

Creek W.M.A., Salem, NJ Mar. 19 (WDa, D. Merkh). A Henslow's Sparrow was heard at Rehoboth Beach, DE May 13 (APE), and 4–5 pairs were at a traditional nest site at W. Nicholson, Wyoming, PA in May (WR). The usual scattered reports came from the few remaining breeding areas in upstate New York. Seaside Sparrows have reportedly undergone a precipitous decline on Long Island (*vide* E. Salzman); observers along the other coastal areas should keep an eye on this locally abundant species.

A bizarre possible Yellow-headed x Red-winged blackbird hybrid visited Koch's feeder in Easton, PA Mar. 16–17; it had blotches of yellow on the head, and one red and one white epaulet. There were at least three Yellow-headed Blackbirds in Salem, NJ in March–April, one at Kestrel Haven, Burdett, Schuylers, NY Mar. 25 (J. Gregoire), and another at Tiff Nature Preserve Apr. 30–May 20 (WW, RA *et al.*). Three Brewer's Blackbirds remained at Leipsic, Kent, DE to Mar. 27 (NP), one was at Kestrel Haven May 2, and another was at Hamlin Beach May 21 (G.O.S. Big Day Team). Up to four Boar-tailed Grackles at Helmetta, Middlesex, NJ Apr 8–9, were far from tidewater (T. Ostrand, P. Adams.)

As noted in the winter report, Red-crossbills were widespread in the Adirondacks February–March. Yunick collected a total of 27 road-kill specimens in the 2 months and measured most of them to be *L. c. minor* from the Pacific Northwest, plus a few of the local *L. c. neogaea* (RPY). White-winged Crossbills were also abundant, and Yunick found a dead juvenile young of the year at Arietta, Hamilton, Mar. 26.

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Middle Atlantic Coast Region

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March and April were warmer and drier than normal, but May was cooler and wetter. As a result, many passerine species arrived early, but the bulk of the flight was delayed by weather in May. Several cold fronts with rain grounded many migrants on the coast, resulting in the best passerine flight in recent memory, according to Dyke. Elsewhere, numbers of migrants were as low as ever. Reporting reached an all time low as well. Our sincere thanks to all those who submitted notes to us and who reported sightings to the Voice of the Naturalist and the Virginia Birdline.

Abbreviations: Bay (*Chesapeake Bay*); Black (*Blackwater N. W.R.*); C.B.B.T. (*Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel*); Chinc. (*Chincoteague N. W.R.*); D.C. (*District of Columbia*); P.N.A.S. (*Patuxent Naval Air Station*).

Grebes to Ibises

An ad. Pied-billed Grebe with four young was noted in Denton *Caroline*, MD May 15 (MWH) for one of the few Maryland breeding records away from Deal I. Horned Grebe numbers were way up this spring: counts of 1000 on the Patapsco R., Mar. 23 (SR), 225 at Belleview, *Talbot*, Mar. 30 (HTA), and 100 at Morgantown, *Charles*, Apr. 16 (GJ) reflect the species' historical abundance here. Three reports of Red-necked Grebe Mar. 11–Apr. 16 (v.o.) was about average. The only Eared Grebe was one at Seneca May 2–3 (MAT, DC, MO *et al.*), the 2nd for *Montgomery*, MD.

Northern Gannets continue to use not only the Bay but also its tributaries. This year, 40 were far up the Potomac R. at Cobb I., Apr. 1 (GJ), a record count for *Charles*. American White Pelicans were notably absent from their usual Chinc. haunts, but one was at Broad Cr., *Prince George's*, May 31 (S Archer, †) for a rare Maryland sighting and the first for *Prince George's*. A Great Cormorant at Conowingo Dam Apr. 18 (EJS, EB) was the only one away from the coast. Two-hundred Double-crested Cormorants at Sycamore Landing Apr. 9 was an excep-

tional count for *Montgomery*, MD, but no other large numbers were reported. Anhingas had the best showing ever in the Region. In Maryland, where there are only a handful of records, a female was seen by many at L. Merle, *Frederick*, MD Apr. 9–22 (J.A. Alspaugh *et al.*, m.ob., ph. †) and another was near Sharptown, *Wicomico*, May 13 (EL). In Virginia, one was at the traditional Stumpy L., May 7 (G. Harris) and another was at Dismal Swamp May 20 or 21 (B. Lockard).

