

of *Wyoming*, where Reid reports that the traditional W. Nicolson field, where at least 2 pairs fledged young this summer, was cut clean in July; one summered and probably bred near Folkston (WR).

↘ The most remarkable sparrow of the season was a singing ♂ **Le Conte's Sparrow** in Lisbon Twp, *St. Lawrence*, NY June 23–July 28 (DDiT, m.ob.), the Region's first summer record. The bird apparently remained unmated.

↘ House Finches suffering with conjunctivitis were very widely reported, and in some areas, such as n. *Saratoga*, NY (RPY) they seemed "very scarce."

### Exotics

A Black Swan was at SCMM July 8 (K. Seager); two Spotted Doves were at Whitesboro, NJ June 13 (RC *et al.*).

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# Middle Atlantic Coast Region

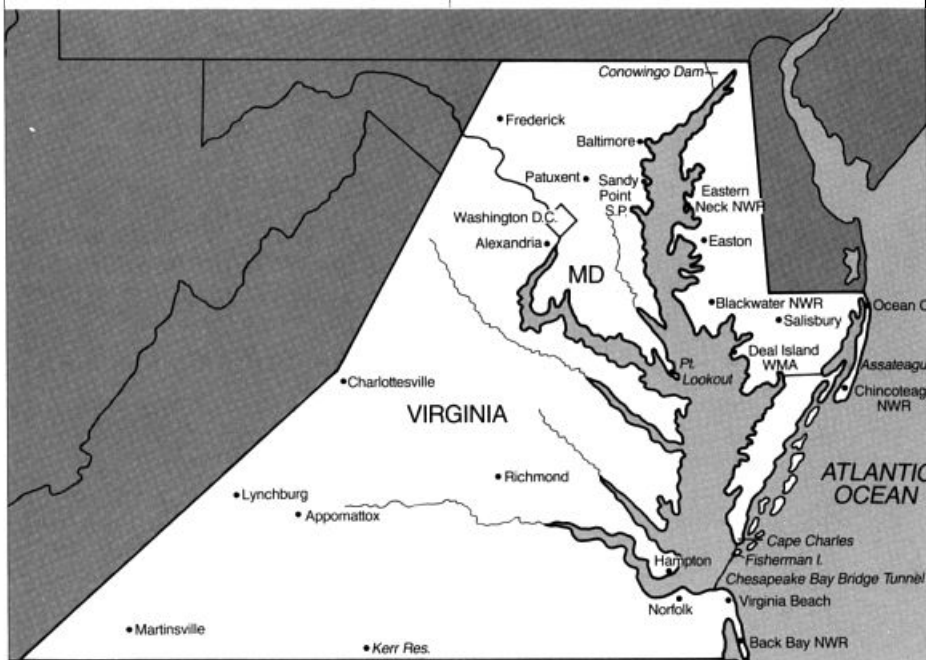
## MARSHALL J. ILIFF

Weather in June was about average, with most of the precipitation at the end of the month. July was very hot and dry, Ringer noted. Thanks to all who reported their sightings, and especially to the county compilers and hotline operators who made all their reports available. Thanks also to Jim Stasz for his exceptional work in compiling and organizing the reports, and to Gene Scarpulla and Jim for help editing my first season report.

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

## Loons to Waterfowl

Nine reports of Com. Loons were about average and were mostly summering non-



breeders on inland lakes and rivers, but five at Philpott L., *Patrick*, VA June 7–9 may have been the last migrants of the spring since at least one was a calling adult in breeding plumage (MA, LR). The only Greater Shearwater was one seen sitting on the surf at Fisherman's Island N.W.R., *Northampton*, VA June 19 (*fide* LW), while the only Wilson's Storm-Petrel report from the Bay came from Sharp's I. Flats June 12 (JE), one of few reports for *Talbot*, MD.

