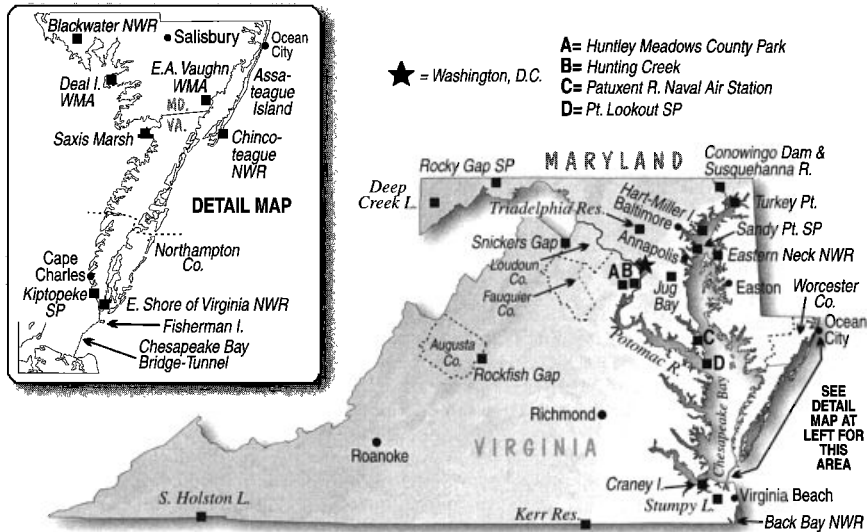


Middle Atlantic



Wetlands Mitigation Project, Loudoun, VA); E.S.V.N.W.R. (Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R., Northampton, VA); p. a. (pending acceptance by state records committee); Kipt. (Kiptopeke S.P., Northampton, VA); Middle Bay (Chesapeake Bay from Maryland line to Bay Bridge); P.L.S.P. (Point Lookout S.P., Saint Mary's, MD); P.R.N.A.S. (Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Saint Mary's, MD); V.S.O. (Virginia Society of Ornithology). All locations can be assumed to be in Maryland except that each Virginia location is mentioned the first time it is mentioned in the text.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Bad weather was to thank for the unusual appearance of a Red-throated Loon at Haines Pt., D.C. 16 Nov (MB) and 3 at Meadow L., Garrett 17 Nov (JLS, JBC). The first-summer Pacific Loon (p. a.) at Clopper L., Montgomery was last seen 1 Oct (DCz). Eared Grebes were at Hurlock W.T.P. 14-21 Sep (MLH, v. o.), Waterview Ave., Baltimore 13 Oct (EB), and P.L.S.P. 14 Oct (ph. PC). The most consistent Regional location for the species is South Holston L., Washington, VA, where at least 4 were present 14 Sep (JWC) and 5 seen 28 Sep (TMD, CMS). A juv. Red-necked Grebe at Burke L., Fairfax, VA 11-24 Nov (KG, v. o.) was an unusual Piedmont sighting; one at South Holston L. 16-17 Nov (JWC et al.) was even more uncommon there. Surprisingly, none were reported from coastal areas. The 7 Sep pelagic trip from Virginia Beach, VA, recorded 9 Cory's and 32 Audubon's Shearwaters and 258 Wilson's Storm-Petrels (BP et al.). Twenty Greater Shearwaters were in Maryland waters on the 16 Nov pelagic from Lewes, DE (MG et al.); the species does not always linger here into Nov. Three Wilson's Storm-Petrels were seen from the Pt. Lookout—Smith Island Ferry 8 Aug (JLS, MH); another 3 from the same route on 13 Aug (MC) were probably the latest Middle Bay records. The species ceases to be seen daily at Cape Charles, Northampton, VA, where it is common in Jun and Jul, around 10-15 Aug (ESB).

Northern Gannets staged a significant Middle Bay incursion beginning with 4 on 5 Nov (PC) at P.L.S.P. and peaking at 300 at Lowes Wharf, Talbot 11 Nov (LR). American White Pelicans appeared in Maryland at Deal 17 Aug (p. a. HH, vt. JLS, v. o.), relocated 26-29 Aug (C&DB, J. Byrnes), and the Belle Haven/Hunting Cr. area, where 2 birds present 9-12 Oct (FA, m. ob.) crossed from Maryland's Prince George's to Alexandria and Fairfax, VA. Others were seen 29 Oct at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach (Jane Beavers) and 1 Nov at Cape Charles town, Northampton (WTP). Two Great Cormorants at the C.B.B.T. 25 Aug—17 Sep (RH, v. o.) may have oversummered, as Turner saw 2 there 4 Jul. No Great Cormorants were far out of place, but sightings in Harford, Prince

Marshall J. Iliff

246 East 16th Street, Unit B

Costa Mesa, California 92627

(miliff@aol.com)

Severe drought and above-average temperatures continued into August before being broken by heavy rain in early September, with about 35 cm falling in Salisbury, Maryland on 1 September. Precipitation in October and November was above average, finally bringing water levels back to normal over the coastal areas and almost normal inland. Cold fronts were mostly undramatic but were regular, with many good warbler waves in the mountains noted, as well as weekly coastal flights observed, especially at Kiptopeke and Sunset Beach in Virginia. Tropical Storm Gustav, which passed offshore of the region 11 September, and Tropical Storm Kyle, which did likewise on 12 October, produced no discernable fallout of birds. Hurricane Isidore, which trailed into the Region's westernmost tip 27 September, produced Sooty Terns in Kentucky and Tennessee but apparently none in Virginia.

Virginia highlights included the first East Coast Heermann's Gull, a White-winged Tern, two Great White Herons, a flock of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, a rare coastal Common Raven, and a Fork-tailed Flycatcher, while Maryland had a Gray Kingbird,

its second Eurasian Collared-Dove, and a summering Pacific Loon. A major movement of late swallows into the Region in November paralleled the Cape May phenomenon that has been seen for over a decade now and brought Maryland its first Cave Swallows (finally) and Virginia many more than it had seen previously (though the species has been annual there since 1998).

We report with great sadness the passing of Eirik A. T. ("Rick") Blom on 11 December 2002, one of Maryland's most active birders until recently, when a protracted illness prevented him from being afield as much as he had been for decades. His presence in these pages, and in the field, will be much missed. *Bird Watcher's Digest* will honor Rick with a special feature in winter 2003. A memorial fund has been established in his memory; to contribute to the fund, earmark checks for the "Eirik A. T. Blom Memorial Fund" to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, P. O. Box 110, Marietta, OH 45750.