American Bitterns were in good numbers, with high counts of three at King's Cr., *Talbot*, Apr. 26 and four at Hughes Hollow Apr. 30 (MO). Least Bitterns were also well reported, with a maximum of seven on the *Dorchester* May Count May 13 (HTA *et al.*). An impressive 172 Great Blue Herons were amassed at Conowingo Dam Apr. 18. (EJS, EB) and a Tricolored Heron was at Dyke Marsh Mar. 30–Apr. 1 (A. Sargeant, BY) for one of the few D.C. area records. An imm. White Ibis at W. Ocean City May 1–5 (C&ES, SHD) represented one of the few spring records for Maryland but two adults at Fisherman's I., where a few pairs nest, May 29 (GLA, HTA) were more expected. Four Glossy Ibis in the D.C. area were more than usual. Single birds were seen at Alexandria Apr. 14 (BL) and D.C., Apr. 16–18 (S. Rudy), and two were at Huntley Meadows Apr. 29–May 3 (D. Dacol *et al.*).

Waterfowl

The Pocomoke City Greater White-fronted Goose from the winter season was last seen Mar. 4 (SHD) and others were at Merkle W.M.A., *Prince George's*, Mar. 3 (D. Perkins) and Black., Mar. 11 (SSu). Excellent water-

fowl counts were made by Armistead at his Bellevue, *Talbot*, property, such as 520 Lesser Scaup, 9125 Oldsquaw, and 1070 Bufflehead Mar. 17; 1830 Surf Scoters Mar. 29; and 265 Com. Goldeneyes Mar. 30. Redheads were scarce, with the best being 11 at Centennial Park, *Howard*, Mar. 11 (JF, TDC). Six Harlequin Ducks were at Ocean City Mar. 14 (SSu), three were still there Apr. 11 (JR), and two were at the C.B.B.T., Apr. 7 (C. Vaughn). The only inland scoter was a Surf at Laytonsville, *Montgomery*, MD May 13–16 (PP, RH *et al.*).

Raptors to Rails

Fort Smallwood hawk watch in Maryland received a record 391.9 hours of coverage this spring (SR *et al.*) and the season total of 12,007 birds beats last year's record. Records were 148 Black Vultures, 34 Bald Eagles, and 3024 Broad-winged Hawks. Sharpshinned Hawks were up slightly for the 3rd consecutive year, but numbers were still barely half of what they were a decade ago. Season totals of 94 Red-shouldered and 196 Red-tailed hawks were inexplicably low.

Kites made news again this spring. An Am. Swallow-tailed was seen at Scientist's Cliffs, *Calvert*, late Apr. 21 (D. Bohaska) and another (or the same) passed Ft. Smallwood, *Anne Arundel*, the following morning (SR, RR, CO), providing the first records for these counties. Mississippi Kites were seen near Andrews Air Force Base May 17 (M.J. Braun), an adult at nearby Upper Marlboro May 19 (B. Peterjohn, M. Gustafson), a sub-adult at the same location the next day (P. O'Brien), and a sub-adult at Ft. Smallwood May 20 (SR, HW *et al.*). The only N. Goshawk was one in D.C., Mar. 2 (PK).

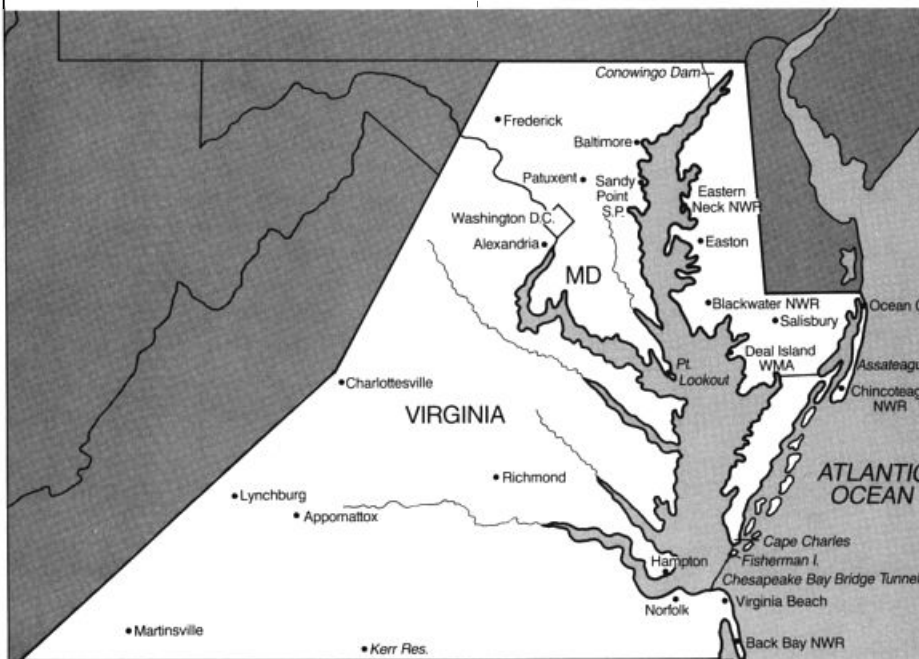
Ring-necked Pheasants were reported in decent numbers by recent standards, with reports from *Frederick*, *Howard*, *Montgomery*, *Queen Anne's*, *Dorchester* and *Loudon*. A Ruffed Grouse of unknown origin was at Hughes Hollow, *Montgomery*, MD Mar. 4 (J. Whittaker). Although grouse occur barely 20 mi away in the Catoctin Mts., a vagrant seems unlikely. Wild Turkey continue to do well and were widely reported (v.o.), but N. Bobwhites continue to decline and are now found in a fraction of their former abundance. Most reports were coastal (v.o.). King Rails were more widely reported than usual, with reports from 9 locations, 5 on the E. Shore, 2 on the W. Shore, and 2 in the Piedmont (v.o.).

