

This season was memorable for a mild March and early April and for record-high average temperatures between mid-April and late May, a period that saw almost no groundings of migrants, with a few exceptions (such as 8 May). Several Regional observers described the spring passerine migration either as "minor" or as "a major bust"—the birds apparently overflowed much of the Region during that period, at least in the eastern half of the Region. Perhaps tied to the persistent southerly and southwesterly winds of the spring, southern species such as Magnificent Frigatebird, Gray Kingbird, and White-tailed Kite put in rare appearances in eastern Virginia, and an Anhinga was recorded in Maryland.

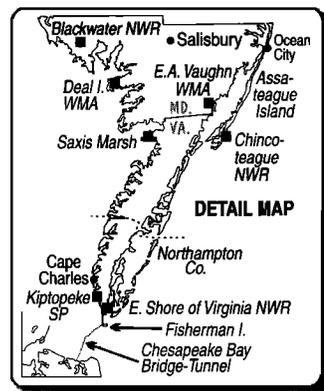
The warm weather also seemed to translate into early, mostly successful nesting of many landbird species. By late May, the northern part of the Region experienced the start of the emergence of "Brood X" cicadas, a food supply for many taxa of birds, especially Mississippi Kites, which appeared in record-breaking numbers in several areas.

**Abbreviations:** Assat. (Assateague I., Worcester, MD); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); Black. (Blackwater N.W.R., Dorchester, MD); Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke, VA); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, s. of Northampton, VA); Chinc. (Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack, VA); Craney (Craney I., Portsmouth, VA); D.C. (District of Columbia); E.S.V.N.W.R. (E. Shore of Virginia N.W.R.); Huntley (Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax, VA); Julie Metz (Julie Metz Wetlands Mitigation Bank, Prince William, VA); Kerr (Kerr Res., Mecklenburg, VA); O.C. Inlet (Ocean City Inlet, Worcester, MD). The state for a location is noted the first time it is mentioned in the text.

### LOONS THROUGH IBISES

There were two significant fallouts of Common Loons this spring. The first was 2–3 Apr, with impressive totals from many locations. Most observers reported vocalizing birds in alternate plumage. The highest count was 230 seen at Liberty L. on the Carroll and Baltimore, MD line 3 Apr (RFR, Bill Ellis), with only 16 found the next day. Other Maryland evidence of this fallout came 2 Apr with 22 at Triadelphia Res., Howard (JSo, Rick Sussman); 54 and 26 at Loch Raven Res. Baltimore 2 & 4 Apr (with 22 still present 8 Apr) (Taylor

# Middle Atlantic



McLean, Debbie Terry); and 45 at Piney Run Park, Carroll (RFR). Seventy-five were at Ft. Smallwood, Anne Arundel 3 Apr (SR); 60 and 47 at Piney Res., Garrett, MD 3 & 4 Apr (JBC); 23 at Big Pool, Washington, MD 3 Apr (RFR); 16 at Rocky Gorge Res., Howard/Prince George's, MD 3 Apr (Bob Elvander); and 13 at Rocky Gap S.P., Allegany 4 Apr (RK, JBC). In Virginia, 10 were at Mill Creek L., Amherst 2 Apr (MJ), keeping company with 34 Red-breasted Mergansers and 27 Double-crested Cormorants, and 50 were at Burke L., Fairfax 4 Apr (with 40 present 5 Apr and 16 on 7 Apr) (KG, m.ob.), these birds seen with up to 250 Double-crested Cormorants. The next pulse of these birds came 14–15 Apr in Virginia. Some 208 were counted at Philpott L., Henry and 95 at the Martinsville Res. 14 Apr (both CK). In a ten-minute span, 67 were counted over Oakton, Fairfax 15 Apr (FA). Two of the Virginia Pacific Loons reported in winter were observed in spring: 6 Mar at L. Anna, Louisa (JI, TP), and 7 & 12 Mar at Kerr (AD, MRB). S. Holston L., Washington, VA continues as the Region's only reliable spot for Eared Grebes. Nine were

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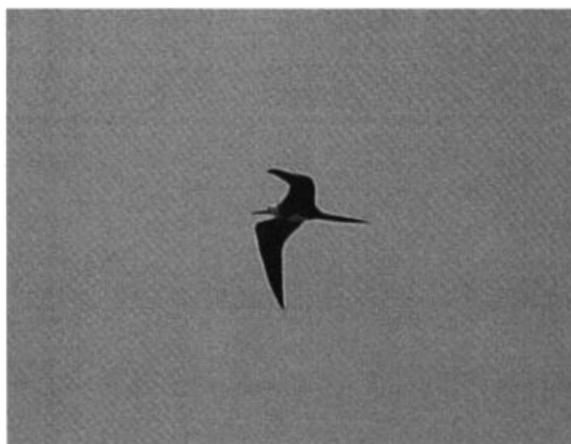
with 15 Horned and 14 Pied-billed Grebes 9 Mar (JWC, LM). "Hundreds" of Horned Grebes were noted at inland Kerr 7 Mar (AD).

