Virginia Birds

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

Volume 2, Number 2
Fall Records August – November 2005

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Editors’ Notes

Hawk watchers around the Commonwealth enjoyed some interesting observations this fall. The Kiptopeke Hawk Watch tallied its second highest Red-shouldered Hawk count and the American Kestrel count exceeded 2004 by 106% ending a four year decline. At the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Augusta County, there were new high counts of Bald Eagle and Merlin and the Red-tailed Hawk flight included the second highest single day count, and third highest season count in 29 year. A western race Kriders Red-tailed Hawk was reported from the Harvey’s Knob Hawk Watch in Botetourt County. The Snickers Gap Hawk Watch produced a new seasonal record for Bald Eagles. A dark morph Broad-winged Hawk in Shenandoah was very unusual for the east coast.

Other interesting seasonal observations included the first ever reports of Cave Swallow in the Mountains and Valleys; the Southwest Region’s first Mississippi Kite and the second observation there of Wilson’s Warbler in Buchanan County. The Coastal Region had the state’s first MacGillivray’s Warbler and second Allen’s Hummingbird, while in the Southeast an American White Pelican provided the second Coastal Plain record west of the Chesapeake Bay. The South Central Region is not known for shorebirds so Piping Plover and Stilt and Buff-breasted sandpipers were significant, as was an American White Pelican. A Neotropical Cormorant reported in the North Region could provide Virginia’s first record and the report of a Sabine’s Gull there was also interesting. Both are subject to VARCOM review.

According to Bryan Watts, Director of The Center for Conservation Biology, in Virginia there are currently about twenty-five species that are of high conservation concern for which status and distribution information is sorely lacking. See his article on Page 3 to find out how you can contribute to the understanding of these species by reporting your observations.

Kurt Gaskill let us know recently that he will not be able to continue as our North Region Editor. We wish to thank him for his contribution to this publication during its first year. His reports thoroughly and knowledgeably covered a complex Region. We are very lucky that Paula Sullivan has agreed to become our new North Region Editor. Paula is a well known digiscoper and field trip leader in Northern Virginia. We look forward to her reports which will begin with the spring reporting period.

If you enjoy Virginia Birds, we hope you will help us keep the publication going. Again this year all of the funds raised by the VSO Roving Ravens in the World Series of Birding will be used to help underwrite the cost of producing Virginia Birds. So please consider making a pledge. There is a pledge form on the inside of the back cover of this issue. More information and a pledge form can also be found at www.virginiabirds.net, or you may e-mail your pledge to us at VSOeditors@comcast.net.

Good Birding,

Linda Fields and Alan Schreck

CORRECTIONS: In Virginia Birds Volume 2 Number 1, Summer Records, Page 5, Col 1, the (RC) referred to in the discovery of the June 1998 Heron Rookery at Damascus is Ron Carrico. All other (RC) notations in this Southwest report refer to Rack Cross. All (WC) notations in the Southwest report refer to Wallace Coffey.

The reporting period on the bottom of the odd numbered pages is incorrectly shown as Spring May – March 2005. The reporting period covered is Summer June – July 2005...

Cover Photo: "A bird in the hand..." Virginia’s first MacGillivray’s Warbler held by Jethro Runco who banded then photographed it using a Canon Elph digital camera in his free hand.
Birding with a Purpose
By Dr. Bryan D. Watts, Director
The Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary

One has only to thumb through the range maps found in any modern field guide to form the impression that species distributions are static and fixed. The truth is that for most species, distribution is a dynamic characteristic and range boundaries have expanded and contracted through time. Many species that we now consider to be common in Virginia did not occur here until recent times while other species considered abundant in previous times are now rare or absent. For example, thirty percent of the colonial birdwater species now breeding in Virginia have expanded their breeding range into the state since 1950. Loggerhead Shrikes and Bachman’s Sparrows expanded their ranges north in a wave-like fashion during the early 1900s only to contract back toward their core since the 1950s. Still other species like the Dickcissel have come and gone through time in discrete episodes. The ebb and flow of distribution is one of the most exciting and fascinating aspects of avian ecology. Documentation of distributional change is often central to the development of conservation strategies for declining species.

For many species of conservation concern, the collective observations of the birding community represent the only information that exists to assess status and distribution. When endangered and other species have a very limited distribution, the scientific community is often able to design effective approaches to determine status and distribution. For common and widespread species, national programs such as the Breeding Bird Survey are reasonably effective in tracking these parameters. However, there are currently no programs designed to assess the status and distribution of species that are both widely distributed and rare. This group represents a large portion of the species of conservation concern within Virginia and other states. The birding community is the only viable body capable of collecting information critical to their protection.

Currently in Virginia there are some 25 species (see table at right) that are of high conservation concern and for which status and distribution information is sorely lacking. All of us within the birding community have the opportunity to improve our overall understanding of these species and contribute information that is critical to their conservation. Our collective eyes and ears are the most powerful tools we have. Whether we are birding well worn locations or exploring new areas, if we all make it standard practice to be aware of these target species and to both document and report their occurrence, together we will improve their future.

*Wayne’s Warbler is a smaller subspecies of the Black-throated Green Warbler confined to the coastal plain of Virginia and the Carolinas and found breeding in cypress swamps.

Breeding Species of Highest Interest in Virginia

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Please report sightings to the VA-Bird Listserv, Virginia Birds, or directly to CCB at conbio@wm.edu

Virginia Avian Heritage Program

The Center for Conservation Biology has established the Virginia Avian Heritage Program. The mission of this program is to compile all available information (historic and future) on bird species of conservation concern in Virginia. The underlying premise of this program is that information is the key currency that drives science-based conservation. We believe that by compiling observations into a comprehensive database we will be able to reconstruct historic changes in status and distribution. Evaluation of these temporal patterns will lead to a better understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to declines and will lead to the development of improved conservation strategies.

We are interested in published papers, museum specimens, field records (particularly historic sets), and well documented observations that pertain to species of concern. These collective observations are the legacy that previous observers have left to us and that we must leave to future observers. We would be willing to copy materials on archival grade paper, return originals, and store materials for entry into the program. If you have or know about historic materials, please contact the Center office at conbio@wm.edu or 757-221-1645.

FALL REPORTING PERIOD  AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2005  3
Fall Reporting Period Aug – Nov 2005

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.

EDITOR — D. Kurt Gaskill,
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The autumn weather was fairly normal, though the lack of storms meant shorebird habitat in the Piedmont was in short supply. At Hunting Creek mudflats the impact of the lack of rain was likely compounded by the construction of the nearby new Wilson Bridge. Still the period had significant highlights including a Neotropic Cormorant which, spent most of its time in the Maryland waters of the Potomac, but made a few incursions into Loudoun airspace providing Virginia’s first record if accepted by VARCOM. Also amazing was a Sabine's Gull that traveled down the Potomac River and appears to have crossed into Virginia and a LeConte's Sparrow at Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge that was seen by dozens of birders over the course of a few days. Other highlights were White-winged Scoter; Mississippi Kite; good American Golden Plover and Buff-breasted Sandpiper showings; Loggerhead Shrike; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Sedge Wren; Golden-winged, Orange-crowned, Mourning and Connecticut Warblers; Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow; Yellow-headed Blackbird; Pine Siskin; and Common Redpoll. A group of birders started taking data at the famous spring migrant trap, Monticello Park, and the encouraging results are included here as appropriate. The Region tallied about 243 species for the period.

Abbreviations: Accotink (Accotink Wildlife Refuge, Fairfax); Airlie (Airlie, Fauquier); Bangshe (Bangshe-Reeks Nature Preserve, Loudoun); Belmont (Belmont Bay, Fairfax); BRCES, (Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, Loudoun); Dulles Wetlands (Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, Loudoun); Dyke (Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Fairfax); HCM (Hunting Creek Mudflats, Fairfax); HC (Hunting Creek, City of Alexandria); Huntsley (Huntsley Meadows, Fairfax); Leesylvania (Leesylvania SP, Prince William); Long Branch (Long Branch Nature Center, Fairfax); Lowe's (Lowe's Island Golf Club, Loudoun); MNSP (Mason Neck SP, Fairfax); Monticello (Monticello Park, Alexandria); OBNWR (Occoquan Bay NWR, Prince William); Riverbend (Riverbend County Park, Fairfax); Sky Meadows (Sky Meadows SP, Fauquier); Smith (Fort CF Smith Park, Arlington); Snickers (Snickers Gap Hawk Watch, Loudoun/Clarke).
The first Cackling Goose of the season was found at Burke L., Fairfax 22 Oct (MR, m.ob.). A banded Trumpeter Swan, part of an Ohio release program, arrived at Airlie 29 Nov (BS). An American Wigeon at Belmont 24 Sep established a new arrival date there (DKG). Blue-winged Teal were first noted at Dyke 7 Aug and Northern Pintail arrived there 1 Sep (DKG). The first seasonal Canvasback was noted in Belmont 22 Oct (DKG). An unusual sighting was a White-winged Scoter flying over Lowe's 29 Oct as it moved along the Potomac R (JK, m.ob.).

Buffalhead arrived at Pholec Bay Northern Virginia Regional Park, Fairfax 22 Oct (DKG). Common Goldeneye arrived a bit early at Belmont 6 Nov (DKG). A lingering Hooded Merganser was found off Dyke 4 Sep (RR, SS); fall migrants arrived nearly two months later. A Neotropical Cormorant was first seen in Maryland waters of the Potomac R. off Lowe's, Loudoun 12 Aug, then found again 25 Oct (DC). It was observed flying over the Golf Club (in Virginia), and may have landed on some ponds there 27 Oct (BR, LS, MH, DP), 28 Oct (PO), 29 Oct (JK, DKG) and 30 Oct (JF).

Observers are encouraged to send their notes to the Maryland and Virginia records committees. A Ruff Grouse drumming at Sky Meadows was an unusual find 5 Nov (SB). Common Loon was first noted over Snickers 16 Oct (JB, BA). A Piedmont migrating American Bittern at Harrison Rd, Fauquier was an excellent find (TD); there was also a lingering bird in the marsh at Quantico Cr., Prince William 17 Nov (LK). A late Little Blue Heron was found near HCM, Fairfax 15 Oct (DKG). Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were spotted near the Reston, Fairfax nest site 8 Aug (VON). The last Mississippi Kite report was near the traditional Waynewood, Fairfax site 5 Sep (VON) - the Annandale site produced one young 8 Aug (DS, BAu). The last Osprey reported was 17 Nov at Snickers which was earlier than typical for the Region. These and the Snickers reports which follow are fide TD. Snickers produced a new seasonal record for Bald Eagles with 192 recorded; the peak flight of 14 birds was 29 Oct. Snickers also recorded 8 Northern Goshawks between 2 Oct and 2 Nov; outside of Snickers there were three other sightings: 23 Oct at Sky Meadows (JK, DKG), 26 Oct at Short Hill, Loudoun (fide TD) and 18 Nov at Dyke Marsh (DKG). A very rare (for the east coast) dark morph Broad-winged Hawk was reported from Shenandoah 1 Sep (DD). The last Broad-winged Hawk report was at Sky Meadows 23 Oct (DKG, JK). The two Rough-legged Hawk reports were from Snickers: 11 Nov and 21 Nov. The Golden Eagles count was down a bit at Snickers with 13 reported from 23 Oct to 14 Nov. The first Merlin of the season was observed near G.W. Thompson Wildlife Management Area, Fauquier 5 Sep (BH). Reports of migratory Peregrine other than local nesters on Potomac R. bridges may have begun at Smith 27 Aug (VK).

