynn’s I, Matthew’s); Hughlett (Hughlett Point NAP, Northumberland); Hutchinson (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Essex); Laurel Grove (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond); The Pocket (in Pamunkey Indian Reservation along Pamunkey River, King William); Rapp. R. NWR. (Rappahannock R. Valley National Wildlife Refuge); USGS (United States Geological Survey); Wilna (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond); WSP (Westmoreland State Park, Westmoreland).

STORM-PETRELS—RAILS
A Wilson’s Storm-Petrel seen in the Bay near Deltaville Middlesex 27 Jun (AL) was only the third report known to the compiler since 2004. Very few American Black Ducks are reported in the summer, but eight were at Dameron 14 Jul (T&SS). The first regional Jul record of Ruddy Duck was 4 Jul in Wilken’s Cr. off the Yeocomico R. Westmoreland (KH). Thirty Double-crested Cormorant at Hughlett 22 Jul was the high for the season (TS). Six Snowy Egrets and 8 Glossy Ibis 22 Jun at Dameron (AB) are the highest counts on record for the Region. A Sharp-shinned Hawk in Gloucester 28 Jun (DH) was only the second breeding season report known to the compiler. Only 13 Northern Bobwhites were heard on twelve stops of Truhart, where the average is 16; this was the lowest since 1998. However, two coverys totaling 25–30 birds thrived on a farm managed for wildlife in Leedstown Westmoreland (CT) and they also did well on point-counts at Hutchinson and Wilna (SS). Between 30 Apr and 21 Jun, thirty-two point counts were conducted in seventeen marsh patches along Mattaponi R.; most points were surveyed three times for a total of 86 point-specific surveys (SH). These surveys found maxima of 2 Least Bitterns, 28 King Rails, 2 Virginia Rails, and one Sora. The maximum for Clapper Rail this season was five at Dameron 22 Jul (AB).

SHOREBIRDS—WOODPECKERS
Two pairs of American Oystercatchers and two pairs of Willets were nesting at Hole-in-the-Wall, Mathews 7 Jul (BP). Early shorebird migrants included 5 Short-billed Dowitchers 7 Jul at Gwynn’s (BP) and a Semipalmed Plover and 4 Pectoral Sandpipers at Hughlett 22 Jul (TS). A Black Tern in beautiful breeding plumage was photographed 4 Jul at Gwynn’s (BP). Least Tern nesting surveys found 12 nests and 22 eggs/young at Rigby I. on 27 Jun (RB), 101 nests at...
Gwynn’s with 193 eggs 12 Jun (RB), and twenty-one nests at Hole-in-the-Wall 7 Jul (BP). A nightjar survey along the first ten stops (4.5 miles) of the Truhart BBS route near Ino yielded 2 Chuck-will’s-widows at two stops and 14 Whip-poor-wills at eight stops on 8 Jun (FA). Chimney Swift numbers were low this breeding season. Only one was noted during the Truhart BBS; seven were recorded in five stops on the Whitestone BBS the lowest number since 1978 and far below the average of 13.5; and none were found on the Gloucester BBS during the breeding season. Only one was noted Chimony Swift breeding season. The greatest diversity was at WSP where 129 were found. The highest for any site was at WSP including two late migrants, single Magnolia and Black-poll Warblers on the VSO foray (SS). The other 13 species were found on the Truhart BBS route, where the swamps and logging operations provide a wide diversity of habitats. A Yellow Warbler was at Beaverdam 10 Jul (G&RH). The only Pine Warbler was on the Whitestone BBS was far below the average of 11.5 for the second year in a row. In comparison, Gloucester BBS had 33, far above its average of 14 for the second year in a row. On the VSO foray, 16 Yellow-throated Warblers were found at WSP and six were at Belle Isle. Eleven Prairie Warblers were at Belle Isle (DH, m.obs.) and 33 were singing at 17 sites at Truhart BBS. For the fifth year in a row there was an increase of Black-and-white Warblers at Truhart BBS where 12 were heard at 11 stops. Two American Redstarts were singing on the Truhart BBS and one on the VSO foray at WSP. WSP was also particularly rich in Ovenbirds (42) and Hooded Warblers (45). Six Kentucky Warblers were singing at WSP during the VSO foray. Another was at Beaverdam 10 Jul (G&RH). There were 77 reports of tanagers in the region this season: Summer Tanagers (57%) slightly outnumbered Scarlet Tanagers. As usual, Grasshopper Sparrows were common on point counts at Wilna which is managed for grassland species (SS) but one was also found at Belle Isle 6 Jun (DH, m.obs.), 2 at lower King and Queen 8 Jul (M&LB), and one at Whitestone BBS. A Seaside Sparrow was noted at Hole-in-the-Wall, Mathews 7 Jul (BP), and 8 were at Dameron 22 Jun (AB). Seven Dickcissels were singing during breeding point count surveys at Wilna. A high count for Eastern Meadowlark in the breeding season was 24 in lower King and Queen 8 Jul (M&LB). Baltimore Oriole is not common here during the breeding season, but one was found at Birthplace 22 Jul (LD).

**CONTRIBUTORS**: Robert Ake, Fred Atwood, Meredith and Lee Bell, Arun Bose, Ruth Boettcher, Richard Davis, Larry Draper, Sergio Harding, George and Rosemarie Harris, Dave Hewitt, Kathy Hoffman, Allen Loken, Bill Portlock, Tom and Sylvia Saunders, Sandy Spencer, Reta Stover, Clark Trader.

**SOUTHWEST**


**EDITORS** – Roger and Lynda Mayhorn, HC 67 Box 44A, Pilgrims Knob, VA 24634

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For the Southwest Region, June and the first part of July had less than normal rainfall with many plants and shrubs showing stress from the lack of water, but as July progressed, rainfall increased and fields and woods began to show more green. The average temperature in June was 76° F and in July it was 72° F with a week of low temperatures in the 50’s. The hard freeze in early April was the likely reason for fewer insects observed through the spring and summer months, and may have had a negative impact on feeding birds. (Raising Young?) The most unusual sightings for the period were Saw Whet Owls, a Sandhill Crane and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, all in Buchanan and two separate sightings of White Ibis in Wythe. The first Eurasian Collared Doves found in Russell in April have since been observed again in the same area. Peregrine Falcons were released in the Breaks Interstate Park in Dickenson. These raptors have not been observed in the park since they nested there in the early 1960’s.

**ABBREVIATIONS**: BP (Breaks Interstate Park); RRL (Rural Retreat Lake); SP (State Park); VARCOM (Virginia Avian Records Committee).