For the present report, Jim Stasz helped greatly with records compilation, as usual. Todd Day helped not only with compilation but also with significant editorial comments and lots of grunt work in tracking down data from various observers. Many thanks to both.

Abbreviations: Assat. (Assateague I., Worcester, MD); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, s. of Northampton, VA); Chinc. (Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack, VA); D.C. (District of Columbia); Deal (Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset, MD); Dulles Wetlands (Dulles Greenways

George's, Westmoreland, VA, and at Allen's Fresh, Charles 23 Nov (JLS) suggest that the species may continue to push its Bay limits.

Two Great White Herons visited the Region, presumably different birds. The first was at South Holston L., Washington 7-29 Aug (†JWC, Chris O'Bryan et al.), the other an ad. at Briery Creek L., Prince Edward, VA 4 Sep—14 Oct (ph., vt., †CMS, m. ob.). In addition to the sole Maryland record 26-30 Sep 2001, the Region has prior records from South Holston L. on 15-19 Oct 1990 (ph. R. Knight), 29-31 Aug 1991, and 25 Aug 1994; all three could pertain to a single returning bird. The only other state record is from *Botetourt* (1-4 Jun 1976). Late herons included a Green Heron 9 Nov at Fisherman I. (HFD, LL) and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at E.S.V.N.W.R. 8 Nov (TMD). A count of 77 Great Egrets at Belle Haven 9 Oct (FA) seemed a good number for n. Virginia. A Snowy Egret at New Windsor 24 Sep was late and rare for inland Carroll, as were 2 imm. Black-crowned Night-Herons at Piney Run 28 Nov (both RFR). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Farmville, VA on the Appomattox R. was locally rare 2 Oct (SWH, ph. ESB). An imm. Little Blue Heron at Youghiogheny Res. was very rare for Garrett 10-16 Aug (JLS, JBC). Continuing the summer's mini-invasion, single imm. White Ibis were noted at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, D.C. 6 Aug (GM, BC) and Jug Bay, Anne Arundel 7 Aug (DBY), and while they are regular in numbers all season at Fisherman I. and E.S.V.N.W.R., one at Chinc. 9 Nov (GW) was out of place there. Inland Glossy Ibis were found at Huntley Meadows, Fairfax, VA 12 Oct (Leni Friedman) and Staunton River S.P., Halifax 18 Aug (J. Blalock).

An unmarked Trumpeter Swan in the vicinity of Winchester, VA from the summer through at least Sep (William Leigh) may foreshadow this species' upcoming feral status in the Region, which some seers have predicted. A small imm. white-morph goose carefully studied and described 8 Nov (†SCR) near Marshall, Fauquier, VA was thought to be a hybrid Ross's x Snow Goose; although its size and structure was almost identical to Ross's, it had a small grin patch and a slightly curved bill-face juncture. Such hybrid birds do occur regularly and should be cause for extreme caution in identifying Ross's Geese, especially away from its regular range in the Region (amid large Snow Goose flocks near the coast). Another hybrid was noted at Great Oak Pond, Kent 6 Oct (WGE), where an ad. Ross's Goose 5 Oct (WGE) provided a record-early date for Maryland by 10 days and a 3rd Kent record. Other Ross's seen here included one 18 Oct (WGE), 2 on 20 Oct (WGE), 2 ad. and one imm. 25 Oct (WGE et al.), and one 24 Nov (JLS). Regionwide, there were regular reports of other Ross's from Coastal Plain

locations, especially Chinc. and including 2 at Craney 12 Nov+ (DC), new for that location, and also of small-race Canada Geese, most probably representing *hutchinsii*. A reported Barnacle Goose at L. Anna, Orange 30 Aug+ appears to have been a Canada x Barnacle Goose hybrid, which can look very similar to Barnacle Goose (G. Harris). The Fauquier, VA ad. Greater White-fronted Goose returned 9 Oct (SH), and an imm. was found 23 Oct in the same county (SH). Inland Brant were at Haines Pt., D.C. 24-26 Oct (J. Felley, v. o.), Ft. McHenry, Baltimore City 26-28 Oct (JP), and Mason Neck S.P., Fairfax, VA 7-17 Nov (L. Markoff, v. o.).

Five Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were studied as they flew northeastward along the bank of the Nansemond R. at Eclipse, Suffolk, VA 10 Aug (LW). There are only about three other Virginia reports, including one specimen. Large single-site counts of Gadwall are not common of late in the Region, so 500 at Havre de Grace 20 Oct (JLS, EBo) was a noteworthy number. Eurasian Wigeon appeared at Chinc. 7 Oct (TMD), Fauquier, VA 9 Oct (SH), and Mattawoman W.M.A. 29 Nov+ (GMJ, v. o.) for one of few Charles records. An early male Red-head was at Piney Run 6 Oct (RFR). Surf Scoters were seen inland at Liberty L., Baltimore, with 3 on 22 Oct (RFR), and in Augusta, VA, with 2 at Swoope 30 Oct and one to 2 nearby 30 Oct—24 Nov (AL). An odd male *Aythya* seen 20 Oct at Perryman, Cecil was thought to be a Lesser Scaup x Ring-necked Duck: it looked most like a Lesser Scaup but had a bill shape and pattern more like Ring-necked Duck (JLS, EBo). A male Harlequin Duck was at P.L.S.P. 11 Nov+ (Jason Waanders, Phillip Kline, m. ob.). Groups of 8 and 6 Black Scoters along the Susquehanna R., Harford 2 Nov (MH, JLS) were county rarities. A White-winged Scoter at Eastern Neck N.W.R., Kent 31 Aug (RFR) was unusual summering in the n. Bay, and up to 2 at Hurlock W.T.P. 19-22 Oct (GL, Kye Jenkins, FS) were the first inland Eastern Shore records of the species. An imm. Black

Scoter was rare inland at Seneca, Montgomery 31 Oct (DCz), while a female Common Merganser at Truitt's Landing, Worcester 29 Nov (MH, ZB) was rare for the coast.

