

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 47

MARCH 1976

NUMBER 1



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$1.00 for junior members (students), \$3.00 for active members, \$5.00 for sustaining members, \$10.00 for contributing members, \$100.00 for life members.

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Williamsburg, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$4.00. Individual issues are priced at \$1.00 for current ones, 75¢ for those prior to 1971.

VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—1975-76 SEASON

F. R. SCOTT

The Christmas bird counts continue to be the largest cooperative project among Virginia birdwatchers. This year a record 563 people engaged in the 31 counts reported here, 37—or 7%—more than last year, and since many took part in several counts, there are 788 observers' names listed. Coverage in the field increased also to a record 2657 party-hours, which was 6% above the previous year.

In all, 209 different species are listed in the tabulation of this year's counts, down a bit from last year's 212 and the record 220 of two years ago but still an impressive total. One new bird was added to the cumulative list of all species reported on Virginia counts—the Bachman's Sparrow—but since the Le Conte's Sparrow was added in error last year (it had previously been found on a count in 1954), the cumulative list remains at 273 species.

The 31 counts summarized here are the same number as last year, and, in fact, the same count areas are represented, except that Danville was not submitted this year and Shenandoah National Park-Luray took its place. Other Virginia counts submitted to *American Birds* but not *The Raven* were, in addition to Danville, Wachapreague, Massanutten Mountain, and Northern Shenandoah Valley, the last two being new counts apparently organized by faculty and students of Lord Fairfax Community College. As in recent years, several other counts overlapped into Virginia from neighboring localities. These were Crisfield, Point Lookout, and Seneca, Md., Washington, D. C., and Cumberland Gap, Ky. These were also submitted for publication in *American Birds*. This summary, however, is as usual and of necessity confined to the counts printed here.

A record eight counts surpassed the magic 100-species level this year, including all the coastal and bay counts plus Hopewell and—remarkably—Kerr Reservoir, the last with 115 species and representing the first Piedmont count to go over 100. Chincoteague was tops this year with 172 species, followed closely by Cape Charles with 170 and Back Bay with 152. Other high species totals were recorded, in the east, by Fort Belvoir with 96 and Lynchburg with 87, and farther west, Roanoke had 87, Blacksburg 86, and Tazewell totaled a remarkable 84.

The weather was generally good for the count period. Nine counts reported light to moderate intermittent rain or snow, and five counts in the western part of the state had insignificant snow cover of up to 3 inches. Excessive winds were recorded on two counts, with up to 36 m.p.h. at Mathews and up to 40 m.p.h. at Wise. For the sixth year in a row, a mild fall was followed by December temperatures also somewhat above normal. This weather pattern was obviously a significant factor in the high species totals recorded by many of this year's counts.

The count tabulation given in Table 1 is more or less in order of distance inland from the coast. Counts 1-9 were all on the Coastal Plain, with 1-4 being on the immediate coast and 5 and 6 being on the western edge of Chesapeake Bay. Counts 10-15 were on the Piedmont, and 16-31 were from the Blue Ridge westward. Details on each count are given at the end of this summary.

Common Loons were found on three counts in Southwest Virginia, and the

8 at Kerr Reservoir was the second year good numbers were reported here. Horned Grebes were in unusual numbers inland with six of the mountain counts reporting them, including 14 at Roanoke and 18 at Bristol. Back Bay came through with 393 Pied-billed Grebes and 1227 Gannets, and single Great Cormorants were recorded at Chincoteague and Little Creek. Record numbers of herons and ibis were found along the coast, with Chincoteague having such counts as 303 Great Blues, 215 Great Egrets, 132 Louisiana Herons, 24 American Bitterns, and 27 Glossy Ibis. Back Bay totaled an amazing 47 Cattle Egrets, the only count reporting this species this year and the first state Christmas count record for three years. The only inland herons of note were 83 Great Blues and one Great Egret at Kerr Reservoir.

The Mute Swan count at Chincoteague increased to 28 this year, and waterfowl in general were in good but not record numbers. Brant appeared on both Chesapeake Bay counts, and 3 European Wigeon were found at Chincoteague, the third year this species has appeared on a Virginia Christmas count. Oldsquaws were found in unusual numbers along the coast, and inland reports included birds at Charlottesville, Warren, and Kerr Reservoir. With little or no ice, inland areas did very well with waterfowl, the best counts being at Kerr Reservoir, Rockingham County, Fincastle, Roanoke, and Blacksburg. Red-breasted Mergansers at Blacksburg and Tazewell were certainly unusual.

Good vulture numbers were totaled especially at Shenandoah Park, Rockingham County, Blacksburg, and Glade Spring, with Blacksburg's 813 Black Vultures being very impressive. Goshawks were found at both Brooke and Shenandoah Park, and the smaller *Accipiters* showed a decided increase for the second year, with Sharpies increasing from 79 on 18 counts last year to 107 on 25 counts this year. Brooke reported the only inland Rough-legged Hawk, a Golden Eagle was seen at Tazewell, and the only Bald Eagles west of the Coastal Plain were at Kerr Reservoir and Bristol. Ospreys were found at Cape Charles and Newport News, and American Kestrels showed another fine increase with 875 reported versus 755 last year. That is a 16% increase on only a 6% increase in party-hours in the field. In marsh birds, Back Bay produced impressive numbers in 57 King Rails, 14 Soras, a Black Rail, and 18 Common Gallinules, whereas inland, Warren had one Sora, Kerr Reservoir had 8 Virginia Rails and 2 Soras, and Lynchburg reported one Common Gallinule. American Coots were again in interesting numbers inland, especially in the southwest.

Woodcock increased significantly over the past couple of years. Most were near the coast as usual, but 10 at Kerr Reservoir were a good Piedmont count. A Spotted Sandpiper was found at Chincoteague, and good Willet numbers were reported again on the two Eastern Shore counts. This year Chincoteague had 45 Marbled Godwits, a record winter number here, but Cape Charles had only 65, down from the record 110 of the previous year. One shorebird is missing from this year's list. In the past few years a number of observers have begun to question the identification of winter Semipalmated Sandpipers. This culminated in a published paper on the subject last year (A. R. Phillips, *American Birds*, 29: 799-806, 1975) in which it was pointed out that there were no United States winter specimens in museum collections except for one from the southern tip of Florida. Based on this—and other evidence given in the paper—it thus seems that most—and probably all—winter records of this species from Virginia are in error (as are the identification criteria given in the commonly used field guides) and that for many years we have misidentified winter Western Sandpipers as Semipalmateds.

A Lesser Black-backed Gull at Little Creek, a third record for a state Christmas count, and a Black-headed Gull at Chincoteague were the only rare gulls reported this year, Herring, Ring-billed, and Bonaparte's Gulls were noted on several counts west of the Coastal Plain, notably at Kerr Reservoir, Tazewell, and Bristol, and the numbers at Kerr Reservoir set records for any Piedmont area with 1584 Ring-bills totaled. In spite of the warm fall and early winter, wintering tern numbers were small. There was one Common Tern at Chincoteague, and the only Royal reported was at Back Bay. Single Dovekies were found at Chincoteague and Little Creek.

Mourning Dove numbers were high over much of the state; note the 1602 reported on the Shenandoah Park count. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers declined a bit from last year from 324 to 276, whereas Eastern Phoebe were up slightly from 140 to 156. An unidentified *Empidonax* (thought to be a Least Flycatcher) was found at Kerr Reservoir, only the second *Empidonax* report for a Virginia Christmas count, and the Black-billed Magpie that has been hanging around Roanoke for several years was recorded on that city's count for the second time (first two years ago). Although Common Ravens increased to 99 on 16 counts from 90 on 14 counts last year, this year's totals were confused by the 19 recorded on the Shenandoah Park count, which was not submitted to *The Raven* last year, and the fact that Waynesboro noted a decrease to 9 from 21 last year. Certainly one of the highlights of the season was the tremendous flight of Black-capped Chickadees down the Great Valley and the mountains, surely the best such flight on record. One even spilled over the Blue Ridge to the Charlottesville count, but the main points of concentration were on the Valley floor, and they were spotty even in the Blue Ridge. Of the Blue Ridge counts, note that Peaks of Otter had 56, whereas to the north, Big Flat had only one and Augusta County and Waynesboro had none. This suggests the possibility that the flight may have originated in the normally sedentary population in the West Virginia mountains rather than in populations to the north of Virginia. In any event, although the flight bypassed northern Virginia east of the mountains, it extended southwesterly all the way to Bristol with the highest count of 144 at Roanoke. Only two counts listed any unidentified chickadees, thus implying that the other counts listing both species correctly identified all chickadees recorded. At best this is a doubtful assumption. It is suspected that many observers simply listed all chickadees as Carolinas unless they were definitely identified as Black-caps.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were locally very common with the best totals at Chincoteague (194), Cape Charles (114), Lynchburg (236), and Roanoke (114). The 64 Brown-heads at Kerr Reservoir were probably a record for a state Piedmont count, and Bewick's Wrens were noted at Kerr Reservoir and Roanoke. Carolina Wrens hit a new peak of 3546 birds versus 3476 last year, but on a party-hour basis, this was actually a slight decrease, from 138 to 133 birds per 100 party-hours. Marsh wrens were in excellent numbers along the coast: note the 57 Long-bills and 79 Short-bills at Back Bay. But the surprise was the inland records. Kerr Reservoir had a Long-bill and 5 Short-bills, and both Charlottesville and Lynchburg also reported Short-bills. At

TABLE 1 (following 8 pages). The 1975-76 Christmas bird counts in Virginia. The underlined figures indicate an unusual species or an unusual number of individuals for that particular count. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are commented on further under count summaries.

	1. Chincoteague	2. Cape Charles	3. Little Creek	4. Back Bay	5. Newport News	6. Mathews	7. Hopewell	8. Brooke	9. Fort Belvoir	10. Charlottesville	11. Warren	12. Marlinton Heights	13. Kerr Reservoir	14. Sweet Briar
Date	12/27	12/28	12/31	12/29	12/20	1/4	12/20	12/23	1/3	12/28	12/21	1/1	1/3	12/27
Common Loon	266	78	1	44	7	18	...	3	2	...	...	...	8	...
Red-throated Loon	26	5	...	19	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-necked Grebe	1	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Horned Grebe	2269	326	29	78	222	110	5	7	4	2	...	...	17	...
Pied-billed Grebe	115	78	54	393	67	5	7	4	3	6	1	...	41	...
Gannet	4	269	23	1227	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Cormorant	1*	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Double-crested Cormorant	4	16	1	2	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Blue Heron	303	216	83	105	61	58	30	55	50	7	4	2	83	1
Green Heron	2*	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Little Blue Heron	86	40	3	20	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cattle Egret	...	...	...	47*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Egret	215	13	5	57	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...
Snowy Egret	109	24	...	17	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Louisiana Heron	132	57	7	6	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black-crowned Night Heron	139	61	20	35	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	2*	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Bittern	24	16	4	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Glossy Ibis	27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Rufe Swan	28	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whistling Swan	1193	236	...	6600	9*	333	3	61	4	...	...	...	5*	...
Canada Goose	7498	4280	...	3500	8	173	11,150	155	7	82	260	...	338	...
Brant	15,200	2488	610	...	39*	77	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose	20,300	420	...	26,100	...	...	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose (blue form)	23	1	...	3	...	...	200	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mallard	1055	303	150	955	202	59	2531	435	527	209	120	...	555	...
Black Duck	7655	523	34	800	24	14	680	115	304	136	17	4	632	...
Gadwall	358	103	...	2800	...	...	35	...	1	...	...	...	22	...
Pintail	2836	79	...	650	...	6	721	...	...	...	...	...	67	...
Green-winged Teal	2894	199	1	207	10	...	5	1	56	2	38	...	158	...
Blue-winged Teal	...	7	...	4	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
European Wigeon	3*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Wigeon	456	490	40	3200	714	11	214	7	2	...	3	...	409	...
Northern Shoveler	694	68	8	311	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Wood Duck	7	7	9	14	31	2	748	2	7	...	...	...	1	...
Redhead	16	50	6	34	55	6	2	...	...	...	...	...	6	...
Ring-necked Duck	14	56	42	33	58	...	21	7	2	...	26	...	35	...
Canvasback	51	21	24	1067	822	73	1	25	162	3	...	...	9	...
Greater Scaup	146	3	...	9	15	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lesser Scaup	68	258	12	9	150	4	1	65	21	...	...	...	8	...
Scaup sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15	...	...	...	...	...
Common Goldeneye	524	311	23	13	757	107	4	37	32	6	...	...	4	...
Bufflehead	2262	3549	124	85	283	210	27	8	44	11	4	...	9	...
Oldsquaw	2485	1046	1260	80	212	174	...	1	2	1	...	...	3*	...
White-winged Scoter	166	124	5	63	106	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Surf Scoter	1671	3299	44	589	203	568	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Black Scoter	87	135	1	51	8	49	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Scoter sp.	...	300	...	...	160	...	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...
Ruddy Duck	381	106	43	357	131	1032	12	80	90	4	1	...	2	...
Hooded Merganser	109	250	84	11	51	4	39	23	6	13	8	...	22	...
Common Merganser	1	3	12	...	...	91	75	487	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-breasted Merganser	191	191	5	134	1237	63	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Duck sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Turkey Vulture	130	45	1	52	4	15	20	64	...	46	110	58	19	15
Black Vulture	9	...	2	27	1	3	14	1	...	32	50	20	176	4
Osprey	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	25	2	13	1	5	3	6	2	2	2	1	6	2
Cooper's Hawk	3	4	...	3	1	2	...	...	2	3	2	...	...	1
Accipiter sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-tailed Hawk	27	40	3	38	5	3	16	8	4	15	14	13	21	4

	15. Lynchburg	16. Shenandoah Park	17. Big Flat	18. Rockingham Co.	19. Augusta Co.	20. Waynesboro	21. Lexington	22. Peaks of Otter	23. Clifton Forge	24. Pinestule	25. Norfolk	26. Blacksburg	27. Fazeell	28. Glade Spring	29. Bristol	30. Nicholasville	31. Wise Co.
Date	12/20	12/21	1/2	12/20	12/20	1/3	12/27	12/23	12/28	12/21	12/20	12/29	12/22	1/3	12/27	12/20	12/20
Common Loon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1*	...	1	...	...
Red-throated Loon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-necked Grebe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Horned Grebe	1	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pied-billed Grebe	13	4	...	5	...	3	4	...	6	1	14	5 (in)	1	2	18	4	6*
Gannet	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Cormorant	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Double-crested Cormorant	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Blue Heron	9	10	...	10	6	5	13	...	1	5	7	1	1	9	15	1	...
Green Heron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Little Blue Heron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cattle Egret	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Egret	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snowy Egret	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Louisiana Heron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black-crowned Night Heron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Bittern	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Glossy Ibis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Rufe Swan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whistling Swan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Canada Goose	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brant	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose (blue form)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mallard	60	62	...	199	30	31	87	...	3	91	327	1061	35	52	59	13	6
Black Duck	6	51	...	6	...	...	22	...	33	34	67	129	23	32	15	1	3
Gadwall	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	40	...	3	1	...	1	...	...
Pintail	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Green-winged Teal	7	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	17	15	...	4	...	...	...
Blue-winged Teal	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
European Wigeon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Wigeon	2	...	...	223	3	...	...	...	...	25	21	57	...	3	...	...	...
Northern Shoveler	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wood Duck	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...
Redhead	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ring-necked Duck	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	4	30	1*	1*	...
Canvasback	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	359	1	...	...
Greater Scaup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	1	2*	...	...
Lesser Scaup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Scaup sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Common Goldeneye	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bufflehead	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oldsquaw	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
White-winged Scoter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Surf Scoter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black Scoter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Scoter sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ruddy Duck	1	1	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...
Hooded Merganser	2	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	4	20	...	3	32	...	...	...
Common Merganser	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-breasted Merganser	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Duck sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Turkey Vulture	122	397	25	308	114	76	87	...	1	89							

	1. Chincoteague	2. Cape Charles	3. Little Creek	4. Back Bay	5. Newport News	6. Hathews	7. Hopewell	8. Brooke	9. Fort Belvoir	10. Charlottesville	11. Warren	12. Darlington Heights	13. Kerr Reservoir	14. Sweet Briar
Date	12/27	12/28	12/31	12/29	12/20	1/4	12/20	12/23	1/3	12/28	12/21	1/1	1/3	12/27
Rock Dove	56	1120	180	134	889	34	676	...	42	47	50	8	145	55
Mourning Dove	317	714	327	247	398	153	853	50	420	665	557	250	752	63
Barn Owl	4	2	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Screech Owl	19	60	15	21	6	3	2	...	...	4	6	1	12	1
Great Horned Owl	13	21	5	25	...	5	...	...	5	6	...	...	4	...
Barred Owl	1	1	3	16	...	2	3	1	2	...	...	...	5	...
Long-eared Owl	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Short-eared Owl	6	7	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Saw-whet Owl	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belted Kingfisher	87	41	38	39	20	43	14	23	21	19	14	1	32	1
Common Flicker	386	356	70	210	140	91	104	61	72	79	36	12	122	6
Pileated Woodpecker	8	1	13	21	3	1	7	12	7	18	13	2	13	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker	33	61	24	60	30	25	78	61	76	69	65	17	80	13
Red-headed Woodpecker	19	9	5	...	...	2	15	11	8	...	...	2	3	...
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7	10	8	11	8	3	28	13	8	15	15	4	24	12
Hairy Woodpecker	9	23	3	8	2	2	5	4	9	9	5	1	17	2
Downy Woodpecker	59	70	26	69	23	16	43	42	88	52	42	12	59	19
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eastern Phoebe	9	8	3	11	...	2	4	...	2	3	3	9	18	1
Empidonax sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...
Horned Lark	40	127	...	1	...	1	2	...	...	45	...	...	18	...
Tree Swallow	83	45	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Blue Jay	109	98	165	149	90	123	131	235	443	202	238	58	349	11
Black-billed Magpie	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Common Raven	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	...	2
Common Crow	1556	380	103	449	363	452	124	520	443	425	487	240	320	350
Fish Crow	5228	23	10	442	61	40	1	11	66	5	...	...	...	...
Black-capped Chickadee	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	1*	...	...	...	...
Carolina Chickadee	205	321	150	242	137	92	111	105	568	262	160	76	228	85
Chickadee sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tufted Titmouse	49	42	62	62	48	34	45	60	245	77	56	18	130	26
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	9	3	6	4	6	17	22	80	38	15	7	41	30
Red-breasted Nuthatch	194	114	3	21	4	2	2	3	26	53	8	26	61	4
Brown-headed Nuthatch	215	77	10	44	...	11	...	...	...	...	...	64	...	...
Brown Creeper	79	39	21	18	3	7	22	13	39	9	5	10	46	5
House Wren	6	25	9	30	...	6	3	...	1	...	...	...	1	...
Winter Wren	42	61	10	20	5	7	9	10	10	24	28	3	11	...
Bewick's Wren	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...
Carolina Wren	284	489	96	234	67	87	121	80	174	180	84	22	250	21
Long-billed Marsh Wren	28	17	2	57	4	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	1*	...
Short-billed Marsh Wren	30	55	1	79	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5*	...
Mockingbird	64	101	69	129	103	91	68	52	131	96	68	44	84	28
Gray Catbird	64	40	6	101	1	13	1	...	5	...	...	...	2	...
Brown Thrasher	21	29	10	36	10	12	10	5	1	...	...	1	22	1
American Robin	1775	438	81	89	2	68	33	75	24	12	7	...	405	...
Hermit Thrush	43	55	10	25	8	8	6	13	12	13	2	6	52	...
Eastern Bluebird	30	19	7	31	...	135	49	34	11	24	14	95	71	3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	...	2*	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Golden-crowned Kinglet	444	151	112	63	14	31	141	37	169	117	83	30	141	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	226	92	38	89	23	53	108	25	54	57	21	25	375	7
Water Pipit	16	764	...	383	...	13	382	...	16	...	...	120	194	20
Cedar Waxwing	218	91	12	...	13	8	92	15	65	141	34	...	356	50
Loggerhead Shrike	...	1	1	1	...	...	3	1	...	4	5	10	20	...
Starling	2686	5983	2600	1300	2276	899	969	1000	2045	736	650	208	1052	225
Solitary Vireo	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black-and-white Warbler	2*	1*	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	2	2	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cape May Warbler	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9041	7174	420	14,400	1138	1551	93	40	25	39	25	2	230	1
Fine Warbler	15	10	12	6	6	5	1	...	...	...	...	6	23	...