**IBIS—DOVES**

An imm. White Ibis flew over the area of Troutdale in Wythe 12 Jul (AB). Also in Wythe, 2 imm. White Ibis were found near a small creek 23 Jul (GE, SJR, PZ). A Northern Bobwhite was heard calling in Grayson Highlands SP near Massie Gap 8 Jun (GM). An ad. Bald Eagle was spotted on a tributary of the North Fork of the Holston R., Scott between Weber City and Wadlow Gap 25 Jun (JW). An-
other ad. Bald Eagle was observed catching a fish on the Clinch R. near St Paul Falls 20 Jul (RK). Eleven Peregrine Falcons were hacked in the BP in Dickenson by members of the VDGIF and BP staff during Jun. Nine of the 11 remained in the park after hacking. Four more Peregrines will be released in Aug (JoW). The BP was the last known nesting site of the species in Virginia in the early 1960’s after the devastation of raptors in the Eastern United States by the pesticide DDT (MB). A first county record for the United States by the pesticide DDT in Virginia in the early 1960’s after the devastation of raptors in the Eastern United States by the pesticide DDT. 

**South Central**


**WARBLERS—CREEPERS**

Four Swainson’s Warblers were found in the BP in Dickenson 2 Jun, as part of the VSO State Park Foray (Ed&M T). Three Northern Saw-whet Owls appeared near a home in the Breaks community, Buchanan 15 Jun (DR). This is the second record of the species in Buchanan (RM). In Washington ton near Whitetop a Least Flycatcher was sighted 19 Jun. That species has seemed scarce during the breeding season this year (GE, RP). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found on a golf course on Compton Mt., Buchanan 6 Jul (JB). The bird was observed for several minutes as it fed on the ground, then as it flew into nearby trees. This is the second sighting of that species in Buchanan. A report of the sighting is being submitted to VARCOM. Twenty-five to thirty active Cliff Swallow nests were observed under a bridge at Austinville, Wythe 29 Jun (GE). This is the only known nesting site for the species in the four county area of Grayson, Carroll, Smyth and Wythe. A Brown Creeper was at Comer’s Rock on the line between Wythe and Grayson 30 Jun (MD) (elevation approximately 3000 to 3200 ft.).

**Contributors:** Allen Boynton, Jack Brown, Mitchell Byrd, Margaret Dunson, Glen Eller, Richard Kretz, Guy McGrawe, Roger Mayhorn, Roger & Lynda Mayhorn, Scott Jackson-Ricketts, Robert Perkins, David Raines, Robert Riggs, Ed & Michele Talbott, Jason Ward (JW), Johnny Willis (JoW), Peter Zwadyk

This species has been an annual visitor and possible breeder in this location for several years. A group of five American Kestrels at Danville Regional Airport, Pittsylvania 21 Jul (JB) offers possible breeding evidence for this species that is normally restricted to the northern Piedmont in summer.

**FLYCATCHERS—SWALLOWS**

Two Willow Flycatchers, including one singing male, discovered at James River SP, Buckingham 7 Jun provided a first record of this species for the Region (TM, PL); an additional singing male was found nearby on 10 Jun (FD). All three birds were still present 12 Jun (JD, TM). A single singing male was present and photographed in the same location 16 Jun (ph. MWBC). A photograph of three juvenile Barn Owls in the fireplace of a home in Cartersville, Cumberland, apparently from a collapsed nest in the chimney, appeared on the cover of the Farmville Herald newspaper 4 Jul. The report was encouraging news regarding this declining and hard-to-find species in the Region. The birds were reportedly released from the home unharmed. Six occupied Cliff Swallow nests were observed under the U.S. 60 bridge over the James R. at Bent Cr., Appomattox, 16 Jun (MWBC). This report provides another breeding location for the species in the Region in addition to a traditional nesting location at Howardsville, at the Buckingham-Nelson boundary.

**Contributors:** Jeff Blalock, Renanne Bruno, Thelma Dalmas, John Dalmas, Fenton Day, Wendy Ealding, Peggy Lyons, Margaret Watson Bird Club, Evan Spears, David Spears

**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@vcu.edu**
Temperatures continued to be above normal and precipitation below normal for the two month reporting period. As is usual during the summer months, there were few reports of interesting birds submitted. The highlight of the period was the apparent postbreeding dispersal of several juvenile White Ibis; there were three separate reports of this species appearing inland during late July in the Southeast Region alone. In other parts of the state, White Ibis were also showing up well inland. The 2007 breeding season was a significant one for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the Piney Grove Preserve, Sassafras. According to Mike Wilson of the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary, six Red-cockaded Woodpecker breeding clusters successfully fledged young. This is the first time in nearly 18 years that Virginia has supported six breeding clusters. It is also the third consecutive year that one additional pair has successfully produced young, bringing the total number of breeding clusters from three to six since 2004. None of this would be possible without the hard work of both the CCB and the Nature Conservancy, including prescribed burns, controlling of competitive species and the translocation of birds from South Carolina to bolster the Virginia population. We all hope for continued success in this very important program to restore the Red-cockaded Woodpecker to its rightful place in Virginia. Two of the four Peregrine Falcon chicks that were born in Richmond this year were relocated to Breaks Interstate Park in southwest Virginia where they will be raised and released with the hope of restoring Peregrines to that mountainous area of the state which they once inhabited. All four chicks were banded and the two not relocated remained in Richmond.

**Abbreviations:** Crewes (Crewes Channel, Henrico); Green Springs (Green Spring Trail, James City); Henricus (Henricus Park, Chesterfield); Hog (Hog Island WMA, Surry).

**Mergansers—Dickcissels**

A male Hooded Merganser was found at the Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery, Charles City 26 Jun (RE). Hooded Mergansers are rare summer residents but numbers of summering birds and breeding records for Virginia and elsewhere are increasing. Least Bitterns were reported from Henricus on two occasions. Both were flyovers, 3 Jun (JK) and 15 Jun (RE). Twenty five Great Egrets were at Crewes during the last week of July (AB). A Snowy Egret was seen at Hog 11 Jun (NF). Juvenile White Ibis, rare and irregular postbreeding visitors, made their way inland during the last week of July with the first report of three flying over Hog 24 Jul (NF). Subsequent reports included one at Crewes 29 Jul (AB, ABr) and another at Green Springs 29 Jul (NW). Two Glossy Ibis were early morning flybys at Green Springs 29 Jul (BW). A female American Kestrel, a declining summer resident, was at Shirley 4 Jul (AB). Two Stilt Sandpipers were noted at Shirley during the last week of July (AB). Four Caspian Terns were counted at Hog 11 Jun (NF). Royal Terns continued their presence at Jordan Point Marina, Prince George with two there 29 Jul (AB). A Black Skimmer was seen at Hog 11 Jun (NF). Black Skimmers are considered rare upstream along larger tidal rivers. The first joint Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) field trip to Piney Grove Preserve, Sassafras was a success with 10 adult Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and two recently hatched young seen 2 Jun (PO). Warbling Vireos were noted in two locations with single birds seen at Pocahontas S.P. 12 Jun (RE) and James River Park 14 Jul (AB). Sixty Cliff Swallows were counted at Shirley during the first week of July (AB). The largest colony of Cliff Swallows in the state rests under the nearby Benjamin Harrison Bridge. Two Cliff Swallows were noted at Crewes in late Jul and 12 were counted at the James River Park Floodwall 30 Jul (AB). A male Dickcissel was discovered singing heartily along Turkey Island Rd., Henrico 4 Jul (AB). This location has hosted Dickcissels in previous years.

