Virginia Birds Regions

Cities/towns numbered on map

1. Abingdon 18. Fredericksburg 31. Petersburg 42. Virginia Beach
12. Covington 29. Norfolk
14. Emporia
15. Fairfax
16. Falls Church
17. Franklin

Southwest

South Central

West

Central

East

Coastal

Virginia Birds

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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 billwilliams154@gmail.com.

Season | Reports due to Regional Editors
Fall (Aug–Nov) | 15 Dec
Winter (Dec–Feb) | 15 Mar
Spring (Mar–May) | 15 Jun
Summer (Jun–Jul) | 15 Aug
Terms and Abbreviations
Species name in bold first time mentioned (VARCOM Review Birds BOLD 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
f. female
fide vouched by
FOS First of Season
Ft. Fort
Hwy. Highway
Is. Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.) immature(s)
junc. junction
juv. (juvs.) juvenile(s)
L. Lake
Ln. Lane
MAPS Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship
m. male
m. obs. many/multiple observers
Mt. Mountain, Mount
NAP Natural Area Preserve
NP National Park
NWR National Wildlife Refuge
ph. photographed by (initials)
Pk. Park
Pt. Point
R. River
Rd. Road
Res. Reservoir
RP Regional Park
Rte. Route
SF State Forest
SP State Park
VARCOM Virginia Avian Records Committee
VDGIF Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
v. r. voice recording
VSO Virginia Society of Ornithology
WMA Wildlife Management Area
* specimen collected

On the cover: Kim Harrell’s 12 March photograph of the Suffolk Lazuli Bunting

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Hidden Valley WMA: One of Virginia’s Under-birded Hotspots

This is the second in an occasional series of Virginia Birds articles about under-birded areas in Virginia, written with the hope of encouraging birders to visit these areas and add to our knowledge of bird distribution in our state. The first article featured Smith Mountain Lake, a large reservoir in the southern Piedmont. This article is about Hidden Valley Lake and the surrounding Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a 6400-acre property in Washington County in the mountains of southwest Virginia.

When I was first considering locations that should be included in this series, I mentioned the idea to a few birders whom I knew had experience birding in the odd corners of the state. One of them, the late Fenton Day, immediately suggested that I write about Hidden Valley Lake. I took this seriously since I knew that Fenton had been birding in every county of the state multiple times and was always on the lookout for new spots that were likely to produce good bird records. Independently, when I asked Todd Day about locations he would suggest, Hidden Valley was one of the places he mentioned as well.

So what is it about Hidden Valley that makes it attractive to experienced birders, and a place that more birders should visit? One factor is the location of the property at a fairly high elevation for Virginia, between roughly 2000 and 4000 feet above sea level. The WMA provides easy access to high elevation hardwood forests and the birds that live there. But other hotspots also provide access to high elevation forest; what makes Hidden Valley different is the lake itself, about 60 acres in size, which has potential to attract waterbirds to a part of the state that in general has little open water. The lake is tucked into a valley below the southwest end of Clinch Mountain and the north slope of Brumley Mountain, and its surface elevation is a little below 3600 feet—much higher than most lakes of comparable size in the state.

The list of birds already recorded at Hidden Valley WMA also suggests that it would be worth more attention from birders. Over 100 species have been reported to eBird from the WMA, despite the area being visited infrequently. A large majority of checklists come from spring and fall visits, while nearly no birds have been reported from mid-October to early April, a major reason I consider the area under-birded. This is despite the potential of the area to produce interesting waterfowl records. The list of waterfowl seen at the lake is short, with only three species listed on eBird as of early August 2016, but this should increase if birders visit more frequently when waterfowl and other birds such as loons, grebes, gulls, and terns are likely to be migrating.

Much of the WMA is covered by relatively mature second-growth forest that provides habitat for many warblers and vireos during the breeding season. Due to the elevation, breeding species in the forests include Least Flycatchers, Blue-headed Vireos, Veereys, Canada Warblers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, along with species also found at lower elevations such as Ovenbirds and Hooded Warblers. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) employees who maintain the area have created small areas of open, shrubby habitats on the property that attract species such as Gray Catbirds and Chestnut-sided Warblers. More intriguing, I have heard of at least one record of a singing Mourning Warbler here in late May (not in eBird), and there are numerous late spring and early autumn reports of Magnolia Warbler, and at least one midsummer report.

Access to Hidden Valley WMA is relatively easy. From the junction of US 19 and US 58 ALT on the west side of Abingdon, take US 58 towards Lebanon (northwest). About 10 miles from Abingdon, take a right on SR 690, which is known as Hidden Valley Road. A brown VDGIF sign should mark the turn. Follow this road up (gaining over 1300 feet in elevation) to Low Gap (elevation 3700’+) and into the WMA property. Just after entering the WMA, at about 2.3 miles from US 58, stay left at a road junction to continue on to the lake itself.

Following Hidden Valley Road into the WMA takes you across Brumley Creek and into the forest on the north side of the lake. A side road leads to a boat ramp where much of the lake’s surface can be scanned. The main road continues to a parking lot at the north end of the dam that also gives views of the lake. There’s ample parking, and the entire area can
be explored on foot. The road is gated at the dam but continues across it and beyond, allowing visitors to walk through
the forested area on the south side of the lake if desired. The lake is about 0.9 mile long, but walking all the way around
the lake on the road is a hike of about 3.8 miles due to the winding route followed.

The lake is located near the west end of the WMA. While visitors with limited time might want to stay in the
immediate area of the lake, and this is apparently what most visitors have done, thousands of acres of habitat lie in the
eastern portion of the WMA, most of which is seldom if ever visited by birders. Some of this area is remote and requires
good off-trail navigation skills to access, but not all of it. This part of the WMA can be reached by taking a right turn
at the junction mentioned in the directions above when entering the WMA property at Low Gap. This road, labeled as
Skycraft Road on some maps, travels about a mile past an FAA tower site to a gate. It continues for a few miles through
the WMA property, though it is gated, and birders can walk as far along the road as they want.

Because it is a WMA, the property is used for hunting and fishing. Birders should be especially aware of hunting
seasons and take relevant precautions if visiting then. But during much of the year, it’s quite possible to bird the area
for hours without seeing anyone away from the lake shore. A basic PDF map of the property can be downloaded from
the VDGIF website. It indicates that the WMA can also be accessed from the southeast, from Brumley Gap Road (SR
689). Based on my experience, this is less desirable due to limited parking and the difficulty of avoiding private property
while accessing the WMA from this direction. As with most Virginia WMAs, visitors to Hidden Valley must be holders
of a current Virginia hunting, trapping, or freshwater fishing license, or a Virginia boat registration, or must purchase an
Access Pass (currently $4 daily) when visiting the property.

C. Michael Stinson
Temperatures got off to a warm start this spring with temperatures at both Dulles Int. and Reagan Nat. Airports averaging 6 degrees above normal for the month of March; however, May saw temperatures averaging 8 degrees below normal for all but the last week. Rainfall was slightly below normal for the 3-month period; however, there was an unusual rainy spell across the Region, with a record 15-day streak of measurable rain during the peak of spring migration in late April and the first half of May. There were several unusual sightings this season including American White Pelican and Black-throated Gray Warbler.


**WATERFOWL–IBISES**

A pair of *TRUMPETER SWANS*, one with a neck band, was seen on the fishing pond at Sky Meadows SP, *Fauquier* 9 Mar (DC) and another or the same pair (although no neck band) was reported on a pond near Upperville, *Fauquier* 17 Apr (KG). A lingering *Tundra Swan* was seen at Cameron Run RP, Alexandria 18 May (ph. AB) and at nearby Belle Haven Pk., Alexandria 27 May (DLe), considerably past its 10 Apr late date. Several duck species were also observed past their usual late dates. Two *Gadwalls*, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, were spotted at a pond in western *Loudoun* 7 May (DnC et al.), well past the species’ 30 Mar late date. A *Blue-winged Teal* was at the Broadlands Wetlands 13 May (JC et al.) (Piedmont late date 30 Apr). Two *Northern Shovelers* were seen at Dyke Marsh 12 May (EE) (Coastal Plain late date 30 Apr). A *Canvasback* seen at Belmont Bay Marina, *Prince William* 30 Apr and 2 May (CL, PSI) was considerably past its Coastal Plain late date of 10 Apr. A *Ring-necked Duck* was observed at Dyke Marsh 15 May (PSi), well outside the Coastal Plain late date of 15 Apr. A pair (m&f) of *Greater Scaup*, a rare winter visitor and transient in the Piedmont, was well seen at Int. Conservation House, *Fauquier* 2 Mar (PS, averred by Dr. Frank Hawkins, conservation biologist and director of the IUCN). Two drakes were well seen at C.M. Crockett Pk. 10 Mar (GS) and a single about 10 mi. away at L. Brittle, *Fauquier* 16 Mar (KK). A single was reported at Alder L., *Loudoun* 7 May (LM et al.), far past the Piedmont late date of 10 Apr. A *Lesser Scaup* seen at Dyke Marsh 29 May (MR) was also far past its Coastal Plain late date of 20 Apr. A *Long-tailed Duck* was spotted off Aquia Landing Pk., *Stafford* 12 Mar (NVBC, ph. DLe), probably the same bird reported there 28 Feb. Three *Buffleheads* were reported from Airlie Conference Center, *Fauquier* 6 May (BH), well outside the species’ 27 Apr Piedmont extreme late date. Reports of breeding *Hooded Mergansers* in the Piedmont are rare but increasing, including sightings of fs. with juvs. at the Dulles Wetlands 24 Apr (JY) and at a pond in Brambleton, *Loudoun* 7 May (BHi). Likewise, reports of breeding *Common Mergansers* are becoming less rare, including fs. with juvs. 24 Apr (MRa) and 29 May (anon.)