	15. Lynchburg	16. Shenandoah Park	17. Big Flat	18. Rockingham Co.	19. Augusta Co.	20. Waynesboro	21. Lexington	22. Peaks of Otter	23. Clifton Forge	24. Fincastle	25. Roanoke	26. Blacksburg	27. Fawcett	28. Glade Spring	29. Bristol	30. Nickelsville	31. Wise Co.
Date	12/20	12/21	1/2	12/20	12/20	1/3	12/27	12/23	12/28	12/21	12/20	12/29	12/22	1/3	12/27	12/20	12/20
227	322	...	311	216	386	157	...	7	274	399	521	53	220	68	3	70	
292	1602	...	380	244	307	470	...	19	741	716	706	98	523	155	143	74	
...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
94	5	...	...	16	7	10	...	9	24	23	2	7	6	8	1	10	
6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	2	1	...	...	1	2	
2	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	3	...	2	...	...	...	5	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	
22	26	2	21	10	11	30	1	3	13	28	11	2	12	14	6	2	
40	14	...	2	5	6	6	...	8	21	22	18	2	8	6	11	4	
22	12	6	7	6	9	5	...	1	19	9	19	15	1	3	5	8	
87	30	4	13	17	16	26	4	1	23	20	21	12	10	3	12	...	
6	...	...	...	7	7	...	...	1	1	...	4	1	1	1	...	...
42	2	...	...	7	2	...	...	1	5	8	21	1	3	2	4	1	5
11	7	1	...	5	2	10	...	9	6	4	14	13	4	3	1	6	5
101	67	12	24	49	36	62	9	51	37	67	85	68	41	10	8	45	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	1	12	3	7	7	6	9	2	5	5	5	2
9	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
44	80	...	...	11	16	...	...	45	39	13	111	1	...	...	1	...	...
...
342	448	6	38	212	237	165	1	41	181	152	193	133	103	84	38	88	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	19	6	3	...	9	5	2	10	6	10	7	10	3	...	3	...	...
807	1247	13	683	445	2154	1024	23	713	1055	261	383	88	804	471	735	240	...
...	1	...	244	19	58	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	23	1*	30	...	60	56	...	4	28	144*	70	1*	...	...	...	...	...
538	430	51	52	231	200	64	33	301	332	603	289	172	187	111	44	201	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	83	...	...	...	...	104	...	...	...	...	...	...
218	130	20	66	57	101	84	11	140	65	141	170	116	93	40	57	191	...
66	51	9	20	56	40	43	10	44	18	66	84	40	34	17	16	52	...
226	14	3	16	4	5	10	11	23	74	114	51	5	5	14	1	4	...
...
30	15	4	7	5	9	2	4	5	2	18	15	6	2	4	2	4	...
2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
37	15	1	8	5	4	14	9	15	9	19	19	7	3	6	5	9	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
191	77	21	21	38	48	76	18	87	105	177	144	64	124	48	26	92	...
...
...
2*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
150	133	2	59	133	86	66	5	27	92	134	89	21	65	47	19	33	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1*	...	...	...	...	...	...
2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	1	...	1	3
14	21	...	...	9	133	1	1	37	9	3	15	22	1	4	15	47	...
21	3	1	...	1	8	1	8	33	11	26	5	9	5	13	...	33	...
165	52	8	8	...	48	51	4	49	110	16	48	38	28	20	87	51	...
...</														

1306 birds, the Eastern Bluebird total represents 49 birds per 100 party-hours, up from 44 last year and the best showing since the late 1950's. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found at Cape Charles and Hopewell, the fifth successive year this species has been recorded on Christmas counts in the state. Both kinglets maintained their high populations of recent years, and there were several record counts of Ruby-crowns. Note the 375 at Kerr Reservoir and the 263 at Roanoke. Little Creek reported the only Solitary Vireo, and of the rarer warblers, Black-and-whites were found at Chincoteague, Cape Charles, and Back Bay, Cape Mays at Chincoteague and Bristol, and a Wilson's Warbler at Cape Charles. Although Black-and-whites have been recorded on at least one count in each of the past five years, this was the first record of a Cape May in over 20 years and only the third for the Wilson's in the same period. Locally high totals of other warbler species included 34 Yellow-rumps at Blacksburg, 53 Pine Warblers at Kerr Reservoir, and an amazing 487 Palm Warblers at Cape Charles. Common Yellowthroats were found inland at Hopewell, Warren, Kerr Reservoir, and Roanoke.

Both Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins increased substantially over last year, with the Evening Grosbeak total of 1821 on 27 counts approaching the record of 1946 birds on 24 counts three years ago. These compare with 596 on 25 counts a year ago. Siskins totaled 688 on 13 counts versus 114 on 14 counts last year. Although still highly irregular, these two species seem to have moderated their extremely wide annual fluctuations of the late 1950's and 1960's. Other northern finches of interest included 2 Common Redpolls each at Cape Charles and Tazewell and 331 Red Crossbills on nine counts. Interestingly, the last were concentrated in two groups, one near the coast and the other on the central and southern Piedmont, and as in recent flight years, the best numbers by far were on the Eastern Shore. House Finches just held their own, with 291 versus 297 a year ago. Two Lark Sparrows were recorded at Back Bay, the third time this species has been recorded on a Virginia Christmas count, the others being in 1962 and 1968. A Bachman's Sparrow at Cape Charles was a first record for a state count. White-crowned Sparrows had a record total of 2582 birds on 25 counts versus 1731 on 25 counts last year. These numbers are equivalent to 97 versus 69 birds per 100 party-hours, respectively. There is a hitch, however, that makes this increase more apparent than real: 1057 of this year's total was supplied by Shenandoah Park-Luray, whose count did not figure in the totals last year. A Lapland Longspur was seen at Little Creek, and Snow Buntings were reported inland at Brooke and Kerr Reservoir.

1. CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center 2 miles north of center of Chincoteague, as described 1972; mainland woodland 18%, farmland 16%, salt marshes 16%, sheltered bays 15%, insular pine woodlands 14%, fresh-water marshes and impoundments 6%, scrub pine and myrtle thickets 5%, sand flats and beaches 4%, dunes 3%, residential 3%).—Dec. 27; 12:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 36° to 45°F.; wind WNW, 2-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop excellent. Fifty-three observers in 23 parties. Total party-hours, 221 (191 on foot, 24 by car, 6 by boat); total party-miles, 499 (133 on foot, 343 by car, 23 by boat). In area count week but not seen count day: *Fulvous Tree Duck*, Blue-winged Teal, *White-eyed Vireo*. Observers: David, Jackson, and Robert Abbott, William Almond, Henry Armistead, Paul Baker, Mike Boatwright, Michael Britten, Glenn and Sue Burroughs, Mitchell Byrd, Ray Chandler, Bill Clark, Charles Cremeans, John and Thelma Dalmas, Paul and Philip DuMont, Keith Fielder, William Gause, Anne Hallenbeck, David Hughes, Frances James, Richard Kiltie, Kheryn Klubnikin, Barbara Lund, Larry Malone,

Elwood Martin, Paul McQuarry, Ed Miller, Carol and Mike Newlon, Dwight and Richard Peake, Peter Pyle, William Reese, F. R. Scott (compiler), Jared Sparks, Barry Sperling, Philip Stoddard, Paul Sykes, John Terborgh, Leonard Teuber, J. S. and S. L. Thornhill, Charles Vaughn, Jerry Via, Claudia Wilds, Grover Wilgus, Bill Williams, Townley Wolfe, Laetitia and Stephen Yeandle. The Great Cormorant, an adult, was noted sitting on a stake by David Abbott, the Green Herons were reported by three different parties, and the Yellow-crowned Night Herons were seen by Carol Newlon. The single Fulvous Tree Duck was reported by Sperling on 25 December, and the European Wigeons, which had been in the area since early November, were seen by Sykes and others. The Thornhills found the Spotted Sandpiper, the high count of Marbled Godwits was reported by three nonoverlapping parties, and the avocets were seen by many observers, including Scott and Sykes. The immature Black-headed Gull was observed by the Thornhills, the Common Tern by the DuMonts, and the Dovekie was picked up alive on a sand dune by the Dalmases, showed to Jack Abbott, and given to refuge personnel, who photographed and released it, apparently unharmed. The White-eyed Vireo was noted by Pyle and Stoddard on 25 December, and the Terborgh party saw the Black-and-white Warblers in the Maryland part of the count. The Cape May Warbler was carefully observed by Boatwright, Chandler, and Fielder, and the Red Crossbills were reported by all of the mainland parties.

2. CAPE CHARLES (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center 1.5 miles SE of Capeville P. O. and just south of Dunton Cove, as described 1972 but with exclusion of Capeville; open farmland 30%, pine and mixed woodlands 30%, saltmarsh 15%, sheltered bay and mudflats 10%, open ocean and beach 7%, open bay 5%, towns 2%, fresh water 1%).—Dec. 28; 5:15 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Overcast; temp. 28° to 45°F.; wind N-NE, 0-10 m.p.h.; fresh water partly open, salt water open. Wild food crop good. Sixty-six observers in 10-25 parties. Total party-hours, 262 (229 on foot, 27 by car, 6 by boat); total party-miles, 386 (173 on foot, 183 by car, 30 by boat). Observers: David, Jack, and Robert Abbott, Henry Armistead (compiler), Paul Baker, Mike Boatwright, Suzanne Brooks, Mitchell Byrd, Ray Chandler, Bill Clark, Win Coffin, Charles Cremeans, Betty and Herb Butler, John and Thelma Dalmás, Doug Davis, Paul and Phil DuMont, Keith Fielder, David Green, Greg Greer, Charles and Stalma Hacker, Anne Hallenbeck, Frank Hanenkrat, John and Mozelle Henkel, David Hughes, Frances James, John Kelly, Richard Kiltie, Ken Knapp, Edmund and Harry LeGrand, Barbara Lund, Elwood Martin, Will McDowell, Paul McQuarry, Ed Miller, Dorothy and Sydney Mitchell, Dwight and Richard Peake, Peter Pyle, Bill Reese, Fred Scott, Dorothy Silsby, Zeldá Silverman, Jared Sparks, Phil Stoddard, Paul Sykes, John Terborgh, Len Teuber, J. S. and S. L. Thornhill, Margaret Toth, Mike Tove, Bob Trower, Jerry Via, Barbara Warren, Audrey Whitlock, Claudia Wilds, Bill Williams, Gary Williamson, Townley Wolfe. The Yellow-crowned Night Herons were reported by Byrd and the Ospreys by Green and others. The pheasants were reported as Ring-necks, which the Editor took the liberty of changing to Japanese Greens, the form that has been released in this area. The Japanese Green Pheasant is considered a distinct species by some authorities but not by others. Richard Peake found the long-eared Owl; one of the gnatcatchers was seen by Paul DuMont and the other by Chandler *et al.* Harry LeGrand and Mike Tove observed the Black-and-white Warbler, the Palm Warblers were reported by all seven mainland parties, one of which had 195, and the Wilson's Warbler was found by Paul DuMont, who also saw the Common Redpolls. The Northern Oriole was noted by Fielder, and David Abbott observed the Bachman's Sparrow.

3. LITTLE CREEK (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center 3.8 miles NE of Kempsville in Virginia Beach, as described 1972; habitat coverage as described 1974).—Dec. 31; 5:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Fog with intermittent light rain; temp. 47° to 61°F.; wind NE-SE, 9-12 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop excellent. Twenty-five observers in 10 parties. Total party-hours, 107 (80 on foot, 27 by car); total party-miles, 389 (38 on foot, 351 by car). In area count week but

not seen count day: Bald Eagle. Observers: Jorn and Robert Ake, Robert Anderson, Danny and Joanna Bennett, Carvel Blair, Mike Boatwright, Ray Chandler, Keith Fielder, Gisela Grimm, Virginia Hank, David Hughes, Barbara Lund, Paul McQuarry, Dorothy and Mike Mitchell, Emily Moore, Dwight and Richard Peake, W. F. Rountrey, Dorothy Silsby, Paul Sykes, Jr. (compiler), Robert Tripician, Gary Williamson, Townley Wolfe (Cape Henry Audubon Society and guests). Sykes and Wolfe found the adult Great Cormorant and the Lesser Black-backed Gull, the Green Heron was seen by Lund and Tripician, and the Dovekie and the Solitary Vireo were both observed by Anderson and Dwight Peake.

4. BACK BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center 1.5 miles E of Back Bay, as described 1972; habitat coverage as described 1974).—Dec. 29; 5:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 25° to 44°F.; wind SW, 0-3 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop excellent. Thirty-eight observers in 13 parties. Total party-hours, 212 (173 on foot, 35 by car, 4 by boat); total party-miles, 535 (117 on foot, 406 by car, 12 by boat). Observers: Jorn and Robert Ake, Robert Anderson, Mike Boatwright, Ray Chandler, Keith Fielder, Robin Fields, Charles Gibson, Gisela Grimm, Tom Gwynn, Frank Hanenkrat, Virginia Hank, David Hughes, Kent Ihrman, Anna Kitces, Ken Knapp, Karla and Palmer Lawler, Edmund and Harry LeGrand, Barbara Lund, Emily Moore, Dwight and Richard Peake, Bill Portlock, F. C. Richardson, W. F. Rountrey, Don Schwab, Dorothy Silsby, Paul Sykes, Jr. (compiler), Mike Tove, Eugene Trescott, Jr., Robert Tripician, Jean Untermaier, Romie Waterfield, Bill Williams, Gary Williamson, Townley Wolfe (Cape Henry Audubon Society and guests). Sykes noted the Red-necked Grebe, and the large flock of Cattle Egret was seen feeding in fields by two parties. The Black Rail and Lincoln's Sparrow were both flushed by the Peakes, who also heard the Saw-whet Owl calling several times before daylight. Boatwright and Chandler saw the Black-and-white Warbler, while the Lark Sparrows were observed by Grimm, Hank, and Moore and by many other observers the following day.

5. NEWPORT NEWS (all points within a 15-mile diameter, bounded by Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, James River, Grafton; habitat coverage as described 1972).—Dec. 20; 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Clear; temp. 30° to 45°F.; wind SW, 10-20 m.p.h.; ground bare; fresh water partly open and salt water open. Wild food crop good. Thirty-two observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 72 (57 on foot, 15 by car); total party-miles, 240 (40 on foot, 200 by car). Observers: R. Beck, E. and H. Bell, J. Bowman, M. A. Byrd, A. Curfman, B. Drummond, B. Frazelle, Charles and Stalma Hacker, B. and G. Heimerl, Jose Hernandez, B. and R. Hodges, G. Keefe, J. Lewis, D. Lundt, E. L. Machen, Dorothy and Sydney Mitchell, Ash Rawls, Dorothy Silsby, Doris Smith, W. P. Smith (compiler), Susan Sturm, J. Suttles, P. Terrell, E. von Schlieben, H. von Schlieben, J. Webster, L. Wilkerson. Hernandez and Keefe saw the Snowy Egret, and the Byrd party reported the Louisiana Heron, Whistling Swans, Brant, Osprey, Least and Western Sandpipers, and White-crowned Sparrow. For reasons stated in the summary above, the Editor changed 35 Semipalmated Sandpipers to 35 peep, sp. The Red Crossbill was observed by Rawls and Frazelle.

6. MATHEWS (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center 0.5 mile E of Beaverlett P. O., as described 1972; bays and rivers 20%, open farmland 20%, pine woods 20%, salt marshes 15%, mixed woods 10%, beaches 5%).—Jan. 4; 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Clear; temp. 30° to 48°F.; wind N, 10-36 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop good. Thirty-six observers in 11 parties. Total party-hours, 94 (50 on foot, 44 by car); total party-miles, 341 (66 on foot, 275 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Gadwall, Bonaparte's Gull, Short-billed Marsh Wren. Observers: Jay Andrews, Penny Baker, Andy Brown, Jeff Brown, Jan Coleman, Dave Dunham, Dorothy Duryee, Mark Gorey, Mark Gwynn, Clare Jones, Virginia Maguigan, Margaret O'Bryan, Brantley, Daniel, Elizabeth, and Richard Peacock, Mary Pulley (compiler), Eleanor Respess, Lillian Rothery, David Roszell, Chris and Jack Sheridan, Bill and Nancy Slate, Jerrie and Warren Smith, John Steiner, Mary

Jane and Toby Stout, J. Steven Thornhill, Steven L. Thornhill, Barry, Gerry, Lorna, and Marvin Wass, R. J. Watson.

7. HOPEWELL (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Curles Neck, as described 1972; woodland 40%, farmland 35%, marshes and river shore 10%, brushy fields 5%, residential 5%, wooded swamp 5%).—Dec. 20; 5:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Clear to partly cloudy; temp. 20° to 47°F.; wind SW to S, 0-20 m.p.h.; ground bare, fresh water partly open. Wild food crop good. Twenty-three observers, 20 in 7 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 66 (55 on foot, 9 by car, 2 by boat) plus 4 at feeders; total party-miles, 227 (31 on foot, 188 by car, 8 by boat). Observers: Robert Ake, R. R. Belton, Charles Blem, Dean Brick, Robert Conklin, Betsy and Chris Foster, David Hughes, Deborah Lapeyre, Mr. and Mrs. K. P. Lapeyre, Fred Murray, Margaret O'Bryan, Harold Olson, David Roszell, Elizabeth Roszell, F. R. Scott (compiler), Mike Shelor, Thomas Sitz, William Slate, II, Warren Smith, John Steiner, Townley Wolfe, III (Richmond Audubon Society). The Blem party found the Laughing Gulls, and the Brown-headed Nuthatches and the Northern Oriole were at the Lapeyre's feeder. The oriole had been seen here for several weeks prior to the count. The gnatcatcher was seen by Belton, Scott, and Slate.