**Contributors:** Arun Bose, Allen Bryan (ABr), Rachel Echols, Nick Flanders, Julie Kacmarcik, Peggy Opengari, Bill Williams.

**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 jwill2@wm.edu**

The passage of Tropical Storm Barry’s remnants 3 June was the minor meteorological perturbation for an otherwise routine, albeit dry, season. By the end of the period year-to-date rainfall at Norfolk was 8.5 inches below normal. The Region’s ornithological research studies once again proved to be enlightening. The College of William and Mary’s Center for Conservation Biology continued to monitor the state’s Peregrine Falcon population and conducted comprehensive marsh bird surveys in Northampton and Accomack counties, shedding light on a number of often elusive species. Ruth Beck and her team of stalwart interns worked diligently among the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Grandview Beach, and Craney Island gull and tern species colonies. The staffs of the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, the Division of Natural Heritage, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Virginia Coast Reserve of the Nature Conservancy contributed revealing information about Atlantic coastal barrier islands’ beach-nesting and colonial waterbirds. Species of note for the season included Greater and Sooty Shearwaters, Anhinga, Magnificent Frigatebird, Black Rail, Sandhill Crane, and White-winged Dove.

**Abbreviations:** Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (the town of Cape Charles, Northampton); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); KSP (Kiptopeke State Park, Northampton); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary); Craney (Craney Island, Portsmouth); ESVNWR...
(Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Northampton); First Landing (First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach); FINWR (Fishermans Island National Wildlife Refuge, Northampton); Grandview (Grandview Beach, Hampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/Norfolk); VCR (Virginia Coast Reserve of the The Nature Conservancy); VDGIF (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries).

WATERFOWL—SANDHILL CRANE
A female Northern Pintail was at Chinc. 1 Jun (JK). There were 54 Black Scoters off Back Bay 8 Jun (DS). Red-breasted Merganser reports included a male in Queen Sound near Chinc. 3 Jun (JK), a female at Craney 15 Jun (BTk), one at Back Bay 18 Jun (DS), and one female at Lynnhaven, Virginia Beach 25 Jun (NF). A hen Wild Turkey with nine young was observed in Cape Charles 14 Jun (NB). A Common Loon was off Chinc. 3 Jun (JK). A count of 4 Greater Shearwaters was made from Chinc. 30 Jun (MRb), and 2 Sooty Shearwaters were off Chinc. 1 Jun (JK). Six Wilson's Storm-Petrels were near Latimer Shoals, Northampton 16 Jun (MR), and 2 were 3 miles southeast of the mouth of the Back R., Hampton 17 Jun (BP). Northern Gannet observations included 7–8 off Chinc. 1 Jun (JK), and one 2 miles southeast of the mouth of the Back R., Hampton 17 Jun (BP). Brown Pelican nests on FINWR declined from 250 at the beginning of the period to 70–80 by season's end (PD). There were 153 Brown Pelican nests on Sandy I., Northampton 16 Jul (AW). The number of Double-crested Cormorants on the electrical transmission towers along the James River Bridge, Newport News/Suffolk totaled 362 adults and 125 nests from counts made 22 and 26 Jun (NF). An adult male Anhinga was seen off Raccoon I., Northampton 16 Jun (NB, DB). A female was observed from the Noland Trail at the Mariners' Museum, Newport News 25-31 Jul (NF, SL, JF). An immature Magnificent Frigatebird (ph.) was seen at Back Bay 4 Jun (CB, JS, TG, JKi fde DS). Another sighting, possibly the same bird, was posted from Sandbridge, Virginia Beach 29 Jun (SP). A Least Bittern was recorded at Back Bay 18 Jun (DS). There were 22 Great Blue Heron nests on ESVNWR (PD). The region supported 14 of the state's 19 occupied Peregrine Falcon nests sites. CCN researchers reported those 14 nests fledged 37 young (BW). CCN marsh bird surveys found 5 Black Rails, all on the Chesapeake Bay side of Accomack between 5 and 15 Jun (FS), and 2 King Rails also in Accomack 22 Jun (FS). A SANDHILL CRANE near Locustville, Accomack 11 Jul (GR fde HA) was the Region's first summer report and a first for the county.

SHOREBIRDS—FINCHES
VDGIF Wilson's and Piping Plover surveys estimated 27 and 199 breeding pairs, respectively (RB). Wilson's Plovers nested only on Assawoman, Metompkin, and Cedar Islands, Accomack. All Piping Plovers were on Atlantic coastal barrier islands with the highest concentration of pairs on Accomack islands as follows: Assateague, 40; Wallops, 3; Assawoman, 24; Metompkin, 57; Cedar, 32. Craney accommodated 15 Killdeer pairs (RB, BF, DT). On FINWR 40 American Oystercatcher pairs fledged 20 young (PD). 4 Black-necked Stilt reports included 2 off the Chincoteague causeway 3 Jun (JK), a territorial pair at Craney 7 Jun (RB, BF, DT), and one at Chinc. 22 Jun (RB). A Bonaparte's Gull was at Back Bay 18 Jun (DS), and 2 were seen at Chinc. 21 Jun (RB). The peak Lesser Black-backed Gull count was 150 at Back Bay 8 Jun (DS). VCR coastal barrier islands surveys documented 64 Gull-billed Tern pairs, all on Wreck I., Northampton (AW). Additional nesting pairs included 22 on Grandview and 11 on HRBT (RB, BF, DT). Wreck I., Northampton also hosted 3856 pairs of Royal Terns and 123 pairs of Sandwich Terns (DF, RA, AW). There were 512 Common Tern nests on Grandview 14 Jun (RB, BF, DT). An ARTIC TERN was seen at Chinc. 1 Jun (JK). For the second consecutive year Least Terns (estimated 50–75 ads. 2 Jul) nested on the roof of Patrick Henry Mall, Newport News. An estimated 15 pairs occupied the roof of Lynnhaven Mall, Virginia Beach (RBt).

Contributors: Harry Armistead, Richard Ayers, Ruth Beck, Ned Brinkley, Ruth Boettcher (RBt), Raxanne Bruno (RBt), Dave Burden, Chuck Butler, Fred Blystone, Pam Denmon, Dot Field, Bobby Fithian, Nick Flanders, Jane Frigo, Tom Griffith, Jay Keller, Jon Kirkpatrick (JKi), Stephen Living, Bart Paxton, Scott Prieborg, George Reiger, Matt Ramah, Mark Ribaudo (MRb), Jordan Sellars, Fletcher Smith, Dorie Stolley, Brian Taber, Dana Taylor, Brenda Tekin (BTk), Bryan Watts, Joyce and Hayes Williams, Alex Wilke.
North

Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Madison, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Stafford and Warren Counties; and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester.

No report this period.

West

This region includes the southern part of the Shenandoah Valley south to the New River Valley. The Blue Ridge Mountain range forms much of the eastern boundary with West Virginia defining the western boundary. The Region includes the counties of (from north to south) Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Alleghany, Craig, Giles, Roanoke, Montgomery, and Pulaski.