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Four of the 5 American White Pelicans seen at Occoquan Bay NWR 25 Apr, photographed by Tyler Reber

Reports of American Bitterns (of which there were no reports in the Piedmont in Spring 2015), a fairly rare spring transient in the Piedmont, were on the uptick, including singles from C.F. Phelps WMA, Fauquier 2 Apr (RB, GS); Leopold's Preserve wetlands, Prince William 24 Apr (DL); Dulles Wetlands 24 Apr (JY) (2 were there 9 May); Bles Pk., Loudoun 13–18 May (BB); Potts Ln., Loudoun 14 May (JC et al.); and over a residence in Taylorstown, Loudoun 2 Apr (EM) (Piedmont early date 10 Apr). A Great Egret was observed at Occoquan Bay 12 Mar (SM), a few weeks prior to its 25 Mar Coastal Plain early date. Three Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, a rare transient and summer resident in the Piedmont, were seen at Virginia Chase County Pk., Fairfax 24–30 Mar (ph. MBr, ph. DLe, m. obs.), with nest-building observed. A pair was also observed attempting nest-building for the third year at an undisclosed park near Annandale, Fairfax 24 Apr (SE). Singles were seen at Luria Pk., Fairfax (said to be a traditional spot) 27 Apr (BF) and the Dulles Wetlands 30 May (MG). A Glossy Ibis, a fairly rare inland transient, was seen sporadically at Huntley Meadows 8–24 Apr (KG).

RAPTORS–FALCONS

Mississippi Kites continued to be seen in ones and twos in the Region throughout May, continuing the trend of recent years. A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE, a rare spring visitor in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Meadowood Recreation Area, Fairfax 27 May (DLe). An early Broad-winged Hawk was seen at Occoquan Bay 1 Mar (LM), preceding the Coastal Plain extreme early date of 23 Mar. A “Northern” Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis abieticola), a distinctive dark subspecies that is not uniformly recognized as separate from the Eastern subspecies, was seen at Belvoir Pond 15 & 31 Mar (Voice). A Golden Eagle was observed soaring over Taylorstown, Loudoun 6 Mar (GHo). A Sora, a fairly rare transient in the Piedmont, was observed at the Broadlands Wetlands 7 May (LM, et al.). A Common Gallinule, rare in the Piedmont, was observed at L. Royal, Fairfax 5–14 May (SE). Observations of Sandhill Cranes, a rare transient in the Piedmont, included 2 at Algonkian RP, Loudoun 6 Mar (BB); one at North Fork Wetlands, Prince William 7 May (GW); and one flying over a residence in Arlington 18 May (fide JA). A flight of 32 American Avocets was observed from Gravelly Pt., Arlington 8 May (LF, AS) and enjoyed by others the same day in the water at Dyke Marsh (ph. EE). A single Black-bellied Plover, a fairly rare inland transient, was seen at Hunting Cr., Fairfax 30 Apr (EE) and again (or another) at nearby Dyke Marsh 16 May (RR). There was a report of a Semipalmated Plover from the Riley Rd. wetlands, Fauquier 23 Apr (GS), earlier than its Piedmont extreme early date of 2 May. An early Spotted Sandpiper was observed at L. Royal, Fairfax 2 Apr (EM) (Piedmont early date 15 Apr). Early sightings of Lesser Yellowlegs included singles at Belvoir Pond 13–17 Mar (GW) and Pierpoint Ln., Fauquier 15 Mar (MP) (Piedmont early date 10 Apr). Two Whimbrels, a rare inland transient, were found at the Hunting Cr. mudflats, Fairfax 15 May (GH), with one continuing through 17 May. Large gatherings of Wilson’s Snipe included 60 at Belvoir Pond 30 Mar (DB) and 40+ at the Broadlands Wetlands 18 Apr (FJ). On 14 May, 13 Bonaparte’s Gulls were observed at Leesylvania (SP) and 2 at Dyke Marsh (KG), considerably off the species’ Coastal Plain late date of 30 Apr. Two Caspian Terns, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were observed successfully dive-feeding on the ponds at Claude Moore Pk., Loudoun 10 Apr (SG), and 2 were seen at Algonkian RP, Loudoun 7 May (LM, et al.). A Black Tern, also a rare transient in the Piedmont, was reported at C.M. Crockett Pk. 11 May (KK). Common Terns, quite uncommon this far inland, were observed at Leesylvania, including a single 1 May (KG) and
2 on 14 May (SP). An early Forster's Tern (Coastal Plain extreme early date 5 Apr) was seen at Pohick Bay RP, Fairfax 6 Mar (AD), with 8 there 12 Mar (KG). An early Black-billed Cuckoo was reported at Laurel Crest Dr., Fairfax 22 Apr (SF), preceding the Piedmont extreme early date of 27 Apr. Whip-poor-wills found outside the few pockets where they are still found with any regularity in the Piedmont included singles at residences in Taylorstown, Loudoun 25 Apr (GHo); Manassas, Prince William 12 May (JS); and Waterford, Loudoun 21 May (NH). Noteworthy in light of the glut of Red-headed Woodpeckers in the past winter was the observation of this species, two weeks apart, as well as all 6 other possible woodpecker species at pocket parks in highly urbanized north Arlington in mid-Apr (LF, AS). A Merlin, a rare transient in the Piedmont, was seen at Great Falls NP, Fairfax 8 May (MRA). A Peregrine Falcon, a rare to uncommon transient and very localized nester in the Coastal Plain, was seen at Possum Pt. Power Station, Prince William 3 Apr (PK). More rare in the Piedmont, 2 were seen at the Reston Town Center, Fairfax 14 May (GN), very vocal and flying from building top to building top.

**FLYCATCHERS–WARBLERS**

Single Olive-sided Flycatchers, rare in the Region, were observed at Ft. C.F. Smith Pk. 10 May (GH) and Possum Pt. Rd. 14 May (KG). Single Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, also rare in the Region, were reported at Possum Pt. Rd. 14 May (KG) and Tatum Dr., Fairfax 28 May (JW). Single Alder Flycatchers, a rare spring transient in the Region, were found at Julie Metz Wetlands, Prince William 14 May (KG) and Dyke Marsh 18 May (ph. EE). A late Blue-headed Vireo was seen at Crow's Nest NAP, Stafford 13 May (ML), past its Regional late date of 10 May. There were scattered reports of Philadelphia Vireos, a rare spring migrant in the Region, including from Monticello Pk., Alexandria 30 Apr (R&CY); a residence in Taylorstown, Loudoun 6 May (GHO); L. Fairfax Pk., Fairfax 8 May (MV); Possum Pr. Rd. 14 May (KG); Leesylvania 19 May (DS); and Dyke Marsh 20 May (LC). Nesting Common Ravens were reported on a cell tower (nest with young) near Haymarket, possibly the first breeding record in Prince William, 23 Mar (LMc), and for the fifth straight year on Ft. Belvoir base, Fairfax 26 Apr (GF). A late Winter Wren was at Riverside Pk. 14 May (SH) (Coastal Plain late date 20 Apr). An early Ovenbird showed up at Huntley Meadows 27 Mar (ASe), three days before the Coastal Plain extreme early date. Also early was a Louisiana Waterthrush reported from Manassas National Battlefield Pk., Prince William 12 Mar (CL), nearly a week prior to its Piedmont extreme early date. Golden-winged Warblers, fairly rare transients in the Piedmont, showed up in a few spots: at a residence in Bluemont, Loudoun 3 May (JC); Ft. C.F. Smith Pk. 8 May (DF); and a residence in Taylorstown, Loudoun 9 May (ph. GHo). Even more unusual, the “Lawrence’s” hybrid (which is reported far less often even than the “Brewster’s” type in the state) showed up at two locations: a reportedly “textbook” specimen at a residence in Great Falls, Fairfax 2 May (RW) and another well described, singing like a Blue-winged Warbler, at Kent Gardens Pk., McLean, Fairfax 8 May (PF). Reports of Prothonotary Warblers, a fairly rare transient and summer resident away from the eastern part of the Region, included one at the Blue Ridge Center 7 May (JC, GH); one at C.M. Crockett Pk. 12 May (TD, KK); 2 at Cedar Run Wetlands, Fauquier 29 May (DL, CL); and 2 as late as 4–11 Jun at Dulles Wetlands (MG, JY). There were a good number of reports of single Tennessee Warblers, a fairly rare transient away from the Blue Ridge: near Oak Marr Pk., Fairfax 5 May (FA); the Blue Ridge Center 7 May (JC, GH); Ft. C.F. Smith Pk. 8 May (DF); a residence in Annandale, Fairfax 9 May (BHo); Riverside Pk. 14 May (SH); Possum Pt. Rd. 14 May (KG); Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, Loudoun 15 May (DSa); and Dyke Marsh 16 May (RR). Single Orange-crowned Warblers, a rare transient in the Piedmont, were reported at Temple Hall Regional Farm Pk., Loudoun 3 May (JN, MB, LFr) and Monticello Pk., Alexandria 13 May (Voice). There were several reports of Mourning Warblers, a rare transient throughout the Region (and fewer in spring than fall): White Oaks Pk., Fairfax 30 Apr–2 May (BJ); Crow's Nest NAP, Stafford 8 May (BHo); Dyke Marsh 14–16 May (EE); Riverside Pk. 14 May (SH); Possum Pt. Rd. 14 May (KG); and Vint Hill Farm Pk., Fauquier 18 May (DL). A Cerulean Warbler made a rare visit to the Coastal Plain, seen at Huntley Meadows 29 Apr (KG) and again 3 May. A Palm Warbler seen 25 Mar at Smith L. Pk., Stafford (MA) was three weeks earlier than the 15 Apr early date for the Piedmont. There were also scattered reports of Palm Warblers past the 5 May Regional late date: Blue Ridge Center 14 May (JC); Occoquan Bay 18 May (PB); and near the Greendale Golf Course, Fairfax 24 May (KJ). A Black-throated Gray Warbler, the first documented in the Virginia Piedmont, was found deceased on the window of the caretaker's residence at Merrimac Farm WMA, Prince William 8 Mar (fide JT, ph. LH).
SPARROWS–BLACKBIRDS

Quite late was a Savannah Sparrow seen on 26 May (Piedmont late date 10 May), the last of a small flock that had been at Discovery Blvd Pond, Prince William (DL) since 4 May. Single Lincoln’s Sparrows, a fairly rare transient in the Region, especially in the spring, were found at Oak Marr Pk., Fairfax 26 Apr (FA) and Huntley Meadows 15 May (KG). Dickcissels showed up on Grassdale Rd., Fauquier for the sixth consecutive year, with a pair there 21 May (RV) and 4 m. 25 May (DB), one carrying nesting material. A large flock of 180 Rusty Blackbirds, which have been declining in the Region in recent years, was seen at Huntley Meadows 12 Mar (KG).