8. BROOKE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center on road 3 miles ESE of Brooke, as described 1972; mixed forest edge 24%, tidal water 22%, marsh 12%, deciduous woods 11%, deciduous swamp 10%, fields 9%, hedgerows 8%, pine woods 3%, slash 1%).—Dec. 23; 5:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Partly cloudy to clear; temp. 28° to 41°F.; wind NW, 10-15 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Sixteen observers in 11 parties. Total party-hours, 80 (69 on foot, 11 by car); total party-miles, 117 (42 on foot, 75 by car). Observers: J. M. Aaron, Roy Bailey, A. A. Baker, Henry Bell, III, L. D. Bonham, E. L. Boudette, J. H. Eric, R. G. Luedke, E. T. McKnight (compiler), T. B. Nolan, J. C. Reed, E. M. Risley, R. L. Smith, David Weber, D. R. Wiesnet, D. R. Wones. The free-flying Blue Goose was noted by Luedke, Smith, and Wones and a few days later by McKnight. The Goshawk was first seen by McKnight and shortly later by Nolan and Risley. McKnight found the Rough-legged Hawk, and the Snow Buntings were seen by Aaron, Baker, and Wiesnet.

9. FORT BELVOIR (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center on Pohick Church, as described 1974; river/ponds 25%, residential 25%, brush and old fields 20%, mixed woods 20%, parkland 5%, freshwater marshes 5%).—Jan. 3; 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Overcast with moderate rain in a.m.; temp. 38° to 48°F.; wind S, 0-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop good. Thirty-six observers in 18 parties. Total party-hours, 131 (104 on foot, 23 by car, 4 by boat); total party-miles, 358 (90 on foot, 265 by car, 3 by boat). In area count week but not seen count day: Bald Eagle. Observers: David, Jackson (compiler), and Robert Abbott, Martin Brandwein, William Clark, Alice and Paris Coleman, Charles Cremeans, Paul and Phil DuMont, Owen Fang, Harriet Gilbert, Anne Hallenbeck, H. L. Handley, Evan Hannay, Robert Hilton, Jr., Dan Keeney, Albert Kennecke, Ron Naveen, Bill Reese, Edwin Rivinus, David Rosen, Napier Shelton, Stanwyn Shetler, George Sigel, Edgar Smith, Ron Staley, Leonard Teuber, John Thorsen, Bronson Tweedy, David Weber, George Weickhardt, Donald and Mary Weisman, Claudia Wilds, Josephine Wood.

10. CHARLOTTESVILLE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center near Ivy, as described 1972; habitat coverage as described 1972).—Dec. 28; 5 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Overcast; temp. 30° to 39°F.; wind SW, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Eleven observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 72 (61 on foot, 9 by car, 2 by canoe); total party-miles, 232 (80 on foot, 149 by car, 3 by canoe). In area count week but not seen count day: Ring-billed Gull, Observers. Amoret and Robert Barbee, Bruce and Pring Davenport, Boo Johnson, Kenneth Lawless, Robert Merkel, Katherine Michie, Eileen Stephens, Charles Stevens (compiler), Tom Wieboldt. The Black-capped Chickadee, which gave its low, slow call, was identified by Merkel, and the Short-billed Marsh Wrens were seen by Lawless.

11. WARREN (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center near Keene, as described 1972; habitat coverage as described 1972).—Dec. 21; 4:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Overcast with light snow in a.m.; temp. 25° to 42°F.; wind N-NW, 0-15 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Thirteen observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 79 (67 on foot, 12 by car); total party-miles, 239 (88 on foot, 151 by car). Observers: Thomas Arter, Robert Barbee, Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Barton, Jr., Bruce Davenport, Kenneth Lawless, Peter Mehring, Robert Merkel, Eileen Stephens, Charles Stevens (compiler), Fred and Lina Whiteside, Tom Wieboldt. The Sora was flushed by Mehring and Wieboldt, the Barn Owl was seen by Lawless, and the male Common Yellowthroat was found by Stephens and Stevens.

12. DARLINGTON HEIGHTS (all points within a 10-mile diameter, center Darlington Heights P.O.).—Jan. 1; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 38° to 52°F.; wind E, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground very wet, water open. Eleven observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 27 (22 on foot, 5 by car); total party-miles, 95 (23 on foot, 72 by car). Observers: Vera Copple (compiler), Bill Dickenson, Edith Driskill, Tom Drumheller, Frank Hanenkrat, Gene Moore, Myriam Moore, Wyatt Murphy, Betty Overcash, Dan Puckette, Mattie Lee Scruggs. The Red Crossbills were seen by Copple and Puckette.

13. JOHN H. KERR RESERVOIR (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center E end of Kerr Dam, to include reservoir W to Ivy Hill, Roanoke River E to mouth of Smith Creek; lakes, ponds, and river 21%, fields and pastures 20%, coniferous woods 17%, deciduous woods 15%, swamp and wooded marsh 13%, open marsh 11%, town and wooded residential 3%).—Jan. 3; 4 a.m. to 7 p.m. Overcast with intermittent light rain in a.m.; temp. 29° to 49°F.; wind WNW, 7-16 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop good. Thirty-seven observers in 15 parties. Total party-hours, 124 (105 on foot, 12 by car, 7 by boat); total party-miles, 445 (70 on foot, 368 by car, 7 by boat). In area count week but not seen count day: Snow Goose. Observers: Michael Boatwright, Jeanette Boone, Carol Sue and Edward Burroughs, Glen and Sue Burroughs, Ray and Sandra Chandler, John and Thelma Dalmas, Fenton Day, Keith Fielder (compiler), Barry Kinzie, David and Ken Knapp, Mark Lassiter, Harry LeGrand, Merrill Lynch, Kay MacDonald, Paul McQuarry, Norwood Middleton, Gene and Myriam Moore, Bill Opengari, John Pancake, Eloise Potter, Daniel Puckette, Mike Purdy, Mrs. Calvin Raney, Katherine Rice, Joan Ricketts, Bobby Schamerhorn, Charles Sydnor, Mrs. Jean Wilburn, Sue Wilburn, Mary and Penultima Wiseman. The Great Egret, which had been in the area throughout the late fall and early winter, was recorded by McQuarry and others, and the Whistling Swans were seen by Fielder, the Dalmases, and many others. The one immature and 2 adult Snow Geese were found on 2 January by McQuarry and Rice, and Fielder reported the Oldsquaws. Three different parties recorded the Virginia Rails, most of which were heard calling, but three were flushed out of the marsh (Boatwright, Ray Chandler, Lynch, and McQuarry); Boatwright and Ray Chandler also heard the Soras. The Glaucous Gull, which had been seen in the area since 29 November, was observed by Fielder and others, while the *Empidonax*, thought to be a Least Flycatcher, was seen and heard calling by LeGrand, and the Bewick's Wren was observed closely and heard singing by Puckette. Ray Chandler saw the Long-billed Marsh Wren, and he and Boatwright noted 2 of the Short-billed Marsh Wrens. The other 3 Short-bills were found by Lynch and the Northern Oriole by LeGrand. The Snow Buntings had been in the area at least since 24 November and were recorded on the count by Fielder.

14. SWEET BRIAR (all points within a 3-mile diameter, center Sweet Briar College campus, as described 1972).—Dec. 27; 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 30° to 35°F.; wind variable, 0-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Ten observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 20 (on foot); total party-miles, 17 (on foot). Observers: Frances Applegate, Mary Blackwell, Jeanette Boone, Tom Drumheller, Ernest and Mabel Edwards, Wyatt Murphy, Kay Macdonald, Gertrude Prior (compiler), Harriet Rogers.

15. LYNCHBURG (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Lynchburg College, as described 1972).—Dec. 20; 3:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mostly clear; temp. 15° to 40°F.; wind NW, 1-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop good. Fifty-three observers, 51 in 15 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 132 (112 on foot, 20 by car) plus 4 at feeders; total party-miles, 472 (100 on foot, 372 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Common Raven. Observers: Frances Applegate, Michael Boatwright, Jeanette Boone, Glen and Sue Burroughs, J. Carter, Ray and Sandra Chandler, M. Christ, C. Christensen, M. Coffey, Vera Copple, John and Thelma Dalmas, Fenton Day, A. Dodd, Myrtle and Thomas Drumheller, Keith Fielder, Ruskin Freer, J. Halvorsen, Frank Hanenkrat, J. Hanenkrat, H. Hughes, E. Kane, Mr. and Mrs. V. Kehr, M. Lerner, Kay MacDonald, Kathie Markham, C. Marlowe, S. Marlow, O. Marshall, M. Marshall, Paul McQuarry, Gene and Myriam Moore (compiler), D. Morgan, Wyatt Murphy, Taylor Piephoff, Gertrude Prior, Dan Puckette, Katherine Rice, Joan Ricketts, R. Ricketts, R. Rosser, R. Schamerhorn, C. Sydnor, M. Tillotson, J. Williams, Grace Wiltshire, D. Woods, M. Woods (Lynchburg Bird Club and guests). The Common Gallinule was flushed by McQuarry and others, and the Herring Gull, a first-year immature, was observed at rest by Fielder and many others. Fielder, Halvorsen, McQuarry, and Rice found the Short-billed Marsh Wrens, and the Chipping Sparrow was seen by Boone, MacDonald, and Prior.

16. SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK-LURAY (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Hershberger Hill, as described 1972; deciduous woods 34%, fields and pastures 34%, river and reservoirs 18%, coniferous woods 14%).—Dec. 21; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Overcast with intermittent light snow in a.m., becoming partly cloudy in p.m.; temp. 20° to 49°F.; wind N, 0-10 m.p.h.; snow cover, 0-1 in.; water partly frozen. Wild food crop good. Thirty-two observers, 28 in 11 parties, 4 at feeders. Total party-hours, 90 (36 on foot, 46 by car, 8 by canoe) plus 12 at feeders; total party-miles, 473 (33 on foot, 429 by car, 11 by canoe). In area count week but not seen count day: *Northern Shrike*. Observers: Clark Baker, Barbara and Ralph Baxter, John Bazuin, Richard Brown, Anne Bullen, Dennis Carter, Jack Frady, Eva Heiston, Norman Hellmers (compiler), Steve Henderson, Henry and Kathleen Hunt, Cliff Hupp, Don Jenkins, Helen Keyhoe, Darwin and Eileen Lambert, Keith Langdon, Paul Lee, Charlie Newton, Lynne Overman, Ethel Price, Kelly Ramsey, Bruce Rodgers, Nevela Rothgeb, Ray Schaffner, Bunky and Lyne Shackelford, Napier Shelton, Rob Simpson, Sarah Thomas. The Goshawk was observed in flight by Simpson, and the Northern Shrike, found by Bazuin the day prior to the count, was a first record for Shenandoah Park. The high numbers of White-crowned Sparrows reflect a single flock of 700 found by Simpson in the same feedlot where a flock of similar size had been found the previous year.

17. BIG FLAT MOUNTAIN (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center on Pasture Fence Mountain, as described 1972).—Jan. 2; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Overcast with fog in a.m., clearing in p.m.; temp. 25° to 38°F.; wind SE, 0-3 m.p.h.; snow cover, 0-3 in.; water open. Three observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 19 (on foot); total party-miles, 31 (on foot). Observers: Robert Merkel, Susan Pfaltz, Charles Stevens (compiler). The Black-capped Chickadee was seen and heard calling in direct comparison to Carolina Chickadees by Stevens.

18. ROCKINGHAM COUNTY (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Ottobine, as described 1972; habitat coverage as described 1974).—Dec. 20; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 26° to 30°F.; wind NW, 5-10 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop good. Seventeen observers in 7 parties. Total party-hours, 47 (20 on foot, 27 by car); total party-miles, 328 (26 on foot, 302 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Horned Lark. Observers: Max Carpenter (compiler), Philip and Susie Cosminsky, Bob Eggleston, Elwood Fisher, Hollen Helbert, Harry Jopson, Clair Mellinger, Homer Mumaw, Peter, Raymond, and Tom Rapp, Evelyn Row, Randall Shank, Mary and Richard Smith, Charles Ziegenfus. Eggleston and Peter Rapp observed the Canada Geese fly in and land

on a pond where there was a tame goose. They left the next day. The same observers watched the Ring-billed Gull along the North River, and the Vesper Sparrows were found by Randall Shank and Mary Smith.

19. AUGUSTA COUNTY (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center intersection of routes 780 and 781, as described 1972; open fields 55%, woodlands 20%, residential 15%, ponds and streams 5%, parks 5%).—Dec. 20; 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 24° to 44°F.; wind SW, 0-20 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Twenty-one observers, 18 in 7 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 59 (21 on foot, 38 by car) plus 3 at feeders; total party-miles, 346 (19 on foot, 327 by car). Observers: Helen Angier, Corda Bott, Brad, Paul, and Thomas Cabe, Joel Day, James Gum, Virginia Harding, Mozelle Henkel, Josephine King, Irene Larner, YuLee Larner, Carole Lisle, John Mehner (compiler), Anne and Fields Moss, Isabel and Richard Obenschain, Roseanne Robertson, Brian Scruby, Ruth Snyder (Augusta Bird Club). The Caves all saw the Palm Warbler, and the Vesper Sparrow was seen with some juncos by Tom Cabe.

20. WAYNESBORO (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Sherando, as described 1971; woodlands 40%, farmland 40%, residential 15%, ponds and streams 5%).—Jan. 3; 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Overcast with moderate to intermittent rain; temp. 37° to 46°F.; wind NW, 3-15 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop fair. Twenty-three observers, 22 in 12 parties, 1 at feeder. Total party-hours, 82 (47 on foot, 35 by car) plus 4 at feeder; total party-miles, 364 (30 on foot, 334 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Redhead, Lesser Scaup, American Coot. Observers: M. I. Bosserman, Brad, Pat, Paul, and Tom Cabe, Joel Day, Anton Decker, Virginia Driver, James Gum, Allen Hale, Vicki Hawes, Mozelle Henkel, Eugene Kerby, Irene Larner, Si and YuLee Larner, Jean Mehler, Isabel Obenschain, Julie Russell, Brian Scruby, Ruth Snyder (compiler), Sam Snyder, C. E. Stevens (Augusta Bird Club and friends). A Budgerigar was removed from this count since there was no evidence that this was not just an escaped cage bird.

21. LEXINGTON (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Big Spring Pond, as described 1974; brush and old fields 45%, deciduous woods 20%, lakes and ponds 10%, riverbottom 10%, coniferous woods 8%, pastures and open fields 5%, residential 2%).—Dec. 27; 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 35° to 40°F.; wind NW, 5-15 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Twenty-nine observers, 27 in 10 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 60 (35 on foot, 25 by car) plus 4 at feeders; total party-miles, 285 (34 on foot, 251 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: *Bewick's Wren*. Observers: Judy and Kenneth Bradford, Ben Clark, Greg Davis, James Davis, Fenton Day, Laura Glenn, Ann Greenbaum, James Hartley, Jill Huntley, Royster Lyle, Paula and Steve Markham, Alice Marotti, Norwood Middleton, Marguerite Moger, Gene Moore, Myriam Moore, Bob Paxton (cocompiler), Robert Schamerhorn, Virginia Shaver, Elise Sprunt, George Tolley (cocompiler), Andrea Turner, Ed and Polly Turner, Sandra Vinson, Rich Wilson, Joshua Womeldorf. The *Bewick's Wren* was seen spasmodically by Tolley during the late fall and early winter as well as during count week.

22. PEAKS OF OTTER (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Peaks of Otter Visitor Center, as described 1972; woods 80%, fields 10%, conifers 8%, streams and ponds 2%).—Dec. 23; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Clear; temp. 17° to 29°F.; wind SW, 18-25 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop fair. Five observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 22 (14 on foot, 8 by car); total party-miles, 63 (14 on foot, 49 by car). Observers: Garst Bishop, Almon English (compiler), Barry Kinzie, Paul McQuarry, Katherine Rice.

23. CLIFTON FORGE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center shifted to junction of Va. rt. 42 and U. S. rt. 60 to include Longdale, Griffith, Douthat State Park, Clifton Forge, Lowmoor, Glen Wilton; woodland 40%, pastures 35%, streamsidess 15%, cultivated land 5%, residential 5%).—Dec. 28; 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Partly

cloudy; temp. 34° to 38°F.; wind WNW, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop good. Fifteen observers, 14 in 5 parties, 1 at feeder. Total party-hours, 42 (32 on foot, 10 by car) plus 1 at feeder; total party-miles, 266 (40 on foot, 226 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Black Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Cedar Waxwing. Observers: Richard Denzler, Ed Haverlack, Ed Kinsler, Mary Kostel, Allen LeHew (compiler), Rowena LeHew, Lauren Olsen, Barbara and Kevin Rice, Beth and Norman Scott, Jim Shires, Ed and Terry Walters, Louise Williams. No details were given for the Blue-winged Teal.

24. FINCASTLE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center N of Fincastle near intersection of rts. 220 and 679, to include all points within circle; farmland 60%, woodland 20%, overgrown fields 10%, streams, rivers, lakes 5%, residential 5%).—Dec. 21; 4:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Overcast with intermittent light snow; temp. 20° to 30°F.; wind, none; snow cover, 1-2 in.; water partly open. Wild food crop good. Fifteen observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 60 (45 on foot, 15 by car); total party-miles, 288 (38 on foot, 250 by car). Observers: Mike Boatwright, Ray Chandler, Keith Fielder, Jeff Halvorsen, Frank Hanenkrat, Barry Kinzie (compiler), Anna Lawson, Paul McQuarry, Norwood Middleton, Gene Moore, Myriam Moore, Bill Opengari, Mike Purdy, Katherine Rice, Jerry Via. Fielder and Halvorsen observed the male Ruddy Duck, and the Long-eared Owl was seen both at rest and in flight by Chandler.

25. ROANOKE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center at Oakland Blvd. and Williamson Rd., as described 1974; woodland 35%, farmland 30%, residential 25%, lakes and rivers 10%).—Dec. 20; 1 a.m. to 10 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 26° to 40°F.; wind WNW, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild good crop good. Thirty-five observers, 33 in 18 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 112 (63 on foot, 43 by car, 6 by canoe) plus 9 at feeders; total party-miles, 326 (67 on foot, 254 by car, 5 by canoe). Observers: William Arthur, Doris and Foy Clark, Lucian Cooch, Mike Dowdy, John and Marion Eddy, Dora and Sam Ellington, Almon English, Eunice Godfrey, Dorothy Hancock, Nora and Raymond Harper, Rushia Harris, Ellen Holtman, Stella Hood, John Hudgins, Perry Kendig, Mrs. W. M. King, Barry Kinzie (compiler), Robert Longo, Carole Massart, Lucille and Norwood Middleton, Ernest and Hazel Moore, Charles Musgrove, Sally Nelson, Bill and Jane Opengari, John Pancake, Mike Purdy, Curt Richter, Jerry Via. The American Woodcock was seen by Opengari and Richter, and the Black-billed Magpie, which has been reported in this area for several years, was found by the Middletons. These were the first Black-capped Chickadees observed in this area in 4 or 5 years, but the number was unprecedented. They had been observed in the area for some time prior to the count by many observers. Via found the Bewick's Wren, and the Common Yellowthroat and the Chipping Sparrows were both seen by Kinzie.