The first American Golden Plover put on an excellent show in Remington, Fauquier and adjoining turf farms in Culpeper. The first was reported 27 Aug near Remington (MI) and five were reported there 3 Sep (LC, GH); with 18 in nearby Culpeper (DKG, RR). The Upland Sandpiper show that began at the end of the last reporting period continued on the
fields outside of Remington until 3 Sep (LC, GH); a peak count of 10 was reported 6 Aug (DKG, RR, m.ob.). 

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** was noted at Dulles Wetlands 10 Sep (DKG, JK). 

**Western Sandpiper** was reported from HCM 27 Aug to 1 Sep (DKG, m.ob.). **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were first found near Remington 17 Aug (BA, TD) and seen off and on until 29 Aug; in the same area. 

**Wilson’s Snipe** was first noted 29 Aug (TD). An **American Woodcock** was found in Shenandoah 22 Oct (DD). Thirty **Boneparte’s Gulls** were reported off OBNWR 1 Oct (MAK, MK). A **SABINE’S GULL** was observed flying down the Potomac R. near Loudoun 26 Sep. The observer thought it crossed into Virginia airspace as it quickly gained speed and altitude and angled upriver headed southwest (DCz). The **California Gull** at HCM 13 Nov set a new early date (LC). **Royal Tern** put in an appearance at Dyke 4 Sep (JK). There were four **Black-billed Cuckoo** sightings; the first at Smith 14 Sep set a new arrival date (VK); the last at Snickers 27 Oct (TD) seemed to match last year’s date until a calling bird was repeatedly heard at Banskeer 5 Nov (JC, MAG). 

**OWLS — MIMIC THRUSHES** 

**Short-eared Owls** returned to last year’s excellent Rectorstown, Fauquier site 30 Nov (TD). A car-killed **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found in Fauquier 27 Oct (TD). The first **Common Nighthawk** was observed at the Tyson’s Corner, Fairfax site 12 Aug (PW); peak flight was sixty 22 Aug (PW) and a late bird was seen over Falls Church 23 Oct (GH). Two calling **Whip-poor-wills** outside of Gore, Frederick 24 Sep were a good find (PKe). A **Chinney Swift** spotted at Smith 28 Oct was a typical departure date but an amazing sighting at Huntley 14 Nov sets a regional record; the previous late date was 12 Nov (FB, AB, KH). A late **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was reported in Arlington 23 Oct (VON). There were five reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** with the last at Snickers 20 Sep (fide TD). **Eastern Wood Pewee** was last at Sky Meadows 15 Oct (DKG) and another bird was heard calling from Smith 17 Oct (JK). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** arrived 14 Aug at Banshee (LW, DKG); there were nine seasonal sightings. A **Trail’s Flycatcher** was noted at MNSP 1 Oct (DKG, m.ob.). The five **Least Flycatcher** reports all fell into the typical date range. 1 Oct was a new late date for **Great Crested Flycatcher** at MNSP (DKG, m.ob.). A **Loggerhead Shrike** stayed at Sky Meadows from at least 6 Sep (JC) to 30 Oct (SB, DKG, JK, RR, SW); the only other report was in the Remington area 20 Aug (JK). The last **Warbling Vireo** was reported at MNSP 1 Oct (JK, m.ob.). There were 14 **Philadelphia Vireo** reports; two more than last year and all in the typical date range. **Common Raven** made significant eastward incursions at Riverbend, Fairfax (JK) and the Broad Run area of Prince William (CT) 19 Oct. The last report for **Tree Swallow** was at Dyke 6 Nov (DKG, m.ob.) and for **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at Leesylvania 16 Oct (DKG, MR). **Twenty Bank Swallows** were noted near Remington 9 Aug (TD). The season’s first **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported near Nokesville, Prince William 4 Sep (DKG) and other reports began soon after. The last **House Wren** report was from Huntley 6 Nov (BJ). 

**Winter Wren** arrived at Riverbend 5 Sep (KS). The **Sedge Wren** at North Fork Wetlands Mitigation Bank, Prince William, present since 31 Jul, was last observed 23 Oct (DKG, JK); an unlined nest was found at the site (CT) but cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of breeding. The last **Marsh Wren** at the Dyke breeding site was 14 Aug (DKG); three reports of migrants were Dulles Wetlands 4 Sep (JD, m.ob.); Oakton, Fairfax 30 Sep (FA); and Sky Meadows 15 Oct (DKG). **Gold-crowned Kinglets** arrived at MNSP 1 Oct (DKG, m.ob.) and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** arrived at Shenandoah National Park 5 Sep (SB). The last **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was reported from Wakefield Park, Fairfax 20 Nov (VON). An excellent dawn flight of 20 **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** over MNSP was seen 1 Oct (DKG, JK); also noted were 2 Veerys, 36 **Swainson’s Thrushes** and 2 Wood Thrushes. An early Swainson’s was noted at Long Branch 2 Sep (PK) and a late bird was at Huntley 17 Oct (DKG). A **Gray Catbird** feeding a fledgling in a Fairfax backyard 10 Oct was unusual (LC). 

**WARBLERS — FINCHES** 

The single **Golden-winged Warbler** report came from Upperville, Fauquier 3 Sep (BJ). The six **Orange-crowned Warblers** reports started with Sky Meadows 10 Oct (DKG) and ended with Julie Metz Wetlands Mitigation Bank, Prince William 11 Nov (MR). A late **Nashville Warbler** was found at Monticello 27 Oct (TA, HG). The last **Northern Parula** was reported near the Stone Bridge, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Prince William 17 Oct (CB). There are few historical records of **Yellow Warbler** in the Region beyond Sep; this season’s were MNSP 1 Oct (DKG, m.ob.) and Leesylvania 16 Oct (MR, DKG). The first and last **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were found at Monticello 17 Aug (TA, PK) and 15 Oct (fide TA). The first **Magnolia Warbler** was reported from Monticello 17 Aug (TA, PK) and the last was from OBNWR 23 Oct (MR). There were 12 **Cape May Warbler** reports, the last at Monticello 18 Oct (TA). A late **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was reported there 3 Nov (TA). **Yellow-rumped Warbler** arrived at Leesylvania 24 Sep (DKG, MR). The last **Black-throated Green** was at BRCES 22 Oct (JD, m.ob.). **Blackburnian Warbler** was first noted at Banskeer
13 Aug (DKG, m.ob.) and Yellow-throated Warbler was last found at Leesylvania 1 Oct (MR). The last Prairie Warbler was at Smith 28 Sep (JK). Palm Warbler arrived somewhat early at Dyke 4 Sep (RR, SS). The last Bay-breasted Warbler was reported from MNS 1 Oct (DKG, m.ob.). Blackpoll Warbler was early at BRCS 3 Sep (JD) and the last report was from Monticello 26 Oct (TA, HG). A singing Cerulean Warbler was at BRCS 27 Aug (DKG). Black & White Warbler finished the season at OBNWR 23 Oct (MR). Ovenbird was last reported from Monticello 16 Oct (fide TA). The seven Northern Waterthrush reports were a welcome increase from this time last year; the first was at Monticello 19 Aug (fide TA). There were two reports of Louisiana Waterthrush on 6 Aug, and the last report was from Monticello 22 Aug (fide TA). A late Kentucky Warbler was found at the Spotsylvania Battlefield, Spotsylvania 9 Sep (JG). There were six Connecticut Warbler reports starting with Long Branch 17 Sep (PK) and ending with Riverbend 30 Sep (JK). There were five Mourning Warbler reports; the first at Airfield 21 Aug (SH) and the last in Shenandoah 24 Sep (DD). The last Common Yellowthroat reported was at Huntley 6 Nov (BJ). Hooded Warbler migration was first noted at Monticello 22 Aug (fide TA). Reports of Canada Warbler migration began and ended with Monticello 17 Aug (TA, PK) and 21 Sep (fide TA). The last Scarlet Tanager was reported at Leesylvania 17 Oct (MR, DKG).

American Tree Sparrow arrived at Virginia State Arboretum – Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke 11 Nov (DC). An early Savannah Sparrow migrant was noted in Oakton, Fairfax 12 Sep (FA). The last report of Grasshopper Sparrow was at North Fork 23 Oct (DKG, JK). The report of a Le Conte's Sparrow was found at OBNWR 30 Oct (LC, PS, JP) and present there until 5 Nov (fide GM).

This very cooperative Le Conte's Sparrow was digiscoped at Ocequan NWR by Paula Sullivan using a Nikon Coolpix 4300 and a 32x eyepiece on her Kowa TSN 823 scope.

Siskin was noted over Snickers 27 Oct (TD); Common Redpoll followed on 29 Oct (BA).


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, Pulaski.

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

The fall season in this part of the Shenandoah Valley was without a major tropical storm impact. Out-of-
range birds were few but included two sightings of CAVE SWALLOWS, the first ever reports of this swallow in the entire Mountains and Valleys Region of the state.

WATERFOWL — HAWKS
The lone Barnacle Goose reported this summer remained in the same site near Waynesboro, Augusta (AL), until at least 7 Aug. This species is a status "category 3" in Virginia; that is the identity may be accepted by VARCOM but the provenance of the bird is uncertain. This goose (pending VARCOM acceptance) provides the fourth record and first summer/fall record in the Region.

The fall migratory hawk flight was relatively eventful. There were only a few records from the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch, Augusta, including new high counts of 11 Bald Eagles 8 Aug, and 10 Merlins 21 Aug (BT)—previous high counts were eight and seven respectively. The Broad-winged Hawk flight was slightly above average with a season total of 7263 (12% above 15-year median). The Red-tailed Hawk flight was exceptional and included the second highest single day count of 590 hawks on 29 Oct, and the third highest season count, 1633 birds, in the 29-year history of this hawk watch. A single western race Krider's Red-tailed Hawk 12 Nov (TF) was reported from the Harvey's Knob Hawk Watch, Botetourt.

RAILS — SANDPIPERS
Four Black Rails were seen in a wet meadow adjacent to the Cowpasture River near Iron Gate, Alleghany 23-24 Aug (EH, fide CHC). This is the only recent record for this rail in the region. The four prior records occurred between 1936 and 1945, all from the Roanoke and Blacksburg area. According to U.S. Forest Service biologist CHC, this area and a nearby location in Botetourt offer potential breeding habitat and will be monitored by USFS. Harvey's Knob Hawk Watch, Botetourt, was the site of a single Sandhill Crane report, 30 Nov (MP, BG, et al), and represents one of less than 10 regional records (accepted or under review) for this crane, all since 1986. The species has been reported with increased frequency throughout Virginia the last three decades. The shorebird migration included a few regionally uncommon fall transients, such as single counts of American Golden Plover, 10 Oct, Rockingham (JL, AL); White-rumped Sandpiper 20 Aug, Augusta, (AL) and 4 Oct, Rockingham (AL); and Baird's Sandpiper 16-26 Aug, Rockingham (AL).