Shorebirds

Black-necked Stilts were as widespread as ever, with \leq seven at Deal I., May 7 (JR, JE), five at Chinc., May 20 (E. Johnson), and nine at Craney I., May 8 & 13 (LW, NB). Blackwater N.W.R. hosted a better-than-average concentration of shorebirds, with 150 Greater and 100 Lesser yellowlegs and a Long-billed Dowitcher Apr. 26 (MO), and 35 Pectoral Sandpipers Apr. 15 (HTA). Upland Sandpipers were few and all w. of the Bay, with a peak of five at P.N.A.S., Apr. 20 (KR). Virginia's vast and nearly unreachable E. Shore marshes surely harbor the bulk of the Regions shorebirds. Counts such as 250 Whimbrel at Quinby, *Accomack*, May 18 (LW) and twenty Marbled Godwits at Willis Wharf, *Northampton*, Apr. 28 (*vide* JH) give us only a taste. The Red Knot that wintered at Ocean City was last seen Mar. 30 (C&DB). Good counts of White-rumped Sandpipers included 30 at Craney I., May 13 and 85 at Chinc. along with three Stilt Sandpipers (NB). Single Dunlins at Lilypons May 6 (MO *et al.*) and Triadelphia Res., *Howard*, May 15 (JS) provided good Piedmont records. Among the rarer shorebirds were a Ruff at Chinc., May 12 (MG) and two Wilson's Phalaropes there Apr. 29 (JH, PGD). Nine Long-billed Dowitchers at Bestpitch, *Dorchester*, Apr. 8 may represent a spring high count for Maryland; another was at Black., Apr. 26. More unusual was a single Long-billed at Laytonsville May 14–16 (PP, RH, DC, MO *et al.*), only the 2nd for *Montgomery*, MD. There are only ten prior spring records for Maryland.

Gulls to Terns

The only Piedmont Laughing Gulls were four at Triadelphia Res., *Howard*, Apr. 23 (JF, JS). Four Little Gulls was about average: singles were at Back R., Apr. 1 (EJS, SS, PO) and Beaverdam Res., *Loudon*, Apr. 2 (D. Abbott), and two were at Dulles Airport the same day (BL, E. Jeffries). The only Com.



Black-headed Gull was at Conowingo Apr. 2 (GJ) & 18 (EJS, EB). Bonaparte's Gull numbers peaked at a modest 1518 at Back R., Apr. 1 (EJS), but 147 Apr. 16 at L. Kittamaquundi in landlocked *Howard* (BO) was a good count. Numbers of Bonaparte's have been down in recent years.

The star rarity of the season was an ad. **Black-tailed Gull** at Grandview Beach, *Hampton*, Mar. 22–Apr. 26 (BT, BP, EMW *et al.*, m.ob.), a first for Virginia and a 2nd for the Region. The first was July 4–9, 1984 at Sandy Point S.P. This native of e. Asia has been recorded on this side of the Pacific several times in Alaska and once each in British Columbia, Manitoba, California, Maryland, Rhode Island (also summer 1995), and Belize. A number of these records have been rejected on questions of origin, but the species range and the emerging pattern of vagrancy is strikingly similar to that of Slaty-backed Gulls, whose origin is never questioned.

Owls to Shrikes

The impressive Short-eared Owl concentration at Taneytown, *Carroll*, MD dwindled to five birds by Mar. 4 (M. Bowen) and two by Mar. 12 (E. Gravatte). A Chuck-will's-widow in Arlington May 11 (L. Robertson) was the first D.C. area report in a number of years. Just as unusual was a Whip-poor-will on Roosevelt I., D.C., Apr. 14 (BD). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird Mar. 26 in Columbia, *Howard* (*fide* PD) beat the previous early arrival by one day. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were widely reported for their best showing in years (v.o.). Red-cockaded Woodpecker still barely holds on in the Region. Two were seen at Waverly, *Sussex*, Apr. 30 (HTA, GLA).