26. BLACKSBURG (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center near Linkous Store, as described 1972; mixed pine and oak woods 50%, river and creek bottoms 22%, pasture and plowed land 15%, town and suburbs 10%, oak woodlots 3%).—Dec. 29; 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Overcast in a.m., becoming mostly clear in p.m.; temp. 30° to 52°F.; wind W, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop good. Forty-five observers, 42 in 13 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 106 (61 on foot, 45 by car) plus 10 at feeders; total party-miles, 507 (76 on foot, 431 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Brown Thrasher, Northern Oriole, Fox Sparrow. Observers: Curtis and Karen Adkisson, Bill Akers, Louise Borchelt, Laura Burrows, Alan Clifford, Dick Conner, Matt Cragle, James M. Craig, Jim Craig, Clara Dickinson, David Evans, Mrs. Robert Felch, Maury Fincham, Mike and Pat Furey, Maynard Hale, Charles, Darellyn, and Todd Handley, Kenneth Horner, Clyde Kessler, Roy Kirkpatrick, Janice and Walter Knausenberger, Henry Mosby, John Murray (compiler), Jane Poulton, Hal Powe, Irvine Prather, Curtis and Martha Roane, Pat Scanlon, Mrs. John Severeid, Myron and Ronald Shear, Joyce Simpkins, Robert Steele, Connie Stone, Alan Tipton, Brian and Judy Weger, David West, Bonnie and

George Whiting. The Red-breasted Mergansers were found on the New River by Conner and Prather and the Gray Catbird by Darelyn Handley, Jim Craig, and Laura Burrows. Brian Weger and Matt Cragle observed the Black-and-white Warbler, a first winter record for this area, and Conner identified the Vesper Sparrow.

27. TAZEWELL (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Four-way, as described 1972).—Dec. 22; 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Overcast with intermittent snow in a.m., becoming mostly clear in p.m.; temp. 10° to 35°F.; wind SW, 4-10 m.p.h.; snow cover, ½ to 1 in.; water partly open. Nineteen observers, 17 in 8 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 65 (29 on foot, 36 by car) plus 6 at feeders; total party-miles, 343 (36 on foot, 307 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Brown-headed Cowbird, Fox Sparrow. Observers: B. Beavers, T. Clinard, S. Cromer (compiler), R. Davis, F. Dean, A. Greever, M. Hurt, E. Kinser, S. Kinser, L. Leslie, P. Leslie, H. Parris, J. Parris, D. Peake, R. Peake, M. Schrader, P. Shelton, J. Surface, N. Ward (Clinch Valley Bird Club and guests). The Common Loon, Canada Goose, and Redhead were all observed by Dwight Peake and Fred Dean, who also recorded all three gull species. Shelton and Schrader found the Canvasback and the immature Golden Eagle as well as the Black-capped Chickadee. The Yellow-rumped Warblers were noted by several parties, and Richard Peake and Richard Davis saw the Common Redpolls.

28. GLADE SPRING (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center junction of routes 750 and 509, as described 1974; open fields and hedgerows 45%, mixed deciduous and pine woods 30%, riverbottom land 10%, residential 10%, marshes and ponds 5%).—Jan. 3; 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Overcast with intermittent light rain and snow; temp. 50° to 34°F.; wind SW, 5-15 m.p.h.; ground bare, water open. Wild food crop good. Twenty-two observers, 21 in 7 parties, 1 at feeder. Total party-hours, 60 (22 on foot, 38 by car) plus 5 at feeder; total party-miles, 346 (26 on foot, 320 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: Palm Warbler, Purple Finch. Observers: Elizabeth and Ellen Aaron, Joyce Buchanan, Charles Byrd, Dorothy and Turner Clinard (compiler), Dorothy and Paul Crawford, Sarah Cromer, Richard Davis, Madeline Hurt, Ed Kinser, Keith Kinser, Steve Kinser, Jack and Helen Parris, Bill Platt, Philip Shelton, Richard Trollinger, Jane White, Diane Wilson, John Wright. The Redhead was found by the Kinsers and the Common Goldeneye by Cromer and many others. The Black-capped Chickadees were reported by four different parties, and the male House Finch was seen by Wright and Platt.

29. BRISTOL (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center junction routes 647 and 654; fields and farmland 40%, deciduous forest 25%, lakes and rivers 15%, towns and residences 10%, miscellaneous 10%).—Dec. 27; 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mostly overcast with intermittent rain, sleet, and snow; temp. 30° to 34°F.; wind W to SW, 2-10 m.p.h.; snow cover, 0-1 in.; water partly open. Wild food crop good. Fifteen observers, 13 in 6 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 43 (12 on foot, 26 by car, 5 by boat) plus 10 at feeders; total party-miles, 313 (18 on foot, 235 by car, 60 by boat). Observers: Rockwell Bingham (compiler), Rosemary Bingham, Wallace Coffey, Dot Crawford, Paul Crawford, Martha Dillenbeck, Joy Dillenbeck, Glen Eller, John Gray, Ken Hale, Conrad Ottenfeld, Charles Smith, Angela Wilson, Diane Wilson, John Wright. No details were given for the Black-capped Chickadees or the Cape May Warbler except that a photo was said to have been taken of the latter bird.

30. NICKELSVILLE (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Nickelsville, as described 1974).—Dec. 20; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Clear; temp. 16° to 37°F.; wind NW, 0-5 m.p.h.; ground bare, water partly open. Wild food crop good. Twelve observers in 8 parties. Total party-hours, 24 (11 on foot, 13 by car); total party-miles, 132 (10 on foot, 122 by car). In area count week but not seen count day: *Green Heron*. Observers: Freeman Ball, Mark Buckner, Thomas Finucane, Jeff Francisco, Aliceson, Ellen, Garland, Homer, and Jean Osborne, E. E. Scott (compiler), Sue Smith, Callie

Starnes (Clinch Mountain Bird Club and guests). The Green Heron was observed on several occasions by Homer Osborne over a period of several weeks, including the count week.

31. WISE COUNTY (all points within a 15-mile diameter, center Dorchester, as described 1972; deciduous woodland 35%, business and residential 20%, fields and pastures 20%, strip mines 10%, orchards 6%, lakes and streams 5%, coniferous woodland 4%).—Dec. 20; 5:15 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Mostly clear; temp. 14° to 42°F.; wind WSW, 5-40 m.p.h.; snow cover, 0-3 in.; water partly open. Wild food crop good. Twenty observers, 17 in 8 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 67 (33 on foot, 34 by car) plus 5 at feeders; total party-miles, 331 (42 on foot, 289 by car). Observers: Charles Byrd, Stacy Cantrell, Turner Clinard, Richard Davis, Fred Dean, Elizabeth Gibson, Ed Kinser, Dwight, Richard (compiler), and Thomas Peake, Bill Portlock, Mauricio Schrader, Philip Shelton, Carolyn, Mary, and Rockwell Smith, Gladys Stallard, Joseph and Tommy Straughan, Hazel Thrower (Cumberland Bird Club). Shelton and Schrader saw the Horned Grebe, and the American Woodcock, Catbird, and Tree and Chipping Sparrows were recorded by Davis and Richard Peake.

115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23226

FLOCKS OF NONBREEDING COMMON RAVENS IN VIRGINIA

ROBERT G. HOOPER AND CHARLES A. DACHELET

During the nesting season, flocks of nonbreeding Common Ravens, *Corvus corax*, are rarely sighted. Such flocks have been reported in Britain (Holyoak and Ratcliffe, 1968: 196), Iceland (Young, 1949: 151), and Wyoming (Dorn, 1972: 16-18). Despite the rarity of nomadic flocks of nonbreeders, Coombes (1948: 293) believed them to be an integral part of the raven's social organization, of which little is known. Ravens probably do not nest before their third year, and these subadults likely make up the nonbreeding flocks.

Wetmore (1950: 12) saw flocks of 35 and 80 birds in the fall in Shenandoah National Park. Lucid and Conner (1974: 82) found a winter roost with over 100 ravens at Mountain Lake in Giles County, Virginia. The Mountain Lake roost became inactive in mid February. About 60 of the birds roosted three miles northwest at Little Meadows. Decline of the Little Meadows roost began in mid March, and only seven birds were recorded in mid April (Harlow *et al.*, 1975: 299). Since nest building starts in late January and egg laying commences in mid February (Hooper, unpublished data), the Little Meadows roost was occupied apparently by nonbreeders.

Groups of ravens are seen at garbage dumps year-round, but these may or may not be organized flocks. In three years of intensive field work during the nesting season, we saw only two flocks away from garbage dumps. Both flocks reported here were at least 5 miles from a dump.

On 8 February 1972 at 10 a.m. we counted 26 ravens on top of Potts Mountain in Craig County, Virginia. The birds were rising briefly above the ridge and settling to the ground. This count was the most birds seen above the tree-tops at one time, and a larger number could have been present. We spent several days during the following two weeks in the area but did not see more than five ravens together.

On 5 April 1973 at 4:45 a.m. we saw a flock leaving a nocturnal roost on Little House Mountain in Rockbridge County. We counted 45 ravens as they flew to Big House Mountain. The flock idled about until 5:30 a.m., when 30 birds flew out of sight. The remainder were not seen again. Ravens did not roost on Little House Mountain that evening. We were in the vicinity until late afternoon of 6 April but failed to see more than four ravens together. During the nesting seasons of 1972-1974 we spent about 90 days within 10 miles of Little House Mountain and never saw over four ravens together, except for the above-mentioned flock and groups of up to 20 birds at garbage dumps.

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SNOWY OWL—THE VISITOR AND THE VISITED

RUTH S. SNYDER

Our vote for the most-visited, most-photographed bird in Virginia during the winter of 1974-75 would have to be the Snowy Owl, *Nyctea scandiaca*, that was seen in and near Waynesboro for nearly six weeks.

First to report it was Mrs. Jean Lackey on Friday, 24 January 1975. When a loud cawing of crows prompted her to look out the window of her Westover Hills home, she discovered the owl perched on the roof of the Ernest Kerby

house across the street. Several birders were notified, as was a newspaper reporter-photographer, who was assured that, indeed, the bird was rare. A good picture of it was printed in the *News-Virginian* that day.

At that time there was snow on the ground and on roofs. Perhaps without the crows' announcement the bird might have gone unnoticed. Actually, it probably was in the area previously, for Jack Raybourne, game research biologist, did have a call about a white owl a few days before when he was not in his Staunton office. Details were not given, and the caller could not be traced.

Two days later, on 26 January, Mrs. Lackey saw the owl fly from a pondside to the nearby Waynesboro Airport, where it perched on the edge of the runway all morning. There it resembled, variously, "a white Angora cat," "a small snowman," or "one of the white runway markers."

The owl's whereabouts for the following two weeks are not known, but it is said to have been seen on farms in the Stuart Draft area. The next official sighting was reported by Mrs. Justus Driver on 12 February. It was perched on a chimney along Augusta County route 632, just off U. S. 340, between Ladd and Stuarts Draft, southwest of Waynesboro. From there it flew to a field on the Beyeler farm near the Driver residence. After perching in a patch of weeds for some time, it flew across route 340 and perched on rocks in a yard for the remainder of the day.

Three days later Ray Chandler, of Amherst, while looking for the owl with his mother, Mrs. Sandra Chandler, went to the weed patch and immediately found a large owl pellet, very much the size, shape, and color of the dried, gray milkweed pods that hung there. Later, Mrs. Driver picked up pellets, as well as bits of rabbit fur, in the area where the owl was seen. Though it was not observed actually hunting, it apparently did not lack for food, since the fields it visited had plenty of mice and rabbits.

On Friday, 14 February, the Snowy Owl began the habits it continued for the rest of its stay of almost three weeks. Practically every morning it would be spotted on some chimney or TV antenna in a residential section in the western part of Waynesboro. Sometimes, harassed by crows, it would fly to another chimney not too far away, where it would perch in plain view in sun or driving rain, fog or feather-rumpling wind. About nightfall it would fly, but no one knew where it spent the night. Justus Driver believed it perched at least one night on a large oil storage tank of his fuel oil business. Someone else saw it on an old barn in the Ladd area at dusk.

On 12 February and for several days following, a long, loose feather dangled from the right wing, and a few others seemed to be missing when the bird flew, but its flight was strong and steady, also very impressive with its wingspan of approximately 5 feet. It was very white, flecked with dusky, fitting the description of the male, though one could not be sure. Close approach was allowed to its chimney perches. A diurnal bird, it watched with yellow eyes narrowed to slits, turning its head to observe its watchers.

The Chandlers were the first of nearly 100 visitors from at least 18 places outside Waynesboro. Several came from distant places more than once, bringing others with them. John Mehner considered that having his Mary Baldwin College ornithology class see a live Snowy Owl was a rare enough experience to warrant two trips to Waynesboro. They were successful in finding it the second time. An "Owl Guest Register" that was kept reads almost like a "Who's Who of Virginia Birders." On 5 March, the date of the owl's last appearance in

Waynesboro, visitors were present from Norfolk, Chesapeake, and the College of William and Mary.

The Snowy Owl has not only been added to the life lists of many experienced birders, but it has perhaps even started a life interest in birds for many persons in the area who had never taken much note of them previously. To see the mysterious Arctic visitor was to receive a lasting impression of a majestic bird, the thrill of a lifetime, according to more than one viewer.

1245 Chatham Road, Waynesboro, Virginia 22980

RUFF IN NELSON COUNTY

RAY CHANDLER

On the afternoon of 17 May 1975 Keith Fielder and I were birding in Nelson County, Virginia, at a flooded field at the intersection of Virginia Route 56 west and Route 151. We were watching three Lesser Yellowlegs when we noticed another bird fly in. We immediately noticed its very brown color and thin white stripe on the wing.

It landed at a distance of about 50 feet away where we observed it in a 20x-60x scope. It was nearly equal in size with the Lesser Yellowlegs. Its legs were red-orange in color, and the bill was dark, seemingly black, and slightly drooped at the end. The bird was buff brown on the head, neck, and upper breast, whereas the back was rich brown and the feathers had very buffy edges, giving it a scaly appearance. The chin and belly were white. It flew several times around the lake, and we observed, often at close range, two white oval spots at the base of the tail, separated by a dark brown stripe.

After identifying the bird as a Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax*, the identification was checked and confirmed by Sandra Chandler. Later in the day a group of six birders arrived and also observed the bird. The group included Paul McQuarry and Michael Boatwright.

On the morning of 18 May the first attempts at photography were made, but rain and poor light hampered attempts. During the day about 35 additional birders saw the bird, including Mrs. Mark Snyder of Waynesboro, Myriam Moore of Lynchburg, and Bill Opengari of Roanoke. The day of 19 May was sunny, and other observers included Ernest Edwards of Sweet Briar, who took motion pictures of the bird. During the course of observations, most felt that the bird, because of its very brown color, was evidently a female (Reeve).

The bird was seen for the last time on the afternoon of the 19th. During its stay it remained almost constantly with the yellowlegs. It fed mostly by picking at the grass and leaves at the edge of the water and was only occasionally observed to probe into the mud.

This area has proved itself as an excellent shorebirding locale by the occurrence of numerous shorebird there throughout the spring. These included a breeding-plumaged Dunlin on 10 May seen by Michael Boatwright, Keith Fielder, and me, Least Sandpipers on 16 and 18 May, Semipalmated Sandpipers on 25 and 26 May, plus both yellowlegs and Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers.

Route 4, Box 18C, Amherst, Virginia 24521

ALDER FLYCATCHER IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

RICHARD N. CONNER

On the morning of 5 July 1975 at Hoge Pond (elevation 1890 feet above sea level), Montgomery County, near Blacksburg, Virginia, I noticed what appeared to be an *Empidonax* flycatcher actively engaged in flycatching from some trees about 15 m from the pond's edge. A close look at the bird with binoculars revealed a dark upper bill, a yellowish lower bill, and a very white throat that contrasted quite sharply with its breast. After I had been watching the flycatcher for about 5 minutes, it began to vocalize the *fee-bee-o* call of the Alder Flycatcher, *Empidonax alnorum*. This was quite fortunate, as it is extremely difficult to distinguish the Alder Flycatcher from the Willow Flycatcher, *E. traillii*, which gives a *fitz-bew* call. The flycatcher flew off after vocalizing for several minutes.

I believe this is the first record of an Alder Flycatcher in Montgomery County. Typically a northern species, the Alder Flycatcher should be found at only high elevations in Virginia.

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WHEATEAR IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY

PETER MEHRING

On Saturday, 14 September 1974, my father, Walter H. Mehring, Jr., spotted an unusual bird at Highland Orchards Farm, Albemarle County, Virginia. At his suggestion I went and observed the bird for 20 minutes after supper. Most of this time the bird perched without moving on the gravel farm road. In general body form it seemed intermediate between a Mockingbird and a Loggerhead Shrike. It perched more erectly than a Mockingbird but less so than a shrike. In size it seemed definitely smaller than either. While perched, its plumage appeared a nondescript light brown. A dark area from the eye to the base of the slender bill contributed to the shrike-like image. When I flushed the bird, it displayed a brilliant white rump and white tail with some black markings. After writing down as complete a description as I was able, I turned to a field guide and tentatively identified the bird as a Wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe*. A reference which I later checked (Todd, 1963) suggested that the bird was probably of the Greenland race, *O. o. leucorhoa*. There is one previous sight record of this species for Virginia, a bird seen at Townsend, Northampton County, on 3 and 4 October 1971 by Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Mitchell, David Green, and Tom Ranney (Scott and Cutler, 1972).

During the following day I observed the Wheatear for more than two hours. Observers other than my father and I on Sunday and Monday, 15-16 September, were Ali, Bruce, and Pring Davenport, who made a worthy attempt at mist-netting and banding the bird, Boo Johnson, Ken Lawless, who photographed it, Katherine Michie, who had seen Wheatears in England, Sara Mehring, Walter Mehring, III, Mollie Moser, Joe Savage, C. E. Stevens, and Lina Whiteside.

On Sunday morning as I looked through 7x35 binoculars from 10 yards away with the sun behind me, I saw traces of summer plumage. There were one or two chalk gray feathers on the bird's back, and on at least one side the bird's shoulder was black. That same afternoon we were unable to see the gray feathers, although we were using a spotting scope in good light. Even though I watched the bird flush 20 times or more, I was never able to form a visual image of the black T pictured in the field guides. However, I did make two observations which led me to believe the T was present. When the bird perched below me, the top of the tail appeared black, but when viewed from below, each bottom tail feather appeared to have a white basal half and a black terminal half. These observations support the idea that if I could have fixed the disruptive image of the tail in flight, I would have seen a black T.

The Wheatear's behavior was noticeably different from that of any local species. It perched motionless on the gravel road for exceptionally long periods of time. When feeding, it would swiftly run up to or into the grass alongside the road and dash back into the open again with a cricket, grasshopper, or katydid. Then it would beat and swallow the insect. My father observed it catching insects flycatcher-fashion from a perch on a fence post. It seemed to have a distinct preference for open places with good visibility. Sometimes while it perched on the road or on fences, we saw the bird bobbing. It dipped the rear portion of its body less rhythmically than a Spotted Sandpiper. When it was flushed, the Wheatear occasionally flew to and perched in the tops of large red cedars and white cedars growing in the pastures. We never observed it in deciduous trees. Twice I heard the bird produce a note while perched. In each case the note sounded like that of a distant Common Grackle or Red-winged Blackbird. It may function as a warning note. Several persons noted the apparent tameness of the bird. It seemed undisturbed by human presence until closely approached.

Mrs. Lina Whiteside deserves credit for pointing out significant details in the Wheatear's plumage. On Sunday, as we watched through the spotting scope, she noticed several discrepancies between the Peterson (1947) illustration and the plumage we were observing. Among these were buffy tips on the black tail feathers. These buffy tips narrowed and ran up the outer edge of each tail feather. They were also evident on the primaries and on what I assume were new tail feathers growing out above the old. Witherby *et al.* (1948) note that both adult females and juveniles have buffy-tipped wing and tail feathers, whereas the adult male tail feathers are tipped with grayish white. Thus it would seem probable that this was a first-year bird or an adult female.