OWLS — SWALLOWS
CM conducted his third successive annual Northern Saw-whet Owl banding project in western Rockingham from 5 Nov to 20 Dec. The captures per hour and per net-hour (both functions of capture productivity) showed greater than 60% decline over the prior year's data, consistent with the annual variations of reproductive success. The new owl capture of 151 in 2005, 156 in 2004 and 85 in 2003 has established that this species, formerly considered to be "rare and transient" fall and winter visitor, migrates through the region in moderate numbers. A new peak count of 53 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was recorded 5 Sep in Augusta, (AL). There were no fall reports of Selasphorus hummingbirds in the Region. There were new peak counts of Tree Swallows (2,062) on 5 Oct and of Barn Swallows (739) on 16 Aug, both in various locations within Augusta (AL). The first report of CAVE SWALLOW in this region, indeed in the entire Mountains and Valleys Physiographic area was on 23 Oct; a single bird was observed flying with other swallow species over a wastewater treatment pond near Stuarts Draft, Augusta (AL). On 12 Nov, 3 Cave Swallows were reported from the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch site, Augusta (BT). Cave Swallows have been annual fall and early winter visitors to coastal Virginia since 1999. Since their arrivals are frequently associated with strong southwesterly winds, many people believe they are from the Mexican population that extends into parts of Texas and New Mexico, which has been substantially increasing in size and breeding range during the last quarter century. The recent annual fall vagrancy to Virginia and neighboring states may be linked to this changing population dynamic, although there are differing opinions. If the trend continues, the species may be seen with increased frequency throughout the state in coming years.

WRENS — SPARROWS
Sedge Wrens were seen and heard in two different wet meadows in Augusta. At least one bird was heard singing in the same Glebe School Road area on 8 Aug (BT, AL) where one of two breeding records for the region was recorded on 4 Aug 2004. Four singing males were heard in the Swoope area on 16 Aug and again on 20 Aug (AL). Nashville Warbler sightings included a new regional early fall date of 31 Aug, (JK) and late fall date of 14 Nov (LH), both Augusta. New late date records were also established for Chestnut-sided Warbler 23 Oct, Staunton, Augusta (AL) and Pine Warbler 5 Nov, Staunton, Augusta (JK). CLAY-COLORED SPARROW is considered a rare fall transient in this region with only six previous records. The Lyndhurst, Augusta, sighting of this species on 23 Oct represents the fourth record and the second in two successive years in this county (AL).

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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.

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Relatively normal weather during the period resulted in fairly predictable avian population movements in the Central Region. Several strong fronts produced fallouts and some interesting migrants including Mourning Warbler in Albemarle and Brewster’s Warbler in Orange. A Rufous Hummingbird appeared in Greene in mid-October and persisted through the end of the period.

Abbreviations: None

DUCKS — GREBES
During the period, frequent checks of lakes in northern Amherst, Mill Creek L., proved most productive with 15 Ruddy Ducks and 10 Green-winged Teal 23 Oct and 65 Common Loons (a high for the area), 8 Red-breasted Mergansers, 8 Gadwall, 11 Green-winged Teal, and 26 Ruddy Ducks 22 Nov (MJ).

HAWKS — TURNS
For the ninth consecutive fall, monitoring of raptor migration through the Lynchburg area took place from atop Candler’s Mountain, Campbell, coordinated by Dr. Gene Sattler who provided the following summary. This year’s Broad-winged Hawk flight was about average, or a little above, with a total of 6089 birds in 104 hours of coverage 14–30 Sep. The best day was 27 Sep which produced 2829 broad-wingers and the lone Peregrine Falcon of the season. Totals for other species were about average: 44 Osprey, 10 Bald Eagles, 2 Northern Harriers, 39 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 3 Cooper’s Hawks, 10 Red-tailed Hawks, 10 American Kestrels, and seven unidentified hawks. There were no observations of Merlin, which was also absent in three other years and is actually counted here less often than the Peregrine Falcon. An Osprey was a good late fall find at Mill Creek L., Amherst 23 Oct (MJ). Always uncommon in the Region in late fall, a Merlin was observed sitting in the top of one of the sweet gums in the median along US 29 N Charlottesville Dec (PC). A sighting of 7 Northern Bobwhites feeding in a field in Appomattox 1 Oct was encouraging for this declining grassland bird (RB, PL). Two American Coots were unusual for Mill Creek L., 23 Oct (MJ). An American Woodcock was flushed northwest of Piney River, Nelson 24 Nov (JL). A Bonaparte’s Gull at Mill Creek L. 22 Nov was unusual (MJ).

OWLS — SWALLLOWS
A single Common Nighthawk was seen “heading south with great determination” near Charlottesville 19 Aug (MA) and 15–20 Common Nighthawks, some vocalizing, were flying around the Food Lion in Madison Heights, Amherst 21 Aug (MJ). A selsaphorus species hummingbird began frequenting a residential feeder in Ruckersville, Greene in mid-Oct and persisted through the end of the season (fide BT). The bird was banded by David Holmes and Peter Littlejohn (assisted by Sue Heath) 16 Jan 2006. During the banding process, measurements confirmed the bird as a second hatching year female.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD
Red-breasted Nuthatch was reported at the Candler’s Mountain Hawk Watch, Campbell 16 & 28 Sep (GS). On 28 Sep, two arrived in the Harris’ yard, Orange and up to three were seen there through at least 28 Oct (GKRH). Other reports of this species were practically non-existent. A mass of more than 150 Tree Swallows catching insects off the top of the water at Mill Creek L., Amherst 23 Oct was reported as a spectacular event (MJ).

FLYCATCHERS — WARBLERS
Always a nice find in the region especially in fall, a Least Flycatcher was observed foraging and allowing good
studies near the bat house at Ivy Creek Natural Area, Albemarle 27 Aug (AM). The only report of Swainson's Thrush was from Appomattox 1 Oct, though more probably passed through the region, (RB, PL). The only report of Philadelphia Vireo came from the 3 Sep Augusta County Bird Club trip to the Swannanoa area, Nelson-Augusta where White-eyed, Red-eyed, and Blue Headed Vireo were also seen (AL, et al.). Four Horned Larks were found getting grit in the graveled parking lot adjacent to the Orange County Airport, Orange 20 Nov (G&RH). Spotsylvania National Battlefield, Spotsylvania produced a nice assortment of migrant wood warblers 9 Sep including American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Tennessee, Nashvile, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Pine, Black-and-white, and Kentucky Warblers (JG). Regional late dates for several warblers were recorded in Campbell 1 Oct including Hooded Warbler (extreme late date), Prairie Warbler (extreme late date), and Canada Warbler. Other warblers seen there 1 Oct included Northern Parula, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Hooded, Pine, Black-and-white, and Prairie; and Common Yellowthroat. Five western race Palm Warblers were in Appomattox the same day (All PL, RB). A push of birds at the Ivy Creek Natural Area 27 Aug included a first-fall MOURNING WARBLER seen from the paved trail and seven other warbler species including Canada, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white, Prairie, American Restart, and Common Yellowthroat (AM). A major fallout of warblers in the Harris' yard, 5 Sep produced a first fall female, second-generation BREWSTER'S WARBLER. The warbler was yard bird #158 on their yardlist! Other warblers seen during the fallout included Magnolia, Blackburnian, and Chestnut-sided (G&RH). On 28 Sep, the Harris' had Blackburnian, Pine, Magnolia and Bay-breasted Warblers in their yard (G&RH). The 3 Sep Augusta Bird Club field trip to the Swannanoa area, Nelson-Augusta, had a total of 39 species, including eight wood warblers: Nashville, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Hooded, and Canada Warblers, American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat (AL, et al.).

BLACKBIRDS — FINCHES
A mixed flock of several thousand blackbirds was seen going to roost 24–26 Oct west of Charlottesville, Albemarle (BS).
A single sighting of an American Tree Sparrow northwest of Pinney River, Nelson 25 Nov was a nice find for the area. A Fox Sparrow in a backyard in downtown Fredericksburg was interesting 26 Nov (JG). A Swamp Sparrow was reported in Campbell 1 Oct (RB, PL). Sparrs found in the Harris' yard, Orange included Lincoln's and Vesper Sparrows 23 Oct, late Chipping Sparrows. White-crowned Sparrow, never really common in the region, and a late Vesper Sparrow 26 Nov (G&RH, PK). White-crowned Sparrow also appeared in a Campbell yard 21 and 22 Oct (PL). There were numerous reports of Purple Finch throughout the second half of the period, with a high of nearly 200 in Orange 28 Oct (G&RH).

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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. The Middle Peninsula includes King William, King and Queen, Essex, Middlesex, Gloucester, and Mathews Counties and is bordered by the Rappahannock and Pamunkey/York Rivers. The Mattaponi River is the boundary between King William and King and Queen and it joins with the Pamunkey River to form the York River in West Point.

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During the reporting period 200 species were recorded in 33 reports from about 20 birders. Perhaps the most interesting finds this season were Cattle Egret, American Bittern, four Peregrine Falcons, a Rough-legged Hawk, an abundance of American Coots, two Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Sedge Wren, Golden-winged Warbler, two Connecticut Warblers, Lark Sparrow, and a large flock of Rusty Blackbirds.

Note: Sightings in the Potomac River from Vir-Mar Beach, Muse Rd, Westmoreland State Park, and at Washington's Birthplace from the beach, (but not the Birthplace Pope's Creek/picnic area) are actually in Maryland waters.

Abbreviations: Beaverdam (Beaverdam Park, Gloucester); Bethel (Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve,}

VIRGINIA BIRDS

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Mathews); Caffee (Caffee Creek, Gloucester); Caledon (Caledon Natural Area State Park, King George); Dameron (Dameron Marsh NAP, Northumberland); Elsing Green (private farm near Lanesville, King William); GWB (George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland); Hughlett (Hughlett Point National Area Preserve, Northumberland); Hutchinson (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Essex); K. G. Ponds (Route 3 ponds in King George); Mothershead (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Westmoreland); New Point (New Point National Area Preserve, Mathews); The Pocket (a bend in the Pamunkey River near the Pamunkey Reservation, King William); Rapp. R. NWR. (Rappahannock R. Valley National Wildlife Refuge); Tayloe (tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond); Wilna (Wilna tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond); Wright (Wright tract of Rapp. R. NWR, Richmond); WSP (Westmoreland State Park, Westmoreland).