HAWKS THROUGH GULLS

An imm. Mississippi Kite at E.S.V.N.W.R. 1 Sep (JRu) was among few fall records for the Delmarva peninsula, and another 7 Oct (Peggy



Out-of-range records of Great White Heron (currently considered a white morph of Great Blue Heron) continue to increase in the East, where reports from interior areas outnumber coastal reports, perhaps because white ardeids away from the coast are more carefully scrutinized. This bird was Virginia's fifth at Briery Creek Lake, Prince Edward County, Virginia 4 September (here) through 14 October 2002. Photograph by C. Michael Stinson.

Spiegel) at Wise Pt. during the local birding festival was unusually late. Other single Missisippis were noted at the Candler Mt. hawkwatch 16 & 23 Sep (Gene Sattler) and Rockfish Gap 2 Sep (BT). The Fauquier Swallow-tailed Kite continued to be seen through 11 Aug at the Marriott ranch (v. o., vt. CMS, ph. TMD). After several slow years, this was a very good year for Swainson's Hawks at Kipt. Reports at the hawkwatch included imm. light morphs 7 Oct (HTA, RLAn, TMD) & 12 Oct (ZS, HTA, RLAn), a juv. light morph 3

Nov (ESB, BLS, TMD, GLA, ZS et al.), and a second-year light morph 23 Nov (ZS, m. ob.), the latter a late record for the hawkwatch. Presumably this same second-year bird was seen 24 Nov at E.S.V.N.W.R. (ph. ESB) and Custis Tomb (ZS) and 26 Nov at E.S.V.N.W.R. (BT et al.).

In addition to one at South Holston L. 10-11 Nov (JWC, R. Cross et al.), Sandhill Cranes were seen passing Kipt. 8 & 13 Oct (ZS et al.). One at Locustville, Accomack, VA 14 Oct (G.Reiger, *vide* HTA) was presumably a different bird. A King Rail at Manassas Battlefield, Prince William, VA 21-25 Aug (LC) was not at a breeding location and was probably a migrant. A Common Moorhen at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens was rare for D.C. and late 9 Nov (RH); another persisted on a pond at Eyre Hall, Northampton 5-7 Oct (DLH, m. ob.), and up to 2 were at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax, VA 15-29 Sep (Bob Beard, SH, KG et al.), the only 2002 reports for the species in the state away from Back Bay, where several birds summered.

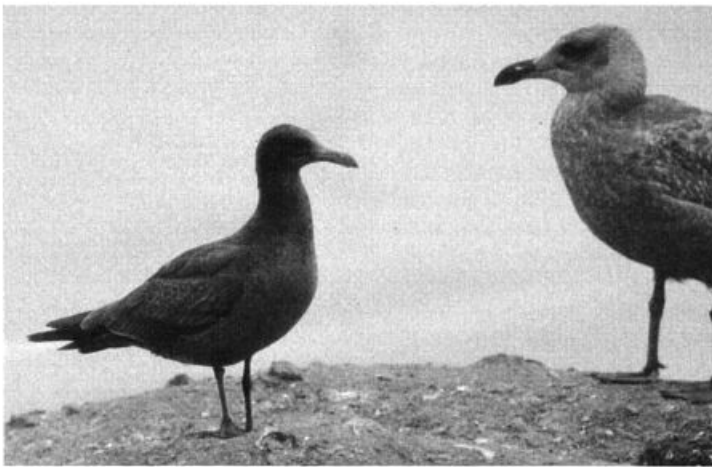
In Maryland, shorebirding was eventful. Regular surveys of the limited access dredge spoil impoundment complex at Poplar I., Talbot were undertaken for the first time this fall

by Reese. Shorebird habitat was good there this fall, and highlights included: 2 American Avocets (*Talbot's* 2nd record) 14 Sep—7 Oct; 2 Red-necked Phalaropes (and 1518 Great Black-backed Gulls) 14 Sep; 471 Sanderlings and one Wilson's Phalarope 25 Sep; 265 Sanderlings, 285 Least Sandpipers, and one Red-necked Phalarope 7 Oct; and 98 Sanderling and 53 Purple Sandpipers 15 Nov. The last count confirms the suspicion from a trip last year that the new rip-rap there has become the regular wintering site of the only large flock of Purples ever known from the Middle Bay.

Carroll highlights came from Liberty L., where there were 2 Baird's 25 Aug, 2 White-rumped 1 Sep, and 8 Dunlin 3 Nov, and from Piney Run, where a juv. Short-billed Dowitcher was unusual 21 Sep (all RFR). Among 17 shorebirds found this fall at the Hampshire Road Turf Farm, *Wicomico* were one Baird's Sandpiper 7 Sep, plus 2 Stilt Sandpipers and a Long-billed Dowitcher 3 Sep (SHD). A new location was Great Oak Pond, near Melitota, *Kent*, where a high count of 55 Stilt Sandpipers was made 24 Aug (WGE), a Wilson's Phalarope turned up on 4 Oct (†WGE), and an ad. male American Avocet put in an appearance 14 Sep (HM, WGE), the latter a first for *Kent*. Another avocet was unusual at Deal 2 Sep (C&DB). A Hudsonian Godwit at Chesapeake Farms 25 Oct (†WGE et al.) was a rarity for *Kent*, as was a Long-billed Dowitcher at Tanyard for *Caroline* 8 Nov (JLS et al.). A Marbled Godwit at P.L.S.P. represented an overdue first for *Saint Mary's* 25-29 Aug (MC, PC, v. o.). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper was unusual for *Worcester* at Rum Pointe Golf Course 6 Sep (C&DB). Two juv. Baird's Sandpipers at P.R.N.A.S. 4 Sep (KR) are among few *Saint Mary's* records, as was one (or more) on three dates at Youghiogheny Res. 21 Aug—7 Sep (JBC, JLS, MH). Two Stilt Sandpipers at Bullfrog Road Pond, *Frederick* 6 Sep (JLS, MH) were the only ones reported away from the coast in Maryland. A 10 Nov Spotted Sandpiper at Hurlock W.T.P. was late (JBC). Notable Maryland phalaropes were a Red-necked at Ridgely W.T.P. 20 Sep (vt. JLS) and single Wilson's at Easton W.T.P., *Talbot* 17 Aug (JR), Hurlock W.T.P. 17 Aug (D. Powell), Triadelphia Res., *Montgomery* 9 Sep (Rick Sussman), and Pickering Cr., *Talbot* 14-15 Oct (LR et al.).