A deceased Black-throated Gray Warbler found at Merrimac Farm WMA, Prince William 8 Mar (photo Lyndon Hawkins)

A Common Grackle nest with eggs at Ft. Belvoir base, Fairfax 5 Apr (GF) was five days earlier than the previously recorded Coastal Plain 10 Apr early egg date. An imm. m. Yellow-headed Blackbird was observed in a residential area near Veterans Memorial Pk., Prince William 19 Mar (KG, ph. BHo).

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The weather for the last half of March and most of April was very dry. Some observers mentioned to me that the migration of several species seemed to be in fits and starts, and maybe this pattern was due to several cold fronts or rainy periods further south. I’m delighted to say that the number of reports I have received have increased, as have the number of lists on e-Bird. Surprises included a Black Rail found in Alleghany County, a Franklin’s Gull found in Rockingham, and a White-winged Dove in Highland County.

Abbreviations: Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke); BRPW (Blue Ridge Parkway); NRV (New River Valley); RSTP (Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Roanoke)

WATERFOWL–RAPTORS

Eight Greater White-fronted Geese that were present in Verona, Augusta in late Feb lingered until 4 Mar (SH). Six Snow Geese were observed in Clarke 4 Mar (JF), one in Shenandoah 9 Mar (ET), and one in Luray, Page 11 Apr (GM). A Ross’s Goose was on Silver L., Rockingham 6 Mar (DL). Two Mute Swans were seen in Botetourt 23 Apr (KD); one at Ft. Defiance, Augusta 1 May (DC); and one in Swoope, Augusta 31 May (AL). Two Tundra Swans were found at L. Frederick, Frederick 5 Mar (DB); 2 at the Nazarene Church Wetlands, Rockingham 19 Mar (DL, GMo); and one at Blandy 22 Mar (DC). Thirty Blue-winged Teal were observed at Greenfield L., Botetourt 8 Apr (PL) and 38 in Fairlawn, Pulaski 9 Apr (PL). A pair of Northern Shovelers was found in Staunton 24 May (DH), a rather late spring date for this species. Seventy-five Ring-necked Ducks were at Gathright Dam, Alleghany 12 Mar (EC). Fifty-one Lesser Scaup were seen at Claytor L., Pulaski 13 Mar (PL). A f. Hooded Merganser with 10 ducklings was observed at the ponds at Rockingham Memorial Hospital 21 May (MG), and photographed later that day (DL). This may be a first nesting record for Rockingham. Two broods of Common Mergansers were found on Big Walker Cr., Giles 7 May, with 10 or more ducklings per brood (SL). Fifteen ads. were observed at Arcadia, Botetourt 1 May (LB). Eight Ruddy Ducks were at Greenfield L., Botetourt 8 May (KD) and 3 were there 19 May (TP). Ten Common Loons were observed on L. Moomaw, Alleghany 25 May (BW). Forty-nine Double-crested Cormorants were seen at Parrott, Pulaski 19 Mar (PL); 41 at L. Frederick, Frederick 5 Apr (DB); and 59 at Riverview Pk., Radford 8 Apr. Two ads. were found at a nest in Fairlawn, Pulaski 22 May (CK). Documentation photos were taken by SB and WR. This may be the first nesting record for Virginia’s Mountains and Valleys Region. An American White Pelican was seen at L. Frederick, Frederick 3 May (DB). An American Bittern was photographed at Greenfield L., Botetourt 6 May (BK). Other reports were one at Blandy 7 May (DC); one near Maybrook, Giles 8 May (MR); and one at the ponds by Rockingham Memorial Hospital, Rockingham 21 May (MG). Twenty active Great Blue Heron nests were noted at Cool Spring Battlefield, Clarke (BL, JL); 35 ads. were counted there 12 May (DB). There were 38 to 40 nests with 2 or 3 young in each in Staunton 26 Apr (AL). Two Great Egrets were found in Roanoke 1 Apr (KC); 4 at Greenfield L., Botetourt 5 Apr (BK); one at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham 12 Apr (WL); 2 at Nazarene Church Wetlands, Rockingham 18 Apr (JSh); one in Rockbridge 28 Apr (LN); and 2 at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham 12 May (GMo). Black-crowned Night-Heron sightings were all of single birds at these locations: Silver L., Rockingham 15 Mar (MN); Waynesboro 16 Apr (VL); Roanoke 24 (TG) & 28 Apr (KD); Augusta Springs, Augusta 30 Apr (VL); L. Frederick, Frederick 3 May (WP); Silver L., Rockingham 19 May (KR); and Dayton, Rockingham 30 May (JSh). Eight Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were found on the Roanoke R. Greenway, Roanoke 6 Apr (KD) and 6 in Salem 3 May (KD). Two Glossy Ibis were seen at a pond in Rockbridge 24 Apr (LN) and 2 were at Blandy...
13 May (DC). A Rough-legged Hawk was found in Blue Grass Valley, Highland 5 Mar (WC).

RAILS–NUTHATCHES
A BLACK RAIL was flushed from a field near Dunlap Cr., Hematite, Alleghany 10 May (JH). A Virginia Rail was found in Blacksburg, Montgomery 26 Apr (NM). A Sora was seen at Greenfield L., Botetourt 10 Apr (TG); 3 at Nazarene Church Wetlands, Rockingham 19 May (GmO); and one, also in Rockingham, 21 May (WL). A Sandhill Crane was found near Monterey, Highland 5 Mar (JP); one in Blacksburg, Montgomery 25 Apr (fide JV); one near White Post, Clarke 26 Apr (JF); one photographed in New Castle, Craig 15 May (BK); one at Goshen, Rockbridge 27 May (GB); and 2 in Fishersville, Augusta 31 May (fide PW). A Semipalmated Plover was observed in Rockingham 13 Apr (CZ) and 5 were at RSTP 13 May (PL). Forty Spotted Sandpipers were at RSTP 11 May (KD). Forty-five Solitary Sandpipers were at RSTP 13 May (PL). Thirty-two Lesser Yellowlegs were found at Nazarene Church Wetlands, Rockingham 1 May (GM). A Stilt Sandpiper was found in Rockingham 26 Apr (DH). A Dunlin seen at Leonard’s Pond, Rockingham 28 May (WL, JSh) was present there 30 May (KR). Five Least Sandpipers were found in Swoope, Augusta 30 Apr (VL) and 25 were at RSTP 13 May (PL). A Pectoral Sandpiper was found at Nazarene Wetlands, Rockingham 19 Mar (DL); 5 were in Rockingham 31 Mar (GMo); one at RSTP 1 Apr (KD); and one at Blandy 25 April (TH). A Semipalmated Sandpiper was seen in Rockingham 26 Apr (DH), one in Augusta 30 Apr (EC), one in Shenandoah 30 Apr (DH), and one in Augusta 21 May (PW). Four Short-billed Dowitchers were found in Highland 15 May (WT). Eighty-one Wilson’s Snipe were tallied at the Nazarene Church Wetlands, Rockingham 19 Mar (DL, GMo). Twenty-one Bonaparte’s Gulls were seen at Carvin’s Cove, Botetourt 4 Apr (BK) and 9 were at Riverview Pk., Radford 8 Apr (CK). A FRANKLIN’S GULL photographed at Silver L., Rockingham 27 May (WC, MF) may be the Mountain and Valleys Region second record. A Caspian Tern was at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham 22 Apr (DL); 2 were at Greenfield L., Botetourt 27 Apr (KD); 2 at L. Frederick, Frederick 3 May (DB); and one at Elkhorn L., Augusta 10 May (PW). Two Black Terns were at L. Shenandoah, Rockingham 22 May (DL). One Common Tern was seen at L. Frederick, Frederick 30 Apr (DB); 2 were at L. Moomaw, Alleghany 18 May (BW). A Forster’s Tern was observed at Riverview Pk., Radford 7 Apr (CK); one at Newman L., Harrisonburg 12 Apr (DL); 2 at L. Frederick, Frederick 11 May (WP); 2 at Silver L., Rockingham 17 May (JS) and one at Greenfield L., Botetourt 19 May (TP). A WHITE-WINGED DOVE was found near Monterey, Highland 30 May (JS) for a first county record. Three Long-eared Owls were found at Swoope, Augusta 9 (PW) & 10 Mar (JS). The one that wintered at Blandy was observed through 15 Mar (m. obs.). A Merlin was seen in Harrisonburg 3 (MG) & 6 Mar (MGo); one at Riverview Pk., Radford 6 Mar (CK); one at Blandy 7 Mar (FJ); one at Greenfield L., Botetourt 12 Mar (TG); one in Blue Grass Valley, Highland 7 May (JS); and one in Augusta 8 May (VL). A Peregrine Falcon was observed in Swoope, Augusta 11 Mar (VL, GM, PW) and one was seen in Warren 20 Mar (DG). An Olive-sided Flycatcher was found in Highland 18 May (KB, TB). One was at Shenandoah R. SP, Warren 24 May (JF) and one was photographed on Shenandoah Mt. Trail, Augusta 25 May (AC). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was found on Wabler Rd., Botetourt 14 May (LA). An Alder Flycatcher was heard at Swoope, Augusta 19 May (AL) and 2 were heard there 20 May (MF). A Loggerhead Shrike was seen in Clarke 23 Mar (BL, JL). Twenty-seven Warbling Vireos were counted along the Shenandoah R. near Longwood, Clarke 24 May (BL, JL). Twenty-three Cliff Swallows were found in Augusta 23 Apr (GM); 37 near Front Royal, Warren 30 Apr (TM); 25 at L. Frederick, Frederick 6 May (DC); 20 in Buchanan, Botetourt 30 Apr (GM); 6 or 7 nests were found there 8 May (BK). A tally of 80 was near Longwood, Clarke 25 May (BL, JL). Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed in Giles 20 Apr (DK), 2 on the BRPW in Augusta at 2800 ft. elevation 4 May (JS), and one in Shenandoah 27 May (BL, JL). A nest was found in Poverty Hollow, Montgomery 16 Apr; an ad. was photographed feeding young at the nest cavity 14 May (RM). A Brown-headed Nuthatch was found in Salem 6 Mar (SL). Four were in Longwood Pk., Salem 30 Apr (MA) and one in Radford 2 May (JS), the first record of this species there. A Brown Creeper nest was found in Poverty Hollow, Montgomery 24 Apr but this nest “was depredated before the eggs hatched” (RM).