**WATERFOWL — GREBES**

The first report of Tundra Swans this fall was of 92 at GWB on 18 Nov (VK, NVBC). Over the next two weeks the species appeared in many places including 14 at K. G. Ponds 25 Nov (FA), 57 at Dameron 26 Nov (SS), 400 at Caledon 27 Nov (PK), and 200 in a farm field along route 17 Essex 30 Nov (VK, MN). Mute Swans were present only in small numbers at scattered locations: two pairs and two young were at GWB 24 Sep (FA); four in Mill Creek, Northumberland 20 Oct (JC); and two ads. with three imm. at Gwynn Island 3 Sep (BP). However, Beavertail had more than 20 on 19 Nov (DH). The biggest flocks of Canada Geese numbered in the 200-400 range in Sep but by Oct the numbers began to build with 1315 at K. G. Ponds 10 Oct and 610 at The Pocket 16 Oct (FA). In Nov there were 2175 at K. G. Ponds 6 Nov, with a Cackling Goose which was still present 25 Nov (FA); an estimated 2000 Canadas were at GWB 18 Nov (VK, NVBC); and 2850 were flying over The Pocket at dusk 13 Nov (FA). In August on her frequent paddles along Dragon Run, Kain regularly saw from 2-12 Wood Ducks. Twenty-six Wood Ducks were in one oxbow pond off the Mattaponi R. in Beulahville, King William, 13 Nov (FA). The highest number reported this season was 81 flying into the swampy woods near The Pocket at dusk 16 Oct (FA). Reports from nine other birding trips included 95 Wood Ducks in five locations. The first American Wigeons of the season were five pairs at K. G. Ponds 24 Sep, where the numbers peaked at 135 (about 30 percent males) feeding among the Hydrilla on 6 Nov (FA). At the Pocket, a high of 35 was observed on 13 Nov (FA). Only one Gadwall was seen at K. G. Ponds 24 Sep, but by the end of November they were more common with 33 pairs there 25 Nov and high count of about 125 birds at The Pocket 26 Nov (FA). The best place to see Green-winged Teal this fall was the marshes between Elsing Green and The Pocket where 275 were seen 26 Nov (FA). Only 23 green-winged were reported from other places this season: Leedstown (FA), K. G. Ponds (FA) and GWB (VK, NVBC). The first American Black Ducks of the season were 12 at Foners Cliffs on the Rappahannock R., Westmoreland, 3 Sep (SS). The high was 40 at Elsing Green 16 Oct (FA). The high counts for Mallard were 200 near The Pocket 13 Nov and 130 at K. G. Ponds 24 Sep (FA). Though they were common elsewhere, the first Mallards of the season didn’t show up until 6 Nov (TK). Thirteen other reports noted a total of 411 Mallards. Seven hundred fifty Northern Pintails were in the Elsing Green marshes near The Pocket 13 Nov; and 184 (20 percent males) were there on 26 Nov (FA). The first Pintail to be seen at Caffee in ten years was a single bird with a mixed flock of Gadwalls and Mallards 24 Nov (TK). Twenty Northern Shovelers were seen at Elsing Green 13 Nov, and 6 Blue-winged Teal were there 11 Sep (FA). Blue-winged Teal were also reported at Hughlett, one on 24 Aug (AB) and four females at K. G. Ponds 10 Oct (FA). Three Canvasbacks were reported at The Pocket 26 Nov (AB); two males and 22 females were at K. G. Ponds 25 Nov, where there were also two pairs of Redheads (FA). It was interesting to watch the population of Ring-necked Ducks at K. G. Ponds change over the season, with 18 females and seven males there 24 Sep, 1680 (50-60 percent males) 6 Nov, and 2315 (90 percent males) 25 Nov (FA). The high for Ring-necked Duck on the Middle Peninsula was in the millpond at Elsing Green where there were 410, (two-thirds males) 26 Nov (FA). Four Greater Scaup were noted at GWB 18 Nov (VK, NVBC). The high for Lesser Scaup was 40 (two-thirds males) at The Pocket 26 Nov (FA). Several Long-tailed Ducks were found at Vir-Mar Beach, Northumberland, 19 Nov and one was at GWB, 18 Nov (VK, NVBC). Scanning the calm waters of the Potoomac R. between GWB and WSP from Muse Rd. 6 Nov revealed 2 male Black Scoters. Several Black Scoters and Surf Scoters were at Vir-Mar Beach 19 Nov (VK, NVBC). The only Common Goldeneyes reported this season were 12 at GWB 18 Nov (VK, NVBC). The first Buffleheads were 12 reported at Fleet Island 6 Nov (JC), but the high was 175 birds (83 percent females) at the Pocket 26 Nov (FA). At Caffee, the first Hooded Merganser appeared 14 Nov; after 24 Nov, there were 6-8 every day (TK). The high for Hooded Merganser in the region was 13 of each sex at K. G. Ponds, 25 Nov (FA). No Red-breasted Mergansers were reported this season and a female Common Merganser at K. G. Ponds 25 Nov was the only report of that species.
The first **Ruddy Ducks** were five males and five females at K. G. Ponds, 10 Oct (FA) and the maxima were 495 (65 percent males) at K. G. Ponds 25 Nov, and 245 (75 percent males) at The Pocket 26 Nov, mostly among the *Hydrida* (FA). Other than the nine adult and 19 half-grown **Wild Turkeys** seen at Caffeine 18 Aug (TK), only three other turkeys were reported at two locations 14 Sep (FA). Only 17 **Northern Bobwhites** were reported from three locations, with a high of 15 at Mothershead (one covey) 24 Sep (FA). The only **Red-throated Loon** reported was in Maryland waters at Vir-Mar Beach, Northumberland (VK, NVBC) 19 Nov. The first report of **Common Loons** was 34 on Mill Creek 30 Oct (JIC), and the high count was 266 seen in the Rappahannock R. as BP went by boat between Urbanna and Windmill Point on 14 Nov. Surprisingly, the only **Horned Grebe** reported was one at K. G. Ponds on 25 Nov (FA). The first 3 **Pied-billed Grebes** of the season were seen at Beavermare 1 Oct (DHI), and the high count was 9 at K. G. Ponds on 6 & 25 Nov (FA).

**PELICANS — SHOREBIRDS**

Reports of **Brown Pelicans** were limited to the lowermost parts of both peninsulas with about 40 birds reported from Fleets Island, Vir-Mar Beach (Maryland waters), New Point, and Bethel between 26 Aug and 19 Nov (AB, JC, VK, NVBC). Several **Northern Gannets** were seen off Vir-Mar Beach in Maryland waters 19 Nov (VK, NVBC). **Double-crested Cormorants** were most common in the lower parts of peninsula with 200 at Hughlett 28 Aug and 100 at New Point 4 Sep (AB). Only 45-50 birds were noted in six reports in upper parts of the region along the rivers and ponds (DH, FA), with the exception of 107 on 6 Nov at GWB, where the high for Sep and Oct was 21 (FA).

**HERONS — SANDPIPERS**

The high count for **Great Egret** was 43 flying over The Pocket at dusk 11 Sep (FA). The Pocket was also the location of the high for **Great Blue Heron**; 26 were resting along the shore there on the afternoon of 16 Nov (FA). Other highs for Great Blue Heron were 14 at GWB 24 Sep (FA), and 11 at New Point 28 Aug (AB). The only reported **Tri-colored Heron** and **Snowy Egrets** (2) were at New Point 28 Aug (AB) and a **Cattle Egret** was at a buffalo farm near Caffeine on 22 Oct (TK). **Green Heron** observations were of one at New Point 4 Sep (AB), and one at Beavermare 1 Oct, the latter along with the only **American Bittern** to be reported (DHI). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was noted at dusk at Troy Creek, Leedstown, Westoverland 3 Sep (FA). The roost of **Black Vultures** visible from The Pocket had 210 birds 26 Nov; another 50 birds were in a mixed vulture roost with 60 **Turkey Vultures** along the Mattaponi R. near the Walkerton bridge in King William that same day (FA). On nine other birding trips, 211 Turkey Vultures were noted (AB, JC, FA). The latest report of **Ospreys** this season was two at Caffeine 18 Nov (TK), and the high was 15 at New Point 28 Aug (AB). On 10 Aug during a boat trip up the Rappahannock R. from Tappahannock to Leedstown, Williams found 44 **Bald Eagles** (22 ads.). **Northern Harriers** were reported from six sites, the first of the season being noted at Elsing Green 16 Oct (FA). **Single Sharp-shinned Hawks** were reported from Leedstown and GWB (FA). Single **Red-shouldered Hawks** were reported in six locations. A total of 16 **Red-tailed Hawks** were reported from 11 locations. Kasen saw a **Rough-legged Hawk** along route 17 near Saluda, **Middlesex** 16 Nov, the first she had ever seen in the region, and only the second report of which the the editor is aware. Twelve **American Kestrels** were found in seven locations and there was a **Merlin** at Mothershead 24 Sep (FA). Single Peregrine Falcons were seen at the Tappahannock bridge over the Rappahannock R. 10 Aug (BW) and at K. G. Ponds 24 Sep (FA), and two birds were at Cat Point Creek, Richmond 21 Oct (SS). Two **Clapper Rails** were at Bethel 28 Aug and three were at New Point 4 Sep (AB). A **King Rail** was calling in a tidal fresh-water marsh in Leedstown 6 Nov, (FA). Calling **Soras** were quite evident in Sep and Oct, with reports from the Mattaponi R. near Garnett's Creek, **King and Queen** (BD); five in Leedstown 24 Sep (FA); and four at Elsing Green 11 Sep, where six were also heard on 14 Oct (FA). Local hunters and paddlers say that the species exists in greater numbers than indicated by these observations. An autumn marsh survey might provide more accurate status information.

**American Coots** were particularly abundant this autumn, feeding among the masses of submerged *Hydrida* plants 25-26 Nov, with 375 found at K. G. Ponds (335 in the La Grange Road pond, where none were seen last year) and 930 in The Pocket, five times as many as were there that same weekend in 2004 (FA). A total of about 450 **Killdeer** were reported from sod farms, river shores, and farm fields in 22 locations, with a high of 136 in a field in Leedstown (FA). With the exception of Killdeer, not many shorebirds were found in the farm fields this fall; because of the lack of rain, there were no wet patches, and most of the farm ponds had dried up. A few shorebirds were among the broad shorelines of the Pamunkey R. and at K. G. Ponds, but almost all the shorebird reports this fall come from the lower extremities of these peninsulas. Between 28 Aug and 4 Sep many shorebirds were seen at Bethel (AB), New Point (AB) and Gwym's Island, **Mathews** (BP) including one **Black-bellied Plover**, 21 **Semipalmated Plovers**, 12 **Short-billed Dowitchers** (one ad. and 11 imm.), one **Lesser Yellowlegs**, one **Willet**, one **Ruddy Turnstone**, 64
Sanderlings, 6 Semipalmated Sandpipers (four imm.), 8 Least Sandpipers, and 5 Dunlin. One late Dowitcher sp. was still at The Pocket 13 Nov (FA). A probable Upland Sandpiper flew over in poor light, giving its distinctive three-note call at Hughlett 22 Aug (AB). Four Spotted Sandpipers were found between 22 Aug and 11 Sep: two in Beulahville, upper King William (FA), and one each at New Point and Hughlett (AB). Eight Lesser Yellowlegs were seen 22 Aug at Hughlett (AB), and seven were along the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers in King William on 26 Nov (FA) but no Greater Yellowlegs were reported. Three Least Sandpipers were also found at a sod farm in King William 28 Aug (AB) and one at K. G. Ponds 10 Oct with 2 Pectoral Sandpipers and a Dunlin (FA). Nine pectorals were also at K. G. Ponds 24 Sep (FA). This species was also present on a farm field near the Rappahannock R. in Leedstown: one on 24 Sep and three on 10 Oct (FA). One American Woodcock was heard at dusk in Leedstown 6 Nov (FA). Only 11 Wilson’s Snipe were reported between 10 Oct and 26 Nov, four from Elsing Green, and three from near The Pocket (FA).