Virginia's shorebirding season played out similarly, with numerous records of note. A most "alarming encounter" was had by Brinkley on the C.B.B.T., when a small curlew, "intermediate in size and general appearance

between Upland Sandpiper and Whimbrel" flew past his vantage over the third island. The bird was studied in flight only, for under a minute, but at relatively close range (30-40 m) and showed clear "straw-colored" underwing coverts, which would appear to rule out Eskimo Curlew. The possibility that a Little



A rare visitor to the East, this juvenile Heermann's Gull turned up for two days at Craney Island, Portsmouth, Virginia 30 (here) and 31 August 2002. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

Curlew has occurred in the Region is tantalizing, but owing to the brevity of the encounter, the rarity of the species, and the absence of fellow observers, he elected to leave the bird unidentified. A thorough search of the s. tip of the peninsula and Fisherman I. did not turn up the bird.

At Cape Charles town, 2 American Avocets frequented drying Crystal L. 27-30 Aug (ESB, TS, SWH, BW, MAB et al.); 17 other shorebird species were recorded there. Hudsonian Godwits were limited to singles, as has become the case in recent years, at Chinc. 7 Oct (TMD) and Oyster, *Northampton* 9 Nov (ESB). A Curlew Sandpiper remained at Chinc. through 2 Aug (*vide* TMD). The only inland Stilt Sandpipers away from Hunting Cr. were singles at the *Loudoun* Sod Farm, VA 29 Aug (TMD, SH) and Loudoun County Parkway, VA 10 Sep (A. Rabin). Single Baird's Sandpipers were at Roanoake W.T.P. 31 Aug (Brian Kane) and 12 Oct (Tad Finnell), and there were widespread reports from n. Virginia, but only 2 were recorded on the outer coast, at Cape Charles and Back Bay. All were juvs., as expected. Hunting Cr., Alexandria and *Fairfax* finds were a Red Knot 15-29 Aug (GM, v. o.), a Sanderling 17-23 Aug (Paula

Sullivan, v. o.), with 6 there 31 Aug (RH), and a Long-billed Dowitcher 11 Nov (KG); another Long-billed dropped in at Huntley Meadows 28 Oct (Fred Bogar). High counts of Wilson's Phalaropes from Hunting Cr. included 3 on 15 Aug (GM) and 4 from 21-28 Aug (KG, v. o.), with ≤ 2 present 11-31 Aug (RH, v. o.). A Red-necked Phalarope at Smiths, Swoope 30 Oct (AL) was the 2nd fall record for *Augusta*.

Also in Virginia, Rottenborn's careful checks of the Woodward Turf Farm near Remington produced five new county records, partly because the turf farm straddles the *Fauquier/Culpeper* line: single juv. Baird's Sandpipers 31 Aug and 13 Sep, new for both counties; a Buff-breasted Sandpiper 5 Sep, with 2 present 7-13 Sep, new for both counties; and a juv. Wilson's Phalarope 31 Aug, which stayed only in *Culpeper* but did provide a county first. American Golden-Plovers were seen there at least

30 Aug—14 Sep, with a peak of 24 on 31 Aug, and Black-bellied Plovers were noted as well, with 7 on 10 Sep and one 13-14 Sep (all SCR). Numbers of American Golden-Plovers were widespread this year in Virginia, with reports of small numbers 30 Aug—12 Oct at the Roanoke S.T.P., Swoope and Stuarts Draft in *Augusta*, and a *Loudoun* sod farm.

Jaegers on the 7 Sep pelagic off Virginia Beach numbered 4 Pomarine and minimally 7 Long-tailed Jaegers (BP et al.), the latter a record Regional high count of this thinly-distributed offshore migrant. An ad. Black-headed Gull at Hurlock W.T.P. 16 Sep—22 Oct (C&DB, m. ob., vt. JLS) improved on the state's 15 Oct early date (from last year) and likely represented a returning individual. None were observed in Virginia. Little Gulls were scarce, with the only reports being an ad. at Lapidum, *Harford* 2 Nov (MH, JLS), an ad. at Kipt. 30 Nov (B. Abrams), and 2 at P.L.S.P. 18 Nov (MC) for a *Saint Mary's* 2nd. Franklin's Gulls (all first-winter birds) included a *Talbot* first at Easton W.T.P. 6 Oct (JLS), one at Tydings I., *Harford* 6 Oct (MH), and one at Sandy Point S.P., *Anne Arundel* 8 Nov (JLS); Virginia had no reports. Very unusual for the Virginia barrier islands and

SA The most remarkable rarity of the season was the juv. Heermann's Gull found at Craney 30 Aug by Clark (†, ph.). It was seen and photographed by multiple observers that day (vt. RLAK, MAB, BW, ph. ESB, vt. LW) and the next (RLAn, DLH, AW, ph. TMD), but was not seen thereafter. This species has a limited record of vagrancy in the interior U.S.A. Away from interior California and Nevada, where there are multiple records, are two records from Texas, one record from Wyoming, and the following eastern records: one third-year bird at Metro Beach, Metropark, MI, Aug 1979—Nov 1981 (with presumably the same bird seen at Lorain, OH, 12 Feb—12 Mar 1980 and 20 Dec 1980—Feb 1981); one first-winter bird at Toronto, ON, Nov 1999—23 Sep 2000; and one at Ft. De Soto, FL, 24 Oct 2000—Mar 2002+. The Virginia individual thus represents the first for the Atlantic Coast.

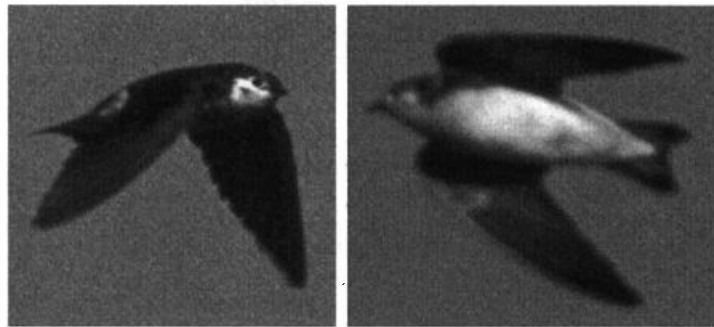
SA If banding of hummingbirds were not remarkable enough by virtue of the unexpected records of vagrants it has produced (e.g., Allen's Hummingbirds confirmed in a half-dozen eastern states, etc.), then consider this showstopper: a Rufous Hummingbird banded 29 Nov 2001 (MG) in Chesterfield, VA was recaptured 1 Aug 2002 in Red Lodge, Montana. And the bird returned to Chesterfield 11 Nov 2002, where it was captured again to confirm its identity! Keep those feeders up all winter and let's see what else we learn; and please, allow those banders to visit and to make future revelations like this one. If you have a hummingbird of any species after 31 Oct, or a non-Ruby-throated Hummingbird at any time, contact Mary Gustafson (live4birds@aol.com) to inquire about banding in this Region and in Delaware.