My father deserves credit for discovering this visitor. All who came to see it enjoyed the discovery.

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SWAINSON'S WARBLER IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

DAVID F. ABBOTT

May 4, 1975, dawned dark and rainy, but as I was scheduled to lead a bird walk to Dyke Marsh, I left home at 6:30 a.m. By 7 a.m., six people had showed up, and the rain had practically ceased. It was not until we were walking back, around 9:30, that I was attracted by a song reminiscent of a Hooded Warbler coming from a patch of dense tangles and low bushes where the road bends to go out into the marsh. This spot is very thick and hard to penetrate, and the low vegetation is standing in stagnant water. The song began with three or four slurred notes finishing with an explosive *weee-o*, not whistled as in the Hooded Warbler but the composition was right. It sang a dozen times, all from the same general spot, and although we looked from every angle, no one could see the bird. In a last effort to see it, Paris Coleman and I crawled through the second growth, each on the opposite side of the elusive singer. After 10 minutes of patiently waiting, I saw a movement and, putting my glass on it, identified it as a Swainson's Warbler, *Limnothlypis swainsonii*. It perched on a twig a foot above the water, no more than 10 feet away, giving me a clear, unobstructed view. The back, wings, and tail were olive-brown, and the underparts were creamy white; the head had a solid brown cap with a dark line running from bill through the eye, and the bill was rather long. It was in clear view for no more than half a minute, and I was apparently the only person who saw it well. Owen Fang and Paris Coleman, who have had prior experience with this species, both agreed that the song was that of a Swainson's Warbler.

There are no prior records of this species for Fairfax County, but two were seen in nearby Arlington on 13 May 1950 by Carl Trevor.

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NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY R. L. AKE

WHITE IBIS IN 1974. On 30 July 1974 at Hog Island State Waterfowl Refuge, Surry County, Virginia, Jerry W. Via observed two immature White Ibis feeding with about 50 Snowy Egrets. During the period from 20 August to 8 September 1974 several observers noted a single immature White Ibis feeding with a large flock of up to 2500 Glossy Ibis on the Wash Flats section of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (R. A. Rowlett, P. W. Sykes, and C. P. Wilds). These appearances by White Ibis in Virginia follow the pattern

of recent sightings of these birds, occurring as postbreeding dispersals of young birds which usually make their first appearance in late June. The location they come from is to the south, the closest breeding location being near Morehead City, North Carolina.

LOUISIANA HERONS INLAND. On 27 July 1974 J. M. Abbott and Leonard Teuber observed a Louisiana Heron feeding in Dyke marsh, Fairfax County, Virginia. The bird remained until 2 October and was seen by many observers. Another Louisiana Heron was found near John H. Kerr Dam in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, on 14 August 1974 (K. M. Fielder). These observations appear to be first records for both of these areas.

LATE COMMON MERGANSER AT DYKE MARSH. J. M. Abbott reports that a male Common Merganser appeared at Dyke marsh, Fairfax County, on 11 May 1974. A few days later on 15 May the male was joined by a female, and the pair was seen steadily through 4 June 1974. There was no indication of nesting, although the species did nest here in 1965 (*Raven*, 37: 55, 1966).

EARLY FALL HAWK MIGRANTS. Fall 1974 witnessed the early appearance of three hawk species in eastern Virginia. On 16 August at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Larry K. Malone observed an immature Peregrine Falcon on the Wash Flats at the refuge. At Sigma, Virginia Beach, on 22 August an early Broad-winged Hawk was observed by P. W. Sykes, R. H. Peake, and D. E. Peake. A year earlier a similar probable fall migrant was seen on 19 August 1973 at Fisherman Island, Northampton County (*Raven*, 45: 92, 1974). And finally, David L. and Mary Jo Hughes carefully studied a light-phase Rough-legged Hawk hovering at the Norfolk Regional Airport on 2 September. All the field marks were seen including the heavy feathering down to the feet. Such an early arrival for this species of the extreme northlands is unprecedented, perhaps signaling the occurrence of a particularly severe late summer Arctic storm.

RECORD COUNT OF STILT SANDPIPERS. The unusually dry summer season of 1974 brought about suitable shorebird habitat for early fall migrants. During a complete census of Chincoteague Refuge on 27 and 28 July Richard A. Rowlett estimated 1200 Stilt Sandpipers scattered throughout the refuge in all the fresh and brackish water areas. He noted that none were seen on the tidal flats or salt marshes. High counts of unmixed feeding flocks were 165 and 140, and flocks containing 20 to 30 birds were commonly recorded.

RUFFS AT CHINCOTEAGUE. Larry K. Malone reports observing a Ruff on Piney Island near Chincoteague Refuge on 14 April 1974. The bird had been first reported by a British birding group and was well seen by a number of people. It was a dark bird with an almost black head, neck, and shoulder with chocolate-colored back and wings and a white belly. The bill was dark near the tip and yellowish at the base, and the legs were a bright orange-red. The bird remained in the area for about a week. A Reeve was seen by Claudia Wilds and others on 11 May 1974 during a special birding weekend at Chincoteague Refuge. Two fall Ruffs were reported here on 22 August 1974 (D. F. and J. M. Abbott), and one was observed three days later along the refuge drives (R. A. Rowlett).

SEASONAL VARIATION OF AVOCET NUMBERS. The general pattern recently observed in the wax and wane of American Avocet numbers at Craney

Island, Portsmouth, Virginia, was again noted in 1974. From a high of 225 birds recorded on 6 August 1973 (*Raven*, 45: 92, 1974), the number fell to 110 on 2 February 1974 (W. W. Fogleman) and 62 on 27 April (R. L. Ake *et al.*) and further to 8 on 25 May (P. G. DuMont). During the early summer months, records indicate very few sightings. However, by 19 August a new record total of 231 birds was counted (P. W. Sykes *et al.*), and the following month 228 were noted on 26 September (W. F. Rountree and J. E. Ames, Jr.). The VSO field trip here on 8 December 1974 recorded 198.

At Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge this seasonal pattern was mirrored on a smaller scale. A few avocets were noted off and on through the winter of 1973-74. Two were seen 21 April 1974 by C. R. Vaughn on nearby Wallops Island, but no reports were received from this area during the early summer. One was found on the refuge on 27 July (R. A. Rowlett), and numbers increased steadily through August and September reaching 30 on 21 September (C. P. Wilds). The peak for the year was recorded on the refuge on 14 October when R. L. Pyle, Peter Pyle, and Will McDowell saw a group of over 100. Numbers then declined to only 13 on 11 November (Wilds).

RED PHALAROPE COMES ASHORE. While conducting one of her bi-weekly shorebird counts for Manomet's Atlantic Coast Survey on 7 July 1974 at Chincoteague Refuge, Claudia P. Wilds recorded a bird rarely seen on Virginia's shores, a Red Phalarope. The bird was a gorgeous female in full breeding plumage complete with black-tipped yellow bill, dark crown, sharply defined white sides of head, and red on the nape and all underparts. The bird was observed for an extended period standing on the beach on the bay side of Fishing Point within 50 yards of beach buggies, fishermen, clambers, and swimmers until a swimmer flushed the bird and it disappeared among the beach buggies. Although birds of this species occur off Virginia's coast during the late fall and early spring, any Red Phalarope in July at this latitude must certainly be regarded as highly unusual. The bird's appearance on shore may simply be a manifestation of its disorientation.

SANDWICH TERN IN VIRGINIA. The present status of the Sandwich Tern in Virginia can be nicely illustrated with the reports of this species received during 1974. An early arrival at Craney Island, Portsmouth, noted by W. W. Fogleman on 10 April was still in winter plumage. A month later during a field trip to Fisherman Island, Northampton County, on 11 and 12 May as part of the 1974 VSO annual meeting, a group of nine Sandwich Terns was noted in a large flock of nesting Royal Terns, and at least two of the Sandwich Terns were incubating. This group was apparently washed out later and did not raise any young (J. S. Weske). Throughout the summer small numbers which increased as fall approached were seen along coastal Virginia. On 23 August Claudia Wilds observed a groveling juvenile Sandwich Tern with a buffy wash on its mantle in the company of two adults and a mixed flock of Royal and Common Terns at Chincoteague Refuge, probably representing the result of a rather late nearby nesting. The decline in numbers of Sandwich Terns along the coast takes place in September, and the sighting of eight on the beach at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 22 September represents a moderately large group for so late in the year (R. L. Ake and W. P. Blakeslee).

OWLS—DEAD AND ALIVE. On 4 May 1974 J. W. Eike and other members of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the VSO visited the hollow nest tree in Bull Run Regional Park, Fairfax County, Virginia, where a year earlier on

5 May 1973 they had found three young Barred Owls. This year they found that the tree had fallen, and closer inspection revealed two young Barred Owls in pin feathers dead in the shattered tree.

On Wallops Island, Accomack County, Charles R. Vaughn reported that a nesting Barn Owl was incubating a second clutch of eggs on 24 August 1974. A young owl was seen here in early October.

Bill Williams reported picking up a dead adult Saw-whet Owl on 24 November 1974 at the junction of U. S. 60 and the I-64 exit at Byrd Airport in eastern Henrico County, Virginia. The specimen is preserved in the collection of the College of William and Mary. This species has been recorded in the mountains of southwestern Virginia during the summer and fall and along the Virginia coast during the fall and winter, but reports—dead or alive—from locales inbetween these are rather rare. Perhaps some careful tree-to-tree searching among pine or juniper plantings would be more fruitful than heretofore expected.

SPRING YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHERS. On 26 May 1974 and again four days later on 30 May J. W. Eike observed singing Yellow-bellied Flycatchers in his yard near Clifton, Fairfax County, Virginia. Each bird whistled the characteristic *pur-wee* song, and the yellow throat and other field marks were carefully noted on both birds. On 14 May 1974 Elizabeth D. Peacock netted a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Pine Ridge, also in Fairfax County. The long wing—69 mm—classed it as a male. This represents the first spring netting at this location, all prior birds of this species having been trapped and banded in the fall.

MOURNING WARBLERS IN EASTERN VIRGINIA. Evidence that the Mourning Warbler passes through Virginia as one of its latest spring migrants comes from two bird banders. On 25 May 1974 at Pine Ridge, Fairfax County, Elizabeth D. Peacock caught a female Mourning Warbler in a net placed near a tangle of multiflora rose, blackberry, and wild grape vines on the edge of her vegetable garden. In the hand she noted the bird's incomplete eye ring and measured the wing chord at 57 mm. Later, before the bird was released, it was examined by J. W. Eike and A. R. Lawrence. On 28 May 1974 Mrs. Peacock netted a male Mourning Warbler in high plumage. Previous banding records of this species here had all been in the fall: 5 September 1952, 24 September 1953, and 6 October 1953. Although these are the first spring banding records for this species at Pine Ridge, the Peacocks have recorded two spring sightings in Gloucester County (*Raven*, 46: 29, 1975).

At the Population Laboratory of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Ruth Beck netted a Mourning Warbler male on 26 May 1974 and two more males on 28 May 1974 (*vide* M. A. Byrd).

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 47

JUNE 1976

NUMBER 2



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$125.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Williamsburg, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971.

NOTES ON SUMMER BIRDS IN THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINS,
1970-1975

CHARLES E. STEVENS

The following records were compiled in or near the western Virginia mountains during the period 1970 into 1975. Most of these presented are either from new locations or old ones where there have been only limited occurrences of birds previously noted.

MALLARD, *Anas platyrhynchos*

Several dozen (feral?) with some young were seen on the Saltville ponds in Smyth County on 18 June 1971.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, *Accipiter striatus*

On 18 July 1970 Bruce Davenport and I saw a pair of agitated birds of this species calling and swooping low over us in ridgetop pine-oak woods at 3450 feet on Rader Mountain in western Rockingham County, but we were unable to find a nest.

AMERICAN COOT, *Fulica americana*

Three were seen on the Saltville ponds on 18 June 1971.

BARRED OWL, *Strix varia*

On 14 June 1970 in the Amherst County Blue Ridge on Elk Pond Mountain two were seen, one a young bird able to fly but still with white down in its plumage.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, *Sphyrapicus varius*

I am presently aware of summer populations from higher altitudes, usually northern hardwoods, along Allegheny Mountain in Highland and Bath Counties, along Shenandoah Mountain in Highland and Augusta Counties, and in the central Virginia Blue Ridge around Cole Mountain in Amherst County. Two of the following records fall in these areas. A single bird was calling in oak-hickory-maple woods on Shenandoah Mountain (Augusta-Highland line) at 3650 feet near Freezeland on 7 June 1970. Farther south on Allegheny Mountain on 26 June 1971 two were found in Highland County just north of Paddy Knob, and eight were recorded on and just south of Paddy Knob in Bath County in hardwoods at 3750-4300 feet.

Outside of the known summering areas one was heard by Bruce Davenport and me during the VSO foray on 23 June 1974 drumming at 3520 feet near Fox Creek at the foot of Hurricane Mountain. This location is in Grayson County on Rt. 603 five miles west of Trout Dale.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, *Parus atricapillus*

From a number of inconclusive records of chickadees which were unsatisfactorily or not at all specifically identified, I can present the following which I feel are good.

Mount Rogers-White Top area: On 26 September 1970 one was singing in northern hardwoods on the Smyth County side of Mount Rogers at 5100 feet in a group of chickadees where a Carolina was also singing. Also on the same

date one was singing at 4500 feet in mixed northern hardwoods and spruce on Elk Ridge in the same county. In 1971 one was singing on 15 June in northern hardwoods at 4800 feet on the Grayson side of Deep Gap, and on 16 June one was singing at 4950 feet on Haw Orchard Mountain in the same county.

Alleghany County: One was heard singing two miles northwest of Clifton Forge near McGraw Gap on 30 June 1973 by Bruce Davenport and me.

Loudoun County: On 15 September 1973 one was singing on the crest of the Blue Ridge at 1100 feet two miles south of the Potomac River. Chickadees heard around Loudoun Heights and Short Hill Mountain to the east were all Carolinas.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE, *Parus carolinensis*

While not a summer record, a bird of this species was heard singing at Craigsville in southwestern Augusta County on 28 February 1971 in what I consider Black-cap territory. On a 21 July 1973 trip to Brumley Mountain, a rather high (4200 feet) but spruceless area in northwestern Washington County bordering Clinch Mountain, Jim Watson and I only heard one chickadee singing, and it belonged to this species.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, *Sitta canadensis*

Highland County: On 30 May 1970 a single bird was found in a spruce stand on an upper tributary of Laurel Fork on Allegheny Mountain $\frac{3}{4}$ mile north of U. S. Rt. 250 where other birds of this species have been seen. The altitude was 3800 feet.

Mount Rogers-White Top area: In addition to birds seen on the two summits, a single bird was seen in spruce-birch woods on top of Haw Orchard Mountain at 5050 feet in Grayson County on 15-16 June 1971.

BROWN CREEPER, *Certhia familiaris*

Highland County: On 24 May 1970 two singing birds were found $\frac{1}{8}$ mile apart in mixed hardwoods, white pine, and hemlock at 2550 feet at the mouth of Sinclair Hollow near the head of Shaws Fork on the west side of Shenandoah Mountain. On 11 July 1970 Jim Watson and I heard one singing in northern hardwoods at 3700 feet off Laurel Fork on a lower slope of Bearcamp Knob.

Iron Mountains: On 19 June 1970 Bruce Davenport and I found four singing, mostly in northern hardwoods, on Grave Mountain. One was at 4100 feet on the Grayson County side, and three were from 4400 to 4600 feet on the Smyth side.

White Top area: On 2 July 1972 I heard one singing at 4600 feet in birch-beech-maple woods just north of the gap between Beech Mountain and Buzzard Rock west of White Top in Washington County.

WINTER WREN, *Troglodytes troglodytes*

This bird is being found at quite a few locations in the Virginia mountains outside of spruce areas. It is not dependent upon conifers and is frequently found on steep, rocky, humid, north-facing hardwood slopes with a considerable understory.

Augusta County: Bruce Davenport, Tom Wieboldt, and I heard one singing on 13 June 1971 at 3800 feet in steep, rocky birch-maple-mixed hardwoods on the north side of Elliotts Knob.

Bath County: One was heard singing in rocky birch-maple woods at 3850 feet on the northwest side of Warm Springs Mountain near Sand Gap on 29 June 1975.

Madison County: On 31 May 1971 Tom Wieboldt and I heard one singing at 2700 feet in hemlocks in The Laurels (named for its stand of *Rhododendron maximum*) which is at the head of the Rapidan River in the Blue Ridge.

Nelson County: In the Blue Ridge one was heard singing at 3500 feet on the north side of Three Ridges in steep, rocky birch-maple-oak woods on 3 July 1975.

Rockingham County: On 3 June 1972 Bruce Davenport and I found two singing in mixed hemlock-hardwoods at 3000 feet on upper Little Laurel Run east of Shenandoah Mountain.

Russell County: One was found singing on 17 June 1971 in rocky mixed hardwoods at 3800 feet at the head of Sturgeon Branch on Beartown Mountain.

Smyth County: Bruce Davenport saw one on 19 June 1970 at 4400 feet in birch-maple-beech forest near Cherry Tree Camp on Grave Mountain in the Iron Mountains. On 19 June 1974 a party of us with the VSO foray heard three singing in rocky *Rhododendron maximum*-hardwoods from 3600 to 4350 feet on the north side of Flattop Mountain.

Tazewell County: Jim Watson and I heard one singing on 20 July 1973 at 4000 feet in steep, rocky birch-maple woods on the northwest side of Knob Mountain on the road to Morris Knob.

Washington County: One was heard singing on 2 July 1972 at 4500 feet in birch-beech-maple woods just north of the gap between Beech Mountain and Buzzard Rock west of White Top.

BEWICK'S WREN, *Thryomanes bewickii*

In western Virginia this species occurs sparingly, most often in mountain pastureland scattered with dead trees, thickets, and woodlots and frequently with rail fences and scattered old buildings. Much less often it is found around open ridgetop rock outcrops and cliffs amidst extensive woods and far from any dwellings. Perhaps this was one of its original habitats before the arrival of European man to North America.

Grayson County: Bruce Davenport and I found four singing in scrubby sections of high pastures on Buck Mountain, a 4670-foot spruceless peak near Independence, on 17 June 1970. On 16 June 1971 I heard one in similar pastureland on Haw Orchard Mountain near Mount Rogers.

Highland County: One was seen in high pastureland on the flank of Snowy Mountain on 25 July 1971.

Madison County: Tom Wieboldt and I heard one about the summit rock outcrops of Fork Mountain, a wooded peak bordering Laurel Prong of the Rapidan River, on 31 May 1971.

Nelson County: One was singing on the rocky summit of Humpback Mountain at 3600 feet on the Nelson side of the Blue Ridge on 4 and 6 June 1972. This prominence is surrounded by hardwoods.

SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN, *Cistothorus platensis*

In Bland County on 20 July 1973 Jim Watson and I heard one singing in a field, fallow for five years, composed of timothy, fescue, clovers, *Erigeron*, and many waist-high weeds, which was bordered by Walker Creek and a narrow strip of wet meadow. The location was beside Rt. 42 one mile east of Effna.

HERMIT THRUSH, *Catharus guttatus*

An addition to the few summer records in Virginia of this northern thrush comes from Tazewell County. On 20 June 1970 while in the spruce-mixed hardwoods on the south side of the Beartown summit bordering Burkes Garden, just before a thunderstorm struck, I heard a Hermit sing. As the sky became darker the bird sang repeatedly without competition from any other species. With much difficulty I finally viewed it perched in several yellow birches. Then a downpour occurred. My descent to the car below in Burkes Garden was soggy but not unhappy.