— American White Pelicans were again notably absent from Chinc., but one reported sitting on an eggless nest at Fisherman's Island N.W.R., June 19 (*fide* LW) may have been one of the former Chinc. birds; could they be breeding in the Region? Brown Pelicans continue to penetrate farther into the Bay and in higher numbers, mirroring the early spring Gannet invasions that have become commonplace in recent years. Primarily immatures, but including  $\leq$ eight adults, were seen through the season at Pt. Lookout, *Saint Mary's*, MD, peaking at 19 June 28 (PC). Other notable reports were singles at Brannock's Bay June 11 (JE), one adult at Holland I., one immature at Pone I., and seven at Spring I., July 2 (HTA, JWT), all *Dorchester*, MD. These, however, were overshadowed by the 46 sub-adults flying up the Bay June 13, seen from N. Beach, *Calvert*, providing a record high for the Maryland portion of the Bay (JLS). The *Accomack* Cheeseman I. colony, VA contained 150 flying birds, >44 flightless juveniles, and 11 nests July 6 (HTA, JSW).

— Double-crested Cormorants have been colonizing the Bay in recent years, and were unknown as nesters in the Region as little as 20 years ago. Reports this year included more than 70 active nests at Poplar I., *Talbot*, MD June 17 (HTA, BM, JWT) and more than 59 active nests (with 135 eggs and four young) at Cheeseman I., VA July 6 (HTA, JSW); the 35 birds at Barren I., *Dorchester*, MD June 2 (HTA, JWT) showed no signs of nesting there, although they have in the past. Ninety (many adults) at Spring I., July 2 indicated that cormorants may nest there next year, perhaps with Brown Pelicans (HTA). The one Anhinga report came June 27 from Stumpy L., Virginia Beach, VA (*fide* LW), the only reliable location for the species in the Region.

— Unusual were single Am. Bitterns away from their breeding grounds: one at the 14th Street Bridge in D.C., June 1 (LC) and another at P.N.A.S., *Saint Mary's*, July 10 (KR). Least Bitterns were well reported this season, with one at the Dupont Nylon Settling Ponds near Martinsburg, June 7 (LC) and two there June 10 (SE, CS), providing first records for *Henry*. Surveys of the heronries on the central Bay islands turned up some

good counts. Great Blue Herons were doing well with a huge colony on Barren I., June 3, 117 nests on Bloodworth I., July 2, where the birds have taken advantage of man-made nesting platforms, and 11 nests on Adam I., July 2 (HTA). The heronry at the south end of Holland I., *Dorchester*, had at least one pair of each colonial nesting heron and ibis known for Maryland for the 3rd consecutive year, but all were in modest numbers, with the total count of 95 pairs dominated by 20 pairs each of Great Blue Herons and Great and Snowy egrets (HTA). Other notable heron reports were two ad. Tricolored Herons at The Wildfowl Trust, *Queen Anne's*, MD July 16 (MJI, GJ, RFR, JLS), one first-summer Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Mumma's Ford Bridge on the *Carroll/Frederick*, MD line June 8 (MJI, JLS, D. Ocasio) & 17 (MH), and a Yellow-crowned nest with chicks at Sligo Cr., Takoma Park, *Montgomery*, MD July 28 (LO). Several White Ibis were noted breeding at Fisherman's I., VA June 19 (*fide* LW) and a wandering Glossy Ibis was spotted at The Elms, *Saint Mary's*, MD July 4 (SS).

— The 81 Mute Swans fortunately showed no sign of nesting in the Barren I. area June 3, although recent annual counts have been of 10–12 nests (HTA). Lingering waterfowl were well represented, with reports of Tundra Swan; Lesser Scaup; Black, Surf, and White-winged scoters; Com. and Red-breasted mergansers, and Ruddy Duck (v.o.). Most unusual of the lingering waterfowl was a first-summer  $\delta$  Bufflehead at Conowingo Dam, *Harford/Cecil*, MD July 30, the latest summer record for the species in Maryland (EJS). The only report of Hooded Mergansers, an uncommon breeder in the Region, was a female with four young at The Jackson Abbott Refuge, *Fairfax*, VA June 11 (MF).

