

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, August 19, at 3:30 p.m.

Top birds this week are GREAT WHITE EGRET* in VA, BLACK-HEADED GULL in MD, WHITE-WINGED DOVE* in MD, and HOUSE CROW* in VA.

Other birds of interest include SNOW GOOSE, shearwaters and other pelagic birds, herons, WHITE IBIS, MISSISSIPPI KITE, shorebirds, terns, EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE, COMMON Nighthawk, flycatchers including OLIVE-SIDED and YELLOW-BELLIED, and warblers.

A GREAT WHITE EGRET*, present at False Cape SP, Virginia Beach, VA, since Aug 4, was seen and well-photographed on Aug 16. It was in the southwestern corner of the main freshwater impoundment in the northern part of the park on the boundary with the Back Bay NWR. It is presumed to be the same bird that was at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA, earlier this summer. It is thought to be an Old World form.

A BLACK-HEADED GULL in non-breeding plumage continues to be seen on the north side of Eagle Harbor at Trueman Point, south of Cedar River Park on the Patuxent River in MD, with the most recent report from Aug 18. Birders should note that Trueman Point is private property. Searches for the bird should be by boat or scope from a public land position such as Trueman Point Road. Most recently it has been reported perched on a tall piling about 50 feet from Trueman's Landing.

A WHITE-WINGED DOVE was seen and photographed at Truitt's Landing, Worcester Co, MD, on Aug 17. It was on a snag at the west edge of the marsh on Truitt's Landing Rd before one reaches Boxiron Landing.

A HOUSE CROW*, an Asian species of crow that often hitches rides on large ships, was seen in Norfolk, VA on Aug 13 on Terminal Blvd a couple of miles east of Hampton Blvd.

A dark morph SNOW GOOSE flew over a group of birders at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project, Loudoun Co, VA, on Aug 16.

The pelagic trip out of Lewes, DE on Aug 16 found good numbers of CORY'S SHEARWATERS, several AUDUBON'S SHEARWATERS, GREATER SHEARWATERS, and also had great looks at RED-NECKED PHALAROPES in both MD & DE waters, and an adult BRIDLED TERN, as well as four PARASITIC JAEGERs in DE waters on the way back.

A juvenile LITTLE BLUE HERON was at Lilypons, Frederick Co, MD on Aug 17.

Three TRICOLORED HERONS, along with a lot of shorebirds, were reported from Crewe's Channel, Henrico Co, MD, on Aug 15 and 18. A juvenile TRICOLORED HERON was seen on Aug 16 at North Beach Marsh, Calvert Co, MD.

Immature WHITE IBIS were sighted Aug 15 at both Hughes Hollow, Montgomery Co, MD and at Bear Swamp, Bombay Hook NWR, DE.

MISSISSIPPI KITES continued to be reported from several different locations this past week. There were reports from both the Waynewood and Kings Park areas of Fairfax Co, VA, with several reports from the latter where the birds were seen off of Braddock Rd on Victoria Rd near where it intersects with Thames St. MISSISSIPPI KITES were also seen flying along Duncan Road in Dinwiddie County, VA, with the most recent report from August 18. And on Aug 17, 18, and 19, MISSISSIPPI KITES were also seen at Piscataway Park, Prince George's Co, MD. On Aug 19 three were seen flying and diving over the nearby Hard Bargain Farm.

Shorebird and wader reports came from many locations this past week including Craney Island, Portsmouth, VA; Paper Mill Flats, Baltimore Co, MD; Bombay Hook NWR, DE; Hart-Miller Island in Baltimore Co, MD; Poplar Island in Talbot Co, MD, as well as a number of other locations.

Four UPLAND SANDPIPERS and an AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER were reported from the Salisbury Airport, Wicomico Co, MD on Aug 18.

Two MARBLED GODWITS were seen in the central lagoon at the Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve in lower Northumberland Co, VA at the end of Rte 605, Ball's Neck Road, about eight miles from Kilmarnock on Aug 16. The same day a MARBLED GODWIT, along with two WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS, five RED-NECKED PHALAROPES and a BLACK TERN were among the thousands of shorebirds at Craney Island.

The shorebirds at Hart-Miller Island, on Aug 16, included a WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER, five STILT SANDPIPERS, and a first-year FRANKLIN'S GULL. Among the many shorebirds at the Berlin Sewer Treatment Plant, Worcester Co, MD on Aug 17 were a BAIRD'S SANDPIPER and a STILT SANDPIPER, both of which were juveniles. A juvenile STILT SANDPIPER was also reported at Paper Mill Flats on Aug 16.

A WILSON'S SNIBE was seen at the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project Aug 16.

Two WILSON'S PHALAROPES and one immature RED-NECKED PHALAROPE were spotted at Bear Swamp, Bombay Hook this past week.

A BLACK TERN was seen Aug 15 at Riley's Lock on the C&O Canal. A juvenile BLACK TERN was seen at Craney Island, Portsmouth, VA on Aug 18.

COMMON NIGHTHAWKS were reported from several locations this past week including reports from the Tysons Corner area of Fairfax Co, VA, where about 20 were seen flying in the lights of the tower buildings at Gallows Rd and Boone Blvd the night of Aug 18.

An OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was seen Aug 17 at Black Walnut Point on Tilghman Island, Talbot Co, MD.

A YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was found at the Rock Creek Park (DC) Maintenance Yard on Aug 17.

A LEAST FLYCATCHER was the highlight of the Dyke Marsh, Fairfax Co, VA walk on Aug 17.

Warbler migration appears to be picking up with reports of warblers at the usual hotspots, such as the Maintenance Yard in Rock Creek Park, DC and Monticello Park, Alexandria, 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.