The following year on the same date I again heard a Hermit at the same place (4650 feet) on a cloudy day. These two observations were surprising in that I had camped overnight on the summit in early July 1966 and had not heard it. The Veery, *Catharus fuscescens*, however, is common in this habitat.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, *Regulus satrapa*

From the known summer range of this bird in northern Highland County, the lowest altitude at which I have found it in Virginia in summer was at 3100 feet in hemlock-spruce woods on 25 July 1971 on Back Creek just north of U. S. Rt. 250.

While participating in the 1974 VSO foray in Southwest Virginia, Bruce Davenport and I found a singing bird in a stand of scattered large spruce at 3900 feet on a southeast-facing slope of Brushy Mountain in Smyth County on 21 June. This spruce was sighted on the previous day from Whiterock Mountain and should be considered a part of the Russell Beartown spruce, of which a few young trees remain around Laurel Bed Lake just west of Brushy Mountain.

WARBLING VIREO, *Vireo gilvus*

This species appears to be regular in western Virginia in riverine woods and groves and even along smaller streams.

Grayson County: Two were heard singing along New River by Rt. 711 southwest of Independence on 17 June 1970 by Bruce Davenport and me.

Madison County: Tom Wieboldt and I heard two singing in small wooded groves along the Rose River near Syria on the east side of the Blue Ridge on 31 May 1971.

Rappahannock County: One was heard singing by the Hughes River at the town of Hughes River in groves of trees in a pasture on 1 July 1973.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER, *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

On 18 June 1971 a single bird was singing in hemlock-rhododendron on Roaring Fork above Kent's Junction in Wise County at 1850 feet.

NASHVILLE WARBLER, *Vermivora ruficapilla*

Two were heard singing in oak-pine-heath along wildlife clearings near the Rader Mountain trail on Shenandoah Mountain in Rockingham County on 5 June 1971 by Tom Wieboldt and me. This is the same area where they have previously been found (*Raven*, 39: 45, 1968).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER, *Dendroica magnolia*

A singing male seen on 15 June 1971 in the summit fir-blackberry openings on the Grayson County side of Mount Rogers may be the first record for that peak, although birds have been found on the Elk Garden side of White Top. On 2 July 1972 I saw one singing in hemlock-hardwoods at 3600 feet by the new road on upper Big Branch on the north side of White Top.

CERULEAN WARBLER, *Dendroica cerulea*

A singing male at 3600 feet on a steep hardwoods slope in Highland County north of Paddy Knob on Allegheny Mountain on 26 June 1971 was an unusually high record.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER, *Dendroica dominica*

One was heard singing in oak-pine woods above Russell Fork at Breaks Interstate Park in Dickenson County on 18 June 1971.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, *Seiurus noveboracensis*

On 2 July 1972 I was much surprised to hear, and eventually see, one of these birds singing repeatedly from a sphagnous shrub swamp (willow and red maple bordered by hemlock-*Rhododendron maximum*-birch woods) at 3600 feet on upper Fox Creek by Rt. 603 in Grayson County. This location just north of Mount Rogers is quite a bit south of the southernmost known summer population at Cranberry Glades in Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

PURPLE FINCH, *Carpodacus purpureus*

On 2 July 1972 I saw a male singing in the top of a spruce near the summit of White Top on the Grayson County side.

RED CROSSBILL, *Loxia curvirostra*

Summer records of this species continue to accumulate from the Virginia mountains. Spruce is not requisite for the bird, as many reports are from oak and oak-pine woods.

Bath County: On 5 August 1972 two were seen in oak woods in north-eastern Bath, near Armstrong, and on 29 June 1975 "several" were heard flying over oak-heath near Trappers Lodge at 3400 feet on Warm Springs Mountain.

Highland County: Ten were recorded in scattered small groups in pine-oak areas at the head of Shaws Fork west of Shenandoah Mountain on 24 May 1970, one was found on upper Laurel Fork on 30 May 1970, and three were seen in oak woods at 3600 feet on Allegheny Mountain just north of the Bath line, on 26 June 1971.

Rockingham County: On 22 August 1970 two were seen at 3600 feet on Shenandoah Mountain flying over oak-pine woods, and one was seen at 2800 feet on nearby Chestnut Ridge in the same habitat. On 5 June 1971 Tom

Wieboldt and I found four in the Laurel Run spruce stand on Shenandoah Mountain and one flying over oak-pine-heath on nearby Rader Mountain.

Mount Rogers-White Top area: In addition to flocks of up to 20 birds on these high peaks a pair was seen on nearby Haw Orchard Mountain in Grayson County on 16 June 1971. White Top is the only place in the state that I have heard crossbills sing. While on the 1974 VSO foray Bob and Sally Barbee and I were walking the Appalachian Trail just northeast of the summit of Rogers on 20 June 1974 and saw a stream of crossbills fly over which consisted of roughly four flocks totaling an estimated 105 individuals, which is the largest flock I have seen. We had previously recorded nine birds during the morning.

Smyth County: Again on the 1974 foray Bruce Davenport and I saw a flock of 30 in the scattered large spruce at 3900 feet on the southeast side of Brushy Mountain five miles northwest of Saltville.

Tazewell County: Two were seen in spruce on 20 June 1970 on the Burkes Garden Beartown Mountain.

VESPER SPARROW, *Pooecetes gramineus*

While regularly met with in fields in western Virginia, this sparrow was found by Bruce Davenport and me to be numerous on Buck Mountain, near Independence, Grayson County, on 17 June 1970 in extensive high (to 4670 feet) pastureland, with 34 birds counted.

SWAMP SPARROW, *Melospiza georgiana*

Two were seen by Bruce Davenport and me on 9 September 1972 at the Buck Run beaver ponds on Allegheny Mountain, Highland County, where they have previously been reported (*Raven*, 37: 50, 1966).

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A CENSUS OF BREEDING BIRDS IN THE DISMAL SWAMP, VIRGINIA

BROOKE MEANLEY

A census of breeding birds was conducted in the Dismal Swamp, Virginia, in the same plots on 1 May and 1 June 1975 (Table 1). The purpose of the census was to determine the composition and relative abundance of breeding birds in the swamp hardwood forest and to compare populations in the same area during two different periods in the breeding season. The technique employed is known as the point census. John S. Webb and I (Meanley and Webb, 1960) used a similar technique in censusing territorial male Red-winged Blackbirds in tidal marshes of the Chesapeake Bay country in the 1950's; and Blondel *et al.* (1970) used a like technique in woodland habitats in France.

Birds were censused from a single location at ten half-mile intervals along spoil-bank roads, mainly in the Jericho Ditch section of the Swamp. The census began shortly after dawn. Territorial males heard or seen were listed during a 15-minute period at each location or spot. The size of the area in which birds could be heard from one point was estimated to be 10 acres.

The forest in which the census was conducted is known as a mixed swamp hardwoods type. It is composed mainly of Swamp Black Gum (*Nyssa biflora*), Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*), Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Swamp Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), Red Bay (*Persea borbonia*), American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), and Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*). Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and Greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.) were the predominant understory plants in most sections.

During the first census period (May 1) the migration of northern transients was near or at its peak but was virtually over during the second census period (June 1). As indicated above only resident breeding species were censused. All breeding birds should have established territories in the Swamp by May 1. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, and Swainson's Warbler are among the last of the resident birds to arrive.

The number of Acadian Flycatchers noted during the two periods was five and six respectively; only one Yellow-billed Cuckoo was recorded in the first period, with six in the second; seven and five Swainson's Warblers were noted; and only one Wood Pewee was listed, that in the second period.

A total of 38 species and 179 individuals was noted in the first period, and 30 species and 147 individuals in the second. There were nine species listed on May 1 that were not recorded on June 1: Wood Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Common Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Yellow-throated Warbler. Eight of these species were seen elsewhere in the Swamp on June 1; however, they were considerably less vociferous at this time than a month earlier. Their nesting season was mostly past. Only two species were seen in June that had not been listed in May, a Wood Pewee and a Worm-eating Warbler. The Carolina Wren, Red-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, and Cardinal ranked among the five most abundant species for both periods. Eight of the same species ranked among the top ten for both periods (see Table 1). The American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), an otherwise rather common summer resident in the Swamp, was not recorded on either of these two counts, although it was noted elsewhere in the Swamp during the census period.

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Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Laurel, Maryland 20811

TABLE 1. Territorial males censused in same 10-acre plots, Dismal Swamp, Virginia, 1 May and 1 June 1975.

May 1		June 1	
Hooded Warbler		Carolina Wren	
<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>	16	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	16
Carolina Wren		Prothonotary Warbler	
<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	15	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	13
Cardinal		Hooded Warbler	
<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	14	<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>	11
Red-eyed Vireo		Red-eyed Vireo	
<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	13	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	11
Common Yellowthroat		Cardinal	
<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	10	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	8
Prothonotary Warbler		Tufted Titmouse	
<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	8	<i>Parus bicolor</i>	8
Ovenbird		Common Yellowthroat	
<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	8	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	8
Great Crested Flycatcher		Ovenbird	
<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	8	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	7
Wood Thrush		Wood Thrush	
<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	8	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	6
Swainson's Warbler		Acadian Flycatcher	
<i>Limnothlypis swainsonii</i>	7	<i>Empidonax virescens</i>	6
Tufted Titmouse		Yellow-billed Cuckoo	
<i>Parus bicolor</i>	7	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	6
Prairie Warbler		Prairie Warbler	
<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	6	<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	6
Carolina Chickadee		White-eyed Vireo	
<i>Parus carolinensis</i>	6	<i>Vireo griseus</i>	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker		Swainson's Warbler	
<i>Centurus carolinus</i>	6	<i>Limnothlypis swainsonii</i>	5
Pileated Woodpecker		Red-bellied Woodpecker	
<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	6	<i>Centurus carolinus</i>	5
Acadian Flycatcher		Pileated Woodpecker	
<i>Empidonax virescens</i>	5	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	5
White-eyed Vireo		Carolina Chickadee	
<i>Vireo griseus</i>	5	<i>Parus carolinensis</i>	3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		Blue Jay	
<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	4	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	3
Gray Catbird		Green Heron	
<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	2	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	2
Louisiana Waterthrush		Louisiana Waterthrush	
<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	2	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	1
Brown-headed Cowbird		Barred Owl	
<i>Molothrus ater</i>	2	<i>Strix varia</i>	1

<i>May 1</i>		<i>June 1</i>	
Brown Thrasher <i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	2	White-breasted Nuthatch <i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	1
Black-throated Green Warbler <i>Dendroica virens</i>	2	Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	1
Red-shouldered Hawk <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	2	Black-throated Green Warbler <i>Dendroica virens</i>	1
Common Flicker <i>Colaptes auratus</i>	2	Eastern Wood Pewee <i>Contopus virens</i>	1
White-breasted Nuthatch <i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	1	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	1
Rufous-sided Towhee <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	1	Worm-eating Warbler <i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>	1
Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	1	Rufous-sided Towhee <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	1
Blue Jay <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	1	Pine Warbler <i>Dendroica pinus</i>	1
Wood Duck <i>Aix sponsa</i>	1	Brown-headed Cowbird <i>Molothrus ater</i>	1
Green Heron <i>Butorides virescens</i>	1	Great Crested Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	1
Downy Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopus pubescens</i>	1		
Hairy Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopus villosus</i>	1		
Yellow-throated Warbler <i>Dendroica dominica</i>	1		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	1		
Barred Owl <i>Strix varia</i>	1		
Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	1		
Pine Warbler <i>Dendroica pinus</i>	1		

ANHINGA IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

JACKSON MILES ABBOTT

My home is only about 150 yards from the Potomac River shore in Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County, Virginia, and about 2.5 miles north of Mount Vernon. I often see waterfowl as well as land birds migrating overhead, so I frequently sit in the back yard watching for them. About 6 p.m. on the sunny afternoon of 4 May 1975 I was engaged in backyard bird watching when I spotted two large, blackish, fast-flying birds flying towards me from the north at about 300-foot altitude. My first reaction was to think "Glossy Ibis" because of their flight: rapid wing beats, then a short sail. Through my 7x50 binoculars I saw that they had long, square tails and long, thin heads, necks, and bills. I thought of cormorants, which I had seen flying over from my yard on several occasions, but the flight was not right and the tails and necks were much too long and thin. As they passed directly overhead I knew that I was looking at Anhingas, *Anhinga anhinga*, the first I had seen in Virginia. Their flight was straight south, but as they flew along there was some yawing from side to side by both birds which allowed brief side views, and I could see some white on the upper wing surfaces.

There have been several previous sight records of Anhingas in Virginia, most in the extreme southeastern part of the state. In this area one was seen by many observers during the first week of August 1936 at Roaches Run in Arlington.

8501 Doter Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22308

COMMON GALLINULE IN WYTHE COUNTY

TONY DECKER

On the afternoon of 1 May 1975 I spent from 1:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. at Rural Retreat Fishing Lake, a 90-acre Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries impoundment in extreme western Wythe County, Virginia. The upper end of the lake is very shallow, with extensive mud flats at times, and has a marshy area of rushes and sedges. Except for about 20 minutes around 2:30 p.m. checking the lower end of the lake, I spent all my time at the swamp.

A pair of American Coots, *Fulica americana*, frequently emerged from the swamp, and I became accustomed to them. About 4 p.m. I noticed a dark bird of about coot size standing a few feet from the vegetation in shallow water. Raising the 7x50 binocular, I assumed it would be one of the coots. The light was good, the distance about 100 yards, and I promptly noted the red bill and frontal shield. I had ready a 20-power spotting scope on a tripod and confirmed the identification of the bird as a Common Gallinule, *Gallinula chloropus*. The bird remained in view about four minutes, then withdrew into the vegetation.

On 11 May Richard Peake and others checked the area but did not find the bird; and on 17 May I spent three hours in the area without seeing it again.

J. J. Murray (*The Birds Of Rockbridge County, Virginia, 1957*) lists the Common Gallinule as a rare transient for that area, with but three records.

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THE 1976 VSO WINTER TRIP

MYRIAM P. MOORE

Sixty-five members and friends attended the VSO winter trip to the Outer Banks of North Carolina on the weekend of 20-22 February 1976. The birders were from all parts of the state, with an especially good representation from the Augusta Bird Club in the Staunton-Waynesboro area. Headquarters for the outing was the Ramada Inn at Whalebone Junction.

Dr. Mitchell Byrd, Mrs. Ruth Beck, and Mr. Jerry Via were trip leaders on Saturday in bright blue and balmy weather. The three groups visited the various impoundments in rotation, finding a total of 99 species. Though 18 species of ducks were listed, it was a disappointment to find that large numbers of the expected ducks and geese had departed the area before we arrived, no doubt due to a season of extremely warm weather. Frogs and Red-winged Blackbirds everywhere called "spring!" quite convincingly.

The White Ibis and Peregrine Falcon were special, but the bird claiming the most attention was a magnificent white gull that held birders spellbound for a large part of the afternoon on the beach at Pea Island across from the North Impoundment. Field guides, scopes, binoculars, and birders' maximum concentration were pressed to the utmost. A lively discussion continued through the afternoon on the dunes and evening back at the hotel. Was it an Iceland or a Glaucous Gull?

Finally, the "wiser head" prevailed, and Dr. Byrd's opinion that it was indeed an adult Iceland Gull was entered on the official tally card. There was no disagreement at all that the opportunity to watch this great white bird flying and wheeling against the background of blue sky and foaming surf was worth the entire trip. It somehow lessened the disappointment when Sunday's fierce rainstorm made an early start home expedient for most of us, leaving only a few windblown birders still patrolling the drenched beaches hoping for one last glimpse of the beautiful white gull.

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NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY R. L. AKE AND F. R. SCOTT

IN APPRECIATION. The Editor is indebted to Walter Post Smith for again compiling the initial tabulation of the Christmas bird counts in the last issue of *The Raven*.

SHEARWATERS IN CHESAPEAKE BAY. While a stiff northeast wind was blowing, Jackson M. Abbott and his two sons watched the stiff-winged flight of a Sooty Shearwater on 21 August 1974 from the comparative comfort of the fishing island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel between Kiptopeke and Virginia Beach, Virginia. The only significant migration of Sooty Shearwaters past the coast of Virginia is a northward movement during May and early June. Sightings of this species along Virginia's coast outside this time span are quite rare.

A few minutes later the Abbotts identified a small black-and-white shearwater as an Audubon's Shearwater as it flew low through the wave troughs into Chesapeake Bay. Although separation from Manx Shearwater is a difficult identification problem, the observers felt the bird they observed was much too short-winged, small, and stubby to be a Manx. At the present time the Audubon's Shearwater is listed as accidental in Virginia. However, it undoubtedly occurs regularly in small numbers during the summer months well offshore in the oceanic waters warmed by the Gulf Stream.

GREAT CORMORANT THROUGH THE SEASONS. An early immature Great Cormorant was observed at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia, flying in from the ocean on 3 October 1974 by Allen E. Kemnitzer. It was later seen by both Kemnitzer and C. P. Wilds on 5 October. A sighting at a more usual time was that of an immature bird sitting on a channel marker along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on 26 December 1974 (D. F. and J. M. Abbott). On 7 June 1975 an immature Great Cormorant again appeared at Chincoteague Refuge and was carefully observed in the company of an adult Double-crested Cormorant (L. K. Malone *et al.*). This appears to be the second summer record of this species for Virginia (*Raven*, 44: 79, 1973).

OLDSQUAWS INLAND. Although there are numerous records of one or a few Oldsquaws inland in Virginia during the migration or early winter, a large flock of 38 or 39 seen on a large farm pond near Fishersville, Augusta County, on 15 April 1975 was quite unusual. The observation was made by Mozelle Henkel and Ruth Snyder.

POSSIBLE TEMMINCK'S STINT AT DYKE MARSH. On 5 October 1974, a bright, clear, windless day, a group of observers at Dyke marsh, Fairfax County, Virginia, including Jackson M. Abbott, David F. Abbott, Paris Coleman, Owen Fang, Austin R. Lawrence, and Leonard Teuber, carefully studied an odd shorebird among a group of other resting shorebirds. The bird was studied in direct comparison with a Least Sandpiper. It was the group's consensus that the strange sandpiper (1) was of a species not appearing in any North American bird guide; (2) that it was at least one inch longer than the Least Sandpiper; (3) that its upper plumage was plain, unmarked, and of a brownish-gray color; (4) that its bill was shorter and of a different shape than that of a Least Sandpiper; and (5) that it had a plain grayish wash on the breast. Two of the group saw white outer tail feathers as the bird flew. On the basis of these observations and a study of the literature, the bird was identified as a probable Temminck's Stint, *Calidris temminckii*, a shorebird which breeds in the subalpine zone of northern Europe and Asia and winters in the Mediterranean area. In North America it has only been recorded in Alaska, the first record occurring in the spring of 1974. No photographs were taken of the bird, so the record will be placed in the hypothetical category of the list of Virginia birds.

1974 SUMMER AND FALL SHOREBIRD HIGHLIGHTS. In addition to other shorebirds already reported, the following were of some interest. The first American Golden Plover was noted at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on 23 August 1974 (F. R. Scott). These reached a peak of 25 here on 9 September (Bruce Beehler) and were last seen (one) on 28 October (C. P. Wilds). Elsewhere, the only other reports of this species were one on the beach at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 22 September (R. L. Ake and W. P.