Other *Selasphorus* may have successfully wintered last year, as a single noted at Springfield, Fairfax, VA 25 Nov+ (M. Plimpton, KG) was at a location that had had one in fall 2000, and another at a James City County residence, VA 5 Nov+ (fide Brian Taber) bore a band; 2 Rufous Hummingbirds had been banded at this location last fall. Other female/imm. *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, not identified to species, included singles at E.S.V.N.W.R. 27 Aug—9 Sep (JRU, m. ob.) and Sunset Beach, Northampton 5 Sep (TMD). Identified, banded Rufous included: an imm. male Rufous in Arlington, VA 17 Nov+ (Haji Warf, banded 30 Nov by MG, ph.); an imm. female Rufous near Bristol, Washington Aug—23 Nov (fide JWC, banded); an ad. male in Russell, VA 26 Nov+ (B. Montgomery, fide JWC); and 3 in Rockingham, VA: at Montezuma 9 Oct—14 Nov (Don & Lydia Rhodes, Mike Shank et al.), Grottoes 20 Oct—23 Nov (Phyllis Rinaca, Lucille Weber), and Massanetta Springs near Harrisonburg 15 Oct—23 Nov (Sam & Lillie Ann Flora; all fide John Irvine). In Maryland, an imm. female was at Amberly at least 23-24 Nov (banded by MG), the first *Anne Arundel* record of a *Selasphorus*. More to follow in the winter report!

Chesapeake Bay mouth this Aug—Dec were large numbers of Ring-billed Gulls in early juvenal plumage; though frequently seen just to the n., birds in this plumage are unusual in the s. portion of the Region (ESB, TMD et al.). A first-winter Thayer's Gull appeared behind the boat in Maryland waters on the 16 Nov pelagic trip (MG et al.); there are only a few pelagic-zone records for Maryland. The Maryland Kelp Gull continued through the season (v. o.). Migration of Lesser Black-backed Gulls through the Region is not always obvious but probably occurs primarily from mid-Oct to mid-Nov. Eleven at the Prince William, VA landfill 9 Nov (SCR) probably involved a number of migrants; 3 there 30 Nov (SCR, KG) was closer to a typical winter count for such a site. Somewhat enigmatic is the species' appearance in some numbers on the Virginia coast much earlier. Single-site September counts such as 6 at Little Island City Park, Virginia Beach 14 Sep (ESB et al.) are becoming the norm between Fort Story, Sandbridge, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Whether these are failed breeders, nonbreeders, or summering individuals (or all three) is not known. Adults depart Iceland in Sep, before the young birds, and it is possible that some outer coastal birds represent the first wave of migrants from breeding areas. A first-winter Iceland Gull at Beulah Landfill, Dorchester 29 Nov (MH, ZB) was one of the earlier state records; none were reported in Virginia.

A Royal Tern at P.L.S.P. 26 Nov (HH) was notably late, and there were sightings on the upper Potomac R. in Prince George's (where rare) at Jones Pt., very near D.C., with one 16 Sep (BC) and at Truman Pt., where there were

3 on 19 Oct (D. Mozurkewich). A Sandwich Tern was at P.L.S.P. 8 Aug (JLS, MH), while 30 on Assat. 17 Aug (JLS, HH) was the state's 2nd best count; numbers have been exceptionally high in the past few years. Any tern in rare in the Appalachians, thus single Forster's Terns at McCunes, Fisherville 29 Aug and 27 Sep (AL) were just the 3rd and 4th fall records for well-watched Augusta, VA. A sensation was the second-year or ad. White-winged Tern in basic plumage among 7-8 Black Terns in Swan Cove at Chinc. 6-9 Sep (†ESB, WTP, m. ob.), found on the first day of the V.S.O.'s annual field trip to the refuge. This species has been recorded minimally six times previously at Chincoteague, but there have been no reports since 1980. The previous records from 1963, 1964, 1965, 1974, 1975 (2 birds), and 1980 probably involved at least 4 different individuals. The Bridled Tern count for the 7 Sep



This swallow's white face, symmetrical on both sides, recalls Violet-green's but for the lores. Though a bit more delicate than the Tree Swallows it accompanied 24 November 2002 at Townsend, Northampton County, Virginia, its structure and pigmentation suggested either an oddly leucistic Tree Swallow or possibly a hybrid Tree x Violet-green Swallow. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

pelagic trip was a conservative 128, which shattered the previous state record high count of 48 (BP et al.).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS

A White-winged Dove at Philbrook Rd.,

Chesterfield, VA 17 Nov (†B. Tarter) was on a typical date, though less expected inland. A Eurasian Collared-Dove at Bayside Campground, Assat. 13 Oct (p. a. MH, vt. JLS) provided Maryland's 2nd acceptable record and a first for Worcester (the county's 375th species). One seen at Marriott Ranch, Fauquier, VA 12 Aug (Ken Hinkle, Brad Menning, Leonard Teuber) was from a new Virginia location but was not described; it is still important to document Eurasian Collared-Doves at new locales to separate them from the similar Ringed Turtle-Dove. The s. Northampton, VA birds, still the only known breeding population in the Region, numbered at least 4 and possibly 6 at various locations s. of Cape Charles through early Oct (m. ob.).