GULLS — VIREOS

K. G. Ponds are less than a mile from a large landfill so many gulls come to these ponds after feeding to bathe and drink fresh water. The numbers of gulls reported there before November was always less than 200 birds at any one time. On 6 Nov, 250 Ring-billed Gulls and 1150 Laughing Gulls were noted and by 25 Nov, these numbers had increased to 3500 ring-billed and 5800 Laughing Gulls. Two Bonaparte’s Gulls were also noted there on both dates (FA). Eighteen Royal Terns were reported from New Point, Bethel, Hughlett, and Gwynn’s Island, Mathews (AB, BP) 28 Aug–4 Sep. The only Caspian Terns reported were two at New Point 4 Sep (AB). While traveling by boat along the Rappahannock R. between Tappahannock and Leedstown, 10 Aug, Williams counted 257 Forster’s Terns, and 75 were noted at the Rte. 301 bridge over the Potomac R. 28 Sep (BP). Two Common Terns were at Gwynn’s Island 3 Sep (BP). An immature Black Skimmer and 48 Least Terns were seen at Bethel, 28 Aug (AB). On 3 Sep, 24 Least Terns were also found at Gwynn’s Island (BP). Ten Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported in Sep in seven locations; the latest record this year was on 6 Oct in Beulahville, King William (FA). Great Horned Owls were hooting in Leedstown, Westmoreland, Sep–Nov (FA). Barred Owls were noted in Elsing Green (FA), Leedstown (FA), and GWB (AS, LF). Two Barn Owls were roosting in natural cavities in the cliffs of Fones Cliffs along the Rappahannock R., Westmoreland (BP). A Common Nighthawk was near West Point, King William, 4 Sep (BW). Whip-poor-wills were heard five times along Cat Point Creek, Richmond, in August (SS). Chimney Swifts are not very common in the Region; a high of 29 was in Leedstown 10 Oct (FA). August had three high counts of Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 16 at White Marsh, Gloucester 4 Aug (JW, HW); at least 12 at Caffe 16 Aug (TK); and 10 at New Point 28 Aug (AB). Seventeen Belted Kingfishers were reported from 13 locations. Redheaded Woodpeckers were found at Hughlett (AB), Wilna (SS), and Beulahville (FA). The only Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the region were five found at Beaverdam 19 Nov (DH). The last report of Eastern Wood-Pewee was five in Westmoreland 24 Sep (FA). Two Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were observed at GWB 4 Sep (AS, LF). A flock of 18 Eastern Kingbirds was found along the Mattaponi R. near Walkerton, King and Queen 28 Aug (FA). No Kingbirds were reported after 4 Sep when three were seen at New Point along with the last 2 Great Crested Flycatchers (AB). Horned Larks were observed at farm fields throughout the season with a high of about 75 birds in Leedstown 24 Sep (FA). Purple Martins tend to leave the area early, and there were only four reports this period with a high of about 145 near West Point, King William 3 Sep (BW). Tree Swallows peaked in mid-October with 800 at Occupoica Cr. Essex 15 Oct (BP); on 10 Oct there were 300 in Beulahville and over 4000 streamed through The Pocket before dusk (FA). For a few weeks large flocks of Bank Swallows gathered at Wilna, reaching a high of 450–500 on 13 Aug and departing on 19 Aug (SS). Barn Swallows were common through 16 Oct but Northern Rough-winged Swallows were not reported after 11 Sep (FA). Single Cliff Swallows were noted only at Wright 2 Sep (SS) and Lanesville, King William 11 Sep (FA). The only report of American Pipit was a flock of nine in a field in King William 26 Nov (FA). Golden-crowned Kinglets first appeared on Oct 13 in Beulahville; also the locale for the season high of 21, along with the high of 12 for Ruby-crowned Kinglets both on 23 Nov (FA). The latter were about half as common as the Golden-crowns and made their first appearance in the Region in Leedstown on 24 Sep (FA). The first sighting for Winter Wren was 24 Sep at GWB (FA). There were three sightings of single House Wrens between 24 Sep and 16 Oct (FA). A Sedge Wren was seen again this year at Hutchinson 10 Aug (SS). Gray Catbirds seemed to be in every thicket in late Sep; 40 of them were seen in upper Westmoreland 24 Sep (FA). Two Gray Catbirds were still at The Pocket 26 Nov (AB). Northern Mockingbirds seemed low this season with daily totals ranging from only 5–14. Fourteen Brown Thrashers were found at eight locations. Cedar Waxwings were reported only rarely this season, the high count being about 20 in a mixed flock.
of robins and blackbirds that were eating every berry in sight at Caffee 25–28 Nov (TK). The first Hermit Thrush of the season was in White Marsh, Gloucester 23 Oct (HW, JW), and the high was 19 in Beulahville 13 Nov (FA). A wave of Wood Thrush passed through Wright 23 Oct (SS). In mid-November flocks of American Robins starting appearing in the dogwood and holly trees throughout the region, with a high of 500–1000 feeding on berries and bathing in a stream at White Marsh Gloucester (JW, HW). A late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at The Pocket 26 Nov (FA). Pairs of Brown-headed Nuthatches were spotted at Hughlett 6 Nov (TS) and New Point, 28 Aug (AB). Surprisingly, only 10 White-breasted Nuthatches were reported from four sites. Six Brown Creepers were in Beulahville 13 Nov (FA). The high daily counts for American Crows were 131 in King George and Westmoreland 24 Sep and 60 in King William and King and Queen 11 Sep (FA). The high for Fish Crow was about 50 birds calling as they flew over Caffee 18 Nov (TK). Three late White-eyed Vireos were seen on 27 Nov at Balls Neck, Northumberland (TS). Other late observations this season were 11 Sep for Yellow-throated Vireos and 24 Sep for Red-eyed Vireos. A wave of Blue-headed Vireos passed through Wright 23 Oct (SS).

**WARBLERS — FINCHES**

A Blue-winged Warbler was at White Marsh, Gloucester 7 Aug (HW, JW), another was at Mothershead 24 Sep (FA) and a male Golden-winged Warbler was in Beulahville, King William 11 Sep (FA). The last Northern Parula report was 10 Oct at GWB (FA). A Yellow Warbler was at Wilna 7 Sep (SS), and two more were at Mill Creek, Northumberland 30 Oct (JC). The only Chestnut-sided Warbler reported was at Wilna 5 Sep (SS). Ten Magnolia Warblers were seen in four locations 4–24 Sep (SS, AB, FA). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Beaverdam 1 Oct (DH). The first Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen 10 Oct (FA). Four Black-throated Green Warblers were seen at GWB, Mothershead, and Leedstown on 24 Sep and 10 Oct (FA). A Blackburnian Warbler was at Wilna 2 Sep (SS). Single Yellow-throated Warblers were seen at GWB 3 Sep (AS, LF) and Beulahville 11 Sep (FA). There was a high count of 17 Pine Warblers at GWB 24 Sep (FA); none were reported after 10 Oct. Five Prairie Warblers were reported from New Point, Mothershead, and Beulahville 4-24 Sep (AB, FA). Nine Palm Warblers were found, mostly in the stubble of farm fields 3 Sep to 30 Oct (FA, JC). Two Bay-breasted Warblers were in Leedstown and Mothershead 24 Sep (FA). Nine Blackpoll Warblers were in five locations from 4 Sep–10 Oct (FA). Eleven Black-and-white Warblers were noted in six reports between 4 Aug and 24 Sep (JW, HW, AS, LF, FA). Thirty-three American Redstarts were noted in nine reports from 4 Sep–10 Oct (AB, DH, SS, FA) with a high of 11 at Peedee Creek in Leedstown, 24 Sep (FA). The last report of Prothonotary Warbler was 14 Sep at Caffee, (TK); the only other report was of three in the Mattaponi R. floodplain in Beulahville 11 Sep (FA). Ovenbirds were reported from New Point 4 Sep (AB) and Leedstown (3) 11 Sep (FA). There were single reports of Louisiana Waterthrush White Marsh 7 Aug (HW, JW), and Kentucky Warbler Zoo State Forest, King William along the Mattaponi R. 1 Aug (TK). Single Connecticut Warblers were seen at GWB 4 Sep (LF, AS) and Leedstown 2 Oct (FA). On 24 Sep 66 Common Yellowthroats were counted in King George and upper Westmoreland; 41 were seen on one farm in Leedstown, but only five were seen at this same farm on 10 Oct (FA). Hooded Warblers, very common in breeding season, rapidly dispersed from the area with only seven reported, one at White Marsh 4 Aug (HW, JW), four at Wilna 2 Sep (SS), and one near Leedstown 3 Sep (FA). The only Scarlet Tanager reported was 4 Sep at Wilna (SS). The high for Chipping Sparrow was 60 at GWB and Leedstown 10 Oct, and the high for Field Sparrows was 55 on 10 Oct in King George and Westmoreland (FA). Forty-five Swannah Sparrows were seen at K. G. Ponds 10 Oct (FA). Song Sparrows were scarce throughout Oct, but 35 were seen 6 Nov in Westmoreland (FA). A Lark Sparrow was found along the entrance road to GWB 24 Sep (FA). Four Grasshopper Sparrows were noted at Wilna, Hutchinson, and K. G. Ponds 30 Aug–24 Sep (SS, FA). Four

**TANAGERS IN GLoucester COUNTY**

Teta Kain provided the following perspective about tanagers during her last 20 years at Caffee Creek, Gloucester:

When we moved here 20 years ago, the Summer Tanagers nested right over the deck, but we didn’t see any Scarlet Tanagers for the first three years. Gradually the scarlets began to appear and the summers began to disappear. Around 1999, scarlets abounded, with only scattered sightings of summers, and their numbers dwindled to an occasional sighting. Last summer, I don’t recall seeing any summers, and scarlets were not plentiful. This year I have not seen or heard a single scarlet and the Summer Tanager seen on 18 Aug is about the only observation all summer. Then on 7 Sep a female Summer was here, obviously migrating through. On 12 Sep both a male and female Summer were in the yard. Unfortunately the male hit our window, but it recovered and flew off, a bit worse for the wear (This is also the late date for Summer Tanager in the region this year).
**SOUTHWEST**

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The southwestern section of the state was dry for the first part of the reporting period with an average rainfall of 3.4 inches and an average temperature of 61.2°F. The dry conditions at the start of fall migration made it possible to find many migrating passerines near water sources. Among the most exciting migrants were the Region’s first Mississippi Kite and a Wilson’s Warbler, which furnished a first record for Buchanan. Other interesting observations during the period included three Black Terns and a Caspian Tern in Washington, a Snowy Egret in Russell, a Western Kingbird in Wise, and a Sora near Galax. The Mendota Hawk Watch group on Clinch Mt. near Lebanon tallied a site record of 6303 Broad-winged Hawks for the season. Also interesting were a Glossy Ibis and a Ruddy Duck on Rural Retreat Lake, two female Rufous Hummingbirds coming to feeders in Grayson during October and November and Bald Eagles observed in both Wythe and Carroll. A new late date was established for the Chestnut-sided Warbler in Buchanan. Brewer’s Blackbirds were sighted in both Grayson and Washington in mid-November.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE — DICKENSON COUNTY**

The first MISSISSIPPI KITE in Southwest Virginia was observed 30 Sep on a ridge road near John Flanagan Res. Dickenson, north of the town of Haysi (†R&LM). The bird was perched on a power line near the roadway and after a few moments left the wire and flew in the general direction of the reservoir.