Blakeslee) and five at Hog Island, Surry County, on 28 September (M. A. Byrd, Bruce Schweitzer, and Bill Williams). After having counts at Chincoteague Refuge all fall of no more than 200 Black-bellied Plovers, Claudia P. Wilds estimated a concentration of 2800 roosting in the dunes near Fishing Point on 10 November during an extremely high tide. With these were an estimated 8500 Dunlin and 11,000 Sanderlings. Also at this refuge was a Long-billed Curlew in early August (Ake), and perhaps the same bird was seen along the Chincoteague causeway on 11 August (P. G. DuMont). Single Baird's Sandpipers were reported here on 26 July (Peter Pyle), 8 August (Wilds), 21 August (D. F. Abbott), 9 September (Wilds), and 27 September (Philip Stoddard). Six Stilt Sandpipers at Hog Island, Surry County, on the odd date of 22 June 1974 (J. W. Via) were a real puzzle. Were they late spring migrants or early fall arrivals? Both godwits were in good numbers locally, especially in the Chincoteague area. Peak counts were 18 Marbled Godwits along the Chincoteague causeway on 14 October (R. L. Pyle *et al.*) and 31 Hudsonian Godwits on the refuge on 10 August (L. K. Malone). Maximum counts of phalaropes were 11 Wilson's at Hog Island on 2 September (Byrd) and an estimated 40 Northens flying along the surf at Chincoteague Refuge on 23 September (R. A. Rowlett and Bonnie Bowen).

MEW GULL AT HUNTING CREEK. On 17 November 1974 Jackson M. and David F. Abbott were scanning a group of gulls perched on some wooden pilings on the north side of the mouth of Hunting Creek in Alexandria, Virginia. One immature gull perched on a piling 50 feet away was strikingly different from the other immature gulls present. It was slightly smaller than a Ring-billed Gull, had pinkish-yellow legs, and the legs were noticeably longer in proportion to the body than those of a Ring-billed Gull. The plumage was that of a first-year bird, being basically gray on the head, neck, and underparts but rather heavily spotted with buff on the head and neck. It showed a dark gray, cloudy scallop pattern on the breast. The folded wings showed brownish-buff and gray on the shoulders and secondary coverts while the primaries were black. The bill was flesh-colored with a blackish tip and did not seem to be any smaller or shorter than that of a Ring-billed Gull, but it was distinctly slimmer. When the bird flew, it showed a solid slate-colored tail which was blacker near the tip. All the immature Ring-billed Gulls had a white tail with a black band near the tip.

The bird was identified as a Mew Gull, *Larus canus*, on the basis of the tail pattern by which it can be distinguished from first-winter Ring-billed Gulls. The long-legged look of the bird is difficult to explain since the length of the tarsus of the European race of this gull, *L. c. canus*, is comparable to that of the Ring-billed Gull, while the tarsus of the North American race, *L. c. brachyrhynchus*, is shorter than that of the Ring-bill.

Although the Mew Gull is a common winter bird along the Pacific Coast of North America south to southern California, it is quite rare on the East Coast of the United States. Most records are sight records from the New England coastal areas. This Virginia report, the state's first, places the species on the hypothetical list of Virginia birds.

BLACK-HEADED GULL AT ALEXANDRIA. On 24 November 1974 an immature Black-headed Gull was identified among a group of Bonaparte's

Gulls at Hunting Creek, Alexandria (J. M. and D. F. Abbott). This represents the second local record of a species found more regularly along the Virginia coast (*Raven*, 42: 44, 1971).

KITTIWAKES, PORPOISES, AND PETRELS. On a somewhat stormy 7 September 1974 after watching a dark-phase Parasitic Jaeger flying low over the water past Cape Henry, Virginia, Robert L. Ake observed an immature Black-legged Kittiwake feeding on the wing by dabbling in the water over a pod of porpoises. The kittiwake stayed with the mammals as they rounded the cape and continued south. Such an association between marine mammals and pelagic birds is common on the ocean, but apparently it can take place when the two meet in the littoral zone. This appears to be the earliest fall record of this species in Virginia.

Other kittiwake sightings through the winter included that of an immature bird by Charles R. Vaughn on 7 December 1974 at Wallops Island, Accomack County. Although the bird was oiled, it appeared to fly well. Another immature was carefully observed on the Back Bay Christmas count on 29 December 1974 by P. W. Sykes. An adult Black-legged Kittiwake was identified along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on 2 March 1975 by Ray Chandler and Michael Boatwright. They observed the black wing tips, square tail, and smaller size when compared to Ring-billed Gulls. Adult kittiwakes are much rarer than young birds at this latitude with pelagic observations off Virginia and North Carolina in the winter showing ratios of immatures to adults as high as 30 to one.

To carry the association of pelagic birds and porpoises one step further, Mitchell A. Byrd reports that on 3 July 1975 he, Ray Lee, and Jack Stevens were in Mobjack Bay, on the western side of Chesapeake Bay off the Middle Peninsula, watching a school of porpoises diving within 20 yards of their boat. The bay was quite smooth, and virtually no birds were in sight. In a matter of minutes a total of 45 Wilson's Storm-Petrels had assembled and begun to feed on the surface of the waters where the porpoises were diving. As the observers followed the marine mammals, it was clear that the petrels were following too, evidently for purposes of obtaining food items brought to the surface by the animals.

LATE CUCKOO AND HUMMINGBIRD. A pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoos was observed feeding a fledged young bird at Queens Lake, York County, Virginia, on the late date of 5 October 1974 by Bill Williams, and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird appeared at the home of Mitchell A. Byrd at the same location on 2 November 1974.

NIGHTHAWKS IN MIGRATION. One of the joys of observing the fall migration is the movement of Eastern Nighthawks that occurs in Virginia, mostly in northern Virginia and southwesterly along the mountains. In 1974 J. W. Eike observed them first near Clifton, Fairfax County, on 12 August and then recorded peak counts of 388 on 28 August and an amazing 2331 on 31 August. The latter count consisted of 331 counted individually and a swirling flock estimated at a minimum of 2000 birds. Also near here at Vienna C. R. Ellis reported a peak count of 243 on 27 August, and farther south, Helen Goldstick observed 200 near Gordonsville, Orange County, on 21 August. The last report was a late bird at Charlottesville on 13 October (C. E. Stevens).

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 47

SEPTEMBER 1976

NUMBER 3



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$125.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Williamsburg, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971.

OBSERVATIONS OF NORTHERN BIRDS ON MT. ROGERS

PHILIP C. SHELTON

This paper describes observations of four species of northern birds, Saw-whet Owl, *Aegolius acadicus*, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, *Empidonax flaviventris*, Hermit Thrush, *Catharus guttatus*, and Swainson's Thrush, *C. ustulatus*. Both thrushes were previously known from the area as common migrants and rare summer residents (U. S. Forest Service, 1970; Decker, 1973). Single singing males of both species were heard at or near the summit of Mt. Rogers on 11 June 1966 by Finucane, Scott, and Wason during the 1966 VSO Abingdon Foray (Scott, 1966). The Saw-whet Owl and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher records are the first known from the Mt. Rogers-White Top area.

Mt. Rogers, elevation 1746 m (5729 feet) is the highest point in Virginia and embraces the only extensive area in Virginia above 1700 m. Geologically it is part of the Blue Ridge and is a northern outlier of the massive ridges of western North Carolina. The summit of Mt. Rogers has a boreal forest of Red Spruce, *Picea rubens*, and Fraser Fir, *Abies fraseri*, with a scattering of Mountain Ash, *Sorbus americana*. It is the only area in southern Virginia with both spruce and fir. Several species of northern birds, including the Veery, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Magnolia Warbler, Brown Creeper, Dark-eyed Junco, and possibly the Black-capped Chickadee, inhabit this spruce-fir forest and the spruce forest of nearby White Top (elevation 1685 m, 5529 feet) (U. S. Forest Service, 1970; Decker, 1973).

Table I is a summary of observations, and the species accounts which follow are brief discussions of these observations. Recordings mentioned in the species accounts were made with an Akai X-IV portable tape recorder.

Saw-whet Owl. The only record I obtained for this species was of one that began calling at 2120 hours (heavy dusk) on 8 June 1974 from dense firs 20-25 m east of the summit. It called persistently for more than half an hour, during which it moved to approximately the same distance west of the summit and then called intermittently through at least the first half of the night. I never saw the bird because of darkness and the thickness of vegetation, but I recorded several minutes of its calls.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. The records of this species consist of sightings, photographs, and recorded songs of an adult male found on 11 and 19 August 1973 in and around the north side of the diseased firs immediately southeast of the summit. On 11 August I saw and heard the bird at about 0800 hours and again in the late afternoon (1600-1900 hours). I obtained identifiable photographs and recordings as it sang from a fir snag just off the old trail southeast of the summit. On 19 August at 1130 I found the bird in the same area. It gave one call note but did not sing.

Hermit Thrush. Georgia Shelton and I first heard and saw a Hermit Thrush on 14 July 1973 along the trail 500 m southeast of the summit at about 1707 m (5600 feet) elevation. This bird was identified in the same area on 17 July by its song which contained a distinctive triplet pattern not heard in other Mt. Rogers Hermit Thrushes. On 17 July Richard and Dwight Peake and I heard at least three, possibly as many as five, different singing males all within 500 m of the summit and above 1707 m elevation. At least two of these were recorded. Singing males were heard on all of four visits in June and July

TABLE 1. Observations of four species of northern birds on Mt. Rogers, Virginia, 1973-1975. Symbols used: c, call notes; s, singing.

Date	Time (EDT) Spent Above 1700 m	Saw-whet Owl	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Hermit Thrush	Swainson's Thrush
1973					
7 July	1600-1700	—	—	—	1 s
14 July	0605-0830 1100-1345	—	—	1 s	2 s
17 July	1540-2100	—	—	3 s	1 s
11 Aug.	0600-1930	—	1 s	2-3 s	—
19 Aug.	1050-1230 1510-1630	—	1 c	—	—
1974					
6 June	0705-0825	—	—	1 s	—
8 June	1855-2400	1 c	—	3 s	?
9 June	0000-1745	—	—	5 s	—
22 July	0645-1100	—	—	2 s	—
23 Aug.	0730-0915	—	—	—	—
1975					
3 May	1200-1400	—	—	—	—
8 June	0830-1140	—	—	—	—
21 June	0800-0900	—	—	3-5 s	—
11 July	1200-1415	—	—	—	1 s

1974, but the distinctive song of 1973 was not heard. On 9 June 1974 careful recording of singing areas indicated that five males were involved, four with territories centered within 100 to 300 m northeast, northwest, west, and south of the summit, and one centered 400 to 500 m southwest of the summit.

In 1975 no Hermit Thrushes were heard on any of my visits—3 May, 8 June, or 11 July—but one of my students, Richard V. Davis, Jr., heard three to five Hermit Thrushes on 21 June. Three of the areas in which he heard singing corresponded to the northeast, west, and southwest territories described for 9 June 1974.

Swainson's Thrush. Grainger Ward and I first saw and heard a Swainson's Thrush on 7 July 1973 singing from firs within 100 m southwest, northwest, and northeast of the summit. On 14 July 1973 this bird was found in the same area and was identified by a unique song, which had a two-note introduction on one pitch, *veer, veer*. This introduction was given on about every eighth song (mean 7.7, range 5-11, $n=8$). Another bird, which never gave the introductory notes, sang east and north of the summit. At one time both sang for about 10 minutes from snags 20 to 30 m apart southeast of the summit, but generally the one with the distinctive song stayed east, south, and west of the summit, while the other stayed east and north of the summit. On 17 July 1973 the Peakes and I heard three weak songs north of the summit late in the afternoon.

In 1974 I heard no clearly identifiable Swainson's Thrush, but on 8 June just at dark I heard a weak subsong which may have been this species. The only Swainson's Thrush heard in 1975 sang from 30 m east of the summit at

about 1300 hours on 11 July. This bird was recorded. Unfortunately the 1973 bird with its unique song was not recorded.

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MARSH HAWKS ATTACK PEREGRINE FALCON

BILL WILLIAMS

On 23 November 1974, while birding on Fisherman Island at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in Northampton County, Virginia, Mitchell A. Byrd, Bruce Schweitzer, and myself observed a subadult Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, fly from the beach at the northeast end of the island. It flew north out over a large expanse of marsh and rose to an estimated height of 150 to 200 feet. There it circled lightly, apparently benefiting from a thermal. Suddenly, a female Marsh Hawk, *Circus cyaneus*, appeared above the Peregrine. It swooped down at the falcon with talons outstretched, withdrawing inches away from it as the falcon tipped sideways out of the way. The Marsh Hawk did not seem to be serious in its effort in that its motions were deliberate, but cautious. It made a number of swoops as we watched, though not extending its talons again. These "attacks" were reminiscent of crows harassing a Red-tailed Hawk. They seemed to have little effect on the Peregrine, which would simply flick itself to one side or the other and continue its circling.

We left the area, and on our return trip the Peregrine flushed again and headed out over the marsh. Ten to fifteen minutes later it returned to the beach only to fly by us and begin to circle above the marsh again. As if from nowhere a female Marsh Hawk appeared above the Peregrine and launched another pseudo-attack, talons extended. The falcon wavered and continued to circle.

Having seen this harassment earlier, we busied ourselves trying to ascertain why the falcon kept returning to the same area of the beach. A search revealed no food items present, so the mystery remained. Another look at the Peregrine revealed it had more company. Instead of one female Marsh Hawk, there were now three of them present. Yet, only one continued the assault. The other two made feeble mock attacks and after some five minutes disappeared. The one persistent Marsh Hawk remained and continued its harassment until the Peregrine began to descend as we withdrew. Soon both were out of sight.

One can only speculate as to the behavior of the Marsh Hawks. Are they somewhat territorial over winter feeding areas? This is possible, though Craighead and Craighead (*Hawks, Owls and Wildlife*, Dover Publications, New York, 1956) found no such defending of winter territories by Marsh Hawks in Michigan. Why then would three hawks engage in the harassment at the same time over the same area of marsh? And why would not the initial hawk be more concerned with its intraspecific rivals than with the Peregrine? Could this be a behavior derived from nesting area competition? This is possible since Peregrines would hunt over the type of area in which Marsh Hawks are likely to nest. This seems to be the most logical explanation of the behavior that we witnessed. However, I can draw no conclusions from the Marsh Hawks' actions, especially since they spent most of their time gliding just above the marsh vegetation instead of wheeling about at great heights as a *Buteo* would do.

This seemed a great expenditure of time and energy on the part of the Marsh Hawk and would therefore appear to be detrimental, especially since the harassment had no visible effect on the Peregrine Falcon. No contact was observed between the two birds, nor did any seem likely in view of the Peregrine's maneuverability and the Marsh Hawk's apparent lack of determination.

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A NEW SPECIMEN RECORD FOR VIRGINIA

BILL WILLIAMS

On 26 June 1975 while conducting a beach nesting-bird survey of Ship Shoal Island, Northhampton County, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, I discovered the remains of a royal tern-sized bird in the wash along the beach that was dark grayish across the back and tail coverts. The feathers of the head and wings were absent. However, what caught my immediate attention was the presence of two quite long tail streamers in the middle of the tail. Looking closely at the bill and seeing the grayish colored webbed feet convinced me I had the remains of a jaeger, and judging by its size and the long tail streamers, possibly a Long-tailed Jaeger, *Stercorarius longicaudus*. My colleagues Tom Wieboldt and Bill Akers agreed with my assessment after seeing the specimen.

I showed the remains to John Weske of the National Museum of Natural History and to Mitchell A. Byrd of the College of William and Mary, and both agreed that the specimen was probably that of a Long-tailed Jaeger. Measurements of the tail streamers put them well beyond the range of overlap between Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaegers according to Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* (1947).

I gave the specimen to Roger B. Clapp of the National Museum of Natural History, who had the remains critically examined. His report indicates that

the bird was in fact a Long-tailed Jaeger and that it was an adult. It has been given the catalogue number of 499381 at the museum and constitutes the first specimen record of this species from Virginia.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Roger B. Clapp who analyzed the specimen remains.

157 West Queens Drive, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

SIGHTING OF A POMARINE JAEGER IN PULASKI COUNTY, VIRGINIA

BILL AKERS, CONNIE STONE, AND JERRY VIA

On Friday, 3 October 1975, we were birding at Claytor Lake in Pulaski County, Virginia, and noticed a large brown bird flying over the water in a fashion much like a tern, but with deep, powerful wingbeats. When the bird landed on the water, we were able to see that the base of the primaries was white. We identified the bird as a jaeger, but because it was in a dark plumage phase, we had difficulty with specific identification. After several hours of observation under excellent light at distances of 300 yards, we concluded that it was a Pomarine Jaeger, *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Identification was made on the basis of the large size in comparison with a passing Osprey and the flight habits.

The following day a group from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University consisting of Curtis Adkisson, Dick Conner, Bud Prather, Mark Larson, and Don Nelson confirmed our identification. This group was able to observe at close range the twisted central retrices which barely extended beyond the tail. John Murray and several members of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club were also able to observe the bird, and many were also able to see the diagnostic retrices. The bird was also sighted on 5 and 6 October and was present at least through 9 October (Stone).

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BREEDING SEASON RECORD OF THE SAW-WHET OWL FROM GRAYSON HIGHLANDS STATE PARK, VIRGINIA

MARCUS B. SIMPSON, JR.

From 9:10 to 10:05 p.m. on 28 May 1975, Park Ranger Howard Sharpe and I listened to a single Saw-whet Owl, *Aegolius acadicus*, calling steadily from the south slope of Haw Orchard Mountain at an elevation of 1480 meters in Grayson Highlands State Park, Grayson County, Virginia. The bird was located about 100 meters east of the picnic ground parking lot near the summit

of the mountain in an open mixture of Red Spruce, *Picea rubens*, Mountain Ash, *Sorbus americana*, Fire Cherry, *Prunus pensylvanica*, Yellow Birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*, *Rhododendron* sp., and maples, *Acer* sp. This habitat is quite similar to that utilized by the species in the Great Balsam Mountains of North Carolina (Simpson, *Chat*, 36: 39-47, 1972).

Although Saw-whet Owls have been previously reported during June 1974 from nearby Mount Rogers and White Top (F. R. Scott, *Raven*, 46: 78, 1975; P. C. Shelton, *Raven*, this issue), this appears to be the southernmost point in Virginia where the bird has been observed during the breeding season. Observers should be alert for additional sightings from this region.

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BREEDING SEASON RECORDS OF THE MAGNOLIA WARBLER IN GRAYSON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

MARCUS B. SIMPSON, JR.

According to the A.O.U. *Checklist* (1957), the Magnolia Warbler, *Dendroica magnolia*, reaches the southern limit of its breeding range in Giles County, Virginia. In recent years, however, the species appears to have been extending its range farther south, with breeding-season records of adult males reported from the Mount Rogers-White Top area of Grayson and Smyth Counties (F. R. Scott, *Raven*, 46: 83, 1975).

On 25 May 1975, I observed three male Magnolia Warblers along the trail leading to the top of Haw Orchard Mountain at an elevation of 1480 to 1495 meters in Grayson Highlands State Park, Grayson County. The birds were observed for periods of up to 4 hours; and all behaved as if on territory, with constant singing from conspicuous perches and movement within areas of 1.5 to 2 acres. The habit consisted of a disturbed mixture of Red Spruce, *Picea rubens*, Yellow Birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*, maples, *Acer* sp., Fire Cherry, *Prunus pensylvanica*, rhododendrons, *Rhododendron* sp., Mountain Ash, *Sorbus americana*, and open areas of grasses and ferns. The three singing males were still active and in their same locations when I returned to the area on 26 May and 2 June.