EDITOR — John Spahr, 234 West Frederick St., Staunton, VA 24401
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The fall waterfowl migration was relatively uneventful with most ponds having low water levels due to seasonal rainfall shortage. Unseasonably warm weather persisted long into October. The hawk watches recorded an increasing trend in Broad-winged Hawks and the local Saw-whet Owl banding station had a banner year. Significant numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported throughout the Region beginning in August. By October, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were being reported in moderate numbers along with a few Evening Grosbeaks, in keeping with a predicted shortage. Unseasonably warm weather persisted long into October. Significant numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported throughout the Region beginning in August. By October, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were being reported in moderate numbers along with a few Evening Grosbeaks, in keeping with a predicted shortage.

Fall Reporting Period Aug – Nov 2007

Goose, Cackling Goose is being documented perennially each fall and winter in the Region, although in low numbers. This fall one sighting of a single goose was reported from Staunton 18 Nov (AL). Scoters are rare transients in this part of the state, so a single female Surf Scoter 26 Oct, (ph MH) on the New R., Pulaski, was noteworthy. A juvenile plumaged ANHINGA was reported, seen soaring in a thermal near Harvey’s Knob, Botetourt 22 Oct (MP, NF). In the M&V there are only two prior recognized records of this species. One juvenile White Ibis was seen in Kemper, Bath 7 Aug (TP) and six birds, also all juveniles, were seen on the New R. near Pembroke, Giles (SL) – the latter representing a new seasonal high count in the M&V.

HAWKS—EAGLES

A subadult Mississippi Kite, viewed by multiple observers at HKHW, Botetourt, 7 Sep (JH, MP) represents the 6th fall sighting of this kite in over thirty years of hawk watching at this site (BK). Cumulative data from HKHW and RGHW (table 1), the two long-established hawk-watch sites in the Region, showed an increasing recent trend in the Broad-winged Hawk flight, with more than a three-fold increase since 2005. A new hawk watch on Bear Mountain Farm, Highland, reported 256 broadwings (3.6 hawks/observation hour) including a rare dark phase bird 1 Sep (PR, JS). This same site also reported 6 Golden Eagles during the months of Sep and Oct (PR). Another 24 were recorded elsewhere in Highland over the four-month fall period (Tide SH). The Large cliffside nest near Blue Grass, Highland reported as a possible Golden Eagle nest in the Summer 2007 issue of Virginia Birds, was finally examined on 12 Nov, and proved to be of a Common Raven (BW).

SHOREBIRDS—TERNS

A lone American Golden-Plover was seen near Bridgewater, Rockingham 8 Sep (WL). There were two separate sightings of American Avocet, the first of a single bird 2 Aug at Sherando L., Augusta (KRo); 7 were later seen in Rockingham 23 Sep (KRa). A Baird’s Sandpiper was identified on a turf farm near Shawsville, Montgomery 5 Sep (MH). Two Buff-breasted Sandpipers were seen in a field near Mt. Crawford, Rockingham 8 Sep (ph WL). This represents only the second record for this county (the first, 29 Aug 2006) with the few additional M&V records all coming from the Roanoke area, Montgomery, where on 12 Sep one was spotted on the same turf farm where the Baird’s had been seen earlier (MH). A flock of 9 Common Terns, never common in this Region, was seen on Claytor L., Pulaski, 26 Oct (MH).

DOVES—SWIFTS

Eurasian Collared Doves, regularly recorded in Montgomery since 2003, were again reported 31 Aug near McCoy (MH). Eight Barn Owls in Augusta 17 Nov, represented two family groups (AL); one of the fledged young was later found dead on the roadside. Data from the seventh annual Northern Saw-whet Owl banding project in western Rockingham (Table 2) shows this to be an exceptional year for these migrating owls (CM). The number of new owls in 2007 surpassed the previous high count by 63 birds and is 94 over the cumulative average. Similar findings have been reported by most east coast banding stations.

Chimney Swift swarms and migrating flocks were again reported in Aug & Sep, but the numbers did not approach the 34,000 record high count of 2006. However, a lone swift on 26 Oct in Radford (CK), established a new late date for the M&V.

FLYCATCHERS—NUTHATCHES

There were scattered reports of Empidonax but only a few where observers were able to identify to species, and these include one Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 2 Sep, Afton, Augusta (AL); 1 Alder Flycatcher (identified by call note), 24 Sep, Blacksburg (MH); and one Willow Flycatcher (identified by attempted song), 5 Aug, Augusta (AL). By far the most un-
usual and unexpected Tyrannidae was a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** briefly seen near Lexington, Rockbridge, 11 Nov (ph JP, AM). Regrettably, the bird did not linger long enough for more than the initial observers to see. This represents only the second M&V and the 6th Virginia record for this rare South American stray. A report of 2 **Cave Swallows** 23 Nov, HKHW, Botetourt (MH) if accepted by VARCOM would be one of only a few records for the M&V for this western swallow that, in Virginia, has been largely limited to the coast during the fall and winter. The first **Red-breasted Nuthatches** outside their summer high-elevation range were reported 26 Aug from the RHGW, Augusta, 26 Aug (BT) and Blue Ridge, Botetourt (NY). At least 20 additional observations, some of multiple birds, were reported thereafter, mostly in Sep and Oct. The Blue Ridge site also reports **Brown Headed Nuthatches** throughout most of the fall (NY).

**Thrushes—Finches**

The state’s first ever report of **Townsend’s Solitaire** came from Harvey’s Knob, Botetourt 19 Nov (ph MH). Although briefly seen by only one observer, the bird was adequately photographed and is expected to become an accepted record. Forty-five **Tennessee Warblers** 8 Sep in Montgomery (MH), is a high count for this area, but does not come close to the M&V high count of 267 from Mt Rogers, 24 Sep, 1950. **Brewer’s Blackbirds** are rare transients in this region that may show up after mid-Oct. Two males were seen 11 Nov in Radford CK). That this is to be an irruption year for winter finches seemed to be validated by the multiple reports of **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** beginning in Oct. The only reported **Evening Grosbeaks** (2) came from a feeder in Monterey, Highland, 30 Oct (ph LB).


**Central**

No report this period.

**East**

**Editor—** Fred Atwood, Flint Hill School, 10409 Academic Drive, Oakton, VA 22124

No report this period.

**Southwest**


**Editors—** Roger and Lynda Mayhorn, HC 67 Box 44A, Pilgrims Knob, VA 24634 mayhorn@netscope.net

Southwestern Virginia was very dry throughout the period with only five days of precipitation in August, three in September, seven in October and nine in November. The area water table is about seventeen inches below the norm. The drought, combined with the late freeze in April, killed many of the foods that normally feed the migrating flocks as they pass through the area. This may be the reason for the low numbers reported for several species, including White-throated Sparrows, Eastern Towhees and American Robins.

This was a year for unusual sightings in Southwest Virginia and the fall period added an American White Pelican, a Sandhill, a Western Kingbird, and a Kirtland’s Warbler to the list. As autumn advanced there was an irruption of Red-breasted Nuthatches into the area.