One of the more interesting reports from the season was of an albatross seen from a small airplane 17 Mar by a crew surveying damage from a sunken tanker approx. 85 km off the coast of s. Assateague I., Accomack, VA. Experienced seabirder Jeff Davis got brief but decent looks of a bird he believed to be a Black-browed Albatross, though the excellent details submitted did not rule out all other albatross species (p.a.). The Region has only one record of Black-browed (6 Feb 1999) and three of Yellow-nosed (1 Feb 1975, 3 Dec 1979, 28 Nov 1981).

American White Pelicans were reported seven times, the most unusual a large, white bird seen alighting atop a tree at dusk 8 May well inland at a farm in Halifax, VA, leaving its identity uncertain until daybreak when several area birders arrived to confirm that it was indeed a pelican (p.a., ph. †JBI, MRB, m.ob.). Other Virginia sightings were 19 Apr between Fisherman I. and the C.B.B.T.,

**SA** For the first time in state history, a full-time spring seabird watch was conducted. This season's count was from the Cape Charles Lighthouse on Smith I., Northampton 14 Mar–13 May, complementary to a fall seabird watch at the same location. Tom Tustison, Stacy Baker, and four volunteers logged 261 hours of observation and noted 42,808 seabirds of 27 species, two-thirds of these birds being Double-crested Cormorants and loons. Peak loon movement was 4–10 Apr, with 7283 noted. Cormorants peaked 10–17 Apr, with 5266 birds. No alcids or jaegers were noted during the survey.

Northampton, VA (AL, Pat Lerner), and 25 May–6 Jun at Back Bay N.W.R., Virginia Beach (RLAK, Dorie Stolley). Maryland reports were from 8 Mar at King's Landing Park, Calvert (p.a., Tom Harden), 2 on 11 Apr over Ft. Washington, Prince George's (p.a., DC), 2 on 17 Apr at Havre de Grace, Harford (p.a., HH, JBr), and one 13 May at Poplar I., Talbot (Jan Reese). Out of place was a **Brown Pelican** along the Potomac R. in D.C. 20 Mar, a first for D.C. (p.a., Rob Hilton, Lisa Shannon, PP, RFR, m.ob.). An imm. Great Cormorant was seen 12 Mar at Kerr (p.a., MRB, MJ), while 4 were somewhat late 19 May at the C.B.B.T. (ESB). Double-crested Cormorants again nested on the Potomac R. in Montgomery, MD with birds noted on nests 11 Apr, and as many as 10 nests believed to be present (CH). Liberty L., Carroll, MD is proving to be a minor flyway of Double-crested Cormorants, with large numbers noted 20–30 Apr, peaking with 148 on 20 Apr (BE). A soaring **Anhinga** was seen near Patterson Park, Calvert 16 Apr, following strong southwesterlies the prior two days (p.a., TB); another was seen 28 May overhead along Steel Bridge Rd., Southampton,



This Magnificent Frigatebird, a first-stage juvenile, was photographed 23 May 2004 at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Virginia; the state has about fourteen prior reports of the genus, many of those not determinable to species. Photograph by Gwen Gantt.

VA, in an area where breeding has been suspected (RB, MJ, Judy Weigand). Another exceedingly rare sighting this season was of an imm. **Magnificent Frigatebird** 23 May at the C.B.B.T. Eccles discovered this cooperative bird with a small party of birders on the 3rd island, allowing for solid documentation (p.a. †SE, ph. GG, JG, et al). Half of the state's approximately 14 prior records of the genus come from the Eastern Shore.