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding operations (Rockingham, VA; Lynchburg, VA; Kipt.; Lamb's Knoll, Frederick; Adkins Arboretum, Caroline) had what might be considered an average fall. The large station at Kipt. ran from 26 Oct through 15 Dec and caught 137 birds, peaking with 18 on 13 Nov. This station was begun in the fall of 1994 by the Center for Conservation Biology. During the nine-year study, about 2,437 owls have been banded and more than 90 foreign retraps and returns recorded. The Center's three trapping sites, open nightly from dusk until dawn from mid-Oct through mid-Dec, consist of six mist nets and a continuous-loop audio-lure. In 2002, the stations' capture rate was 2.2 owls/night or 1.88 owls/100 net-hours (compare 2001's numbers of 5.7 owls/night or 2.8 owls/100 net-hrs). The age ratio of birds captured was 42% hatching-year birds compared to 58% after-hatching-year birds (compare 2001's data: 79% HY and 21% AHY birds). The capture rate for 2002 is thus closer to the non-invasion years of 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2000 than to the invasion years of 1995

and 1999; the age ratio observed, with older birds outnumbering birds of the year, is not consistent with invasion years. Thanks to Fletcher Smith and Bart Paxton for this summary.

The peak Common Nighthawk flight at Rockfish Gap was 1036 on 4 Sep (BT); this species is a significantly more common migrant down the ridges than on the coast, although flights of a few hundred were observed in s.

Northampton in mid-Sep. A

late nighthawk at Jug Bay 11 Nov (DBY) was late enough that careful identification to species would be important. Chimney Swifts are exceptional into Nov, so 40 at Little Falls on the Potomac R., Montgomery 4 Nov (DCz) and 8 continuing the next day (DCz) were

surprising. A rather late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Kipt. 8-10 Nov (GLA et al., v. o.), though Nov records of both cuckoos have a long history in the literature of this area.

Olive-sided Flycatchers are significantly more common fall migrants inland than on the coast; of 20+ reports this year (a high number), the only coastal birds were at Chinc. 7 Sep (V.S.O.; HFD, LL et al.) and 9 Sep (fide ESB and E.S.V.N.W.R. 6 Sep (A. Martin, C. Studholme). The Region's 6th and Virginia's 4th Fork-tailed Flycatcher was a remarkable Appalachian ad. at Coursey Springs Fish Hatchery, Bath, VA 28 Sep (p. a. Evelyn Smith, †Lisa Hamilton, ph. BT). A Gray Kingbird at Jug Bay, Anne Arundel 24 Sep (DBY, m. ob., ph. A. Ripley, ph. MH) was Maryland's 5th, Anne Arundel's 2nd, and the first state record for fall (although Sep—Nov is the major peak along the Northeast coast). Other state records have been from May, Jun, and Jul (2). At least 8 Western Kingbirds in Northampton, VA 6 Sep—11 Nov constituted a good total and were the only ones reported this season; Cape May, NJ, by contrast, recorded just 2. Eastern Kingbirds often have impressive flights in s. Northampton; 700 at

E.S.V.N.W.R. 30 Aug (ESB) and 518 passing Sunset Beach 31 Aug (HTA) were typical dates and counts for the peak flight. A Blue-headed Vireo at Waynesboro, Augusta was the 2nd local record for the late fall 24 Nov (Robert Plank). A Loggerhead Shrike 24 Nov (SCR) at VA-673 and VA-674 in se. Elkwood, Culpeper was at a location where they bred historically, though they probably are gone as breeders from this precise area; shrikes should continue to be closely watched at their remaining sites in Virginia's Piedmont.

CORVIDS THROUGH FINCHES

A Common Raven being harassed by crows passed Kipt. 26 Oct (ZS). This furnishes the only recent county record for Northampton and one of few on the coast; the most recent Eastern Shore records come from the barrier islands in 1882, when Ridgway observed a few. The only other nearby records are of singles from York County (22 June 1949) and mile 238 on I-64 at Camp Peary (22 September 1996; both in Sheehan, W. J., ed. 1998. *Birds of the Williamsburg Area: An Annotated List*. Williamsburg Bird Club). Though some texts imply that the species was present in

small numbers on the outer coast in the early part of the 20th century, only two possible records from Virginia Beach could be located (Stumpy L., 2 Jun 1942 and Knotts I., 14 Nov 1931). A Common Raven at the Prince William landfill 30 Nov (SCR) was the 3rd record at this location within the past year, the easternmost site where the species appears to occur in the Virginia Piedmont. Fish Crows, rare and local in most montane areas, have been documented (†DD) from the upper valley of Cedar Cr., about 8 km from the North Fork of the Shenandoah R. five times in summer and fall since first noted there 6 Sep 2001; this season's peak was 18 birds 25 Aug. This species uses "leapfrog" colonization by family groups, so that new core populations can be started quite far from established range.

Red-breasted Nuthatch was so scarce this season that it was barely reported at all. Sedge Wrens are rare inland but were found at Hughes Hollow, Montgomery 13 Oct (MAT, DCz), Cromwell Valley Park, Baltimore 14 Oct (P. Lev), and Dulles Greenways Wetlands Mitigation Project, Loudoun, VA 26 Oct (KG, BL, LC, J. Drummond). Marsh Wren is an uncommon migrant in the Appalachians, so 2 at Quillen's Pond 6 Oct (AL) represented one of few fall records for Augusta; one wonders how many of these Appalachian birds could be of w. subspecies. A worn juv. Carolina Wren on the C.B.B.T. 20 Sep (SH, TMD, ESB et al.) provided one of very few records for the span and evidence of at least occasional short-distance movements over water (cf. a record of 3 here 19 Aug 1979; *Raven* 51: 66). Both kinglets were reported in healthy numbers this fall. Reese made counts at an American Robin roost in Easton that peaked at 26,370 on 23 Oct, a number which was exceeded by a count of 36,905 migrating past Kipt. 10 Nov (HTA).

Passerine migration in s. Northampton is monitored informally by counters at Sunset Beach, where reorientation flights can be observed from well before dawn through mid-morning. Peaks there were much lower than in the past four seasons, probably owing to the weakness of most cold fronts: few days in Sep and Oct surpassed the 418 warblers passing on the first real cool front of the season 31 Aug (HTA), other than the late flights of Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers. Best flights there were probably 19 & 24 Sep, though totals on the latter date (e. g., 100+ each Black-throated Blue and Black-and-white Warblers) were still below expectations (TS). A good warbler day in Howard was 12 Sep, when 24 Magnolia and 18 American Redstarts in a small area in Elkridge were observed (BO). Rarely detected as a fall migrant, a female Prothonotary Warbler was away from nesting areas at Rigby's Folly, Talbot 10 Aug (HTA), his 3rd record there in 40+ years. A Black-and-white Warbler 18 Nov in

SA This was the best fall yet for late swallows. The late-fall "reverse migration" of swallows has been observed for almost a decade at Cape May, NJ, and each year observers seem to be better at locating a larger mix of species. This year our Region joined the fray with gusto, due in part to weather systems in Nov that were perfect for this phenomenon.