WARBLERS–FINCHES
Seventy-five Ovenbirds were tallied in Augusta 26 Apr (LH, PW) and 37 along the BRPW, Augusta 4 May (JS). Thirty-two Worm-eating Warblers were found in Augusta 26 Apr (LH, PW) and 12 on the BRPW, Augusta 4 May (JS). Thirty Black-and-white Warblers were counted in Augusta 26 Apr (LH, PW). Three Blue-winged Warblers
were observed near Natural Bridge, Rockbridge 24 Apr (RR); one near Union Springs Dam, Rockingham 26–27 & 30 Apr (KS); 2 at Mill Mt. Pk., Roanoke 29 Apr (WT); 2 in Waynesboro 29 Apr (MA, JF, JSb); 5 in Augusta 30 Apr (m. obs.) for a new county spring peak count; 3 near Singers Glen, Rockingham 30 Apr (CT); one at Paul SF, Rockingham 30 Apr (WL); one on Warbler Rd., Botetourt 1 May (WT); one in Frederick 1 May (JL); one in Shenandoah 6 May (ET); and one in Highland 22 May (AG). A Golden-winged Warbler was found at Cook's Creek Arboretum, Rockingham 29 Apr (CM); one in Roanoke 30 Apr (MA); one in Rockbridge 30 Apr (PC); one in Staunton 1 May (VL, GM); 6 in Highland 6 May (JR); one in Shenandoah NP, Page 11 May (AH); and 3 near Mountain L., Giles 14 May (PL). A hybrid Golden-winged Warbler x Blue-winged Warbler was found in Highland 6 May (JR). A Prothonotary Warbler was found in Ripplemead, Giles 22 Apr (PL); one near Union Springs Dam, Rockingham 26 Apr (KS); one along the Shenandoah R., Clarke 4 May (JF); 2 at Cool Spring Battlefield, Clarke 13 May (TH); and 2 in Warren 14 May (TH). A Tennessee Warbler was found near Singers Glen, Rockingham 11 May (MG) and one at Sunset Field, Botetourt 22 May (KB, TB). An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen at Sherando L., Augusta 30 Apr (TC). A Nashville Warbler was seen in Roanoke 23 Apr (TG); one at the Arcadia Boat Landing, Botetourt 24 Apr (BK); one near Winchester, Frederick 25 Apr (BL, JL); 3 on Walker Mt., Giles 30 Apr (DK); one in Botetourt 1 May (WT); one at Paul SF, Rockingham 1 May (JSh); one at Glen Maury Pk., Buena Vista 2 May (MC); one at Mill Mt. Pk. Roanoke 4 May (KD); 2 at Blandy 7 May (DC); one in Shenandoah NP, Page 9 May (LB); and one in Starkey, Roanoke 11 May (KD). A Mourning Warbler was found on Warbler Rd., Botetourt 8 May (MC); one at Massanetta Springs, Rockingham 18 May (DW); one near Dublin, Pulaski 21 May (AK, CK); and 2 at Paddy Knob, Bath 21 May (WRo). Fifty-one American Redstarts were counted along Warbler Rd., Botetourt 30 Apr (GM); 26 along the BRPW, Augusta 4 May (JS); 22 in Shenandoah NP, Rockingham 28 May (RW); and 30 also in Shenandoah NP, Warren 29 May (PN). Four Cerulean Warblers were found at Switzer Dam, Rockingham 24 Apr (TH); 20 along Warbler Rd., Botetourt 30 Apr (GM); 5 on Walker Mt., Giles 30 Apr (DK); 9 along the BRPW, Augusta 4 May (JS); 3 in Shenandoah NP, Page 16 May (GM); and 9 in Shenandoah NP, Warren 29 May (PN). Fifteen Blackburnian Warblers were found at Glen Alton, Giles 30 Apr (BV); 14 at Hone Quarry, Rockingham 1 May (JT); and 11 in Highland 31 May (JS). Ninety Yellow-rumped Warblers were counted at Mill Mt. Pk., Roanoke 4 May (TG) and an even more amazing tally of 200 on Roanoke Mt., Roanoke 8 May (KD). An American Tree Sparrow was at Blandy 18 Mar (DC). Five Vesper Sparrows were found near Singers Glen, Rockingham 26 Mar (CT); 4 at Blandy 31 Mar (DC); 2 at Willow L., Rockbridge 4 Apr (JP); 2 at Blandy 4 Apr (DC); and one in Linville, Rockingham 12 Apr (MG). A Lark Sparrow was found in Blue Grass Valley, Highland 26 Mar (JM). Eight Grasshopper Sparrows were tallied in Warren 14 May (AP) and 4 near Mt. Clifton, Shenandoah 28 May (ET). A Lincoln's Sparrow was photographed in Rockbridge 2 May (WR) and one was seen at Bent Mt., Roanoke 21 May (TG). A Lincoln's Sparrow was photographed in Rockbridge 2 May (WR) and one was seen at Bent Mt., Roanoke 21 May (TG). There were more reports of Summer Tanagers than during the past few springs, all of single birds at these locations: Mill Mt. Star Trail, Roanoke 30 Apr (KD); Staunton 30 Apr (DT, PW); Loft Mt. Campground, Shenandoah NP, Rockingham 20 May (SC); Ravens Roost, BRPW, Augusta 23 May (KB, TB); and Botetourt 23 May (BK). Twenty-four Scarlet Tanagers were observed along Warbler Rd., Botetourt 30 Apr (GM), 15 in Augusta 9 May (LH, PW), and 15 in Alleghany 16 May (BW). A Dickcissel was observed in Bridgewater, Rockingham 3 Apr (DP). Hundreds of Bobolinks, mostly, if not all males, were seen near the NRV Airport, Pulaski 7 May (MB, SB) and 50 in Warren 14 May (JF). Eighteen Rusty Blackbirds were found at Gathright Dam, Alleghany 12 Mar (EC); 4 at Shenandoah River SP, Warren 4 Apr (NH); 40 near Woodstock, Shenandoah 13 Apr (BD); 3 at Augusta Springs, Augusta 17 Apr (VL); 5 in Rockbridge 20 Apr (JP); 24 in Clarke 23 Apr (SB); and 5 at Massanetta Springs, Rockingham 29 Apr (SB). Twenty to 30 Red Crossbills were found in the Briery Branch/Reddish Knob area, Rockingham all spring (m. obs.). There were 2 in Poverty Hollow, Montgomery 22 May (RM). Sixty-eight Pine Siskins were seen in Shenandoah 1 Mar (DD); 80 at Newport, Giles 30 Apr (LS); and 40 on Warbler Rd., Botetourt 1 May (SG). Sixty-three American Goldfinches were observed in Shenandoah 10 Apr (DD).

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Dick Rowe took these photos of a male Red Crossbill (left) and a female (right) in Rockingham 26 March.
The Southwest Region had average temperatures as follows: March 53 °F; April 57 °F; May 63 °F. Sightings of note for the 3-month period included: Greater White-fronted Goose, Eared Grebe, White-winged Dove, and a Sora.

**Abbreviations:** BG (Burke’s Garden, Tazewell); HMSP (Hungry Mother State Park, Smyth); SHL (South Holston Lake, Washington)

**WATERFOWL–DOVES**

A Greater White-fronted Goose was reported in Tazewell 1 Mar (ph. CD) and observed again on 6 Mar (ph. DO) at the same location. In Buchanan 6 Common Mergansers were reported on 4 Mar (DR). There was a total of two reports of Eared Grebes, both of which were of a single individual at SHL 8 & 20 Mar (RK). A Sora was recorded in Buchanan 15 May (DR). This species is an uncommon transient and a rare summer resident according to the Gold Book, so the date of this observation could represent a local summer resident. Burkes Garden has gained more attention over the last year outside of the normal winter season of searching for raptors. This spring produced many shorebird records. Spotted Sandpipers were reported in high numbers totaling 29 individuals from various sites there 30 Apr (CD). There were two Greater Yellowlegs reports from the same area 16 & 30 Mar, with a high count of 5 individuals on 30 Apr (DS). Least Sandpipers were reported on three different occasions with a high count of 13 on 11 Mar (CD). Pectoral Sandpiper reports at BG included one 19 Mar (DS) and 2 on 25 Mar (DS). Ten Short-billed Dowitchers were recorded there 16 May (ph. CD, ph. DS). A WHITE-WINGED DOVE was reported 27 Apr in Buchanan (JT et al.). Reports of this species have been increasing since the mid-90s on the Coastal Plain and starting to be recorded elsewhere in the state.
Compared to past years, this spring saw more birders active in the Region, not one of the parts of the state that’s more frequently visited by birders. The season brought a few notable waterbird reports, but in general the overall number was low, and while good numbers of migrant landbirds such as vireos and warblers were reported, most were found within expected time frames and are not detailed here.