American Bitterns made appearances at several previously unknown locations: 21 Apr in Augusta, VA (JSp); 22 Apr at Pinto Marsh, Allegany, MD (JBC); 28 Apr in Patrick, VA (a county 3rd; CK); 8 May at Blandly (SB); and 10 May at a farm pond near Sperryville, Rappahannock, VA (TMD, SAH, Bob Abrams). Other unusual heron sightings included a Snowy Egret 9 Apr at Morrisville, Fauquier's first (TMD); single Little Blue Herons 20 Apr at Siler, Frederick, VA (Margaret Wester fide SB) and 22 Apr at Chester Phelps W.M.A., a 2nd for Fauquier (TMD, SAH). Cattle Egrets well away from the Coastal Plain included one 12 Apr at Buchanan, VA (David Raines, Ed Bailey fide RM); one n. of Rapidan, Culpeper, VA 2 May for probably the county's 2nd (SAH, TMD); and one 7 May at Bealeton, Fauquier's first (TMD, SAH). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons nested along Shanks Rd., Roanoke, where a pair was seen tending a nest 27 Apr (AQ), and at Runnymede Park, Fairfax, for the 2nd year, with a bird seen on nest 30 May (Jay & Carol Hadlock), and possibly at another location near Herndon, Fairfax, where a pair was first noted 2 Apr (SAH, Allen Hart). A first

**SA** Again this year, there was an influx of Red-necked Grebes into the Region, though it paled in comparison to the massive flight of late winter 2003. Nevertheless, it was the 3rd largest ever documented locally, after Feb 1994 and Feb 2003. Two early sightings had come from sites away from the coast on 6 Dec at Roaches Run, Arlington, VA (RR) and 27 Dec–3 Jan at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg (AD). Mid-Jan saw two reports at coastal locales, which are more typical: one at Grandview Nature Preserve at Hampton, VA 13 Jan (John Drummond) and another at Assat. 14 Jan (Adam Smith). These individuals were probably connected to the later influx.

Between 19 Jan and 4 Feb, partial freezing of the Great Lakes occurred, with L. Erie entirely covered, and significant portions of the other four lakes frozen. This remained the case until nearly mid-Mar. Perhaps the first indication of displaced birds was at Fort McHenry, Baltimore 30 Jan–4 Feb, where as many as 9 birds were seen at times (JP, fide KEC), or at Belle Haven Marina, Fairfax 25 Jan (DK). By mid-Feb, grebes were being reported around the Region, with a decidedly coastal bias. From 14 to 29 Feb, seven other coastal and three inland sites hosted birds, usually numbering between one and 3 individuals. Virginia sightings were mostly at the C.B.B.T. 14–21 Feb (ESB, Steve Hairfield, Valerie Kitchens, TMD, m.ob.), 3 at Yorktown, James City 21 Feb (BW), one at Whitethorn, Montgomery 21–29 Feb+ (BK), and one at a drainage pond at Manassas, Prince William 23–28 Feb (LC). Maryland saw one bird at Ft. Armistead, Anne Arundel 8 Feb (SA), up to 2 at O.C. Inlet 10–29 Feb+ (SM, PJ, m.ob.), one on the Potomac R. at Seneca Cr. 11–29 Feb+ (DC), one at Solomon's, Calvert 15 Feb (SA), 2 on 20 Feb at Ft. Smallwood, Anne Arundel (SR), 2 at Bogle's Wharf, Kent 28 Feb (WGE, NLM), and one at Assat. 29 Feb (JLS, MH, MLH). As expected after a flight that stretches into late Feb, many grebes were located in the spring season (see Table 1).

The movement of birds in 2003 came about two weeks later than the flight in 2004, with the first push in mid-Feb in 2003, and the biggest influx arriving in the first week in Mar. In 2003, however, there was more extensive and earlier freezing of the Great Lakes: L. Erie was mostly covered by 21 Jan 2003 and remained so into Apr. Possibly a more important factor in 2003 was the nearly complete freezing of L. Superior and L. Huron by 28 Feb (see: <<http://coastwatch.glerl.noaa.gov/glsea/glsea.html>>). Without the extensive freezing seen in 2003, it is not surprising that the 2004 influx of grebes involved considerably fewer birds. This season's reports unfortunately shed little light on the mystery of the source of such movements of this species into the Region (cf. *N.A.B.* 57: 329) but further support their connection to Great Lakes freezes.

**Table 1. Records of Red-necked Grebes from the Middle Atlantic region, Spring 2004.**

Date	No.	Location	Municipality	Observer(s)
4 & 15 Mar	1	Claytor L.	Pulaski, VA	GE, SJR, BK
4–6 Mar	2	Violette's Lock	Montgomery, MD	DC
6 Mar	2	L. Anna	Louisa, VA	JL, TP
6 Mar–7 Apr	1–2	Georgetown Res.	D.C.	PP, m.ob.
6–21 Mar	1–2	O.C. Inlet	Worcester, MD	N&FS, m.ob.
7 Mar	1	S. Holston L.	Washington, VA	JWC, LM
7 Mar	1	Patuxent R.	Calvert, MD	HH
13 Mar	1	Whitethorne	Montgomery, VA	BK
13 Mar	1	Chester R.	Kent, MD	WGE, NLM
20 Mar	1	Ft. McHenry	Baltimore, MD	JP
20 Mar–15 Apr	1	Sandy Pt. S.P.	Anne Arundel, MD	BS
22 Mar	2	Miller's I. Rd.	Baltimore, MD	MH
25 Mar	2	Lapidum Landing	Harford, MD	LE
27 Mar–1 Apr	1	Airlie Res.	Fauquier, VA	TMD
28 Mar	1	City Reservoir	Martinsville, VA	J. Beard
30 Mar	4	Belmont Bay	Fairfax, VA	BJ, BH
3 Apr	1	Triadelphia Res.	Howard, MD	KS
9 Apr	2	Violette's Lock	Montgomery, MD	DC
9 Apr	7	Liberty L.	Baltimore, MD	BE
16 Apr	1	Kerr Res.	Mecklenburg, VA	JT

