

Voice of the Naturalist

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Coverage: MD/DC/VA/DE

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This is the Voice of the Naturalist, a service of the Audubon Naturalist Society. This report was completed Tuesday, April 15, at 1 p.m.

The top bird story of the week is the unrelenting influx of spring migrants. Unusual birds were MONK PARAKEET, PAINTED BUNTING, and WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL in MD and RED CROSSBILL in VA.

Other birds of interest include WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, loons, grebes, NORTHERN GANNET, AMERICAN BITTERN, herons, GLOSSY IBIS, raptors, shorebirds, gulls, terns, WHIP-POOR-WILL, CHIMNEY SWIFT, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, flycatchers, vireos, COMMON RAVEN, CLIFF SWALLOW, HOUSE and MARSH WRENS, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, HERMIT THRUSH, BROWN THRASHER, warblers, sparrows, ROSE-BREADED and BLUE GROSBEAKS, RUSTY BLACKBIRD, PURPLE FINCH, and PINE SISKIN.

On April 12, a MONK PARAKEET* was observed at a park at 12600 Falls Rd, Potomac, Montgomery Co, MD.

PAINTED BUNTING* was again seen at two sites Anne Arundel Co, MD, on the morning of April 9. Bird cams set up April 10 have documented bunting visits to a private yard in Annapolis on the morning of April 10 and to a feeder in Arnold on the evening of April 11 and the morning of April 12.

A pair of RED CROSSBILLS were seen April 10 at the entrance to a USFS shooting range in Wythe Co, VA, immediately beside county road 717, not far from the Little Creek exit of I-77.

After an absence of several weeks, a WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL reappeared at a feeder in Silver Spring, MD, April 10; it was back again April 13 and 14.

A WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was discovered April 12 at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, Queen Anne's Co, MD.

Four RED-THROATED LOONS were seen at Eastern Neck NWR, Kent Co, MD, on April 13. Migrating COMMON LOONS, sometimes in flights of dozens, have been widely noted.

A RED-NECKED GREBE was reported from Loch Raven Reservoir, Baltimore Co, MD on April 14. HORNED GREBES were noted at Riley's Lock, Montgomery Co, April 9, and Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA, April 10.

NORTHERN GANNETS were again plunging into the Chesapeake Bay in the vicinity of the Bay Bridge; more than 100 were reported from Kent Narrows, Queen Anne's Co, April 8.

Reports of AMERICAN BITTERN came from Hughes Hollow, Montgomery Co, on April 12; Huntley Meadows April 12; and the Manassas Airport WMP, Prince William Co, VA, April 13 (along with LITTLE BLUE HERON and VIRGINIA RAIL).

Two SNOWY EGRETS were seen at Stony Point Park, Caroline Co, MD, April 12. A TRICOLORED HERON was spotted flying over Pt. Lookout SP, St. Mary's Co, MD, on April 12. On April 12, a CATTLE EGRET and a GLOSSY IBIS were unusual sightings in the Jamestown, VA, area. GREEN HERONS are back in force.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were spotted near Fletcher's Boathouse, NW DC; Riley's Lock; Ben Brenman Park, Alexandria; and from a paddleboat on the Tidal Basin, SW DC. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were reported from Sligo Creek Parkway, Montgomery Co, as well as the Jones Falls Trail (500 meters downstream from the Druid Hill Park trailhead) in Baltimore.

Five GLOSSY IBIS were found April 11 at Patuxent River Park's Mt. Calvert area, Anne Arundel Co.

BROAD-WINGED HAWKS are in the air, with sizable flights reported from hawk watches at Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore, and Manchester, Carroll Co, MD, as well as smaller numbers from numerous locations.

A dark-phase ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was observed flying over central DC on April 14.

PEREGRINE FALCONS are using a nest box beneath the I-495/American Legion Bridge over the Potomac, and can be observed from the VA side from the Potomac Heritage Trail. (The trail can be accessed from Turkey Run Park off GW Parkway, Fairfax Co; the bridge is a 1.9-mile hike upstream.)

On April 13, fields along the entrance road to Bombay Hook NWR, DE, were covered with hundreds of BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS, and among them, 3 AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVERS. BLACK-NECKED STILTS are back at Bombay Hook. A SOLITARY SANDPIPER was reported from Folly Quarter Rd, Howard Co, MD, on April 12. SPOTTED SANDPIPERS were seen April 11 at Lake Needwood, Montgomery Co, and April 12 at Jug Bay.