**Abbreviations:** Kerr (John H. Kerr Res., Charlotte [upper lake only], Halifax [upper lake only], and Mecklenburg [lower lake]; Sandy R. (Sandy River Reservoir, e. Prince Edward)

**SNOW GOOSE—YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**

A single blue morph Snow Goose reported at the Farmville airport, Cumberland 30 Apr (ES) apparently represents a first for that county. A single m. Redhead at Sandy R. 10 Mar (ES) and 3 at Palmer Pt., Kerr 12 Mar (AD) were the only reports. A single Greater Scaup lingering from the winter at Wilck’s Lk., Prince Edward remained until 18 Mar (ES) and provided the only report away from lower Kerr.

The only report of any scoter was of a single m. White-winged Scoter above the dam and near Palmer Pt. at Kerr 12 Mar (JB, ph. AD, PG). A Common Merganser below the dam at Kerr, apparently the same one lingering there since July 2015 (m.obs.), remained until at least 26 Apr (ES). A Pacific Loon that appeared at Sandy R. 9 May (ph. CMS) and remained until 12 May (m.obs.) was a first for Prince Edward and provided a third Piedmont Virginia location for the species, with all previous records from Kerr aside from a 2004 report from L. Anna. Given the records of this species at Kerr, one above the dam there 3 (PG) & 9 (MI) Apr was less surprising, though any Virginia record of this species is still noteworthy.

Adam Donofrio’s photo of a White-winged Scoter at Kerr 12 Mar

A Pacific Loon at Kerr photographed 3 Apr by Adam Donofrio

Two Red-necked Grebes were found in Prince Edward but none elsewhere. The first was at Wilck’s L. 25 Mar (ph. CMS, ES), and the second was above the dam at Sandy R. 31 Mar (ES) until 10 Apr (ES). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Wilck’s L., Prince Edward 6 May (ES, ph. CMS) provided one of a few records of either night-heron for the county and the only seasonal report of the species; it was seen again the following day (m.obs.) but not subsequently.
OSPREY–MERLIN

Ospreys continued to increase as breeders in Prince Edward, with six active nests on upper Briery Creek Lk. and four elsewhere in the county as of mid-April (CMS). An ad. Mississippi Kite along Wolf Trap Rd., Halifax 21 May, followed by 2 there on subsequent dates (JB, PG), and one seen from Steel Bridge Rd., Greensville 30 May (EF), were the only reports (JB); both are known locations for the species. Bald Eagles had active nests at three locations in Prince Edward at the beginning of the season, two on Sandy R. and one at Briery Cr. Lk. (m.obs.), and were widely reported elsewhere in the Region, signs of their continuing recovery. Shorebird reports were scarce aside from the few common and expected species, making an American Golden-Plover photographed at the Danville Regional Airport 2 May (JB) remarkable; this might be the first Regional record for the spring. The only reports for Least Sandpipers were 4 at Dick Cross WMA, Mecklenburg 26 Apr (AD, PG); 3 at Paul Edmunds Pk., Halifax 1 May (JB, PG); one on Poorhouse Rd., c. Prince Edward 19 May (CMS); and one at Pine Ridge Farm, w. Prince Edward 22 May (ES). Less common Regionally was a single Semipalmated Sandpiper with the Least at Paul Edmunds Pk. 1 May (JB, PG). A single ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull remained in the vicinity of the dam at Kerr, where one has often been reported in recent years, until 3 Apr (m.obs.), while 6 were seen near Southgate Square Shopping Center, Colonial Heights 3 Apr (EO), with lower numbers there on earlier dates (m.obs.). The only Regional reports of Great Black-backed Gulls were also from Southgate Square, with 2 first reported there 5 Mar (AD) and a single remaining 3 Apr (EO). Two Forster’s Terns at Sandy R. 18 Apr (ph. CMS) were the only ones reported. A Black-billed Cuckoo, always scarce in the Region, was found n. of Darlington Heights, Prince Edward 26 May (CMS, ph.). Only four Common Nighthawks were reported, a disturbingly low total: one 3 May at the Halifax school complex n. of South Boston (PG); one in Farmville, Prince Edward 9 May (CMS), and 2 in Danville 13 May (MF). Single Merlins were noted at Holliday Lk. SP, Appomattox 14 Apr (ES), and Crossing of the Dan Pk., South Boston, Halifax 1 May (PG); although only 2 birds, this continues a relatively good record of appearances for the species in the Region recently.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE–BOBOLINKS

A Loggerhead Shrike found 9 Apr along VA Rte. 45 near the SR 646 junc. in Cumberland (ph. WR,) remained until at least 19 May (ES) but no breeding evidence could be found. A different Loggerhead Shrike was seen 5 May about 9 km to the nw along Sports Lk. Rd., also Cumberland (ph. EO,), but not reported afterwards. In addition to reports from e. of Kerr in Mecklenburg (m.obs. and dates), one Loggerhead Shrike was found along SR 633 ne. of Chase City, also Mecklenburg 25 May (EO). Collectively these represent more Regional reports of this species than in recent springs. Common Ravens nested at Crossing of the Dan Pk., South Boston, Halifax (ph. m.obs.) and at High Bridge Tr. SP, Prince Edward (ph. m.obs.) with birds present at both sites throughout the period. The species was also widely reported elsewhere in the Region, suggesting the possibility of additional breeding sites. The only Veeries reported away from the Blue Ridge were single birds along Sports Lk. Rd., Cumberland 5 May (EO) and along Lipscomb FR, Prince Edward 12 May (CMS). A Blue-winged Warbler at Staunton View Public Use Area 23 Apr (JB, PG) was unusual for the spring at that site and was the only report for Mecklenburg or any adjacent Virginia county. Swainson’s Warblers were reported only from Steel Bridge Rd., Greensville 26 Apr (EO), and nearby Low Ground Rd., Greensville 30 May (EF); this species apparently breeds in this area but nowhere else in the Region. A Bay-breasted Warbler at Halifax Country Club 4 May (PG) and a Wilson’s Warbler at Wilck’s Lk., Prince Edward 5 May (CMS) were the only reports for each of those species, and a Vesper Sparrow along Poorhouse Rd., Prince Edward 16 May (CMS, ph.) was the only report for that uncommon migrant. Bobolinks were reported more frequently than normal this season. Flocks of over 100 were found near the junc. of Rtes. 600 and 615, Charlotte 4 May (PL); along VA Rte. 45 about 2 mi. n. of US Rte. 60 on 5 May (EO); and on Heights School Rd. in w. Prince Edward 7 May (FD, CMS, ph.), while several smaller groups were reported from additional locations (m.obs.). This was at least mildly encouraging given recent reports of trouble with this and other species that breed in grasslands.

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The average monthly temperature in March (53.8 degrees) was a departure from normal of 7.9 degrees, while the total monthly precipitation (1.49 inches) was a departure from normal of 2.17 inches. April and May had closer to normal temperatures, but May was rainy. The average precipitation for the month of May was 5.53 inches, a departure from normal of 1.55 inches. The overall warmer temperatures earlier in the season and more rainfall amounted to many good sightings of wading birds and also early migrants breaking prior extreme dates. Species highlights: Black Scoters, American White Pelicans, both American and Least Bitterns, Snowy Egret, continuing Rough-legged Hawk, Common Gallinules, Selasphorus sp. hummingbird, Alder Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, American Tree Sparrows, and Nelson’s Sparrow.

Abbreviations: ICNA (Ivy Creek Natural Area, Albemarle); RVT (Rockfish Valley Trail, Nelson); RMNA (Ragged Mountain Natural Area, Albemarle)

GESE–CRANES
Three apparent backcross Ross’s Geese were found at Plain Dealing Farm, Albemarle 8 Mar (ph. MN). Compared to last year’s high numbers this spring there was quite a lack of unusual geese. Ducks reported included 21 Gadwalls in Green Springs, Louisa 12 Mar (AR); an American Wigeon, an uncommon transient, at King Family Vineyard, Albemarle 3–16 Apr (GB); and an American Black Duck at Mill Cr., Amherst 23 Apr (DMS). The earliest Blue-winged Teal for the area came on 13 Mar in Green Springs, Louisa (AR) and forecasted a strong spring migration for that species. Nineteen Green-winged Teal were found at Lickinghole Cr., Albemarle (CM) on 23 Mar. Eleven Redheads and 50 Ring-necked Ducks were found at Green Springs, Louisa 5 Mar (AR). A Greater Scaup was reported from RMNA on 9 Mar (JP). A notable high count of 8 Lesser Scaup was found at Old Trail, Albemarle 15 Mar (CM, PM). A huge surprise came when 2 Black Scoters were found at RMNA 12 Apr (ph, JP et al.). Also at RMNA were 12 Red-breasted Mergansers 3 Apr (CM, EM). There were two reports of Common Mergansers, both of individual birds: one at the City of Lynchburg Pk., Lynchburg 25 Mar (AL, CT) and another at Riverview Pk., Charlottesville on 20 Apr (JC). A very late Ruddy Duck was found on 29 May at L. Shawnee, Powhatan (LB). Though many individual Common Loons were reported, the only multiple bird sighting came from 4 migrating over Belmont, Charlottesville 7 May (DS). Five American White Pelicans were found at Groome’s Pt., Orange 26 Apr (ph. TJ et al.). There were two reports of American Bitterns: one at King Family Vineyard, Albemarle 8–13 May (TJ et al.), while another individual was found at Reynovia L., Albemarle 12 May (AR). A Least Bittern was found in Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 12–13 May (SM, JP, DS). Two Great Egrets were located, one at Lickinghole Cr., Albemarle 1 Apr (CM) and another on the James R., Lynchburg 2 Apr (LA, GBu). A Snowy Egret was found at Lickinghole Cr., Albemarle 5 May (CM, AC), the second year in a row this rare transient through the Region has been reported. A Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported from Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 13 May (DS). The Rough-legged Hawk at Green Springs, Louisa continued its stay until it was last seen 13 Mar (CL, RW, BB et al.). Two Common Gallinules were found in Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 12 May (SM, JP). A Sandhill Crane was spotted migrating over Ashcroft, Albemarle 7 May (ph. MN).