**RAP TORS — T E R N S**

An adult Bald Eagle was found on Rte. 749 near RRL, Wythe 28 Oct, where eagles have been seen for the last three years; the next day the same observer found another Bald Eagle at Buck Dam in Carroll (GE). The Mendota Hawk Watch group on Clinch Mt. near the Russell-Washington line logged a site-record 6303 Broad-winged Hawks for the fall reporting period August – November 2005
season (RH, BQ, et al.). Other species totals from the Mendota site were: 6 Bald Eagles, 2 Northern Harriers, 21 Osprey, 16 Sharp-shinned Hawks, one Red-shouldered Hawk, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers, and 2 Double-crested Cormorants. Buchanan County Bird Club (BCBC) members and others tried a new hawk watching site 18 Sep on Clinch Mt. at “The Channels” on the Russell – Washington line. Totals for the day were 87 Broad-winged Hawks, 3 Cooper’s Hawks, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, one Red-tailed Hawk, and one Red-shouldered Hawk (AF, CK, RKr, R&LM, E&M). Members of the BCBC also watched for hawks in Birch Knob on Pine Mt. in Dickenson on the Virginia–Kentucky border 19 & 24 Sep. Species recorded were 809 Broad-winged Hawks, one Cooper’s Hawk, and 3 Peregrine Falcons (TD, R&LM, MM, DR, E&M). Hawks were counted on the Virginia–West Virginia line near Bluefield 19 Sep & 10 Oct. Birds observed were 2 Osprey, 3 Sharp-shinned Hawks, one Cooper’s Hawk, 121 Broad-winged Hawks, and 4 Common Ravens (J&HP, J&JP). A dark morph Red-tailed Hawk was seen circling over Grundy, Buchanan 22 Aug (E&M). On 9 Oct a Peregrine Falcon was observed in the Breaks (DR) and another was seen 13 Oct in Floyd (JG). American Coots are rarely found on Laurel L. at Breaks Interstate Park on the Virginia–Kentucky border, but five were present 7 Dec (R&LM). Two days later eight were there (DR). A Sora, an unusual species for Southwest Virginia, was found 9 Sep just w. of Galax, Grayson (GE). A Semipalmated Plover was found in the company of a Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper and a Killdeer at Stuart’s Pond, Russell 27 Aug (E&M). A Caspian Tern was present at Musick’s along with 3 Black Terns 18 Aug (WC, DD, DH), the latter a first sighting in the area this fall.

OWLs — BLackBirds

There were two Buchanan reports of Great Horned Owls, a species seldom heard or seen within the county; one in the Breaks 7 Sep (DR), and one on the Elkins Branch of Slate Cr. 11 Nov (EC). Common Nighthawk migration got underway right on schedule with eight observed near Galax 20 Aug, 96 there 21 Aug, and 510 noted 22 Aug (BD & GS). Forty-five Common Nighthawks were observed feeding over a field on Compton Mt., Buchanan 30 Aug and five on 2 Sep (RM). Two Rufous Hummingbirds appeared at feeders in Grayson 4 Oct, one in Galax (GE) and one in Independence (SJR), with the Galax bird remaining through 30 Nov and the Independence bird there through the end of the reporting period. Species identity was determined when both birds were trapped and banded by Bob and Martha Sargent. A Western Kingbird was found in shrubbery on the campus of the University of Virginia’s College at Wise 17 Sep (BG, GGB). The only other Wise record of this species was 22 Aug 1969 (RHP). Loggerhead Shrikes were observed along Green Valley Rd in Elk Garden, Russell 10 Oct (RKr). These birds have become regulars in this small area. A Marsh Wren was seen in a field w. of Galax 11 Sep (B&MD). A Sedge Wren was observed in a marshy area at the same location 19 Oct (B&MD). Fall warbler migration was first noted in Buchanan with a Tennessee Warbler arriving on 22 Aug (RM). A late date was established there for Chestnut-sided Warbler, when one was found in the Breaks 22 Oct (DR). The Wilson’s Warbler observed and photographed on Compton Mt. 7 Sep (RM) provided a first record for Buchanan. Data for Compton Mt. migration was gathered again this year from 22 Aug–Oct 30. Thirty warbler species passed through with a total of 616 individuals being logged. Tennessee Warblers were the most numerous as their numbers bounced back from a drop last year. Only one Cerulean Warbler and one Golden-winged Warbler were logged during the period (RM). Bobolinks were sighted twice in the same general area of Baywood near Galax 9 Sep with 18 birds (GE), and 11 Sep with 14 birds (B&MD). A Rusty Blackbird was sighted at RRL, Wythe 30 Nov (GE). We should take note of this declining species. A pair of Brewer’s Blackbirds made an appearance in Abingdon, Washington 19 Nov (EM). A Brewer’s Blackbird showed up in a yard in Galax 21 Nov (GE). A partial albino American Goldfinch was among other finches at a feeder on Compton Mt. 17 Nov (R&LM).

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DUCKS — HAWKS

Very few waterfowl were reported this season. The maximum count for Wood Ducks was 40 at Staunton River Battlefield SP (not the same as SRSP) on 13 Nov (JB). At the same location and date there were 4 Gadwall and 10 Ring-necked Ducks.

A lone female Bufflehead was above Kerr dam on 27 Nov, as were two pairs of Ruddy Ducks (AD). One Ruffed Grouse was reported at Syon on 25 Aug (JS). That location is in the Blue Ridge, where the species can still be found though it is absent in most of the region. On 27 Nov a Red-throated Loon was located at Kerr, accompanied by 12+ Common Loons off of Palmer Pt. (AD et al.). This makes at least three consecutive years that a red-throated has been seen on this portion of the lake. Horned Grebes were reported only from Kerr, where a few were noted on 27 Nov (AD). Blalock found an American White Pelican on 18 Sep at SRSP. The bird was seen from the point at the eastern end of the park at the junction of the Dan and Staunton Rivers — actually the upper end of Kerr. The bird was reported as being in Halifax, but it is worth noting that the borders of Charlotte, Mecklenburg, and Halifax join just offshore from this point. An individual of this species was also seen in Halifax in May 2004. The maximum count of Great Egrets this fall was 50 at SRSP 25 Sep (JB). Bald Eagles were reported on several occasions from Kerr (m.ob.), including birds seen repeatedly below the dam and around the upper lake at SRSP, but not from any other location. A fairly early migrant Cooper’s Hawk was noted at Syon on 14 August (JS). The only sizeable Broad-winged Hawk movement reported was also at Syon, where 341 were seen going over in about a 20-minute span during the early afternoon of 23 Sep (JS).

PLOVERS — WOODPECKERS

While the following shorebird reports would not be particularly notable in some parts of the state, for this region they might fairly be termed a bonanza due to the local scarcity of appropriate habitat for these species. Two Black-bellied Plovers were at SRSP, 4 Sep (JB) and 4 Semipalmated Plovers were there on 28 Aug (JB). One Semipalmated Plover was at Kerr on the same date (AD), and the total at SRSP had increased to eight by 4 Sep (JB). Much more unusual, a Piping Plover was reported at SRSP on 4 Sept (p.a., JB). Other interested shorebirds reported there were 4 Short-billed Dowitchers on 4 Sep (JB), 2 Greater Yellowlegs 4 Sep and four on 18 Sep (both JB). Lesser Yellowlegs were seen at Kerr with two there on 28 Aug (AD), and at SRSP two on 4 Sep and 15 on 18 Sep (both JB). One Solitary Sandpiper was at Kerr, 28 Aug (AD), and two were at SRSP 4 Sep (JB). One Spotted Sandpiper at SRSP 28 Aug (JB) was the only report of this species, though it is fairly common in migration especially compared to other shorebird being observed in the area. Sandpipers were reported several times from SRSP: 14 on 28 Aug, 15 on 4 Sep, 18 on 18 Sep, and five on 25 Sep (all JB). Three Semipalmated Sandpipers and 4 Least Sandpipers were reported at Kerr 28 Aug (AD) and a single least was at SRSP 4 Sep (JB). Pectoral Sandpipers were reported repeatedly at SRSP: four were there on 28 Aug, 10 on 4 Sep; 15 on 18 Sep; and a flock of 70 was seen on 25 Sep (all JB). One was also seen at Kerr on 28 Aug (AD). The report of a juv. Stilt Sandpiper feeding on rocks below the dam at Kerr 28 Aug was accepted by VARCOM as was the report of a juv. Buff-breasted Sandpiper at the Farrar Sod Farm on Baskerville Rd., Mecklenburg also 28 Aug, which rounded out the fine assortment of shorebirds for the period (both ph. AD). Four Bonaparte’s Gulls were at SRSP on 13 Nov (JB), and Bonaparte’s were present in good

South Central


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Many of the region’s significant sightings during the fall were of shorebirds, a group that is generally scarce in this area with the exception of a few common species. Most notable were single reports of Piping Plover and Stilt and Buff-breasted sandpipers. Kerr Reservoir continues to shine as the region’s outstanding attraction for uncommon birds, with unusual shorebirds from below the dam, uncommon waterbirds on the lower reservoir, and an American White Pelican near the lake’s upper end during this report period.

Abbreviations: Kerr (John H. Kerr Reservoir, Mecklenburg; below the dam unless otherwise stated); SRSP (Staunton River State Park, Halifax); Syon (Syon Abbey, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, Franklin).
numbers at Kerr by 27 Nov (AD). Four Caspian Terns were at SRSP on 28 Aug and three were there on 18 Sep (both JB). Common Terns were reported only from SRSP, with two there 28 Aug and a single on 4 Sep (both JB). The most notable movement of Common Nighthawks was reported from Syon, with 100 or more passing there in a short time on the evening of 25 Aug (JS). Red-headed Woodpeckers, probably migrants, included one in a South Boston yard on 25 Sep (JB) and two juveniles in a yard in Burnt Chimney, Franklin 30 Sep (AQ).