for Campbell, VA was a Glossy Ibis 14 Apr (TD, Dave Reid). A White-faced Ibis was seen at Chinc. 25 May+, marking the 4th consecutive year that at least one bird has spent spring there (MI, MRB).

### WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Late was a Tundra Swan 21 May at Halethorpe Pond, Baltimore (SA, Brian Sykes). A Brant was a surprise at Piney Run Park, Carroll, MD 7 Mar (SA). A Ross's Goose accompanied 4000 Snow Geese 23 Mar at Ruthsburg, Queen Anne's, MD (Danny Poet). Two Greater White-fronted Geese at Lilipons, Frederick, MD lingered from winter, last seen 1 Mar (GM, BC), and another was at Paper Mill Road, Baltimore 21 Mar (†Taylor McLean). A Cackling Goose was found at Centennial L., Howard, MD 1–2 Mar (MH, KS); this individual may have been identifiable as subspecies *minima*, in which case wild provenance would be difficult to support. A Barnacle Goose at Spring Road, Talbot 10 May (Les Roslund) was of uncertain provenance. A Eurasian Wigeon was at Ridgeway Park, Hampton, VA 1–10 Apr (Ben Copeland). A late American Wigeon was at Dixon Farm, Frederick, MD 20 May (RFR). Northern Shovelers were seen from the causeway to Chincoteague I. sporadically as late as 23 May (ESB, TMD); a pair took up residence 16 May+ at a mitigation site at New Windsor, Carroll, MD, but breeding was never confirmed (RFR).

A regular lingerer in late spring, a Lesser Scaup was found at Hains Pt., D.C. 25 May (John Beetham). Bufflehead rarely linger in the Region unless injured; this season, an ad. male was at Oyster, Northampton 18–31 May+ (ESB, RLak), another was at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax 30 May+ (SE et al.), and 2 were at Westminster Res., Carroll, MD 20 May (RFR). As many as 25 Common Eiders were at O.C. Inlet 21 Mar, with the last report being "a flock" 3 Apr. Four Harlequin Ducks were reported from the C.B.B.T. 19 Apr (RLAn). Armistead had impressive Bay counts of Surf Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks around Ferry Pt., Talbot through Mar/Apr, peaking with over 5000 scoters 28 Mar (with over 700 Long-tailed Ducks), and over 1100 as late as 24 Apr, while 1100 Long-tailed Ducks were tallied 3 Apr. Away from the Bay and ocean, reports of Surf Scoters included: one 11 Apr at Hains Pt., D.C. (PP); 3 at Kerr 11 Apr (JT); one 13 Apr at Allen's Fresh, Charles, MD (GJ); 8 at Piney Run Park, Carroll, MD 17 Apr (Dave Harvey); 3 at Rocky Gap S.P., Allegany 18 Apr (RK); and one 20 Apr at Piper's Gap, Carroll, VA (GE). A

White-winged Scoter was at Parrot, Montgomery, VA 4 Mar (GE, SJR); 2 were on the Potomac R. in D.C. 19 Mar (MB); and 4 were at Rocky Gap S.P., Allegany (RK, JBC). Twenty-one Common Goldeneyes were on the Potomac R. at Violette's Lock, Montgomery, MD 8 Mar, along with a single Long-tailed Duck (DC). Czaplak discovered a small Common Merganser chick on the Potomac R. at Violette's Lock, Montgomery, MD 30 May (with a hen and 6 young seen near here 6 Jun); further details will follow in the Nesting Season



This Gray Kingbird, about the thirteenth for Virginia, was observed during the "Birds & Blossoms" festival 8 May 2004 at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Northampton County. Photograph by Edward S. Brinkley.

report. Triadelphia Res. hosted 1600 Common Mergansers 2 Mar (JSo, Emy Holdridge), a high count for well-watched Howard. A hen Hooded Merganser with 9 tiny young was seen at Chester Phelps W.M.A. 10 Apr, and again 18 Apr (though the young were considerably larger), one of few breeding records for the Piedmont and the first for Fauquier (SAH, TMD). Another Hooded hen with 10 small young was photographed at Race Rd. Wetlands, Howard, MD 24 Apr (Mark Hollis), the 3rd consecutive year of breeding at this spot. Huntley has had successful breeding seasons in recent years, including this season, with one pair fledging several young in a wood duck box (Ken Hollinga).