**Abbreviations:** Breaks Interstate Park

<table>
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<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Total Hawks Counted</th>
<th>Hawks Counted/Observation Hour</th>
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*Table 1. Cumulative Data from Rockfish Gap and Harvey’s Knob*
GESEES—RAPTORS

A Ross’s Goose was found near Interstate 81 at Exit 32, Washington 17 Nov. (RR). Two American Black Ducks were sighted at RRL, Wythe 28 Oct (RP). At Clear Creek Lake in Washington a Redhead was observed 25 Oct (WC). A small flock of Ruddy Ducks was found 28 Oct at RRL (RP). Four Ruddy Ducks were also found at Clear Creek L. 25 Oct (WC). One Ruddy Duck and a Common Loon were seen at L. Witten, Tazewell 6 Nov (RK, JM, DW). Two Common Loons were also sighted at Clear Creek L. 25 Oct (WC). The Eared Grebes, that normally arrive at their wintering grounds at South Holston L., Washington in Aug, did not appear until 6 Nov, when one was observed (RiK). The reason for their late arrival is not known. An American white pelican was on the Levisa R., Buchanan near the Virginia/Kentucky state line 26 Nov (PV). The bird was photographed where it was first observed sitting on a rock in the river, and again as it flew up river. If the report submitted to VARCOM is accepted, this will provide only the 8th record of the species in the area.

Golden Eagle was observed in Corn Valley, Russell 7 Nov (TH). A female Northern Harrier was seen flying over a field in Washington 14 Oct (WC) and another was in Baywood (near Galax), Grayson 28 Oct (B&M D). Two more were found in Tazewell 30 Oct (RK, FS, DW) and a juvenile was observed in Burkes Garden, Tazewell 19 Nov (RR).

RAILS—SHRIKES

A Sora was viewed at a farm near Galax, Grayson 26 Sep (B&M D). On 30 Nov a Sandhill Crane was detected flying overhead near Independence, Grayson (HB). This species is a rare transient in the Mountains and Valleys so the sighting of another in Buchanan in Jul (RM) was unusual. Black-billed Cuckoos were heard for more than a week around the 14 Aug at a farm west of Galax (B&MD). Common Nighthawks were found in larger numbers in the area this fall than in previous years. Observations of nighthawk flights over a farm near Galax were 328 on 26 Aug, 805 on 27 Aug, and 1385 on 28 Aug (BD). One hundred five Common Nighthawks were observed over Compton Mountain in Buchanan 2 Sep (RM). A Western Kingbird was discovered in the Breaks area of Buchanan 3 Sep (DR). The bird was observed for several minutes as it sat on a power line. A Loggerhead Shrike in the Elk Garden section of Russell was also found sitting on a power line 26 Oct (JT).

VIREOS—GROSBEAKS

A Philadelphia Vireo, a Sedge Wren and a Marsh Wren were discovered on a farm in the Baywood area of Grayson 26 Sep (MD). Red-breasted Nuthatches moved into the area in Sep. The first record of the species this fall was in Buchanan 15 Sep at a small stream on Compton Mt., with another showing up there 20 Sep (RM). A Red-breasted Nuthatch was observed at Independence, Grayson 26 Sep (SJR) and a small flock was discovered at RRL 28 Oct (RP). A single bird was observed 23 Nov at Whitetop Mt., Grayson (WC, AJ).

The first wave of migrating warblers through the area was recorded on Guest Mt., Wise 1 Aug and included Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Hooded and American Redstart (RiP). An ad. male Golden-winged Warbler came into a yard stream on Compton Mt., Buchanan 21 Aug (RM). A Kirtland’s Warbler was reported near the entrance to Grayson Highlands SP, Grayson 25 Sep (AH). The bird was said to be in the company of Magnolias and other warbler species. Details have been submitted to VARCOM. A male Cerulean Warbler was observed on Compton Mt., Buchanan 4 Aug and a pair were observed there 10 Aug (RM). The first Palm Warbler of the season was located at a farm near Galax, Grayson 8 Sep (MD). The species appeared in the area one day earlier than in the previous year. During the annual Warbler Watch on Compton Mt., Buchanan, 80 migrant species were recorded during 51 days of observation with 1937 migrants from 23 Aug–18 Oct. (RM). Twenty-seven were warbler species. The top 5 warbler species listed by number of individual birds were Tennessee Warbler 193, Yellow-rumped Warbler 53, Yellow-throated Warbler 43, Palm Warbler 32 and Magnolia Warbler 23. A total of 562 warblers passed through the area during the period. (RM). The first of the season Rose-breasted Grosbeak for Buchanan was observed on Compton Mt. 28 Aug (RM).

SPARROWS—FINCHES

A migrating Vesper Sparrow came to feeders on Compton Mt. 29 Oct (RM) and two more made an appearance on the Hurley High School track, Buchanan 16 Nov (MT). The first reported Fox Sparrow of the season in Buchanan was on Compton Mt. 3 Nov (RM). Two more at a feeder in Independence, Grayson were the first reported for the season in that area. (SJR). The first White-throated Sparrows for Grayson also showed up at that same feeder 10 Oct (SJR). The first season report of a White-throated Sparrow in Buchanan was again on Compton Mt. 24 Sep (RM). The first winter flock of 8 White-crowned Sparrows was re-
A single male Common Merganser on the James R. at New Canton, Buckingham, was late (DS). Two immature White Ibis on a private pond 20 Jul provided a first report for Buckingham (DS). Spotted Sandpiper records are always interesting in Jun and Jul, as breeding has not yet been confirmed in the Region. Reports were received of one individual at Bear Creek Lake SP, Cumberland 4 Jun (WE, ES, DS) and three individuals at Holliday Lake SP, Appomattox 6 Jun (RB). Two Solitary Sandpiper observed on a private pond in Buckingham 13 Jul (DS) were probably early southbound migrants. A surprising variety of migrating shorebirds reported from Staunton River SP, Halifax 22 Jul included 2 Black-bellied Plover, 8 Semipalmated Plover, 20 Pectoral Sandpiper, 5 Short-billed Dowitcher, and 20 unidentified peeps (JB). A single Mississippi Kite at a private farm in Halifax 1 Jul was also observed on 4, 8 and 15 Jul (JB). This species has been an annual visitor and possible breeder in this location for several years. A group of five American Kestrel at Danville Regional Airport, Pittsylvania 21 Jul (JB) offers possible breeding evidence for this species that is normally restricted to the northern Piedmont in summer.

FLYCATCHERS—SWALLOWS

Two Willow Flycatchers, including one singing male, discovered at James River SP, Buckingham 7 Jun provided a first report of this species for the Region (TD, PL); an additional singing male was found nearby on 10 Jun (FD). All three birds were still present 12 Jun (JD, TD). A single singing male was present and photographed in the same location 16 Jun (ph. MWBC). A photograph of three juvenile Barn Owls in the fireplace of a home in Cartersville (Cumberland), apparently from a collapsed nest in the chimney, appeared on the cover of the Farmville Herald newspaper 4 Jul. The report was encouraging news regarding this declining and hard-to-find species. The birds were reportedly released from the home unharmed. Six occupied Cliff Swallow nests were observed under the U.S. 60 bridge over the James R. at Bent Cr., Appomattox, 16 Jun (MWBC). This report provides another breeding location for the species in the region in addition to a traditional nesting location at Howardville, at the Buckingham-Nelson boundary.