— A late report was received of an Am. Swallow-tailed Kite at the Great Dismal Swamp N.W.R., VA May 29 (*fide* NB). Mississippi Kites are reported with increasing frequency and were again found in *Greensville*, VA, with high counts of seven June 14 (KK) and six adults June 17 (VK). Other reports included singles from The Harry Diamond Laboratory, *Prince William* (JK, JWa), and Little Texas, *Southampton*, May 31 (NB), and first-summer birds at Leesylvania S.P., *Prince William*, June 28 (BS) and *Loudoun* July 7 (DA), all Virginia. One adult at Port Tobacco, *Charles*, July 12 (TB) was the only report from Maryland. Bald Eagles had their best year since Maryland Department of Natural Resources began surveying regularly in 1977, with 182 pairs raising 265 young (MD D.N.R. *fide* GT).

— Peregrine Falcons continue to make news in the Region, with a first D.C. nesting

punctuating this year's reports. For the past several years Peregrines have been noted hunting around Thomas Circle during the winter, and sightings of birds in D.C. this spring and early summer suggested that nesting might finally occur. Despite some confusion surrounding a family of Am Kestrels roosting atop an office building downtown June 20 (*fide* EW), the Peregrine nest was finally discovered on The Shrine of Immaculate Conception at Catholic University. An ad. male and a second-year female raised one young male, banded July 15, much to the delight of local observers. The female had been banded as a fledgling May 13, 1993, in New York City; interestingly, a sibling hatched a year earlier was found harassing pigeons at a dairy farm in Norfolk last year (CK). Peregrines continue to do well in Maryland, tying the 1991 and 1992 record of 8 nesting pairs (which laid 28 eggs and raised 19 young). Unfortunately, all nestings continue to be from man-made structures, with none returning to the cliff nesting sites that Peregrines once used along the Potomac and Susquehanna Rivers (GT). Remarkably, a female hatched atop the USF&G Building in downtown Baltimore was found nesting this year in Toledo, OH (CK).

— A Clapper Rail seen at The Wildfowl Trust, MD July 9 (GJ, JLS) was at the limit of the species' known range along the Bay. The two Soras reported from the Easton Sewage Ponds, *Talbot*, MD July 28 may have been nesters (HTA), while two juveniles at a small Ashton, *Montgomery*, MD, farm pond (RS) from July 12–28 may or may not have been the result of local nesting, since two adults were reported there earlier this spring but were not seen thereafter. Armistead reported a disappointing total of eight Com. Moorhens, with only three young, at Deal I. W.M.A., *Somerset*, MD July 10. Rare for *Saint Mary's* were two ad Com. Moorhens at Page Pond, near Saint James, through July 2 (SS, BB). Two ad Sandhill Cranes reported from the River Road area of *Montgomery*, MD from July 19+ provided a curious summer report. Some observers are bound to raise questions about their origin, but the recent discovery of breeders in w. Pennsylvania suggests that these may have been wanderers from a burgeoning e. population.

### Shorebirds to Terns

Undoubtedly the bird of the season was a highly territorial ad.  $\delta$  **Snowy Plover** reported June 19–21 (but apparently present through the end of the season) that was photographed and videotaped at an undisclosed Piping Plover colony on a Virginia barrier island, possibly in *Northampton* (*fide* LW)

This bird represented a first for Virginia, a first for the Region, and only the 4th report for the East Coast n. of Florida, all of which have occurred since 1992. It is yet unknown whether these birds originate from Gulf Coast or Midwest populations. The only report of Wilson's Plover was from the same undisclosed barrier island in Virginia June 19 (*fide* LW). Armistead found seven Am. Oystercatchers at Barren I., MD June 3, a high count for there, but could find no indication of nesting in *Dorchester* despite trips to their preferred offshore island nesting sites. Black-necked Stilts continued to have a good showing in the Region, with from one–six reported from Craney I., *Portsmouth*, VA, ≤three in Swan Cove, Chinc. through the season (v.o.), and a fair count of seven at the traditional Deal I., *Somerset*, MD stronghold July 10 (HTA). American Avocets showed up at Craney I., VA in late July, with three found there July 20 (DCI) increasing to six July 25 (BL). An early southbound Solitary Sandpiper was reported from Loch Raven Res., *Baltimore*, MD July 4 (SWS). Two Willets reported from The Elms June 10 (SSc) were unusual that far north on the w. shore in summer, while four at Poplar I. were acting like breeders June 17 (HTA, BM, JWT). Thirteen Whimbrel were near Pt. Lookout, *Saint Mary's*, MD July 26 (PC), while single Marbled Godwits on the Chincoteague causeway June 14 (BL) and Craney I., June 29 (*fide* LW) represented unexpected summer lingerers. An alternate-plumaged ad. Curlew Sandpiper was at Craney I., July 20 & 21 (LW), and a Wilson's Phalarope was at Chinc., June 9 (JH).

