

Voice of the Naturalist

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Coverage: MD/DC/VA/DE

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Reporting Guidelines

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Please consider joining ANS, especially if you are a regular user of the Voice (Individual \$40; Family \$50; Nature Steward \$75; Audubon Advocate \$150). The membership number is 301-652-9188 x12, the address is 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

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This is the Voice of the Naturalist, a service of the Audubon Naturalist Society. This report was completed Tuesday, December 9, at 5 p.m.

Top birds this week are GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE in MD, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD in VA, and ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER in both MD and VA.

Other birds of interest include waterfowl, NORTHERN BOBWHITE, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, NORTHERN GOSHAWK, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, VIRGINIA RAIL, AMERICAN WOODCOCK, ICELAND and other gulls, SNOWY OWL, SHORT-EARED OWL, RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD, WESTERN KINGBIRD, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, SEDGE WREN, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, AMERICAN PIPIT, warblers, sparrows, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING, BREWER'S and other blackbirds, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, and PINE SISKIN.

A GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE made a rare visit to suburban Montgomery Co, MD. It was spotted Dec 3 at a pond at the northwest corner of Tuckerman Rd and Brewer's House Rd in North Bethesda, and it has continued to be seen near the pond, or on the grounds of nearby Georgetown Prep--where it could sometimes be seen from the sidewalk along Rockville Pike--through Dec 8. (If you wish to enter the school property, stop at the gate and explain why you are there.)

A CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD that has been visiting a feeder just north of Lynchburg, Bedford Co, VA, since mid-October was banded and definitively identified on Dec 6. This hatch-year male, which was back again Dec 7 and 8, can be viewed, thanks to the gracious hospitality of the property owners, at the rear of 207 Sandown Circle.

An ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER was discovered Dec 7, and was still present Dec 8, at Occoquan NWR, Prince William Co, VA. It was along Deephole Rd, initially north of Charlie Rd.

An ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER was found Dec 3, and seen again Dec 4, in Somerset Co, MD. The bird was hanging out along Coventry Parish Rd southeast of Rehobeth, near the banks of the Pokomoke River.

Two CACKLING GEESE were found Dec 4 along Presquile Rd west of Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot Co, MD. On Dec 2, 1 CACKLING GOOSE and 2 GREATER-WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were at Pickering Creek. On Dec 3, 2 CACKLING GEESE and 2 REDHEADS were among more than a dozen species of waterfowl in the vicinity of the Belle Haven Marina and the mouth of Hunting Creek, Fairfax Co, VA.

A EURASIAN WIGEON was reported from Ridgeway Park, Hampton, VA, on the afternoon of Dec 6. A EURASIAN WIGEON was found Dec 8 at a pond at the Bayside development off Rte 611 north of Assateague Island, Worester Co, MD.

A REDHEAD was present Dec 2 at Kershner's pond, off Rte 17 south of Burkittsville, Frederick Co, MD. A REDHEAD was found Dec 2 at Ft Smallwood Park, Anne Arundel Co, MD.

A female HARLEQUIN DUCK and a COMMON EIDER were again spotted at the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, on Dec 8.

Eight NORTHERN BOBWHITE were found Dec 6 at Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke Co, VA; they were in the field in front of the observation tower.

A RED-THROATED LOON was seen Dec 7 at Triadelphia Reservoir, from the boat ramp area off Greenbridge Rd in Montgomery Co. RED-THROATED LOONS were abundant at Indian River Inlet, DE, on Dec 6.

As many as 6 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS are again on display at Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co, MD, with sightings Dec 6 and 7. A VIRGINIA RAIL was observed along the refuge's Wildlife Drive (part of which is closed), as were 2 CACKLING GEESE.

A NORTHERN GOSHAWK was reported from Beltsville, Prince George's Co, MD, on Dec 2, while a likely NORTHERN GOSHAWK was seen not far away--over Greenbelt Lake--Dec 3.

Northampton Co, VA, is supporting a bonanza of AMERICAN WOODCOCKS; some 55 were counted from a car going 60 mph down Rte 13 on Dec 4. That same day a single AMERICAN WOODCOCK visited a yard in Talbot Co.