Four Rough-legged Hawks were reported in Virginia in the early part of spring: at Swope, Augusta, VA 3 Mar (AL); Burke's Garden, Tazewell 6 Mar (Ed and Michelle Talbot); along I-66 near Markham, Fauquier 11 Mar (Greg Justice); and along I-64 in Albemarle 29 Mar (MRB). A Merlin 21 May at the C.B.B.T. was one of the latest for the Virginia coast and continues a recent trend on the Atlantic coast generally (ESB). The

spring hawkwatch at Ft. Smallwood, Anne Arundel, reported an average year compared with the past four. Notable were some unprecedented flights in early Apr. Twice over 1000 birds were counted: 1161 on 7 Apr and 1246 on 9 Apr. The single-day total of Cooper's Hawk was bested by one 7 Apr with 102 tallied (SR).

### RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

King Rails were at Julie Metz Wetlands, Prince William again this spring, calling from 28 Mar through at least 20 Apr (MR, DK). A Black Rail was briefly seen but never heard 17 Apr at Huntley (BL, Jen Foults); others were heard in the Gunpowder R. marshes, Harford, MD 15 May (MH, JLS et al.); up to 4 calling from four spots along Elliott I. Rd. 19–20 May (George & Elliott Adams, *vide* HTA); and one at Saxis, Accomack, VA 23 May (RLak, JSp, BW, KG). A King Rail at Swan Harbor, Harford, MD 15 May was probably a migrant (MH, JLS, et al.). Virginia's first Purple Gallinule in a decade was an ad. along Colonial Parkway, James City 9–23 May (Dan Cristol, BT, m.ob.). Another was at Hughes Hollow, Montgomery, MD 6–31 May (Paul Woodward), the latter keeping company with up to 2 Common Moorhens first discovered 11 Apr (Frank Powers) and seen through Jun (m.ob.). Single Common Moorhens were at Dick Cross W.M.A., Mecklenburg 28 Apr (BB) and at Huntley 12–17 May (Jesse Fulton, RR, LC). A Sandhill Crane arrived at Rural Retreat L., Wythe, VA 26 Mar, only to be joined 5 Apr by 3 others; the last was seen 9 Apr (GE, Allen Boynton, MRB, PS).

A Piping Plover provided the 3rd Calvert record 20 Mar at Calvert Cliffs S.P. (ph. MC). Three Piping and 2 Wilson's Plovers were at little-visited Wreck I., Northampton 3 Apr (KG et al.), the latter providing a good arrival date. American Oystercatchers nested successfully on the 3rd island of the C.B.B.T., first noted on eggs 1 May (RLAn). Along with Mallard, oystercatchers are the only species to have bred on these islands. A few reports of Black-necked Stilts came from atypical locations in Maryland. Two were found 7 May at Merkle W.M.A., Prince George's (Fred Shaffer), one 15–21 May at the US Route 50 borrow pit, Wicomico (Sam Dyke, D&CB), and 3 at Jug Bay, Anne Arundel 24 May (Danny Bystrak). A Willet was well out of place at Fairlawn Ponds 28 Apr in Pulaski, VA (JK). Spotted Sandpipers were present at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax through migration and into spring, with 2–3 birds noted frequently, suggesting this species might be breeding nearby (RR, m.ob.). Uncommon