LAUGHING GULLS made it as far north as Hance's Point, North East, Cecil Co, MD, on April 14. A LITTLE GULL was observed April 13 at Fort Smallwood Park, Anne Arundel Co.

CASPIAN TERNS were noted at numerous locations. ROYAL TERNS showed up April 13 at the Eastern Shore of VA NWR, Northampton Co, and at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, St. Mary's Co.

WHIP-POOR-WILLS were heard April 10 at a farm near Piscataway Park, Prince George's Co, MD. On April 14, 25-30 Whips were calling at the Patuxent North Tract, Anne Arundel Co.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS were noted in Hagerstown, MD, and Pokomoke City, MD, on April 10; Huntley Meadows, April 12; and the Manassas Airport WMP April 13.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS have appeared at several area feeders and gardens.

On April 11, a COMMON RAVEN flew over Chinguapin Parkway, on the far north side of Baltimore. A COMMON RAVEN was noted April 12 over Western RP, Howard Co.

An EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE was singing at Little Bennett RP, Montgomery Co, on April 13. GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHERS are edging north, with reports from Great Dismal Swamp NWR, Suffolk, VA, April 12, and Millville Rd, Worcester Co, MD, April 13. EASTERN KINGBIRD appeared at Occoquan NWR Woodbridge, Prince William Co, April 12.

Heading up swallow reports this week was a CLIFF SWALLOW seen April 14 at Piney Run Park, Carroll Co.

Vireos are all around: WHITE-EYED VIREO at Hughes Hollow April 11; at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, NE DC, April 12; at Huntley Meadows April 12. On April 12 BLUE-HEADED VIREOS were seen at Huntley Meadows; Pennyfield Lock, Montgomery Co; Oxbow Lake, Anne Arundel Co; Vienna, Fairfax Co; and on April 13, at Great Falls Park, VA. On April 12 YELLOW-THROATED VIREO was at Kerr Reservoir in far southern VA (Mecklenberg Co) and RED-EYED VIREO at Great Dismal Swamp.

HOUSE WRENS arrived, too, with reports from yards in Northern VA and Carroll Co, MD. Good numbers of MARSH WRENS were found April 11 by a kayaker at Elkton Marsh in Cecil Co, MD.

Numerous birders enjoyed the songs of RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS and HERMIT THRUSHES. BROWN THRASHERS were in good voice, too.

Among 19 species of WARBLER were ORANGE-CROWNED (Weyanoke Sanctuary, Norfolk); NORTHERN PARULA, YELLOW-THROATED, PROTHONOTARY (Riley's Lock); YELLOW (Henricus Park, Richmond); BLACK-THROATED BLUE (Possum Point, Prince William Co, and Great Falls, VA); BLACK-THROATED GREEN (eastern Buchanan Co, VA); PRAIRIE (Hughes Hollow); AMERICAN REDSTART (Chesapeake Bay EC); SWAINSON'S and HOODED (Great Dismal Swamp); OVENBIRD (Shad Landing SP,

Worcester Co, MD); and COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: at least 18 were tallied in NoVA on April 12.

Standouts among the week's dozen or so SPARROW species were a GRASSHOPPER SPARROW seen April 13 at Ben Brenman Park, VESPER in Howard Co and Washington Co, MD, and lingering AMERICAN TREE and WHITE-CROWNED.

On April 12, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS graced feeders in Burke, Fairfax Co, and Columbia, Howard Co. A BLUE GROSBEAK was reported April 12 from Governor Bridge Rd, Bowie, Prince George's Co.

RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were again reported from numerous locations.

PURPLE FINCHES swarmed area feeders, including those at the ANS Rust Nature Sanctuary in Leesburg, Loudoun Co, VA. In Russell Co, in far southwestern VA, flocks of more than 200 were reported.

A few PINE SISKINS were still around; one report came from Fairfax Station April 11. On April 12, as many as 25 were flitting around the conifer grove at Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke Co, VA.

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

Finding Birds in the National Capital Area by Claudia Wilds is an excellent source for directions to many birding sites. The [Audubon Sanctuary Shop](#) (301-652-3606) is an excellent source for this 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.