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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
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Above average temperatures seem to be the norm these days. The first three months of the period recorded higher than average temperatures with October averaging 8.6 degrees above normal, the second warmest October on record for the Richmond area. Total precipitation was below normal. A cold front pushed through the area on September 29 and finally got fall passerine migration underway. Until then, reports of migrants were few and far between. Shorebird migration on the other hand, provided numerous unusual sightings throughout August and September with most coming from Hog Island W.M.A, Surry and other locations in Charles City.

In downtown Richmond, two of four Peregrine Falcon chicks fledged from the Riverfront Towers building in August with the assistance of VDIGF wildlife biologists. The other two were relocated to Breaks Interstate Park in southwest Virginia. Also, a large Purple Martin roost was discovered in Shockoe Bottom with thousands of birds coming to roost in a spectacular display. The birds were ap-
parently staging in this unusual location before heading to South America for the winter.

In what looks like a good irruption year for winter finches, a number of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins were reported from residential yards and other locations. Many of the observers noted that they had never seen either species in their yards before.


**Abbreviations**: Crewes (Crewes Channel, Henrico); Green Springs (Green Springs Trail, James City); Hog (Hog Island W.M.A., Surry); JRP (James River Park, Richmond), Shirley (Shirley Plantation, Charles City).

**WATERFOWL – FALCONS**

A single Snow Goose was seen flying with 63 Canada Geese from JRP 13 Oct (AB). Sixty Blue-winged Teal were counted from a Charles City location 16 Sep (AB). A pair of Common Mergansers was observed from JRP 26 Nov (AB). A soaring and then perched ANHINGA was a nice surprise for paddlers floating towards the mouth of the James R. near Westover Plantation, Charles City 15 Sep (ph. JK, RAS). 187 Great Blue Herons were counted at Hog 7 Sep (BW). Not to be outdone, more than 175 Great Egrets were at Hog 9 Sep (TA). A Little Blue Heron, an uncommon postbreeding summer visitor farther inland, was noted at the Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery, Charles City 16 Sep (AB). A Black-crowned Night-Heron, also less common inland, was seen at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chesterfield 18 Aug (ph. JK). An imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron was at Jordan Point Marina, Prince George 10 Nov (ABr). Two juv. White Ibis, rare postbreeding visitors inland, were found at Crewes 1 Aug (AB, JK). Previously, on 29 Jul, there had been one White Ibis at this location. Finally, this location hosted another single White Ibis on 10 Oct (AB, ABr). A lingering Osprey was seen at the mouth of the Chickahominy R., James City 1 Nov (BW, FB, SD). Single Merlins were noted at Hog 7 Sep (BW) and 28 Oct (AD) and in Charles City 23 Sep (AB). A pair of Peregrine Falcons were consistently seen on the James Harrison Bridge, Prince George (AB). A single Peregrine Falcon was reported as a flyover from a yard in Chester 24 Oct (RE) and another was at Hog 28 Oct (AD, FD).

**SHOREBIRDS**

Three Black-bellied Plovers were reported from Charles City 7 Oct and one was there 3 Nov (AB, ABr). American Golden-Plovers were also reported from Charles City with 1 ad. in alternate plumage 9 Sep and three others, presumably juvs., 16 Sep (AB, ABr). Another American Golden-Plover was at Crewes 5–7 Oct (JK, RE). Several American Avocets, rare inland, were found at 2 locations this season. A single bird was at Hog 18 Aug (ph. AD, TT). Two more were at Shirley 16 Sep (ph. ABr, AB) and one was at Shirley 2-7 Oct (ph. ABr, AB, PB, GW). A Solitary Sandpiper was at Green Springs 14 Oct, a local late date (BW). A late Spotted Sandpiper was noted on the James R. rocks from JRP 30 Oct (AB). At least two and possibly four Upland Sandpipers were seen at the north end of Hog 23 Aug (BW, MB, SD). Another Upland Sandpiper was at the Riverside Turf sod farm, Charles City 9 Sep (AB). A very late Whimbrel, rare away from the immediate coastline, was discovered consorting with a group of Greater Yellowlegs at Hog 28 Oct (AD). Godwits made an unexpected appearance at Hog this season with the discovery of a single Hudsonian Godwit and a single Marbled Godwit 18 Aug (ph. AD, TT). The Hudsonian Godwit marked the fifth local occurrence and remained until at least 9 Sep (TA, BW, et al.) and the Marbled Godwit provided an eleventh local record. A second Marbled Godwit joined the first 2 Sep (AD, TT, MI, VG, AB) and two Marbled Godwits were last reported 27 Sep (TA, RB). A Ruddy Turnstone, observed in Charles City 16 Sep (AB), is considered a rare transient west of the Chesapeake Bay. Three White-rumped Sandpipers were at Hog 2 Sep (AD, TT, AB, MI, VG). A single Pectoral Sandpiper was seen at Shirley 1 Nov (BW, SD). Three Stilt Sandpipers were reported from a pond at Upper Brandon Farm, Prince George 23 Oct (FD). One Dunlin was also noted there on the same day (FD). A nice count of 13 Buff-breasted Sandpipers was made at the Riverside Turf sod farm, Charles City 9 Sep (AB). Two Buff-breasted Sandpipers were at the north end of Hog 2 Sep (AD, TT, AB, MI, VG). Forty Wilson’s Snipe were counted at Crewes 10 Nov (AB, ABr). A Wilson’s Phalarope, rare fall transient inland, was discovered in Charles City 23 Sep (AB, ABr). Even more rare were the two Red-necked Phalaropes that were found at Hog 9 Sep (TA).

**GULLS – FINCHES**

Four ad. or near ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found in a field near Singleton Farm, Sedges mixed in with 25 Herring Gulls and 300–400 Ring-billed Gulls 12 Nov (FD). Another ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported from the floodwall of the James R. in Richmond 1 Nov (AB). Observations at Hog include a great count of 518 Caspian Terns 7 Sep (BW), 6 Royal Terns 18 Aug (AD, TT), 10 Least Terns 1 Aug (AB, AD), 2 Black Terns 23 Aug (BW, MB, SD) and one Black Tern 7 Sep (BW). Three Yellow-billed Cuckoos were at York River S.P., James City 20 Oct (BW). A very late female Ruby-throated Hummingbird frequently visited a hummingbird feeder in a residential yard in Chester 2–4 Nov (ph. JK). A Philadelphia Vireo was found in Charles City 23 Sep (AB). A Cliff Swallow was noted at Hog 23 Aug (BW, MB, SD). A Sedge Wren, rare west of the Chesapeake Bay, was encountered at close range at Green Springs 2 Oct (BW). A predawn flyover of 21 Veerys was noted at Green Springs 27 Aug (BW). An incredible 81 Gray-cheeked Thrushes were recorded as flyovers on the morning of 7 Oct at Green Springs (BW). Bicknell’s Thrushes were also recorded at Green Springs as predawn...
flyovers with two on 2 Oct, two more 7 Oct and one on 14 Oct. (BW). A female Golden-winged Warbler was seen at JRP 18 Aug (AB). An extremely late Chestnut-sided Warbler was found in a residential yard in Chesterfield 17 Nov (PB). Several late Yellow-throated Warblers were encountered this season with singles at JRP 29 Sep (PB, GW), Shirley 2 Oct (PB, GW) and in Charles City 3 Nov (AB) and 10 Nov (ABr). A late f. or juv. CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, very rare anywhere inland, was discovered at Crewes 10 Nov (ph. ABr) and then seen again later on the same day (AB). Lincoln’s Sparrow reports included two in Charles City 14 Oct (AB, ABr), one at JRP 5 Nov (AB) and one at Crewes 10 Nov (ABr). Two Purple Finches were noted at Green Springs 21 Oct (BW).