on the coast in recent springs, an Upland Sandpiper e. of Exmore, *Northampton* 8 Apr (ESB, TS) was a bit early. Others were 2 at Long Neck Rd., *Saint Mary's*, MD 17 Apr (MC, Pat Rose) and a single at Harrison Rd., *Fauquier* 1–6 May (AR, m.ob.). The winter assemblage of Marbled Godwits at Willis Wharf, *Northampton* still numbered 150 on 4 Mar (Ralph Wall), and 3 lingered 25 May along the causeway to Chincoteague I. (MRB, MI). A Ruddy Turnstone was at Mason-Dixon Farm 22–24 May (RFR et al.), the 4th for *Frederick*, MD, and 6 were along Rte. 574 on 22 May (HH), *Wicomico's* 4th. A flooded, plowed field e. of Jefferson, *Culpeper* hosted 5 Sanderlings 9 May (†TMD). A White-rumped Sandpiper was at a wetland mitigation site near Nokesville, *Prince William* 30 Apr (SAH), and another was at Greenfield Pond, *Botetourt*, VA 1 May (Tad Finell). A low of 2 White-rumpeds at Chinc. 18 May (ESB, RLAK) would be improved by early Jun. Small numbers of Purple Sandpipers were seen through late May at the C.B.B.T., with 39 seen 19 May (ESB); all were gone by 1 Jun. Some 2000 Dunlin along with 240 Short-billed Dowitchers, 400 Semipalmated Plovers, and 1300 peep were at Chinc. 8 May (ESB). Single Ruffs were at Jug Bay, *Prince George's*, MD 7 Apr (JLS) and at Chinc. 21–22 May (a red ad. male; SE, ph. JG, GG, m.ob.). Following the passage of a front in *Kent*, MD on 3 May, Ellison noted a modest fallout of shorebirds, consisting mainly of 230 Least Sandpipers, 75 Lesser Yellowlegs, 50 Semipalmated Plovers, and 18 Black-bellied Plovers. Mason-Dixon Farm hosted up to 2 Red-necked Phalaropes 19–21 May, the 7th county record (Barbara Gearhart, Paul Mauss, RFR).

### JAEGERS THROUGH NIGHTJARS

A dark- and a light-morph Parasitic Jaeger were seen 18 Apr at the C.B.B.T. (RLAn). A Laughing Gull was unusual at Kerr 28 Apr, with 3 Bonaparte's Gulls (BB). An ad. Franklin's Gull was at Jug Bay, *Anne Arundel* 8 May (MH), and 2 were seen from Ft. Smallwood, *Anne Arundel* 27 May (SR). Little Gull reports are typi-

cally more frequent in Maryland, with Back R., *Baltimore* reliably producing 1–5 birds 22 Mar–10 Apr (MH, GM, BC, m.ob.); an ad. was seen 20 Mar at Lapidum Landing, *Harford*, MD (with an ad. Black-headed Gull), with 2 there 23 Mar (MH, ZB); a basic ad. was at Violette's Lock, *Montgomery*, MD 21 Mar (DC); and the lone Virginia report was from the southernmost C.B.B.T. island 28 Apr (RLAK, Tom Tustison). Following the recent winter reports of California Gull at Neabsco Cr., *Prince William*, one was reported again 13 Mar (p.a. MR), while another was reported from Hunting Cr., *Fairfax* and Alexandria line, 19, 23 & 27 Mar (p.a., KG, †MB, SS). A first-winter Thayer's Gull was at Ft. Story, Virginia Beach 22 Mar (MRB, AD). Leftover from winter were first-winter Iceland and Glaucous Gulls at *Prince William's* landfill through 14 Mar (LC, BL, George Wheaton). A first-winter Iceland Gull was

also at the Salisbury Landfill, *Wicomico* 4 Mar (CH, Cyndie Loeper), and an ad. was at O.C. Inlet 3 Apr (WGE, NLM, Peter Mann, m.ob.), seen with a first-winter Glaucous Gull. Later Glaucous Gull reports from Maryland included a second-winter 3 Apr at the Route 50 borrow pit, *Wicomico* (BS, Eric & Pat Decker) and another 12 & 16 May on Assat. (DP, N&FS). Providing the first *Garrett* record and 2nd for w. Maryland, a Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Broadford Res. 20 Mar (p.a., †Fran Pope). A Gull-billed Tern was at Skimmer I., Ocean City, *Worcester* 24 Apr (N&FS). Inland Caspian Terns included two reports from w. of the Blue Ridge in Virginia: 3 at S. Holston L. 9 Apr (JWC, Rack Cross et al.) and 5 at Riverview Park, Radford 12 Apr (JK). Others were several at Kerr 16 Apr (JT); 55 at Four Mile Run at the Potomac R. 18 Apr, a good count for D.C. (PP); and 2 in w. Maryland at Rocky

Gap S.P., *Alleghany* 25 Apr (John Hubbell). Two Black Terns at Mason-Dixon Farm were unusual inland 23–24 May (Helen Horrocks, RFR et al.). On the heels of a strong cold front with 20-knot ne. winds, David and Linda Hughes and later Brinkley found hundreds of terns and shorebirds between Fisherman I. and the northernmost C.B.B.T. islands 8 May, including 4 Black Terns (DLH, LH, ESB), plus a single Arctic Tern at the C.B.B.T. and a Roseate Tern at Fisherman I. (ESB), the latter both thought to be rare, although the complete lack of sea-watching on the state's outer coasts in spring since the early 1990s means that both species conceivably pass undetected. The bulk of the C.B.B.T. birds were Common Terns and dozens of Royals, the shorebirds primarily Dunlin and Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Razorbills continued at O.C. Inlet through 14 Mar, with a high count of 7 seen 9 Mar (v.o.).