↘ Laughing Gulls have been virtually extirpated as breeders from Maryland, but 5 nests were found at Barren I. and one at Spring I., June 3 (HTA). Herring Gulls appear to be doing well as nesters in the Bay, with 240 pairs at Spring I., July 3 (HTA, JWT) and similar counts from Barren I., June 2 (HTA). Only a few Great Black-backed Gulls were found nesting, such as the nest with 2 eggs at Barren I., June 3 (HTA) and the 20 adults with three large, flightless young July 2 (HTA, JWT). Ten Gull-billed Terns at Craney I., July 10 were the most reported (DCI). The 527 young Royal Terns banded at Cheeseman I., July 6 were significantly down from the 1297 banded last year (HTA, JSW *et al.*). Most were feeding on soft-shelled crabs and hogchokers brought by the adults, prompting the remark by one bander that "They eat better than we do!" Common Terns have been declining as breeders in the Bay recently, so news of a new colony of >700 in Pry Cove, S. Marsh I., *Somerset*, MD (LBy, *fide* HTA), which may be the largest *Sterna* colony in the Bay, is encouraging. Another colony just s. of Barren I. had 329 pairs—estimated as 95% Forster's and

5% Common—July 2, but none were found on Spring I., perhaps because of the large gull colony there (HTA, JWT). An unusual mid-summer Black Tern was seen at a small pond in Emmitsburg, *Frederick*, June 24 (m.ob.), while the first migrants reported were three over the Bay in *Calvert* July 29 (JE). The two Black Skimmers seen at the Tar Bar, *Dorchester*, June 3 unfortunately showed no sign of breeding (HTA).

#### ↘ Doves to Shrikes

Ringed Turtle-Doves reported from Gaithersburg and Ashton, MD were carefully separated from the ever-encroaching Eur. Collared-Dove (v.o.). Several observers commented that Yellow-billed Cuckoos were present in average numbers after several low years. A fledged juv. Black-billed Cuckoo at L. Elkhorn, MD provided a rare indication of nesting for *Howard* July 18 (JWi). A Barn Owl entertained observers by hunting over the marsh at Huntley Meadows in suburban *Fairfax*, VA from July 17+. One Willow Flycatcher was singing along the Life of the Marsh Trail, Assateague I., *Worcester*, MD June 18 (KB); they were only first found summering there last year and at a location several miles to the south. A Gray Kingbird carefully described from Pt. Lookout July

22–23 (†PC, BB) was only the 3rd reported from Maryland. Previous Maryland reports have been birds photographed from *Worcester* June 14, 1975 and *Anne Arundel* May 3, 1983. Second place in the flycatcher department goes to a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher seen well at Chinc. in mid-June by Drew Elliff, a member of the refuge staff.

Three Brown-headed Nuthatches at the Goose Pt. Campground of Philpott L., June 11 may have represented the westernmost breeders in Virginia (MA, LR). A Sedge Wren by a small pond in *Loudoun*, VA July 30 (DA) provided an unusual record. Loggerhead Shrikes were found at Beaverdam Res., *Loudoun*, VA July 29 (DA) and 5 locations in *Frederick*, MD this year, including the traditional Lilypons site (v.o.). A late migrant Gray-cheeked Thrush at Bowie, *Prince George's*, MD June 5 was carefully separated from Bicknell's Thrush (MJI), while two Bicknell's seen in Annapolis June 8 (JLS) were the latest recorded yet for Maryland.