SHOREBIRDS–WARBLERS
Shorebirds of note included a Semipalmed Plover on Reedy Mill Rd., Caroline 16 May (MA); a high count of 8 Least Sandpipers at Liberty Corner Farm, Albemarle 8 May (WC); the lone report of a Semipalmed Sandpiper at King Family Vineyard, Albemarle 8 May (PM); and 3 Pectoral Sandpipers also found at King Family Vineyard, Albemarle 22 Mar (AC). A high count of 20 Bonaparte’s...
Gulls came from Broome’s Pt., Orange 26 Apr (WC). An uncommon transient Black Tern was found at L. Anna, Louisa 19 May (CH). There were three reports of Black-billed Cuckoos, all individuals: Observatory Hill, Albemarle 3–7 May (JP, CM); Rivanna Trail, Charlottesville 14 May (WC, CF, AR); and Barboursville Vineyard, Orange, also on 14 May (DeS). A Short-eared Owl was found along East Jack Jouett Rd., Louisa 5 Mar where the species wintered (RW). A Great Horned Owl nest was found in Green Springs, Louisa and held 2 jvus. 5–28 Mar (AR). A high count for the spring of 6 Common Nighthawks came from Rivanna Dam, Albemarle 13 May (AJ). Chuck-will’s-widows were found at numerous locations in Albemarle and Fluvanna while Eastern Whip-poor-wills were reported from Amherst, Albemarle, Powhatan, Louisa, and Caroline. A Selasphorus rufus/sasin hummingbird made a quick appearance on Observatory Hill, Albemarle 16 May (PB). An Olive-sided Flycatcher remained at RVT 22–23 May (MF). An Alder Flycatcher, whose migration through the Region can be hard to study due to the requirements of vocalization, was recorded and seen at Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 13 May (DS). A Willow Flycatcher was only recorded a single time along the Rivanna Trail, Albemarle 24 May (GM). A Loggerhead Shrike, likely the same individual reported over the winter months, was found along Langhorne Rd., Albemarle 2 Mar (KH). A high count of 4 Bank Swallows was found at Chris Greene L., Albemarle 9 May (ph. DS). Breeding colonies of Cliff Swallows were found at four locations: a small colony of 3 individuals was at the Rivanna Reservoir Bridge, Albemarle; a colony of 20 continued for another year at the Howardsville Boat Landing, Albemarle; a colony of 20 was recorded from Maidens Boat Landing, Powhatan; and finally, 14 were found on the Pamunkey Bridge, Orange. The small population of Brown-headed Nuthatches continued to hold on at Fort A. P. Hill, Caroline 31 Mar (BN). A Marsh Wren was found at Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 5 May (SM). There were three reports of Gray-cheeked Thrushes, an uncommon transient: one on private property in Fluvanna 7 May (BB); another at Observatory Hill, Albemarle 13 May (JP); and a final report from Scottsville, Albemarle 21 May (WC). Warblers of note included: a new extreme early date for Louisiana Waterthrush came on 11 Mar at Fort A. P. Hill, Caroline (ph. BN); a Golden-winged Warbler was seen 7–8 May at Observatory Hill, Albemarle (PM, BM); a much less common spring migrant than fall, Tennessee Warbler, was reported several times but a count of 2 individuals came from Heard Mt., Albemarle 14 May (EG); and a Mourning Warbler was found at Riverview Pk., Charlottesville 11 May (LS).

SPARRROWS–BLACKBIRDS

There were seven sightings of individual American Tree Sparrows, an uncommon transient through the area, so this many reports is irregular: ICNA 2 Mar (AS); Lickinghole Cr., Albemarle 13 Mar (PM); Broken Is., Fluvanna 14 Mar (EG); Chancho Volante, Albemarle 13–16 Mar (PM); Chris Greene L., Albemarle 15 Mar (TJ); and Jones Mill Rd., Albemarle 19 Mar (AC). An impressive high count of 5 Vesper Sparrows came from McIntire Pk., Charlottesville 10 Apr (MA). A Nelson’s Sparrow was found at Hidden Swamp, Albemarle 13 May (ph. DS). There were two reports of Lincoln’s Sparrows: one at Old Trail, Albemarle 29 Apr (CM); and the other in Forest Lakes, Albemarle 7 May (RW). Flocks of Bobolinks were found at five different locations: 6 were reported from Belmead, Powhatan 29 Mar (BN, JR, LBu); 18 were found along Jones Mill Rd., Albemarle (AC); 6 were found at Cool Spring Farm, Spotsylvania 7 May (JY); 12 at Liberty Corner Farm, Albemarle 8 May (ph. WC); and another flock of 12 found at Greenfield Farm, Albemarle 11 May (JP). There were two noteworthy flocks of Rusty Blackbirds that came through: 13 in Green Springs, Louisa 26 Mar (AR, MN, RW, BB); and 32 at Lickinghole Cr., Albemarle 5 Apr (JP).

Temperatures in the Region were slightly above average in March and returned to average during April and May. Precipitation was below average in March and April, but significantly above average in May. Some waterfowl lingered into the spring in the Region, and it was also a good year for shorebirds, with several notable local records. Perhaps most exciting was the presence of three different individual Western Tanagers in James City County this spring. Other rarities included Swallow-tailed Kite, Sandhill Crane, and Lark Sparrow.

**Abbreviations:** Cheatham (Cheatham Annex, York); Hog (Hog Island WMA, Surry); Jamestown (Jamestown Island, James City).

**WATERFOWL–IBISES**
Nine Brant seen on the Goodwin Is., York 18 Mar (ph. BW, DY et al.) were a notable record away from the coast. A flyby Northern Shoveler at Hog 15 May (BT et al.) eclipsed the previous local late date of 7 May by over a week. A lingering m. Ring-necked Duck was seen at Cumberland Marsh NAP, New Kent 14 May (ph. AD, TT). Three f. Buffleheads were at Swift Creek Res., Chesterfield 30 Apr (AB, EO). Late Ruddy Ducks were reported from multiple locations this spring. One was reported from Cheatham15 May (DY) and another was seen at Hog 22 May (ph. AD). Three Anhingas flew over the Kingswood neighborhood, James City 7 May (BT). A group of American White Pelicans continued at Hog for most of the reporting period. The birds were first seen during the winter season, and sightings continued until at least 7 May (MB). The birds were often observed soaring over the James River by viewers at the College Creek Hawkwatch, James City. The highest count during the period was 21 birds viewed from the Hawkwatch 26 Mar (AD). Away from the James, one was observed over York River SP, James City 2 May (m. obs.). Cattle Egrets, an uncommon species in the Region, were reported from multiple locations this spring. Five birds were at Carlton Farm, James City 20 Apr (ph. BW). Single birds were reported from Elm Dr., York 27 Apr (AB); Carlton Farm, James City 3 May (BW); and Gospel Spreading Farm, James City 21 May (BW). An ad. White Ibis that flew over Hog 15 May (BT et al.) was only the second local spring record. A very early Glossy Ibis was at Briar Green Riding Academy, Isle of Wight 3 Mar (ph. JH).

**KITES–FALCONS**
A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE over the Greensprings Interpretive Trail, James City 14 May (RK) was only the third local record. A Mississippi Kite, a rare local migrant, was observed at the College Creek Hawkwatch, James City 2 May (BT). Five late American Coots were at Hog 15 May (BT et al.). Two Sandhill Cranes, rare in the Region, were seen in a roadside field near Windsor, Isle of Wight 7 May (CL). Two Black-necked Stilts at Hog 22 Apr (TC) provided the seventh local record; one was there the following day (CJ). Seventeen American Avocets, a rare migrant locally, were observed flying north over the College Creek Hawkwatch, James City 1 May (ph. BT). The Goodwin Islands, York proved to be a good spot for shorebirds this spring; 12 American Oystercatchers (ph. BW, DY et al.) and 3 Black-bellied Plovers were observed there 18 Mar (BW, DY et al.). The Black-bellied Plovers provided a new local early date. Willets, uncommon in the Region, were seen at several locations this spring. One was off Bay Tree Beach Rd., York 19 Apr (DY) and another was seen from College Creek, James City 20 Apr (BW). Eighteen “Western” Willets at Jamestown 1 May (ph. BT) provided the second record locally for this subspecies. A Black Tern, seen following the Jamestown–Scotland Ferry, James City/Surry 6 May (BT) provided a new local early date, preceding the previous early date of 11 May by five days. Another Black Tern was at College Creek, James City 20 May (BW). The first Royal Tern of the season was seen...
at College Creek, *James City* 12 Mar (BT, BW) a few days later than the current local early date of 6 Mar. Always exciting as local nesters, a pair of **Peregrine Falcons** had a 4-egg nest at the Yorktown refinery site, *York* (MB, BWa).

**VIREOS–TANAGERS**

A **White-eyed Vireo** at Jamestown 20 Mar (BT) was 12 days ahead of the previous local early date of 1 Apr. A **Warbling Vireo**, an uncommon and often inconspicuous transient locally, was observed at College Creek, *James City* 28 May (BW). Three **Blue-grey Gnatcatchers** at New Quarter Pk., *York* 18 Mar (SK) preceded the previous local early date by 3 days. A singing **Ovenbird** at Piney Grove, *Sussex* 22 Mar (BP) was an early record. A **Kentucky Warbler**, an uncommon migrant locally, was seen at the Bassett Hall Nature Trail, Williamsburg 1 May (BL). A **Canada Warbler** at the Powhatan Cr. Trail, *James City* 2 May (ph. BW) was three days ahead of the previous local early date.

**LARK SPARROW** at Shirley Plantation, *Charles City* 30 Apr (ph. AB, EO) was a notable local record. One “**Ipswich**” **Savannah Sparrow**, a subspecies rarely encountered away from the coast, was seen at the Goodwin Is., *York* 18 Mar (ph. BW, DY et al.) and provided the fourth local record.