Eurasian Collared-Doves still hold strong at the Northampton intersection of Rtes. 600 and 645, with reports scattered throughout the season. Other reports from Virginia were at Sandbridge, VA in May (Murray

**SA** Many experienced observers expected unprecedented kite numbers to coincide with the cicada emergence, and no one was disappointed. Aside from the plethora of Mississippi Kite reports (Table 2 is a partial accounting), including a nesting bird in *Prince William*, VA (more details in the Nesting Season report), there was a well-described White-tailed Kite 3 Apr near the Nansemond R. at Suffolk, the 3rd for Virginia and the Region (acc. CLW). The season saw four reports of Swallow-tailed Kites, with one in place through mid-Jun. McCandless had a number of Mississippi Kites at his Elkton, *Cecil*, home beginning 22 May and peaking with a dozen in early Jun. He discovered a Swallow-tailed Kite 29 May, which was seen regularly through 10 Jun (p.a., ph., †SM, m.ob.). Other Swallow-taileds were at Black. 9 Apr (p.a., JF, BD), at E.S.V.N.W.R. 15 May (BT), and near Oxford, *Talbot* 17 May (D&CB).

**Table 2. Records of Mississippi Kite in Virginia and Maryland, Spring 2004.**

MARYLAND				
No.	Date	Location	Municipality	Observer(s)
1	2 May	near S. Mt.	Frederick	HH
2	12 May	Ft. Smallwood	Anne Arundel	R. Geuder
1	12 May	Hughes Hollow	Montgomery	T. White
1	13 May	Pt. of Rocks	Frederick	TMD, E. Hynes
1	14 May	Patterson Park	Calvert	TB, T. Jordan
1–12	22 May+	Elkton	Cecil	SM
1	23 May	Ft. Smallwood	Anne Arundel	SR
4	24 May	Ft. Smallwood	Anne Arundel	SR
1	27 May	Clyburn Arboretum	Baltimore City	S. Sanford
VIRGINIA				
No.	Date	Location	Municipality	Observer(s)
1	mid-May	Rock Church	Virginia Beach	Doug Davis
ca. 10	9 May+	various, Greensville/Southampton Counties		MRB, TMD, m.ob.
1	11 May	Fort Hunt Rd.	Fairfax	E. Eder
1–7	16 May+	Riverview area	Prince William	J. Pearson
4	16 May	E.S.V.N.W.R.	Northampton	ESB
4	17 May	College Creek	James City County	BT
1–2	18–25 May	Banister R. W.M.A.	Halifax	JBI
1	22 May	Great Dismal Swamp	Suffolk City	SCR
5	22 May+	Huntley Meadows	Fairfax	RR
1	23 May	off I-64	Portsmouth City	ESB, GLA et al.

Honick, *vide* RLak) and Dublin, Pulaski 2 Mar (Ron Underwood, *vide* CK). A Rufous Hummingbird that wintered at Cave Spring, Roanoke, VA was last seen 8 Apr (George Munsey, vt. Bill Grant). Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were singing at Cranesville Swamp, Garrett 25 May (MH, DP). The Kiptopeke 2003 fall banding operation of Saw-whets netted 119 owls, with an age ratio that was not skewed toward HY birds, and capture rates well below the invasion years of 1995 and 1999, indicating that 2003 was a non-invasion year (Paxton, B.J., B.D. Watts, and F.M. Smith. 2004. Autumn Migration of Northern Saw-whet Owls on the Lower Delmarva Peninsula 1994–2003: Project Report 2003.). Chuck-will's-widows were reported from several unusual locations in Virginia: one at Union Springs Dam, Rockingham 5 May (Ken Hinkle et al.); one 8 May at Marine Base Quantico, Prince William, where not detected in several years (MR); and one at Rapidan, Culpeper 8 May (TMD, ICT).