#### ↘ Vireos to Finches

Two Solitary Vireos were found at Fairy Stone S.P., *Patrick*, VA June 10 (MA, LR) at an elevation of 1100–1200 ft. Stasz unknowingly tape recorded a singing Blue-winged Warbler June 20 in a panorama recording at

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Wango, *Wicomico*, MD, where they are rare breeders. The rare "Lawrence's" Blue-winged x Golden-winged hybrid was noted at Marriottsville, MD on the *Carroll Howard* line June 11 (D&MH) while a strange Yellow-throated Warbler there July 16 with an unusual amount of white on its back was singing an imperfect Cerulean Warbler song (JS, JF). A Tennessee Warbler singing at Arnold, *Anne Arundel*, June 16 (LD) was extraordinary being 2 weeks later than the latest spring migrant recorded for Maryland and more than a month before the earliest record of a fall migrant. A Blackburnian Warbler was discovered on Bull Mt., *Patrick*, VA at only 1600 ft., June 10 (WS, EC). A Prothonotary Warbler along the Smith R. in Martinsville, *Henry*, VA was found at the exact spot where the only other county record was obtained 9 years ago (RC)! The two Swainson's Warblers at Great Falls, *Fairfax*, VA persisted through at least July 17 (SHI) while the one at Wango, *Wicomico*, MD was last reported June 20 (SHD). Disappointingly, Dalmas' Breeding Bird Foray into *Patrick* and *Henry*, VA June 6-11 produced only two Summer Tanagers, despite thorough coverage.

Several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen and heard singing June 24 along Fishing Cr. Road, in the Catoctins Mts., *Frederick*, MD, where they are rare breeders (GJ). Dickcissels put on a fair showing in the Region, with singles being found in Virginia at the U.S. Naval Radio Station, *Portsmouth*, May 31 (KB) and Curles Neck Farm, near Richmond, June 3 (NB), and two in *Loudoun* July 30 (DA). Reports from Maryland included two at De-tour, *Carroll* (RFR) and three singing males near Lilypons, *Frederick*, MD (v.o.), which remained until their respective fields were mowed in mid-June, as well as another male singing from a cornfield bordering an alfalfa field near Research Farm, *Queen Anne's*, July 9 & 16 (JLS, GJ, MJI, RFR).

Bachman's Sparrows continue to hang on in s.e. Virginia, with four reported from Fort Pickett in *Knottaway* June 13 and three reported from Fort Pickett in *Dinwiddy* June 14 (KK), as well as one on the *Brunswick Greenville* line June 4 (PGD). Up to five Vesper Sparrows were found in July along A. E. Mullinix Rd., the same location that this rare *Howard* breeder was last reported summering in the county in the late 1980s (JWi, JS, JF). The stellar count of 337 Seaside Sparrows July 10 at Deal Island W.M.A., MD was the product of a 7-mi walk around the impoundments and a whole lot of fishing. However, only six Sharp-tailed Sparrows was a remarkably low count (HTA). Swamp Sparrows were singing at King's Cr., *Talbot*, MD June 10 (JRe) and Eastern Neck N.W.R., MD July 16 (MJI, GJ, JLS, RFR). Bobolinks found in *Frederick*, MD (GJ) and *Carroll*, MD (RFR)

in June were breeders, while the male at Ashton June 12 may have been a very late spring migrant or a summer wanderer (RS). A Boat-tailed Grackle nest with young was found June 11 at Tilghman I., *Talbot*, MD where they are scarce and local breeders (JRe). A Pine Siskin visiting a feeder in Davidsonville, *Anne Arundel*, MD July 3 (P&BD †, ph.) was extraordinary considering how poor the previous winter had been for the species, not to mention the exceptionally late date, which is several weeks later than any other reported away from *Garrett* in Maryland in summer.

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# Southern Atlantic Coast Region

## RICKY DAVIS

The weather this summer was a study in contrasts. Over most of the Region, June was very wet and July was very hot and dry. Many areas had record rainfall early and then had record heat later. In spite of these extreme conditions, there were very few reports of negative impact on the breeding birds. Highlights this season included a wealth of tropicbirds off North Carolina, and South Carolina had its first good Roseate Tern record. Also of interest was North Carolina's first record of breeding Mississippi Kites.

Abbreviations: C. Hatt. (*Cape Hatteras, NC*); E.L.H. (*E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA*); K.Mt. (*Kennesaw Mt. Park, GA*); W.M.A. (*Wildlife Management Area*)

## Loons to Wood Stork

Lingering loons made news this summer. Two Red-throated in the surf at Kill Devil