**Contributors:** Tom Armour, Ruth Beck, Paul Bedell, Fred Blystone, Arun Bose, Allen Bryan (ABr), Mitchell Byrd, Fenton Day, Shirley Devan, Adam D’Onofrio, Rachel Ehchols, Vickie Gullet, Mike Iwanik, Julie Kacmaric, Richmond Audubon Society, Tina Trice, Gerry Weinberger, Bill Williams.

**Coastal**

A Cackling Goose was at Chinc. 1 Nov (RY). The peak Tundra Swan total was 203 from KHW 25 Nov (JB). Back Bay waterfowl surveys revealed 100 Blue-winged Teal 26 Sep and 305 Northern Pintails 13 Nov (DS). A fly-by group of 3 Common Eiders passed Chinc. 25 Nov (JR). A Harlequin Duck was at # 3 CBBT 17 Nov (BTk). An Eared Grebe was in Cherry Stone Creek off 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**

Evere drought stifled the Region through the third week of October when five inches of rain fell 24—27 October. The period still ended with a 12.5 inch annual rainfall deficit at Norfolk. Record high temperatures were recorded at Norfolk 9 October (91˚), 18 October (84˚), and 21 Nov (78˚). Hurricane/Tropical Storm Noel proved to be an avian non-event with its windy dry run past the coast 2—3 November. The Kiptopeke State Park Songbird Banding Station experienced its second lowest banding total (5507) since 1997 (4627). A paucity of neotropical migrants was attributed to the absence of significant frontal movements through early October coupled with persistent easterly winds. The first notable warbler movement at the station did not occur until 29 September. Researchers speculated that migrants may have taken an inland route away from the coast in response to the wind and lack of frontal movement conditions. Preliminary evidence to support this hypothesis was drawn from fat scores, a health assessment parameter taken from captured migrants. It appeared that a high proportion of these birds had high fat scores, an indication they were exploiting a continuous food supply, a direct parallel to lower migrant numbers. As one digests the following accounts it will be quite evident the season resounded with significant numbers of late migrants across a broad spectrum of species groups. Notable too were the number of early migrants including Red-breasted Nuthatches which penetrated into the Region early in great abundance. The Region’s wealth of ongoing comprehensive avian investigations included the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory’s songbird and raptor banding and coordinated hawk watch at Kiptopeke State Park, the regular surveys of Fishermans Island and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuges, and the Center for Conservation Biology’s Saw-whet Owl banding project.

**Abbreviations:** Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Cape Charles (Town of Cape Charles, Northampton); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel, s. of Northampton); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomac); Craneys. (Craneys Island, Portsmouth); ESNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Northampton); FINWR (Fishermans Island NWR, Northampton); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/Norfolk); KHW (Kiptopeke Hawk Watch); KSP (Kiptopeke State Park, Northampton).
Eyre Hall, Northampton 7 Oct (DH, MI, VG fide KG), and 2 were at Craney 15 Oct (SD, AM). A trio of **American White Pelicans** flew over KHW 2 Sept (BA, HA), and 10 were seen there 29 Sep (JB, LD). The female **ANHINGA** first reported 25 Jul remained at Mariner’s Museum Park, Newport News through at least 16 Sep (NF). A female **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** flying past KHW at 1050 EST 4 Oct (HW, ph. JB) was relocated at 1120 in Cape Charles (ST). The Back Bay **Little Blue Heron** count peaked 26 Sep at 123 (DS). A **Cattle Egret** was at ESVNWR 11 Nov (HA). Another was near Oyster, **Northampton** 17 Nov (BTk). A FINWR roost had 2 **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** and 27 **Black-crowned Night-Herons** 11 Oct (BW). The 311 **White Ibis** at Bull’s Lane, **Northampton** 9 Oct set a state peak count record (HA, BAn). An imm. **WHITE-FACED IBIS** observed from ESVNWR Ramp Road 10 (DC) & 11 Nov (AD fide SH, ph. JF, STh) was a fall first for the state. The Oyster, **Northampton** landfill had 151 **Black Vultures** 18 Oct (BW, SD, FB). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** at KHW 8 Sep (BA fide BT) was a fall first for the Region and a second for Sep for the state. The KHW season total was 23337 raptors, 3% above the 31-year mean of 22748. Peak daily counts included 105 **Northern Harriers** 8 Oct, 2323 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** 19 Sep, and 130 **Cooper’s Hawks** 8 Oct (JB). The **Northern Goshawk** season total was 16 including a remarkably early one 17 Sep (JB) and a high count of 7 on 27 Nov (JR), matching the previous all-time one-day high set 17 Nov 1999. A late **Broad-winged Hawk** was banded at KSP 25 Nov (JM, JB). A **Swainson’s Hawk** was seen from Seaside Rd., **Northampton** 11 Nov (SB, LM, PB fide AD). A **Golden Eagle** was reported off Bay Creek, **Northampton** 5 Oct (SL, TS). Possibly the same individual was at Brennan Farm, **Northampton** 6 Oct (PO). One was near Oyster, **Northampton** 2 Nov (RBr). The KHW total was 8 including 2 on 12 Nov (JB, BAn). Part of KHW’s 3584 **American Kestrels** were 646 counted 21 Sep (JB). The peak KHW **Merlin** and **Peregrine Falcon** flight day was 8 Oct with 84 and 162, respectively (JB). A trio of “reed hopping” **Virginia Rails** was along Magotha Rd., **Northampton** 6 Oct (KG). A **Sora** was at ESVNWR 11 Nov (fide HA). An Eastern Shore Birding Festival highlight was a **Common Moorhen** at Eyre Hall, **Northampton** 5 & 7 Oct (KG, VG, DH, MI). A **SANDHILL CRANE** was seen 13 Nov near Locustville, Aacomack where the county’s first was observed 11 Jul (GR fide HA).