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Gray Kingbird was discovered 8 May at the E.S.V.N.W.R., seen by four parties through the morning, including the "Birds & Blossoms" festival participants led by Ake (ph., †ESB). The Western Kingbird returned for its 3rd year to Ft. McHenry, Baltimore 10 May. Reported originally to be associating (again) with an Eastern Kingbird, surprisingly it disappeared 31 May, not to be seen again (despite frequent monitoring of the site) until mid-Jul (JP, Mike Lynch, KEC, m.ob.). A coastal Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was a C.B.B.T. 20 May (ESB), where not without precedent. A Sedge Wren was at Huntley 23 Apr (MRB); one at Elkton 1–2 May was the first for Cecil (SM, PJ); another was at Truitt's Landing, Worcester 12 May (DP); and one was at a marsh along Terry's Run, Orange, VA 12 May (MRB). Marsh Wrens were at Parrot, Pulaski 11 Apr (BK) and at Glen Alton, Giles 15 May (PS). A Brown-headed Nuthatch was found 1 Apr at Camp Holiday Trails Rd., Albemarle, VA, well away from the typical range for the species in the Region and very nicely documented (ph., v.r. †John L. Rowlett). Loggerhead Shrikes were seen near Parker Rd., Bedford, VA 4–8 May, with food-carrying noted (RB). A late migrant Hermit Thrush was at Mason Neck S.P., Fairfax 30 May (Mary Alice Koeneke, Glenn Koppel).

A male American Redstart was record early for Maryland 27 Mar at Colbourne Mill Road, Worcester (ZB). A male Prothonotary Warbler was seen and heard

singing at a pond in Rappahannock 5–24 May and also observed bringing materials to a nest box, but it did not attract a mate (Bruce Jones). Other sightings were 5 May along the New R. at Radford (CK) and 8 May n. of Calloway, Franklin (BK). An apparent second-year male Western Tanager appeared at a feeder in Staunton, Augusta 27 Mar and stayed through 29 May (ph. †Andrew Clem, ph. †Brenda Tekin, YL). Another Western Tanager was at Chipokes S.P., Surry, VA 18 Apr (Mitchell & Lois Byrd, *vide* BW). The Rose-breasted Grosbeak that overwintered in Bedford was



A green male Painted Bunting at the home of John and Pat Kominski Green west of Ellicott City, Maryland 15–24 December 2003 (here undated) provided a first record for well-watched Howard County. Photograph by John Kominski.

last seen 9 Mar (*vide* TD). There was a consensus among many of the Region's birders that Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen in numbers either unprecedented or not seen in many years. The peak count was of 15 at a feeder in Bedford 30 Apr (TD). A male Painted Bunting visited a Dameron, Saint Mary's feeder 8 May (Patty Craig), while a female was at a feeder in w. Ocean City, Worcester 22 May (ph. N&FS). Two spring Clay-colored Sparrows were reported: 21 Mar at Shiloh School Rd., Northumberland, VA (TS) and one singing 20 Apr at Cornfield Harbor Road, Saint Mary's (Gemma Radko, Jim Green, *vide* DP). A grayish Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow thought to be of the Acadian race *subvirgatus* was at the southernmost C.B.B.T. island 23 May (ESB, GLA). Seaside Sparrows were seen at three atypical Maryland locations: 17 Apr at Diamond Pt. Rd., Baltimore (RFR, BE), 18 Apr at Scientist's Cliffs, Calvert (SS), and 23 Apr at Flag Ponds S.P., Calvert 23 Apr (5 birds; Arlene Ripley). One of the 3 Harris's Sparrows at Julie Metz since Nov was seen through 12 Mar (CH). An ad. male Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Julie Metz 19 Mar (Craig Tumer).

Following the unprecedented invasion of Common Redpolls in winter, there were sev-

eral to report in spring. In Virginia, one that frequented a Lynchburg feeder in Feb was last seen 1 Mar (Cinda Hurt); another winter leftover at a Chesterfield feeder was seen through 13 Mar (John Coe); one visited a Spotsylvania feeder 13–18 Mar, the same feeder hosting an Evening Grosbeak through 12 Mar (Jackie Nelson, AR, Larry Meade, m.ob.); and Maryland had one at a w. Ocean City, Worcester feeder 6 Mar (N&FS). It seemed a good year for Red Crossbills in the Mountains & Valleys of Virginia. At Twelve O'Clock Knob, Roanoke, as many as 7 were seen 1–16 Apr (AQ); one was at Roan Mt., Giles 9 Apr (PS); and a flock of 25 was seen at Whitetop Mt., Grayson 29 Apr (BK).

**Addenda:** A Painted Bunting was a first for Howard at a feeder in Ellicott City, visiting 15–24 Dec (p.a., ph. Pat & John Kaminski, *vide* JS). Howard Common Redpolls from winter were: singles 2 Jan at Iron Pan Pl. (Doug Odermatt) and 21 Jan at Ilchester Rd. (Janet Lydon), 8 at Harness Ct. 22–29 Jan (Emy Holdridge), and up to 3 at Ellicott City 22 Jan–5 Feb (Kevin Heffernan, Karen Darcy).

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