A first-winter ICELAND GULL was discovered Dec 6 at Brown Station landfill, Prince George's Co. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS were among the larids flocking to Schoolhouse Pond, Upper Marlboro, Prince George's Co, on Dec 4 and 6.

SNOWY OWLS continued to grab the attention of birders. The bird on Assateague Island was viewed on Dec 6, more than 3 miles down the ORV zone. Another specially arranged boat trip to Poplar Island, on Dec 2, again found the SNOWY OWL, as well as more than 50 SNOW BUNTINGS; both owl and buntings were present again Dec 4, and the owl was still around Dec 9. A SNOWY OWL visited Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore Co, MD, Dec 2.

In VA, a SNOWY OWL near Ruckersville, Greene Co, was refound and photographed Dec 6, and it was back in the area Dec 7. The bird favors fields on the east side of Rte 29 north of Rte 609 (although it has also visited yards about a mile away).

SHORT-EARED OWLS are frequenting the area around Blackwater NWR: on Dec 6, one was found along Shorter's Wharf Rd while 3 were found along Cedar Creek Rd--as were a

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and a SEDGE WREN. Two SHORT-EARED OWLS and a NORTHERN HARRIER were observed Dec 4 in the Russell Rd area of Garrett Co, MD.

Several area birders report lingering hummingbirds. One--apparently a hatch-year RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD--has been visiting a feeder since early fall in the Sampson's Wharf area of lower Northumberland Co, VA. Another likely RUFIOUS is visiting a feeder in Bedford Co, not far from the haunt of the Calliope. Yet another hummer continues to visit a yard in the Four Corners area of Silver Spring, Montgomery Co.

Birders scouring Somerset Co for the MD Ash-throated Flycatcher found a WESTERN KINGBIRD, as well as a LARK SPARROW, at Vessey's Orchard (north of Rehobeth) on Dec 5; these birds were also present on Dec 6.

A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was spotted Dec 7 in a field south and east of Blandy.

The LBJ Grove along the GW Parkway, next to the Columbia Island Marina, DC, continued to be a hotbed of warbler activity: on Dec 6 it showcased YELLOW-THROATED, PINE, and ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS (as well as 15 PINE SISKINS and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH). These birds were reported again Dec 7 and 8. (The LBJ Grove is accessible only from the southbound George Washington Parkway, between Memorial Bridge and the 14th St Bridges.) On Dec 6, 4 yellow PALM WARBLERS visited Kenilworth Park, NE DC--as did 2 AMERICAN PIPITS and a flyover SNOW BUNTING.

WARBLERS also continued to brightenthe Hopewell, VA, area, with reports of ORANGE-CROWNED, WILSON'S, and BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS on Dec 7 and 8. As of Dec 2, a WILSON'S WARBLER had spent the week in a backyard in Alexandria, VA. A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT turned up at Assateague's Bayside campground on Dec 5 (site C 49).

AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS were reported at a few spots, including Blandy and Occoquan, on Dec 6.

At least 10 LAPLAND LONGSPURS and a sprinkling of SNOW BUNTINGS have been working the fields around the intersection of Oland Rd and Rte 85 in Frederick Co, MD, with reports from Dec 4 through Dec 9.

The Rehobeth, MD fields hosting the Ash-throated Flycatcher also produced 2 BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS along with numerous RUSTY BLACKBIRDS on Dec 3 and 4. On Dec 8 a BREWER'S BLACKBIRD foraged with a flock of RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS near Blackwater NWR, along Egypt Rd 1/2 mile north of Key Wallace Drive.

A BALTIMORE ORIOLE visited a yard in Columbia, Howard Co, MD, Dec 6. On Dec 4, a BALTIMORE ORIOLE was spotted at Vessey's Orchard.

Some of this week's reports have been gleaned from the MDOsprey, VA-Bird, and DE-bird list servers.

The **Audubon Sanctuary Shop** (301-652-3606) is an excellent source for local guidebooks and many other nature-related titles.

To report bird sightings, e-mail your report to voice@AudubonNaturalist.org or call 301-652-1088 and select menu option 2. Please post reports before midnight Monday, identify the county as well as state, and include your name and a Tuesday morning contact, either

e-mail or phone.

Thank you for calling, and GOOD BIRDING.

*Of interest to the records committee.