PASSERINES

A calling Fish Crow was reported at SRSP 4 Sep (JB). Migrant warbler reports were few and mostly in line with expected dates. The most interesting included a single Black-throat-
Black-crowned Night-Heron, seen at Dutch Gap 29 Aug, was a first for the observer at that location (JC). A single adult White Ibis was at Green Springs 21 Aug (BW). This is only the second record of that species for the county. Four Blue-winged Teal were seen at Hog 2 Sep (AD). Three Green-winged Teal were somewhat early at Dutch Gap 7 Sep (AD). A lone male Redhead was spotted at Shirley 9 Nov (RAS). An Osprey was at Henricus 4 Oct (TTu). An adult male Northern Harrier was seen at Shirley 9 Nov (RAS), while a female was a flyover at Harrison Lake, Charles City 15 Oct (RAS). Bald Eagles (both ad. and imm.) were reported widely throughout the region. On 21 Sep a Bald Eagle banded 20 years earlier at Curles Neck Farm, Henrico was recovered near the Flowerdew Hundred Plantation, Prince George (BWa), only 20 miles away. Single Soras were observed at Hog 2 Sep (AD), 6 Sep (BW, MB), and 18 Sep (EE). Two American Golden-Plovers were detected in the grassy fields at the north end of Hog 2 Sep (AD). Semipalmated Plovers were noted at Shirley 6 Nov (B&B). Both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were seen in good numbers at Hog 2 Sep (AD). Both yellowlegs were also seen at Dutch Gap 7 Sep (AD). One Solitary Sandpiper was noted at Hog 2 Sep (AD), while two were seen at Dutch Gap 7 Sep (AD). A single Buff-breasted Sandpiper was briefly observed coming out of the tall grass at Hog 2 Sep (AD). Dunlin were present at Shirley 6 Nov (B&B). Pectoral Sandpipers were seen at Hog 2 Sep (AD) and four were at Shirley 6 Nov (B&B). Two White-rumped Sandpipers were noted at Hog 18 Sep (EE) and a few Western Sandpipers were there 2 Sep (AD). Stilt Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitchers were both present at Hog 2 Sep (AD).

GULLS — WRENS
One Bonaparte’s Gull was seen from the main section of JRP 25 Nov (AB). Approximately 500 Laughing Gulls were counted from Browns Island, Richmond 26 Nov (AB). One Lesser Black-backed Gull and about 100 Great Black-backed Gulls were also counted there 26 Nov (AB). On 6 Sep 517 Caspian Terns were counted at Hog (BW, MB) and three were also seen at Henricus 26 Sep (WE). Royal Terns were at Hog 2 Sep (AD). Forster’s Terns were seen at Hog 18 Aug (AD, JO) & 2 Sep (AD), also noted along the York R., York 27 Nov (MB) and on the Chickahominy R., Charles City 5 Nov (EE). Least Terns were seen at Hog 18 Aug (AD, JO). A Barn Owl being mobbed by 2 American Crows and 2 Red-shouldered Hawks in James City 16 Oct was interesting (BW). Common Nighthawks were reported from James City 25 Sep (BW) and also from Richmond 27 Sep (AB). A Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird frequented a feeder for a few days in late Nov in Williamsburg (BW, ph. FT). Two Red-headed Woodpeckers frequented a residence on Saltwood Ct., Henrico during Aug (TT). Red-headed Woodpeckers were also seen at Hog 2 Sep (AD) and 18 Sep (EE), at York River SP 10 Sep (HRBC) and at Forest Hill Park, Richmond 6 Aug (AB). Two Traill’s Flycatchers were reported from Pocahontas SP 11 Sep (WE). Single Traill’s were found at Green Springs 11 Sep (BW) and at Bandy 22 Sep (AB). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was also seen at Green Springs 11 Sep (BW). A large flock of Horned Larks was found at Shirley 6 Nov (B&B). On 11 Aug 500 Bank Swallows were counted at Shirley (AB). Three Brown-headed Nuthatches were seen at Bandy 17 Oct (AB). A Sedge Wren was at Green Springs 9 Oct (BW). This sighting represented only the third time Sedge Wren has been seen on the trail. Another Sedge Wren at Bandy was a nice surprise 17 Oct (AB).

THRUSHES — FINCHES
Two Swainson’s Thrushes were encountered at Bandy 22 Sep (AB). Thirteen Veerys were predawn flyovers James City 11 Sep (BW). A Gray-cheeked Thrush was discovered in a residential yard, Chesterfield 24 Sep (WE). Hundreds of American Pipits were located in corn fields at Shirley 6 Nov (B&B). A Tennessee Warbler was at Bandy 28 Sep (AB). A Nashville Warbler was also seen there the same day and another, or the same one, was there 30 Sep (AB). A Nashville was also noted at Green Springs 25 Sep (BW). A highlight for JRP this fall was the sighting of a Golden-winged Warbler found at the 42nd street location 10 Sep (GW, WS). A first winter female Cape May Warbler was seen in a residential area, Chesterfield 9 Oct (WE). A Bay-breasted Warbler was in a residential yard, Chesterfield 5 Sep (C&JC) and another was seen at Green Springs 25 Sep (BW). A Northern Waterthrush was at Dutch Gap 7 Sep (AD). A late Yellow-breasted Chat was discovered at Bandy 23 Nov (AB). The latest Scarlet Tanager observation came on 3 Oct at New Quarter Park, York (BW). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported frequently with the latest being 9 Oct at JRP (AB). A Vesper Sparrow was noted at Green Springs 13 Nov (BW). Not far from the location of the vesper sighting, an
adult **LEONTE'S SPARROW** was discovered 27 Nov (BW). If accepted, this will represent the third record of LeConte's Sparrow for James City. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was seen at JRP 12 Nov (AB). An adult male **Baltimore Oriole** was found at the Jamestown Campground, James City 27 Nov (MB) where a few **Purple Finches** were also present (MB).

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## 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

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Coastal Virginia was spared direct effects of the most prolific tropical cyclone season on record. August and September were mild and dry. Hurricane Ophelia, 14–15 September, was forced offshore by the passage of a cold front on 13 September. October temperature and rainfall amounts were both above average, with Tropical Storm Tammy and Hurricane Wilma delivering heavy rains 7–8 and 24–25 October, respectively. November was cool and dry. Many of the season's reports are from observations from the Eastern Shore peninsula where migration data from the Kiptopeke State Park banding and hawk watch stations and the habitat patch point count project of the Center for Conservation Biology tell the most comprehensive stories. The 2005 songbird migration got off to a fast start with unusually large movements through August followed by strong frontal movements on the nights of September 1, 10, and 18. Particularly large flights during the last two weeks of October resulted in 5981 birds banded between 13 and 31 October. For the season, a total of 9567 song birds, 105 species, were banded with an average capture rate of 83.7 birds per 100 net hours, up from the 55.7 birds per 100 net hours in 2004. The Kiptopeke hawk watch operated 838 hours over 88 of 91 possible days (1 Sep–30 Nov) with a total count of 28,100 raptors and vultures of 16 species. In typical fashion the season manifested its share of interesting avian sightings including Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Pacific Loon, Eared Grebe, Magnificent Frigatebird, Swainson's Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Ruff, the state's second Allen's Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, the state's first MacGillivray's Warbler, Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow, "Oregon" Junco, and Brewer's and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

**Abbreviations:** Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); CCB (Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, s. of Northampton); Craney (Craney Island, Portsmouth); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Northampton); False Cape (False Cape State Park, Virginia Beach); FINWR (Fisherman's Island NWR, Northampton); Kiptopeke (Kiptopeke State Park, Northampton); Oyster (town of Oyster, Northampton); POP (Peach Orchard Point, Smith Island, Accomack); Saxis (Saxis WMA, Accomack); South Point Marsh (South Point Marsh, Smith Island, Accomack).

**WATERFOWL — CRANES**

The **Tundra Swan** first reported in the summer period was noted at Back Bay 8 Aug (DS). The first reported migrants of this species were 30 at Kiptopeke 7 Nov (SSt). A peak count of 35 **Mute Swans** at POP was recorded 5 Aug (HA, DB, JW, NW); eight (two ads., two subs., five juvens.) were observed at Cape Charles 27 Nov (NB). Somewhat early were 4 **Snow Geese** at Chinc. 23 Sep (JG). The season's first **Ross's Goose** was at Chinc. 12 Nov (TD, MD, SH). A week later, 19 Nov, 5–6 were photographed there (Btk, JZ). A single bird remained in Swan Cove through 30 Nov (SE, RH). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was discovered on the Bull property, Northampton 12 Nov (KG), and subsequently seen there 26 Nov (FD, SH). Eight **Redheads** were seen off Sunset Beach, Northampton 12 Nov (HA). An early **Black Scoter** was off the tip of Wise Point, Northampton 22 Aug (BC, JP). A **PACIFIC LOON** was studied carefully among Red-throated and Common Loons at Back Bay 4 Dec (BA). The Back Bay **Pied-billed Grebe** count peaked at 12 on 17 Aug (DS). An **Eared Grebe** first reported at Craney 11 Sep (DH, MI, VG, JF, EE) was joined by a second bird 4 Nov (TD, IT). Single **American White Pelicans** were noted 30 Oct near Lake Placid, Virginia Beach (KB) and 12 Nov on FINWR (JK). At South Point Marsh 1331 **Brown Pelicans** were banded 20 Aug (HA, DB, JW). Likely displaced by inland tracking hurricanes, single **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRDS** were observed at Kiptopeke 9 (ph) and 16 Nov (SS, ZS). Sunset Beach, Northampton
observations produced 3 Great Cormorants 12 Nov (HA). The Whitehurst Tract, Virginia Beach had 4 American Bitterns 26 Nov (SS), and one Least Bittern, identified by flight call, passed Cape Charles the night of 28 Sep (NB). A high count of 65 Tricolored Herons was registered at Chinc. 28 Aug (JK). Once a common fall species on the Eastern Shore a lone Cattle Egret observed at Kiptopeke 12 Nov was noteworthy (SS; jude KG, HA). Somewhat tardy were 2 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at FINWR 12 Nov (JK, LM). Suffolk’s third White Ibis record was 2 juv.s along the Nansemond River 8-27 Sep (LW). The peak count for this species was 82 on FINWR 12 Nov (JK, LM). The season’s Kiptopeke Hawk Watch totals included 734 Northern Harriers, 6,645 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 2,301 Cooper’s Hawks, 5 Northern Goshawks, 157 Red-shouldered Hawks (second highest), 963 Broad-winged Hawks, 2 Swainson’s Hawks (one each on 18 Sep and 19 Oct), 940 Red-tailed Hawks, 10 Golden Eagles, 5,455 American Kestrels, 1,521 Merlins, 726 Peregrine Falcons (SS, BN). A 3 Sep Golden Eagle was unprecedented. The American Kestrel count exceeded 2004 (2643) by 106% ending a 4 year decline. A chorus of 26 Clapper Rails heard on ESVNWR 13 Nov (HA, BA, TT). An unexpected King Rail created some excitement at Kiptopeke 10 Oct (SS). A Sora was observed at Craney 27 August (TA, RB, MB, BW), with two more at ESVNWR 12 Nov (JK, LM). Common Moorhen sightings included 2 juv. at Bredimus Farm, Northampton 9 October (JK, BL, SH) and two at Kiptopeke 26 Nov (SS). Two Sandhill Cranes flew over Kiptopeke 2 Nov (RK, SS), and four (two imm.s) were seen and heard there 25 Nov (SS).