An extremely late Cliff Swallow was at North Branch, Allegany 26 Oct (JLS, MH, JBC, RK). In addition to the late swifts noted earlier, Czaplak had Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Little Falls with one 4 Nov and 3 on 5 Nov, as well as single Barn and Bank Swallows, the latter the 2nd latest state record and unreported this fall since 20 Sep (but see below). A late Northern Rough-winged Swallow was at Centennial L., Howard 3 Nov (BO, R. Cullison). Single Bank Swallows in Northampton were surprising 9 Nov at Oyster (HTA) and Kipt. (GLA).

Later in the month, however, the swallow show really got underway, and for the first time, both states took part in the Cave Swallow invasion. Point Lookout S.P., Saint Mary's, was the stage for the Maryland portion of the show. Craig spotted the first Cave Swallow there 19 Nov (†PC), as it moved s. past the point behind a group of about 10 Tree Swallows. The next report was of 2 feeding over the pond at the point 24 Nov (SS), with another there 26 Nov (HH, MC). One flew overhead 27 Nov (MC) among 20 Tree Swallows, and another was feeding over a field in Dameron, 17 km n. of Pt. Lookout 29 Nov (SS). The only other swallow species (besides Tree) noted at Pt. Lookout during this bonanza was a lone Barn 26 Nov (HH), but Northern Rough-winged Swallows were noted at Piney Run, Carroll, with 2 on 17 Nov (RFR), and at Jug Bay, with one 24 Nov (Ashley Sutton).

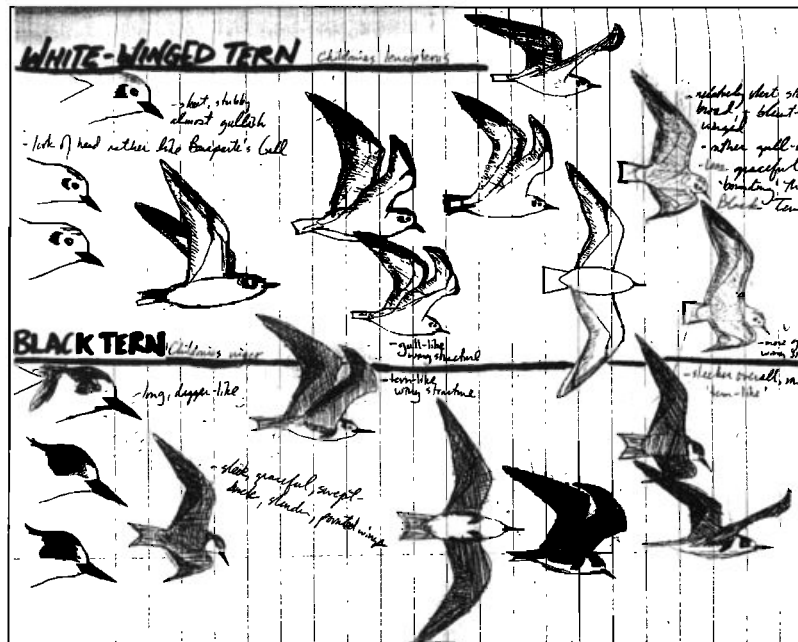
In Virginia, the swallow show was also splendid, with at least seven species recorded in Northampton after 18 Nov, including hundreds to thousands of Tree Swallows through the end of the month. Two Cave Swallows just n. or the junction of Rtes. 718 and 600 (n. of E.S.V.N.W.R.) on 18 Nov consorted with one Northern Rough-winged and many Tree Swallows (†TMD, RLAK). On 19 Nov, one Cave Swallow was in the same general area, while to the north, 2 *Petrochelidon* swallows and single Bank and Northern Rough-winged Swallows were among an estimated 8000 Tree Swallows along Rte. 600 between there and Oyster (ESB). A lone Cave Swallow was noted in the area 22 Nov (WTP).

The next sightings came on favorable west-northwest winds 24 Nov, when a focused search by Brinkley (†) and Tekin turned up single Cave Swallows at Kipt., Sunset Beach, and Pickett's Harbor, and 4 together among 900 Tree Swallows feeding over a mustard field at Arlington Rd., for a total of 7. Brinkley was able to photograph two of the birds at Arlington Rd., providing the first physical documentation for the Region. The Arlington Rd. flock also contained a mostly white Tree Swallow, a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, a Cliff Swallow, and a Bank Swallow, the latter two record-late dates for the Region. An essentially white-faced *Tachycineta* swallow here bore some resemblance to a Violet-green Swallow but was determined to be either a hybrid Tree x Violet-green or possibly a symmetrically leucistic Tree (ph. BT, ph. ESB). The month's Cave Swallow parade closed with singles 25 Nov at two locations off Rte. 600 just n. of E.S.V.N.W.R., along with one Northern Rough-winged Swallow (ESB, BL), plus a single bird at First Landing S. P., Virginia Beach 29 Nov (John Spahr). Surprisingly, Barn Swallow was not seen by observers in Northampton in Nov, despite dozens of hours of watching by many! All records of Cave Swallow will be reviewed by states' records committees.

s. Northampton (TMD) and a Prairie Warbler Chinc 24 Nov (BT et al.) were both late. Late Black-throated Blue Warblers were at Lilypons, Frederick 2 Nov (DCz) and banded at Kipt. 8 Nov (JRu); a late Blackpoll was at Jug Bay 14 Nov (DBy).

