

Voice of the Naturalist

Date: **9/30/2008**

Coverage: MD/DC/VA/DE

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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, September 30, at 3:00 p.m.

Top birds this week are WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL in WV and SABINE'S GULL in MD.

Other birds of interest include SNOW GOOSE, GREAT CORMORANT, NORTHERN GOSHAWK, KING RAIL, shorebirds, SANDWICH TERN, BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, CHIMNEY SWIFT, woodpeckers, flycatchers including YELLOW-BELLIED, PHILADELPHIA VIREO, thrushes including BICKNELL'S, warblers including CONNECTICUT, and LINCOLN'S SPARROW.

A WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL has been present since mid-Sept in a pond at the Huntfield subdivision south of Charles Town, Jefferson Co, WV. Because it appeared in the wake of Hurricane Hanna, some area birders believe that it blew in naturally and others believe it is an escapee. It can be found by taking Rte 340 south at Charles Town from the interchange of US 340, Rt. 9, and Rt. 51, go about 3.3 miles to Augustine Avenue where you need to take a sharp right. The Huntfield subdivision is just ahead on the left. Take the second left onto Prospect Hills Blvd. At the circle/obelisk, go right onto Butler Street. At the next circle, go 3/4 of the way around circle, taking the first right (Colston Road). The pond will be on your right a little ways ahead.

On Sept 26 a possible SABINE GULL was found in the Ocean City Inlet, Worcester Co, MD.

Eight SNOW GEESSE were seen flying over Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore Co, MD, on Sept 23 and 17 were reported Sept 26 from Scott's Landing, Worcester, Co, MD as the flock at Bombay Hook NWR, DE, continues to grow.

A GREAT CORMORANT was observed at Black Walnut Point before a trip to Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD, on Sept 23.

An immature NORTHERN GOSHAWK was reported from the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch, near Waynesboro, VA, on Sept 28.

Four KING RAILS were among the 73 bird species found on a Sept 27 birding trip to the Occoquan Bay NWR, Woodbridge, Prince William Co, VA.

Two AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVERS were found on a trip to Poplar Island, Talbot Co, MD, on Sept. 23 along with two AMERICAN AVOCETS and four WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS. An AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER and two MARBLED GODWITS were a few of the many shorebirds seen at Chincoteague NWR, Accomack Co, VA, on the same day. On Sept 27 an immature AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER was found along Chelsea Rd, Harford Co, MD.

A flock of SANDWICH TERNS, six of whom were banded, was found on the beaches south of the town harbor in Cape Charles, Accomack Co, VA, on Sept 26.

A BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO was found Sept 24 at Blue Mash, Montgomery Co, MD.

CHIMNEY SWIFTS continue to be found in large numbers descending into chimneys at dusk and exiting from them at dawn. On Sept 24 over 150 were observed leaving the chimney at East Silver Spring Elementary School, Montgomery Co, MD. The evening of Sept 27 between 300 and 400 swifts were seen descending into a chimney at the Fairfax Co Juvenile District Court building in Fairfax City, VA.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS were reported from a variety of locations this past week with 10 reported from the boardwalk at Calvert Cliffs SP, Calvert Co, MD on Sept 28 and an amazing 32 RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS were reported from the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch near Waynesboro, VA on Sept 29.

There were also several reports of YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS returning to the area this past week.

There was a report of a YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER at Greenbury Point, Anne Arundel Co, MD on Sept 24. A YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was also found at Mason Neck SP, Fairfax Co, VA on Sept 28. An ALDER FLYCATCHER was observed from the Conowingo Dam, Harford Co, MD on Sept 27.

A PHILADELPHIA VIREO was seen near Grovesnor in Rock Creek Park, NW DC on Sept. 23. Another was reported from Terrapin Park, Kent Island, Queen Anne's Co, MD, on Sept 24. On Sept 26, a PHILADELPHIA VIREO was the highlight of several visitors to a yard on Compton Mountain in Buchanan County, VA. And on Sept 27 one was seen in Rock Creek Park in picnic area 17/18.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSHES were among the different species of thrushes found moving through the area this past week. One was found at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, Howard Co on Sept 26 and another at the Mason Neck SP on Sept 28. Two GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSHES were reported from the Governor's Bridge Natural Area & Canoe Launch, Prince George's Co, MD on Sept 29.

A BICKNELL'S THRUSH was the highlight of the banding station at Kiptopeke SP, Accomack Co, VA on Sept 29.

Warbler migration continued throughout the area with a wide diversity of different species being reported from a number of different locations.

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was sighted Sept 30 at Hughes Hollow (also known the McKee Beshers WMA), Montgomery Co, MD, a ¼ mile past the impoundment parking lot. A CONNECTICUT WARBLER was found Sept 23 at Terrapin Point Park, Anne Arundel Co, MD. A hatch year CONNECTICUT WARBLER was found Sept 28 at the Mason Neck SP, Fairfax Co, VA.

Two LINCOLN'S SPARROWS were among seven sparrow species found at Western Regional Park, Howard Co, MD, on Sept 27.

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.