Four **Seaside Sparrows**, uncommon and very local in the Region, were singing on Bay Tree Beach Rd., *York* 26 Apr (JS, AB). This spring was particularly exciting for **WESTERN TANAGERS**, with three separate individuals documented in the Region. The long-staying m. that overwintered at Settler’s Mill, *James City* continued through 13 Mar (BW, AW). A second m. was seen at a feeder in Kingsmill, *James City* 4–14 Mar (ph. CJ). A f. off Winston Dr., *James City*, first reported 7 Feb, continued until 11 Apr (DM fide DC).

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A total of 234 species were reported this spring in the Region, a few species higher than in recent springs. This was partly due to a phenomenal warbler migration through this Region, which tallied 30 species. A low-pressure system lingered in the southern part of the Region during the height of migration in early May, which seemed to have an effect on the number of neotropical migrants detected. Exciting highlights included: a new all-time high count of Brant, a Red-necked Grebe, many Cattle Egrets, a Ruff seen by many; an immature Iceland Gull, the first spring record of Red Knots, three Olive-sided Flycatchers, a Cerulean Warbler, and a Lark Sparrow. Data was sourced from the Virginia Birds listerv, eBird®, NNASnet (Northern Neck Audubon Society listserv) and emails to the editor.

**WATERFOWL–PELICANS**

A new Regional all-time high count of 144 Brant at Guinea 18 Mar (ph. EW) kicked off this very exciting Spring 2016. It was a far below average spring for flocks of Canada Geese, with the largest being a paltry 150 at Tayloe 6 Mar (MS). Likely because of this, there were no other goose species found this spring. The highest count of Tundra Swans in the past 5 years was of 550 birds at Bethel 3 Mar during the species peak migration this year, which occurred during the first week of March, seemingly about a week or two earlier than most years (JS). A couple of Northern Shovelers at K.G. Ponds 1 May were the latest of the last few years (T&EM). Following up a strong winter, 500 Canvasbacks were reported off Dahlgren 5 Mar (T&EM). Also at Dahlgren, approximately 500 Surf Scoters were among a large group of mixed waterfowl in the Potomac R. 20 Mar (LW). A tardy Bufflehead was seen loafing about at South Haven 15 May (Richmond Audubon Society, m. obs.). Seven lingering Common Goldeneyes were reported at Belle Is. 23 Apr (LF, JW). Two Ruddy Duck counts surpassed the previous eBird Regional high count, the first being 5200 off Washington's Birthplace 24 Mar (FA) and the second a colossal group of 6250, mostly in breeding plumage, at Colonial Beach 8 Apr, which raised the bar of 4450 by 800 individuals and was the highest count in the state this spring (BH). A single late Ruddy Duck was seen at Suggett’s Pt., Richmond 24 May (LA). A tardy and stunning Horned Grebe was seen in the York R. about 4 mi. e. of Gloucester Pt., Gloucester 29 May (ph. TR). One of very few Red-necked Grebes in the state this year was seen at close range in the Potomac R. off Colonial Beach 5 Mar (BH). A high count of 134 Brown Pelicans at Guinea 18 Mar nearly doubled the previous spring high count of 72 (ph. EW).

**HERONS–GULLS**

Little Blue Herons were reported on four occasions from as many counties, a very strong showing for this typically scarce spring transient; a maximum of 4 was reported along Potato Neck Rd., Matthews 15 May (EO). Prior to this year there were only five spring reports in eBird of Cattle Egrets; now that number has been doubled. A maximum of 5 were reported from Mary Ball Rd., Lancaster 27 Apr where they represented a first for the county (KB).
single bird seen in a field next to Elsom Mascot Rd., *King and Queen* was also new for the county per eBird (MM). Single *Yellow-crowned Night-Herons* were reported at Gloucester Pk., *Gloucester* (CS) 8 May and in West Point, *King William* 22 May (WB). No *Black-crowned Night-Herons* were spotted this spring. Certainly one of the most charismatic harbingers of spring, the first *Osprey* was seen in Dahlgren 26 Feb, on the early side of their arrivals for the past few years (JD). While *Bald Eagles* are a common sight throughout the Region year-round, there is something to be said for just how many there are. A report released by the CCB showed the top three counties in Virginia with the most eagle nests for 2016 were *Westmoreland* with 75, *King George* with 73, and Essex with 71. A *Broad-winged Hawk* was seen circling over a private property in *King William* just s. of Newtown along the Mattaponi R. 8 May (FA). The behavior and date may indicate it was nesting in the area. Two *Red Knots* were photographed at Bethel 25 May, one of only a handful ever reported in the Region and the first for the spring (ph. JA, EM). The star of the spring was undoubtedly the Region’s first *Ruff* found in a flooded field off of Burgh Westra Ln., *Gloucester* 13–19 May (ph. JS, NB, m. obs.). *American Woodcocks* were found in four locations this spring, up from only one last year, with a maximum of 5 coming from Burgh Westra Ln., *Gloucester* 13 May (JS). A new seasonal high count of 435 *Herring Gulls* was at K.G. Ponds 12 Mar (FA). A first-winter *Iceland Gull*, representing the second Regional and first spring record for this species, was spotted amongst a large group of gulls along Rt. 3 about a mi. east of Sealston, *King George* 2 Apr (FA). A smattering of 11 *Lesser Black-backed Gulls* in a larger group of mixed gulls at K.G. Ponds 12 Mar raised the previous Regional high count of 6 into double digits (FA). *Lancaster* and *Matthews* came away from this spring with their first county *Lesser Black-backed Gulls* at Belle Island 15 Mar (KK) and New Pt. Comfort 17 Apr (DY), respectively.

**GOATSUCKERS–FINCHES**

Eight *Common Nighthawks* were found in four locations 13–27 May. The first *Ruby-throated Hummingbird* appeared at a nectar feeder on a private residence in *Gloucester* 8 Apr, a few days later than last year (R&EB). *Red-headed Woodpeckers* were seemingly omnipresent with nearly 100 reports from across the Region; this number is up from 25 reports in 2015 and only seven in 2014. A single *Merlin* at Woodville Pk., *Gloucester* 30 Apr was the only one reported this spring (MB). Three *Peregrine Falcons* were reported this spring: 2 in the vicinity of river bridges near the Chesapeake Bay (JN, TR), and one at Washington’s Birthplace (RM). Prior to this year there were zero spring *Olive-sided Flycatcher* reports. Single birds at Burgh Westra Ln., *Gloucester* 19 May (ph. TD), Hopyard Farm, *King George* 23 May (ph. SB) and Brown Bay Rd., *Gloucester* 26 May (G&RH) made certain that will not be the case moving forward. The individual in *King George* also appears to be a first for the county. A *Willow Flycatcher* at Wilma 15 May (BA), where they have been known to breed, was the only notable *Empidonax* flycatcher. While *COMMON RAVENS* are quite uncommon throughout the Region, they have recently become more regular in the extreme northwest. A single bird at LaGrange Ln., *King George* 24 Mar falls in line with other recent sightings in the area (FA), but no nests have been noted yet. Over 20 *Ruby-crowned Kinglets* 4 Apr at Monroe’s Birthplace (BH) appears to be the highest spring tally for the Region on record. A total of 30 warbler species, not including *Yellow-breasted Chat*, was recorded this spring. Thirteen of these are resident breeders, but 30 was a highly respectabale total for an area that is very under-birded during migration and largely misses the lion’s share of migrants from both the coast and the mountain flyways. Warblers included: *Ovenbird*, *Worm-eating Warbler*, *Louisiana* and *Northern Waterthrush*, *Blue-winged*, *Black-and-white*, *Prothonotary*, *Tennessee*, *Nashville*, and *Kentucky Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May* and *Cerulean Warblers, Northern Parula, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Pine, Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated, Prairie, Black-throated Green*, and *Canada Warblers*. Occurring five days before the extreme early date listed in the Gold Book and marking a new Regional early date, a *Louisiana Waterthrush* was heard vigorously singing at Beavardam 13 Mar (DC). Likely a breeding bird at Monroe’s Birthplace, a Kentucky Warbler seen and heard singing 8 Apr, was quite early, appearing nearly two weeks before the expected early date in the Gold Book (BH). An early *Hooded Warbler* found at Monroe’s Birthplace 8 Apr falls outside the expected dates and is about as early as they come, with fewer than a handful of birds reported from earlier dates (BH). *Cape May* Warblers are not encountered every spring and are especially scarce in the Middle Peninsula; in fact, one seen and heard singing at Gloucester Pk., *Gloucester* was a first for the county in the spring (CS). A *Cerulean Warbler* found at Washington’s
Birthplace 14 May was only the sixth eBird report for the Region (BH). Bay-breasted Warblers often go undetected in the spring and an individual at Fort Nonsense, Matthews 14 May was a first for the Middle Peninsula during the spring (MA). One Blackburnian Warbler was discovered at Westmoreland Berry Farm, Westmoreland 14 May (RM). **Vesper Sparrows** were reported on three occasions: 3 at a private location in King George 24 Mar; one near Colonial Beach 4 Apr (BH); and one at Lands End 24 Apr (T&EM). An ad. **Lark Sparrow** was photographed 13 & 30 Mar at a private residence near Gloucester Pt., Gloucester and was only the third eBird record for the Region and first for the county (ph. MB). At Burgh Westra Ln., Gloucester 19 May a **Grasshopper Sparrow** was the county’s first for the spring (TD). A late **White-throated Sparrow** lingered until 22 May after its kin had departed from a feeder in Middlesex (M&JC). More **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were seen than usual this year with at least 44 reported from 19 locations 27 Apr–15 May. The final year of the Rusty Blackbird Spring Blitz turned up **Rusty Blackbirds** at seven locations in Gloucester, Westmoreland, and King George with a maximum of 31 at Beaverdam 16 Apr (G&RH). An overwintering **Baltimore Oriole** was seen at a seed feeder in Gloucester through 25 Mar (G&RH). The last **Pine Siskin** winter holdout was seen up until 8 May at a feeder in Lancaster 8 May (KB).