Less common inland than coastally, single Dickcissels were noted in Carroll at the University of Maryland Central Farm, Howard 2 Oct (BO, EH) and 18 Oct (BO). A Clay-colored Sparrow at Ft. McHenry 13-16 Oct (KEC, JP et al.), one at Clopper L. 1 Nov (DCz), and one at P.L.S.P. 26 Nov (HH) were the most notable; several others were reported from the coast, and if anything, numbers were below average. In addition to at least 4 along the coast earlier, a Lark Sparrow on the C.B.B.T. 16-17 Nov (BTa, v. o.) was on the late side for this scarce migrant, which begins passing through in mid-Aug and can be considered "reliable" only on Assateague I. in late Aug and Sep. A Henslow's Sparrow at Guesses Fork strip mine, Buchanan, VA was noted 2 Nov (Roger Mayhorn), a very late date but in the classic breeding habitat. Could some Henslow's remain this late in breeding areas, as do some Grasshoppers? Two Le Conte's Sparrows at North Fork Wetlands Bank, Prince William 31 Oct—1 Nov (Ray Smith, †SCR, TMD) are among a handful of records for the Virginia Piedmont; Maryland still has no Piedmont records. A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was at the same location 1 Nov (TMD), and another was an Augusta 2nd off VA-610 13 Oct (B. Tekin). Sparrow-seekers in Howard found 16 Lincoln's Sparrows 12 Oct (BO), a typical total for a focused Piedmont search during the migration peak. A Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow at Eastern Neck N.W.R., Kent 13 Oct (p. a., †WGE) and up to 2 at North Branch, Allegany 26 Oct (p. a. JLS, MH) were good finds; in Virginia, one was noted at E.S.V.N.W.R. 3 Nov (GLA, BLS, ESB) for the 2nd local record. Another imm. noted at Cedar Creek, off the Shenandoah Valley, 13-14 Oct (†DD) was thought to represent an intergrade with *leucophrys*. A Harris's Sparrow in the same fields with the Allegany Gambel's 26 Oct (RK et al., vt. JLS) was a 2nd county record and the 3rd for w. Maryland. Reports of both Gambel's and Harris's have made a significant jump in recent years; in Maryland, Harris's Sparrow was reported five times in the 1950s, seven times in the 1960s,

just four times 1970-1997, and now five times 1998-2002. Gambel's are certainly being found more often due to increased observer attention to White-crowned Spar-



This set of field sketches shows distinctions between an adult or second-calendar-year White-winged Tern (above) at Chincoteague N.W.R., Virginia 6-9 September 2002, sketched here on the last day of its visit, and accompanying Black Terns on Swan Cove (below). This was the first Regional and state record since 1980. Sketches by Michael L. P. Retter.

row subspecies, but Harris's Sparrow is so distinctive that it suggests that some other factor may be involved. A White-throated Sparrow at Rigby's Folly 7 Sep was that property's earliest by two weeks (HTA). Migrant Lapland Longspurs were detected near E.S.V.N.W.R. 3 Nov (BLS, GLA, TMD), Cedar Run Wetlands Bank 7 Nov (SCR), and North Fork Wetlands Bank 22 Nov (SCR); 9 in Westmoreland, VA were likely wintering birds 29 Nov (FA) and presaged a very large showing of the species in Dec. Eleven Snow Buntings at Poplar I. 15 Nov (JR) afforded a first record there but was actually a surprisingly low tally given the extent of suitable habitat.

In Virginia, Brewer's Blackbirds were near Elkwood, Culpeper, VA 9 Nov (14 birds, †SCR), and off Elk Run Rd., Fauquier 23 Nov (one; KG), with 5 about 8 km away the following day (TMD). Maryland Brewer's were singles at Willow Rd., Frederick 29 Sep (JLS, MH)—the earliest for Maryland by 24 days—and at Glen Echo, Montgomery 23 Oct (DCz), one day after the previous record-early date. Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds put in appearances at Great Oak Pond 29 Aug (†WGE), West Ocean City, Worcester 28 Sep (N&FS), and Remington, Fauquier, VA 13 Nov (TMD). Winter finches were nothing short of pitiful away from the mountains and immediate coast, with six reports of Purple Finches and two reports of siskins, and no reports of crossbills or redpolls anywhere, and just two Evening Grosbeak sightings.

UNDOCUMENTED REPORTS

A dark-morph Broad-winged Hawk from the Rockfish Gap hawkwatch 22 Sep (BT) would represent possibly a first Regional record if documented. A Western Tanager at Loch Raven Res., Baltimore was reported 29 Nov (p. a. Elise Kreiss), and a male Painted Bunting was at the residence of Dave and Mary Swift in California, St. Mary's 6-7 Aug (p. a.; fide KR); details on both should be submitted to the Maryland Records Committee.

Observers (area compilers in boldface): Robert L. Ake (RLAk), Robert L. Anderson (RLAn), Henry T. Armistead, George L. Armistead, Fred Atwood, Zach Baer, **Debbie Bennett** (Caroline, P.O. Box 404, Denton, MD 21625), Eirik Blom, Michael Bowen, Ed Boyd (EBo), Edward S. Brinkley, Carol & Don Broderick (C&DB), Mitchell A. Byrd, Danny

Bystrak (DBy), Laura Catterton, John B. Churchill, David Clark, J. Wallace Coffey, Barry Cooper, Keith Eric Costley, **Patty Craig** (Saint Mary's, P.O. Box 84, Lexington Park, MD 20653), Marty Cribb, Dave Czaplak, Dave Davis, H. Fenton Day III, Todd M. Day, Samuel H. Dyke, Walter G. Ellison, Kurt Gaskill, Mary Gustafson, Matt Hafner, Steven W. Hairfield, Sue Heath, Rob Hilton, Mark L. Hoffman, Hans Holbrook, Emy Holdridge, David L. Hughes, George M. Jett, Ray Kiddy, Allen Lerner, **Yulee Lerner** (Augusta, VA, 1500 North Colter St. E-6, Staunton, VA 24401), Bev Leeuwenburg, Glen Lovelace, **Larry Lynch** (VA-BIRD internet group), Gail Mackiernan, Harvey Mudd, Bonnie Ott, Brian Patteson, Helen A. **Patton** (Montgomery, 429 Hamilton Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20901 <helen@dataprompt.com>), W. Thomas Pendleton, Jim Peters, **Elizabeth Pitney** (Wicomico, 7218 Walston Switch Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849), Kyle Rambo, Jan G. Reese, Robert F. Ringler, Les Roslund, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Jethro Runco (JRu), **Norm & Fran Saunders** (MDOsprey Internet group), Tom Saunders, Fred Schaffer, Lydia Schindler (Voice of the Naturalist), Lisa Shannon, Zach Smith, Jo Solem (Howard, 10617 Graeloch Rd., Laurel, MD 20723), James L. Stasz, Sigrid Stiles, C. Michael Stinson, Brian L. Sullivan, Brian Taber (BTa), Brenda Tekin, Mary Ann Todd, Craig Turner, George Wheaton, Audrey Whitlock, Bill Williams, Les Willis. ☉