SHOREBIRDS
American Golden Plovers were noted throughout the region beginning with one at Craney 11 Sep (DH, MI, VG, JF), one 16-17 and 23 Sep at Chinc. (JG, JK), two at Back Bay 21 Sep (AD), and seven at Craney 30 Sep (BW, MB). A banded Piping Plover was on FINWR 13 Oct-3 Nov (BA). A single bird was at False Cape 19 Oct (DS, BA, BSc). A high count of 15 Black-necked Stilts was recorded at Craney 12 Aug (AD). Two were at Chinc. 20 Aug (M and MKR). Only four could be found at Craney 27 Aug (TA, MB, RB, BW). The number of American Avocets peaked at 25 at Craney 30 Sep (BW, MB). Two were seen at Chinc. 20 Aug (M and MKR), and five were at Craney 1 Nov (AD). A 20 Aug shorebird survey at Oyster produced 51 Whimbrels, 49 Marbled Godwits, 248 American Oystercatchers, 151 Willets, and 11 Spotted Sandpipers (KG, RB). Two Upland Sandpiper reports included two off Arlington Road, Northampton 20 Aug (FS), and five near ESVNWR 31 Aug (JR). A single Whimbrel was noted at Chinc. 20 Aug (M and MKR). Long-billed Curlew observations included one at FINWR 26 October (BA), and one at Chimney Pole Marsh, Northampton (for the third fall) into Nov (Jide TD, AWI). There were reports of single Hudsonian Godwits at Chinc. 26 Aug (JK), and 8 Sep (PK), two there 14 & 17 Sep (JK, AS, LF), and one 23 Sep (JG). The Marbled Godwit tally exceeded 100 at Willis Wharf 12 Nov (TD, MD, SH). Up to 39 Red Knots were found at Back Bay as late as 4 Nov (DS, BA). A peak Sanderling count of 1534 was noted at Back Bay 16 Aug (DS). White-rumped Sandpiper observations included two at Back Bay 21 Sep (AD) and three at FINWR 13 Oct (BA). Separate Baird’s Sandpiper reports included a juv. at Craney 12 Aug (AD), and two at Chinc. 16-17 Sep (KG, MR, RR, JK). A count of 50+ Pectoral Sandpipers was made at Chinc. 7 Sep (PK). Buff-breasted Sandpiper reports included one at Craney 27 Aug (BW, MB), 5 off Pond Drain Road, Northampton 31 Aug (JR), one at Back Bay 21 Sep (AD), and a very late flyover at Kiptopeke 29 Oct (SS). A single Ruff was in Snow Goose Pool at Chinc. 27 Aug (JK). Back Bay had the season’s highest Long-billed Dowitcher count of 21 on 8 Sep (DS). Another three were at Chinc. 23 Sep (JG). The first American Woodcock noted at Kiptopeke was 28 Oct (JR). There were 2 Wilson’s Phalaropes at Craney 12 Aug (AD), 10 on 27 Aug, (TA, MB, RB, BW), and two there 1 Nov (AD). Craney also had 2 Red-necked Phalaropes 27 Aug (TA, MB, BW), and a Red Phalarope 30 Oct (DH).
GULLS — HUMMINGBIRDS
A FRANKLIN'S GULL was photographed in Suffolk 29 Sep (LW). Clearly the best Lesser Black-backed Gull concentrations continue to be at Back Bay with counts as follows: 30 on 16-17 Aug; 60 on 26 Aug; 25 on 8 Sep; 47 on 19 Oct; and 44 on 26 Oct (DS). A late Royal Tern was at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach 27 Nov (RBr). Craney had 4 Black Terns 21 Aug (MA, DH, MI, JF). The CBBT had one 15 Sep (BS, BZ). There were 50 Black Skimmers at Chinc. 12 Nov (TD, MD, SH). By 19 Nov only one was observed there (Btk, JZ). A WHITE-WINGED DOVE in Cape Charles created excitement with irregular sightings 6-28 Nov (NB, JR, TS). The 27 Eurasian Collared Doves at Sandbridge, Virginia Beach 27 Nov certainly established a state high count (DC). There were five at Townsend, Northampton 6 Nov (AS, LF). Single Black-billed Cuckoos were noted at Sandhill Road, Northampton 10 Sep (AD, MB) and at ESVNWR 5 Nov (BA, DC). Common Nighthawks reported included 12 at Kiptopeke 2 Sep (HA) and five at ESVNWR 4 Sep (HA, BAn, TT). Late Chimney Swifts, likely displaced northward within inland passing hurricane systems included two at Kiptopeke 11 Nov (SSi). Chuckwills-widows banded at Kiptopeke included a single bird 17 Aug, the third since 1994, and two more 24 Aug (JR). Hummingbird observations on 8 Nov included: one Rufous/Allen's and 2 Ruby-throated in Cape Charles (NB), one Rufous/Allen's and one Ruby-throated at Kiptopeke (SSi), and one Ruby-throated and one unidentified near Kiptopeke (fide NB). The aforementioned Rufous/Allen's, first noted in Cape Charles 26 Oct, was confirmed as the state's second ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD. It remained through the report period (NB, mobs). The CCB Saw-whet Owl project produced 75 new owls (73 unbandeds and 2 foreign birds), during 47 nights of operation, the third lowest count in twelve consecutive years. That project garnered observations of one Eastern Screech Owl, 2 calling Long-eared Owls, 2 Great Horned Owls, 3 captured Saw-whet Owls, and one Barn Owl the night of 11-12 Nov (AW). A Long-eared Owl was noted at Kiptopeke 8 Nov (SSi).

WOODECKERS — TANAGERS
A flight of over 40 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was noted at Cape Charles 17 Oct (NB). The only reported Olive-sided Flycatcher was in Cape Charles 18 Sep (NB). An ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (ph) made a stellar showing at Kiptopeke 19-26 Nov (SSi, JR, MP, mobs). Western Kingbird reports included two at Back Bay 21 Sep (AD); and single birds at Kiptopeke 16 Oct (SSi, BA); Route 600 near Plantation Road, Northampton 5 Nov (JN); and ESVNWR 19 Nov (JR). A modest passage of 126 Eastern Kingbirds was recorded at Sunset Beach, Northampton 2 Sep (HA). Kiptopeke produced four Yellow-bellied Flycatcher captures 3 Sep (JR). A Blue Headed Vireo was banded at Kiptopeke 6 Nov (JR). Rarely reported from the immediate coast, a Warbling Vireo was at Kiptopeke 2 Sep (SSi, HA). A Philadelphia Vireo was seen at Chinc. 19 Sep (AD). The season's peak Tree Swallow estimate was 18,000 at FINWR 26 Oct (BA). Somewhat late Northern Rough-winged Swallows included several in lower Northampton 5 Nov (TD); one at Kiptopeke 10 Nov (SSi); and one at Sunset Beach, Northampton 12 Nov (HA). Two Bank Swallows passed over Kiptopeke 9 Nov (SSi). A single Cliff Swallow was at FINWR 27 Sep (BA) CAVE SWALLOW reports included two at Kiptopeke 10 Nov (BT); one at Kiptopeke 13 Nov (SSi, HA), and the first for the Island 4 CBBT 25 Nov (BTk, JZ). Late Barn Swallows were one at Kiptopeke 13 Nov (SSi, HA), and one on Island 4 CBBT 25 Nov (BTk, JZ). There was a modest penetration of Red-breasted Nuthatches into the region this season. Up to four were observed at Kiptopeke 4 Sep (HA). The first Brown Creeper at Kiptopeke was 27 Sep (JR). A stunning 90 Winter Wrens were observed on a CCB Savage Neck, Northampton point count 21 Oct (BZ). A bit tardy was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at the GATR Tract, Northampton 12 Nov (TD, MD, SH). The arrival of Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Kiptopeke was noted 27 Sep (JR). A lingering Veery was banded at Kiptopeke 15 Oct (JR). The night of 12 Oct brought the following flight-call thrush counts from Cape Charles: 300+ Gray-cheeked Thrush and 230+ Swainson's Thrush (NB). At Kiptopeke 3 Bicknell's Thrushes were banded; one 27 Sep; and two 18 Oct KSP (JR). A CCB Savage Neck, Northampton point count yielded a whopping 90 Hermit Thrushes 21 October (BZ). A high of 8 Wood Thrushes were banded at Kiptopeke 18 October (JR). An American Robin flight approaching 10,000 birds was logged at Kiptopeke 14 Nov (HA). Summer 2005 was certainly productive for Gray Catbirds. A record 1289 were processed at Kiptopeke with a one-day high of 127 banded 23 Oct. The best Cedar Waxwing count was 60 at Sunset Beach, Northampton 2 Sep (HA). A hatch-year male Golden-winged Warbler was banded at Kiptopeke 4 Sep (JR). Orange-crowned Warbler reports included separate birds in Norfolk 21 Nov (BA) and 27 Nov (DC). A Western Palm Warbler at Kiptopeke 4 Sep was considered early (JR). A tardy Blackpoll Warbler was banded at Kiptopeke 9 Nov (JR). An early migrant, the first Cerulean Warbler since 1997 and the second since 1994, was banded at Kiptopeke 17 Aug (JR). Two Black-and-white Warblers were frequenting a yard in Norfolk 13 Nov (BA). Of great surprise was a markedly late Prothonotary Warbler captured at
Kiptopeke 9 October (JR). Unusual too were single Louisiana Waterrushes at Kiptopeke 15 and 17 Aug (JR). However, no one was prepared for the state’s first MacGILLIVRAY’S WARBLER banded and photographed at Kiptopeke 8 (JR). A Connecticut Warbler was seen at Sunset Beach, Northampton 16 Sep (BS) and a Mourning Warbler was banded at Kiptopeke 24 Aug (JR). Wilson’s Warbler sightings included one at Cape Charles 19 Sep (AD, MI), and one in Norfolk 27 Nov (DC).

SPARROWS — FINCHES

The last reported Blue Grosbeak of the season was at Kiptopeke 30 Oct (SS). A Dickcissel was noted at Kiptopeke 19 Oct (SS). Up to 10 Eastern Towhees frequented a Cape Charles yard 16 Oct (NB). Clay-colored Sparrow reports included one at Back Bay 21 Sep (AD) and one at ESVNWR 12 Nov (JK, LM). Vesper Sparrow reports were one at Kiptopeke 18 Oct (SS), one at Craney 1 Nov (AD), and two banded at Kiptopeke 3 Nov (JR). A Lark Sparrow was seen at Wilsonia Neck Drive, Northampton 9 Oct (JK), and a LeConte’s Sparrow was found off Magotha Road, Northampton 4–5 Nov (BZ, TD). A Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow was observed at Saxis 27 Aug (JK). A Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow and at least 2 Seaside Sparrows were found at Oyster 9 Oct (KG, JG). Lincoln’s Sparrows seen included one at ESVNWR 5 Nov (BA) and one at Kiptopeke 22 Nov (SS). A Gambel’s White-crowned Sparrow was banded at Kiptopeke 30 Sep (JR). The season’s Purple Finch and Pine Siskin flights were modest at best with scattered reports of less than a dozen birds at a time. Separate Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported 26 Nov, one at the Whitehurst Tract, Virginia Beach (SS) and one at Kiptopeke (BA). A fly-over Brewer’s Blackbird was seen at Kiptopeke 17 Oct (SS). A count of 75 Boat-tailed Grackles at ESVNWR 13 Nov was noteworthy (HA, BA, TT). A lingering Baltimore Oriole was at Kiptopeke 12 Nov (TD, MD, SH).

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FALL REPORTING PERIOD  AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2005

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