Seven Olive-sided Flycatchers May 3–27 (v.o.) was a bit above par. Always rare in spring, single Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were reported from Norfolk, VA May 14 (NB), Rockville, MD May 16 (MO), and *Arlington*, VA May 17 (PGD). Also rare were four Alder Flycatchers: singles at P.N.A.S., May 13 (DL), Schooley Mill Park, *Howard*, May 18–20 (JS, NM), *Arlington* May 19 (PGD), and Layhill Park, *Montgomery*, MD May 20 (N&FS). The only coastal Willow Flycatcher was one at Norfolk May 13 (NB). A flock of 150 Horned Larks in *Howard* Mar. 12 (JF, TDC) was an unusually large number for mid-March. Normally by this date winter flocks have departed and local breeders have paired off and begun nesting. Only 3 reports of Bank Swallow from heavily birded *Howard* (*fide*, JS) was surprising if not alarming.

Brown-headed Nuthatches continue to be scarce. Despite 45.5 party hours of effort on the *Dorchester* May Count May 13, the Armisteads *et al.* found only six. Probably holdovers from the mild winter, six Sedge

Wrens were singing at Truitt Landing, *Worcester*, Apr. 27 (MO). Another was at Northwest Branch Park, *Montgomery*, MD May 13 (HY). Gray-checked Thrushes were reported in above-average numbers (v.o.), but no big nocturnal flights were noted. Other thrushes were in typical numbers, but 25 Hermits in Rockville Apr. 22 (MO) was a high count there. A Gray Catbird at Hughes Hollow Mar. 11 (N&FS) probably overwintered. The most unusual albino of the season was a N. Mockingbird in Reston Apr. 19 (J. Goodson). Three parties censusing *Dorchester* May 13 found only three Brown Thrashers, a new low in 25 years (HTA). The N. Shrike that wintered at Lucketts was last seen Mar. 10 (BL). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from Nokesville, Manassas, and Lilypons (v.o.).

Vireos to Warblers

Solitary Vireos were in good numbers and came through a little later than usual (v.o.) There was a scattering of early warbler arrivals in April, but the traditional early May wave never materialized. The best flights took place in mid-May but the numbers were not spectacular. A Blackburnian Warbler at Mason Springs, *Charles*, Apr. 15 (GJ) was 4 days earlier than any previous Maryland report. One of the best fallouts in the Piedmont took place on the afternoon of May 11 in *Howard* and *Baltimore* (*fide* JS). On the coast where migrants are normally scarce, the Armisteads had one of the best *Dorchester* May Counts ever, with 24 species of warblers May 13 (HTA *et al.*, 3 parties). Eleven Golden-winged Warblers Apr. 20–May 8 (v.o.) was above average, but even more unusual were five "Brewster's" and four "Lawrence's" warblers. An Orange-crowned Warbler at Neavitt, *Talbot*, Mar. 25 (G. Didden) probably wintered locally, but one in D.C., May 4 (B. Swift) was in the typical migration period. Most other warblers were in unremarkable numbers. Some of the top counts were 27 Black-throated Blues, 78 Am. Redstarts, and 20 Kentuckys at Rockburn Branch Park, *Howard*, May 13 (BO), 38 Blackpolls in *Arlington* May 19 (PGD), and >10 Canadas at Great Falls Park, VA May 16 (BH). For the first time in over a decade, a Swainson's Warbler was found at Great Falls Park, VA May 12+ (HE *et al.*, m.ob.). Several Swainson's Warblers were also reported from the Pocomoke Swamp area (v.o.), where they still show up from time to time, and ≤seven were seen in Dismal Swamp, the species' only stronghold in the Region, in late April (HTA, GLA).

Buntings to Finches

An exceptionally early Indigo Bunting was at Bull Run, *Manassas*, Mar. 12 (S. Ellis). A Dickcissel at Lucketts Mar. 10 (BL) was

probably a wintering bird. Other Dickcissels included two at Lilypons May 12+ (B. Augustine, A. Mitchell *et al.*) and a nice count of 12 May 19 (L. Weinberg) at Curles Neck Farm near Richmond, currently the most reliable site in the Region. Single Henslow's Sparrows were reported from Ashburn Farm, *Brunswick*, Apr. 29 (R. Clapp) and Saxis May 22 (NB). This species is gone as a breeder in the Maryland part of the Region, but still holds on in Virginia. Twenty-four Lincoln's Sparrows Apr. 24–May 20 (v.o.) continues an increasing trend for this species. As usual, none was on the coast. Rusty Blackbirds were reported in above-average numbers, with the best counts being 200 at Hughes Hollow Mar. 18 (RS) and 100 at Myrtle Grove W.M.A. the next day (GJ). Winter finches are back to being scarce. Only about 30 Purple Finches were reported, probably their worst showing ever (v.o.). Perhaps a better indication of their scarcity is that none was reported from heavily birded *Howard* (*fide* JS)

Exotics

A Monk Parakeet was seen at Dyke Marsh Apr. 1 (BY).

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