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Measureable rainfall soaked the Region 22 of 31 days in May, effectively grounding many migrant species the first two-and-a-half weeks of the month. This created inconveniences for birders whose first priority (Without Question!!!) was to explore their respective Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas blocks, while at the same time adding possibilities for the unexpected, especially in ephemeral wetlands. Pot-of-gold species at the ends of their respective rainbows were Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Western Grebe, Purple Gallinule, Long-billed Curlew and Lazuli Bunting.

**Abbreviations:** Back Bay (Back Bay NWR, Virginia Beach); Beasley (Beasley Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach); CBBT (Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel s. of Northampton); Chinc. (Chincoteague NWR, Accomack); Craney (Craney Island, Portsmouth); Dismal (Dismal Swamp NWR, Chesapeake/Suffolk); ESVNWR (Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Northampton); False Cape (False Cape SP, Virginia Beach); HRBT (Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Hampton/ Norfolk); Little Is. (Little Is. Park, Virginia Beach); Rudee (Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach); Whitehurst (Whitehurst Tract, Princess Anne WMA, Virginia Beach)

**WATERFOWL–KITES**

Six **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCKS** were at the Cheriton landfill, Northampton 13 May (MI, ph. ESB et al.); 2 remained to at least 16 May (ph. AD, JD). A **Brant** was at the same location through 24 May (BA, BK, JP). A m. **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Back Bay 13 Mar (RF, MM); up to 3 (4 Apr–RBr) were at Chinc. through 9 Apr (MA et al.). An **American Wigeon** at the Cheriton landfill, Northampton 24 May (BK, JP) was nine days past the Coastal Plain 15 May average late date. Two late-departing **Green-winged Teal** were at Beasley 25 May (JP, m.obs.). A m. **Greater Scaup** at Back Bay 5 May (BA) had lingered well beyond that species’ typical Coastal Plain 10 Apr late date. A hen **Wild Turkey** with chicks was encountered at Craney 19 May (BA, BW). Single extended-stay **Red-throated Loons** were at Ft. Monroe, Hampton 24 May (ph. GT, DL) and at Chinc. 27 May (JB, CM); 20 May is the species’ average Coastal Plain late date. There were five **Red-necked Grebe** reports, each of single birds as follows: off Little Is. 1 Mar (K&TB); off the CBBT 8 Mar (K&TB); on FINWR also 8 Mar (ESB); at Chinc. 4 Apr (DLo); off Little Is. 10 Apr (AB). An **Eared Grebe** was off 10th View St., Norfolk 3 Mar (AB, TT) then again 6 Apr (TT). The **WESTERN GREBE** that was in the Machipongo R., Accomack/Northampton 28–29 Feb was listed by m. obs. through 10 Apr (ph. JA, EM, RK).

A **Sooty Shearwater** was at Back Bay 20 (CW et al.) & 22 May (AB, ph. RBi, JS, TT) coincidental with one off Rudee 21 May (AB, TT). A **Wilson’s Storm-Petrel** was off Chinc. 25 May (DL). A sick/injured **Northern Gannet** was at Chinc. 27 May (JB, CM). An **Anhinga** quintet was observed circling above Adams Swamp Rd. near Greenway Rd., Suffolk 12 May (ph. RBr). Four **White Ibis** flocks totaling a Coastal Plain seasonal record 1233 birds were encountered between Oyster, Northampton (flock of 1080) and the ESVNWR 5 Apr (RBr). Two **Swallow-
Tailed Kites were reported, one at the ESVNWR 9 May (Anonymous) and one over Redwing Park, Virginia Beach 14 May (K&TB). A Mississippi Kite returned to the Thoroughgood section of Virginia Beach 30 Apr (TT). Throughout May as many as 3 (26 May–TT) were noted in this vicinity where a pair successfully nested the previous two years. Elsewhere, 2 were over Rt. 13 near Cheriton, Northampton 31 May (DM).

Rails–Cuckoos
A Yellow Rail was heard near Mitchell Dr., Gargatha, Acomack 12 May (JL). Birders in pursuit of an elusive Purple Gallinule that was at Beasley 16 (ph. RB) through 29 May (m. obs.) also documented a Common Gallinule there 17 (ph. RB, TM) through 31 May (m. obs.).

Rob Bielawski’s picture of a Purple Gallinule at the Beasley Tract, Virginia Beach 19 May
A Sandhill Crane was at Chinc. 29 Apr (JL); another was off the Nansemond Parkway near Upton Ln., Suffolk 8 May (BJ). Black-necked Stilt reports began with one at Craney 6 Apr (BA, LS, ph. BW, DY) and 2 at Chinc. 9 Apr (ph. BH, m. obs.). The number at Craney peaked 19 May at 45 (BA, LS, BT, BW). The high count at Queen Sound Flats, Acomack was 9 on 13 May (AK). There was one Black-necked Stilt at Mill Creek, Poquoson 13 Apr (BP) and one to 2 at Beasley 17–31 May (m. obs.). American Avocets were at Craney 3 Mar (20) through 21 Apr (34) with a peak count of 75 there 31 Mar (LS et al.). An American Golden-Plover was at Craney 21 Apr (ph. BW, LS, DY); another, or the same bird, was present 6 (BW, BT, DY) & 19 May (ph. BW). A Wilson’s Plover pair on Cedar Is., Acomack 21 Mar (ph. B’T) significantly preceded the species’ previously known 2 Apr extreme early date. Two of the 3 Long-billed Curlews mentioned in the Winter 2015–2016 Coastal report continued at Gull Marsh, Northampton until at least 10 Apr (ph. JA, EM, RK). The season’s highest reported Marbled Godwit count was 243 at Willis Wharf, Northampton 3 Apr (RB). Exceptionally rare for spring anywhere in the state were 4 skillfully described Baird’s Sandpipers found in a field near Centerville, Acomack 24 May (NG, EG). Single Wilson’s Phalaropes were at Craney 20 Apr (DCr et al.) and 5 May (BT, ph. BW, DY). One was at Beasley 11 May (AB) with 2 there the next day (JM). There were 6 Red-necked Phalaropes at Craney 19 May (ph. BW, BA, LS, BT) then 9 there 26 May (BW et al.). A displaying American Woodcock was icing on the cake for late-in-the-day birders at Beasely 17 (EF) & 26 May (AB, TT). A Parasitic Jaeger was off Cape Henry, Virginia Beach 19 Apr (TT, AB). Three Razorbill reports placed single birds off the CBBT first island 5 Mar (DC), off the CBBT second island 6 Mar (CG, KR, CP), and off Little Is. 10 Apr (AB). A Black-headed Gull frequented Chinc. 11 (ph. GS) through 22 Mar (BH); another at Little Cr. Inlet, Norfolk 19 Mar (ph. ABo) may have been the one there 10 Apr (ph. JF, JS). Two one-egg Laughing Gulls on Craney May 27 Apr (BW, LS) reset Virginia’s early egg-date for that species, previously established on HRBT 9 May 2011. “White-winged” gull sightings included a first-cycle Iceland Gull at 10th View St., Norfolk 3 Mar (AB, TT); a second-cycle Icelandic Gull at Craney 14 Apr (ph. BT et al.) then 12 May (ph. BW et al.); and a Glauco Gull at False Cape 14 Apr (BH, RW). A Black Tern was at Chinc. 25–28 May (JF, CJ, WT). The Ruby-throated Hummingbird that had been present at a Norfolk residence “every day” since 27 Nov 2015 was last observed 23 Apr (BA). Virginia’s Yellow-billed Cuckoo extreme early date, formerly 17 Apr, was rendered obsolete by one at Back Bay 3 Apr (ph. RB). A Black-billed Cuckoo was at Back Bay 12 May (K&TB, RB).
and heard at Back Bay 12 (K&TB et al.) & 14 (AB) May and one was at Craney 26 May (BA et al.). May’s persistent inclement weather was likely the cause for several Ruby-crowned Kinglets to tarry past the species’ 5 May normal late date. The last reported were one each at Chinc. (SF) and Back Bay (K&TB) 11 May. A Prothonotary Warbler along Dismal’s Washington Ditch 3 Apr (CO) was seven days ahead of the Coastal Plain 10 Apr average early date. Was a Nashville Warbler in Norfolk 3–10 Apr (BA) one that overwintered nearby or an early migrant well ahead of the species’ more expected 30 Apr arrival? Two Yellow Warblers confirmed by sonogram at Dismal 26 Mar (BB, RBi, SB) reset that species’ Coastal Plain extreme early date by three days. Two different Wilson’s Warblers were reported 12 May; a f. was on the CBBT (ESB) and a m. was at Mutton Hunk Fenn NAP, Accomack (EO). Back Bay’s very accommodating Lark Sparrow was last reported 28 Mar (m. obs.). A Savannah Sparrow was still at Craney 26 May (BW et al.) and an Ipswich Savannah Sparrow, rare away from the coast, was there 6 Apr (ph. BW, BT, DY). A Grasshopper Sparrow was along White Marsh Rd., Suffolk 30 Mar (RB) well ahead of the species’ 15 Apr Coastal Plain average arrival. Single Lincoln’s Sparrows were at Whitehurst 30 Apr (JM) and at Back Bay 11 (ph. RBi) & 12 May (K&TB et al.). Back Bay also hosted a White-crowned Sparrow 12 & 13 May (ph. K&TB et al.); post 10 May is considered late for the Coastal Plain. The Western Tanager that wintered in Kempsville, Virginia Beach remained through 8 Mar (DD). One at Back Bay 11 May (ph. MP) added ten days to that species’ previously known 1 May Coastal Plain late date. The Lazuli Bunting that was photographed at a Suffolk feeder 16 Feb (BG) returned the week of 7 Mar where it enriched the lists of m obs. through 19 Mar (BG fide MA). The 5–6 Painted Buntings that enlivened feeders in Oceana, Virginia Beach much of the winter remained through at least 4 Mar (ph. MRB). One to 2 were at a Chesapeake home 13 Mar through 13 Apr (DG, m. obs.). The peak reported Rusty Blackbird tally was 240 in Dismal 23 Mar (BA, TT).

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