**SHOREBIRDS-SWALLOWS**

**American Golden Plover** reports included one on FINWR 4 Oct (BA), one along Seaview Road, **Northampton** 10 Nov (NB, FD, LL), and one at KSP also 10 Nov (HA, BT). The **Semipalmated Plover** peak count was 200+ at Chinc. 5 Sep (MP). **Piping Plover** observations noted 17 on FINWR 7 Aug (BA fide SR), 3 at Chinc. 3 Sep (CH), and one at Back Bay 26 Sep (DS). Back Bay had 8 **American Avocets** 26 Sep (BA, DS). A Willet flock in excess of 850 (ca. 40% Western) was at Chinc. 29 Sep (JK). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at Willis Wharf, **Northampton** 1 Nov (RBr). A **Hudsonian Godwit** was at Back Bay 26 Sep (BA, DS). The tidal flats at Oyster, **Northampton** attracted 78 **Marbled Godwits** 14 Oct (LD, HW). Back Bay’s **Sandering** count peaked 14 Aug at 1249 (DS). A juv. **Baird’s Sandpiper** was observed at Chinc. 3 Sep (CL). **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** reports included one at Craney 2 Sep (AD et al.), 19 at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO), and one at Back Bay 26 Sep (DS, BA). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** was at Chinc. 5 Oct (KG, M & PR). **Wilson’s Phalarope** reports included one at Chinc. 14 Aug (DL), 6 at Craney 30 Aug (RBr), and 2 there 2 Sep (AD et al.). **Red-necked Phalaropes** had 4 19 Sep (BK). A southbound juv. **Parasitic Jaeger** was off Back Bay 5 Oct (AD, TT). An impressive 5100 **Laughing Gulls** were counted at Lynnhaven, Virginia Beach 29 Oct (RBr). A **Franklin’s Gull** located at Chinc. 8 Sep (VK, SE fide JT) was seen again 10 Sep (fide PO). Back Bay’s **Lesser Black-backed Gull** count was 169 on 14 Aug (DS), 170 on 27 Aug (DS), 151 on 26 Sep (BA, DS), and 230 (a new state high) on 4 Oct (DS). A **Gull-billed Tern** was seen from KHW 14 Oct (JB). The **Sandwich Tern** peak count was 87 on FINWR 19 Sep (BA). Most extraordinary was a **Common Tern** pair on HRBT tending a 2-week old chick 13 Sep (RB). The highest reported **Least Tern** count was 125 at Craney 15 Aug (AD). At least 10 **Black Terns** were at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO). There were 375 **Black Skimmers** on FINWR 5 Sep (BA). A total of 4 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were along Magotha Road, **Northampton** 4 Oct (FB, SD, BW). A late **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was banded at KSP 7 Nov (JR). A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO). A **Barn Owl** was in Cape Charles 9 Nov (NB). A **Long-eared Owl** was banded on ESVNWR 21 Nov (SEh). For the 14th consecutive fall CCB conducted a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** migration study in lower **Northampton**. Between 27 Oct & 30 Nov 412 were captured including 395 newly banded and 17 foreign re-captures—birds banded elsewhere and recaptured on the Eastern Shore (SEh). Five **Chuck-will’s-widows** were seen at KSP 15 Aug. One was singing there 28 Aug with individuals present through at least 22 Sept (JR). Quite surprising was a singing **Whip-poor-will** at KSP 28 Aug (JR). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was at KSP 11 Nov (JM fide HA). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was at Chinc. **Western Kingbird** reports included one on FINWR 5 Oct (A & PS fide KG), one at Brownsville near Nassawadox, **Northampton** 10 Oct (BW), and one near Willis Wharf, **Northampton** 10 Nov (SH, TT, LL, FD). The Oyster landfill, **Northampton** hosted 136 **Fish Crows** 18 Oct (BW, SD, FB). A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at KSP 10 Nov (NB), and a late **Cliff Swallow** was on ESVNWR 5 Oct (AD, TT). At least 4 **CAVE SWALLOWS** were at KHW 8 Nov (JR, HA); 7-8 were near KSP 11 Nov (HA), and 5 were at KSP 17 Nov (JB, BT). Tardy **Barn Swallows** included...
one at Oyster, Northampton 10 Nov (BW, JS) and one at KSP 10 & 11 Nov (HA, JB).

**THRUSHES-FINCHES**

The first-of-season Gray-cheeked Thrush was banded at KSP 15 Sep (JR). One was at Hofler Creek Wildlife Preserve, Portsmouth 27 Oct (NF), and one banded at KSP 8 Nov (JR) established a new Region extreme date (formerly 28 Oct). Red-breasted Nuthatches were noted at KSP by 13 Aug (JR) followed by high counts of 22 at Chinc. on both 10 Sep (fide PO) and 29 Sep (JK). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Chinc. 3 Nov (JK). A Blue-winged Warbler was banded at KSP 15 Aug (JR), and a Golden-winged Warbler was at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO). Somewhat late was a Yellow Warbler at ESVNWR 12 Oct (BW). Part of the first significant neotropical migrant flight were 22 Magnolia Warblers banded at KSP 29 Sep (JR). A season high 60 Palm Warbler’s (29 Western, 31 Yellow) were banded at KSP 20 Oct (JR). A Black-and-white Warbler was at Eyre Hall, Northampton 10 Nov (JS, BW) and an American Redstart was at Chinc. 3 Nov (fide JK). A Worm-eating Warbler banded at KSP 22 Oct (JR) extended the extreme date by 8 days. Other noteworthy warblers banded at KSP included a Louisiana Waterthrush 24 Aug, a Connecticut Warbler 29 Sep, and a Mourning Warbler 16 Sep (JR). A Wilson’s Warbler was at Chinc. 10 Sep (fide PO). Quite exceptional were 71 Chipping Sparrows banded at KSP 14 Nov (JR). A Clay-colored Sparrow was at a Norfolk feeder 2 Oct (DC). Another was banded at KSP 21 Nov (JR). A Vesper Sparrow was in Cape Charles 8 Nov (TS), and 5 were found along Magotha Road, Northampton 10 Nov (NB). The peak Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow count was 13 from FinWR 19 Oct (BA). A LeConte’s Sparrow was on # 3 CBBT 17 Nov (BTk), and 105 Seaside Sparrows were at Bull’s Lane, Northampton 11 Oct (HA). A total of seven Lincoln’s Sparrows were banded at KSP 29 Sep-14 Nov (JR). Snow Bunting reports included one on ESVNWR 30 Oct (ph. ST fide JR), 5 at Chinc. 4 Nov (JK), and one at Chinc. 23 Nov (JR). A juv. Blue Grosbeak at KHW 13 Nov extended the former extreme date (31 Oct) by 13 days (BAn). An Dickcissel was at Custis Tomb, Northampton 10 Nov (BW, JS). At least 125 Baltimore Orioles passed KHW by 0900 on 3 Sep (CF). One was at Eyre Hall, Northampton 10 Nov (JS, BW). Irruptive northern finch species were modestly evident with peak counts, all from KSP, of 24 Purple Finches 17 Nov (JB, BT), a Red Crossbill 18 Nov (JB), and 15 Pine Siskins 14 Nov (JB). In excess of 900 American Goldfinches were in Cape Charles 14 Nov (NB).

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