Although no nests were found, these records suggest that the Magnolia Warbler may reach its present southern breeding limit in the eastern United States at this point, since this appears to be the southernmost area of suitable habitat in Virginia, and the species has not yet been observed in North Carolina during the nesting season.

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SAVANNAH SPARROW NEST IN HIGHLAND COUNTY
—FIRST NESTING RECORD FOR VIRGINIA

JORN R. AKE, ROBERT L. AKE, AND WAVELL W. FOGLEMAN

On 15 June 1973 the three of us set out from Norfolk on the long trek across Virginia to discover the avian wonders of Highland County with a particular interest in the Mourning Warbler. We camped at Locust Springs in the George Washington National Forest that night and were awakened the following morning by the chorus of bird song. We explored the Allegheny Backbone along the forest service road that follows the ridge. At several locations we parked the car and walked down the available trails to the streams and associated beaver ponds that flow eastward toward Laurel Fork. Birds of note seen during the morning along the ridge or at the beaver ponds included a female Wood Duck, *Aix sponsa*, with young, a singing Brown Creeper, *Certhia familiaris*, and Alder Flycatcher, *Empidonax alnorum*, giving its zzzfebeo call, a singing Purple Finch, *Carpodacus purpureus*, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, *Poliophtila caerulea*, and three presumably territorial male Mourning Warblers, *Oporornis philadelphia*.

Later in the morning we explored the area along U. S. Rt. 250 east of the Allegheny Backbone where we found another Mourning Warbler singing in a blackberry tangle near where the highway crosses Laurel Fork. This disturbed habitat is typical of that which has allowed the Mourning Warbler to become an established breeding bird in Virginia.

South of the highway near this location was an area that appeared to promise more Mourning Warblers, so we turned off the main highway onto a small gravel road (Rt. 601) which wound up a hillside and then headed south. This road is a favorite of Dr. Ruskin Freer. He has written much about it in his newspaper column in the Lynchburg *News* and has named the area along it "Shangri-la." After we had gone but a short distance along the road, a sparrow flew across the road flashing its white outer tail feathers. No doubt it was a Vesper Sparrow, *Pooecetes gramineus*. We waited for it to reappear. It did not but a smaller sparrow did fly in and land on a fence post. It was quickly identified as a Savannah Sparrow, *Passerculus sandwichensis*, and it was carrying food in its mouth. The bird perched on its post, nervously chipping and watching us while a mad scramble took place in the car as a camera with telephoto lens was brought into position for a portrait. A picture was snapped and the bird flew into the field to the north of the road only to appear moments later with an empty beak. Aware of the lack of a nesting record for the Savannah Sparrow in Virginia, we decided to locate and photograph the nest. To accomplish this task we entered the field and took widely separated positions facing the suspected nest location. After the adults had come and gone to the nest twice, the three of us walked directly toward the spot where we thought the nest to be. It was found a short distance from the point where we converged.

The nest was on the ground in the foot-deep grass and contained four nestlings which were on the verge of fledging. In fact, as their picture was being taken, they continuously hopped out of the nest and had to be manually returned to the nest to complete the round of picture taking. The nest location

was only a short distance from the West Virginia state line at an elevation of 4100 feet. In addition to the aforementioned Vesper Sparrows, there were also Grasshopper Sparrows, *Ammodramus savannarum*, presumably nesting in the same field.

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THE 1976 VSO ANNUAL MEETING

ROBERT J. WATSON

The forty-second stated meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology was held at the Martha Washington Inn in Abingdon, Virginia, on 7-9 May 1976. Proceedings began at 3 p.m. on 7 May with a workshop on local chapters, presided over by Mrs. Myriam Moore, chairman of the VSO Local Chapters Committee. Mrs. Moore and other speakers presented a number of ideas based on recent experiences of various chapters. One particularly useful function of chapters, as Mrs. Moore pointed out, is to maintain accurate local bird lists in their areas. Mr. Thomas Finucane, of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, spoke as a representative of the Hawk Migration Association of North America and paid tribute to the role of the VSO in reporting hawk migration observations.

At the annual business meeting on Friday evening, 7 May, President Peake recognized the Treasurer, Mr. Williams, who announced that the 1975 financial report of the VSO would appear in the Newsletter. A motion by the Secretary, Mr. Watson, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting was approved.

Mr. Scott moved the adoption of the following amendments to the bylaws of the VSO:

Article 1, Section II. There shall be three classes of members as follows:

(a) Junior Members—Any member who is enrolled and attending a recognized school or college and who has not reached the age of 23 years shall be a Junior Member. Junior Members shall not be entitled to hold office. Dues for Junior Members shall be \$2 per year.

(b) Honorary Members—(no change).

(c) Regular Members—All other members shall be Regular Members. Regular Members shall be classified on the basis of dues paid, as follows:

(1) Active Members—Dues of \$5 per year.

(2) Sustaining Members—Dues of \$7.50 per year.

(3) Contributing Members—Dues of \$15 or more per year.

(4) Life Members—Dues of \$125 paid in a single sum or over a period not to exceed five years.

(5) Family Members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children)—Dues of \$9 per year.

Article IV, Section III. Local chapters shall pay annual dues to the corporation based upon the number of members as of January 1, as follows: 6-25 members, \$10 per year; 26-100 members, \$15 per year; over 100 members, \$25 per year.

Article IV, Section IV. Each local chapter shall be entitled to receive publications of the corporation based on the number of members as of January 1, as follows: 6-25 members, one subscription; 26-100 members, two subscriptions; over 100 members, three subscriptions.

Mr. Scott's motion was seconded and passed with little discussion. The changes will take effect with the 1977 dues.

A slate of nominees for 1976-1977 was presented by Mr. Bill Opengari, chairman of the Nominating Committee, as follows:

President: J. J. Murray, Jr., Charlottesville

Vice President: Robert L. Ake, Norfolk

Secretary: Robert J. Watson, Arlington

Treasurer: Bill Williams, Williamsburg

Editor: F. R. Scott, Richmond

Board of Directors, Class of 1979:

James W. Eike, Fairfax

Randall E. Shank, Broadway

Jerry W. Via, Blacksburg

There being no nominations from the floor, a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for the above nominees was approved.

Dr. Peake, the outgoing President, expressed appreciation for the support given him by other officers and Board members during his tenure of office. The audience responded with an enthusiastic round of applause for Dr. Peake.

Entertainment features presented on Friday evening included slides of the seasons, accompanied by readings from the journals of Henry David Thoreau, presented by Mr. Bill Portlock, director of the Southwest Virginia Museum; slides of Mount Rogers, by Dr. Philip Shelton; and a well-illustrated description of the natural history of Christmas Island, in the Pacific Ocean, by Dr. Ralph W. Schreiber.

Field trips on Saturday morning, 8 May, were led by members of the host chapters (Clinch Valley, Cumberland, and Marion Bird Clubs) and ranged from the summits of Mount Rogers and White Top down to the valley of the Holston River, with various points in between. The participants totaled 117 species of birds during the morning in spite of temperatures that dropped into the 20's in the high mountains.

The first speaker at the Saturday afternoon session, which began at 2 p.m. with Dr. Peake presiding, was Ms. Emily Grey, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She described research aimed at determining food preferences of birds in order to devise an optimum feed mix at the lowest possible cost. Feeders were set up in three areas in Blacksburg and watched for periods of 20 minutes at a time between 15 December 1975 and 13 March 1976. Observations of 11 species of birds showed that the most popular foods were sunflower seeds, whole peanuts, peanut hearts, and millet. Findings will be reported in more detail in *Virginia Wildlife* magazine in time for the 1976-1977 winter feeding season.

"Vertebrate Populations of Southwest Virginia Strip Mines," by Mr. Richard Davis of Clinch Valley College, reflected the results of a study of three sample plots. On the first of these, an area strip mined in 1970 and now growing

up in grasses and other low vegetation, the speaker found only one species of bird (two pairs of Common Yellowthroats) and 112 mice per hectare. Another area mined some years ago, before reclamation laws were passed, is now covered with small trees; here Mr. Davis found eight species of birds and 70 to 75 mice per hectare. These findings contrasted with those on the third study plot, a second-growth hardwood forest about 50 years old; it had nine species of birds and 48 mice per hectare. The results bear out the ecological principle that young ecosystems have less species diversity but often more individuals than more mature systems.

Mr. Richard N. Conner, of VPI&SU, spoke on "Vocal Aspects of Courtship Behavior and Nesting Development on the Common Raven." He had studied Ravens at nesting, feeding, and roosting sites between January 1972 and April 1976. Sonograms and recordings of various Raven call notes were presented with a description of their correlation with various behavior patterns. The courtship behavior of Ravens in Virginia, according to Mr. Conner, has been found to resemble that of the Raven in Germany.

Mr. Wallace Coffey, of Bristol, described a study of food habits in the Screech Owl, conducted by himself and Mr. Brent Rowell, a secondary school student. A captive owl was fed, and careful records were kept of the weight of the food and of fluctuations in both body and ambient temperatures. As the speaker pointed out, this experiment illustrated the fact that valuable ornithological research can be carried out by students at almost any level.

"Past and Present Osprey Breeding Populations in Virginia" was presented by Christopher H. Stinson, of the College of William and Mary, who had cooperated with Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd in the research involved. Mr. Stinson offered population estimates to demonstrate the decline in the numbers of Ospreys beginning about 1947, when pesticides began to accumulate in the birds' tissues. The present population in Virginia was estimated at about 650 pairs, as compared with from 3000 to 3500 pairs before 1947. However, a study of 288 nests on the west side of Chesapeake Bay in 1975 showed an average of 1.17 young birds per active nest—almost up to the figure of 1.22 to 1.30 young per active nest required for a stable population.

"Vocal Mimicry in the White-eyed Vireo" was the topic of Dr. Curtis S. Adkisson, of VPI&SU. Evidence of mimicry was presented by Dr. Adkisson in the form of sonograms demonstrating very close similarity between elements of White-eyed Vireo songs and call notes of other species occurring in similar habitat, including Yellow-throated Vireo, Gray Catbird, Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, and others. Only rarely, however, did the White-eye incorporate elements of the territorial songs (as distinct from the call notes) of other species. The speaker suggested several theories to explain this mimicry, including the possibility that the borrowed call notes may have power to penetrate the shrubby habitat of the White-eyed Vireo.

"Observations of Woodcock Twilight Behavior during Spring Migration," by R. W. Schermerhorn, of Lynchburg, was based upon a project carried out by the speaker, who was a student in junior high school. Instead of merely summarizing his findings, however, Mr. Schermerhorn called attention to the paucity of Woodcock observations in Virginia and urged his hearers to add to the number of Woodcock records. On the basis of his experience, he described in some detail how best to go about finding the bird.

Irvine D. Prather, of VPI&SU, compared the ecology of the two species of vultures occurring in Virginia. Black Vultures are more likely to travel in groups than the Turkey Vulture; they are less adept at soaring. Turkey Vultures have been found to rely on both olfactory and visual cues; Blacks use visual cues only. Turkey Vultures soar in circles, seeking food and at the same time watching each other; Black Vultures circle and watch Turkey Vultures. The precise ecological niches occupied by these species remain to be determined.

The banquet was held at 7 p.m. on Saturday, 8 May, with 110 persons attending. Mrs. Moore announced that the Board of Directors had just voted to approve the affiliation of a newly organized Bristol Chapter, which became the Society's twentieth chapter. Mr. Watson reported that the 1976 Conservation Award had been voted by the Board of Directors to the Governor and Legislature of the State of North Carolina, for their efforts to protect New River against a pumped-storage hydroelectric project.

At the request of Dr. Peake, members observed a moment of silence in memory of the late Mr. Arthur H. Fast, of Arlington, who died recently.

Mr. Norwood C. Middleton and Mrs. Claire Eike, constituting the Resolutions Committee, submitted resolutions (which were approved) expressing approval to all those responsible for the success of the meeting.

Dr. Peake called on Dr. Philip Shelton, of Clinch Valley College, to introduce the principle speaker, Dr. Ralph W. Schreiber of Seabirds, Inc., Tampa, Florida. His subject was "Florida's Brown Pelican, Abundant Yet Endangered." Between 1968 and 1972, according to Dr. Schreiber, the Brown Pelican disappeared entirely from California as a result of eggshell thinning caused by pesticides. Since 1972, however, when DDT was banned, pesticide residue levels have declined, and the Brown Pelican has returned to California as a nesting species. The population in Florida is estimated at between 6000 and 8000 pairs, with a maximum of 30,000 individuals. The birds face various hazards, notably fishing lines in which they often become entangled. A reception for Dr. Schreiber followed his address.

Sunday morning, 9 May, was devoted to another series of field trips to the areas visited the preceding day, after which the group dispersed to their homes.

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LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THE VSO

This list of local chapters, compiled by Myriam P. Moore, chairman of the Local Chapters Committee, has been revised to 1 May 1976. The number in parentheses after the chapter name is the approximate total number of members of that chapter.

1. Alleghany Highland Bird Club (15), Clifton Forge
2. Augusta Bird Club (100), Staunton-Waynesboro
3. Cape Henry Audubon Society (160), Norfolk
4. Charlottesville-Albemarle Bird Club (60), Charlottesville
5. Clinch Mountain Bird Club (14), Nickelsville

6. Clinch Valley Bird Club (25), Tazewell
7. Cumberland Bird Club (20), Wise
8. Danville Bird Club (25), Danville
9. Hampton Roads Bird Club (90), Newport News-Hampton
10. Lynchburg Bird Club (225), Lynchburg
11. Marion Bird Club (35), Marion
12. New River Valley Bird Club (34), Blacksburg-Radford
13. Northern Neck Audubon Society (263), Kilmarnock-White Stone
14. Northern Virginia Chapter (150), Arlington-Fairfax
15. Richmond Audubon Society (435), Richmond
16. Roanoke Valley Bird Club (165), Roanoke-Salem
17. Rockbridge Bird Club (15), Lexington
18. Rockingham Bird Club (8), Harrisonburg
19. Margaret H. Watson Bird Club (30), Darlington Heights

NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY R. L. AKE AND F. R. SCOTT

CORRIGENDUM. The table of contents of the June 1976 issue of *The Raven* listed the 1976 VSO annual meeting report in error. This report is in this issue. Left off the table of contents was Myriam P. Moore's report of the 1976 VSO winter trip on page 45.

GREAT CORMORANTS ON POTOMAC. Great Cormorants have been reported on the Potomac River in the area about St. George Island, St. Marys County, Maryland, for several years (*Maryland Birdlife*, 27: 67, 1971), and it was only a matter of time before one or more strayed across the Virginia line, which technically runs along the south shore of the river. In this area of Northumberland County, Virginia, unidentified cormorants are often seen in winter but rarely come close enough to shore to be specifically identified. The Great Cormorant, however, has now been positively identified here four times and probably occurs fairly regularly, if one can come to such a conclusion based on the seasonal reports appearing in *Maryland Birdlife*. The first observation here was made by E. H. Schell and others who found two in the Yeocomico River on 26 December 1971 during their coverage of the Point Lookout, Maryland, Christmas bird count. Subsequent observations, all by F. R. Scott, were three immatures on the mouth of the Yeocomico River on 3 November 1973, one immature in the Coan River estuary on 24 January 1975, and one adult and one immature sitting on a channel marker in the Yeocomico River on 30 November 1975.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS IN FALL. The Olive-sided Flycatcher, a rare migrant in Virginia, was seen 22 August 1974 at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (D. F. Abbott) and on 11 September 1974 at Fort Hunt,

Fairfax County (D. F. and J. M. Abbott). When this flycatcher is observed in Virginia in the fall, it is usually in northern Virginia or in the mountain ridges and valleys in late August or early September.

EARLY CAROLINA CHICKADEE NEST. Paul Bystrak reports finding a nest of the Carolina Chickadee in the Blue Ridge of Warren County, Virginia, on 12 April 1974. This early nest contained a complete clutch of seven eggs which were being incubated. Six well-developed young were in the nest on a return visit on 9 May.

STAFFORD COUNTY BLUEBIRDS. Edwin T. McKnight reports that during 1974, 23 nest boxes in Stafford County, Virginia, fledged 149 young Eastern Bluebirds in 38 broods of from two to five young each. Bluebirds nested in seven additional boxes in which they brought off no young, and three additional boxes were not used at all. Snakes were the chief predators, getting 71 nestlings from 16 broods plus ten or more eggs. The loss to snakes was 29% of all eggs laid. At least 28 pairs of bluebirds were involved at some time or another. Three boxes fledged three broods totaling 10, 11, and 12 young, and nine other boxes fledged two broods each. The earliest eggs were laid about 10 April and the latest 7 August. The latest brood fledged about 7 September 1974 (cf. *Raven*, 44:59-68, 1973).

WARBLERS, EARLY AND UNUSUAL. A Wilson's Warbler on 12 August 1974 at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge was quite early (L. K. Malone). At Great Bridge in Chesapeake, David and Mary Jo Hughes identified a male Wilson's Warbler in a thicket on 5 January 1975. Winter records of this warbler are quite rare, although one was observed on the Back Bay Christmas bird count on 29 December 1970 and another on the Cape Charles Christmas count on 28 December 1975. Orange-crowned Warblers appeared at Dyke marsh, Fairfax County, on 28 September 1974 (J. M. Abbott *et al.*) and at Chincoteague Refuge on 5 October 1974 (C. P. Wilds), both dates somewhat earlier than usual. Care must be taken in identifying Orange-crowns during the fall migration as confusion with Tennessee Warblers, particularly young birds, is possible. Other early warblers in 1974 included a Canada Warbler along Washington Ditch in the Dismal Swamp on 12 August 1974 and a male Golden-winged Warbler at Claremont, Surry County, on 15 August, both seen by C. E. Stevens. In his yard in Portsmouth, Gary M. Williamson leisurely observed another brightly plumaged male Golden-winged Warbler on 1 October 1974. This is one of southeastern Virginia's rarest warblers, and although records from the Kiptopeke banding station in Northampton County indicate that this species is present in very small numbers along the coast in the fall, very few are seen south of the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW "INVASION." Prior to the fall of 1974 there were three records for Le Conte's Sparrow in Virginia, a pair at Saltville (one collected), a sighting along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, and one at Craney Island, Portsmouth (*Raven*, 45: 87, 1974). During the fall and winter of 1974-75 four additional records were added, and neighboring Maryland and North Carolina also recorded sightings of this heretofore rarely seen sparrow.

It began in Wise County when Richard A. Peake observed a Le Conte's Sparrow in his yard for three days beginning 3 November. The second observation occurred on 23 November. Bill Akers, Jerry Via, Susan Sturm, and

Brian Taber were birdwatching at Grandview Beach, Hampton, and observed a bird of this species at close range for approximately 10 minutes. The face and upper breast were a golden buff; the central breast was unmarked, and there was a distinct white median crown stripe. The streaking on the back was very intricate, and the observers described the bird's collar as slate gray rather than the normal purplish color. A later second viewing hinted at the possibility of two birds, but only one bird at a time was seen.

During the VSO field trip to Back Bay Refuge on 7 December 1974, Gary Williamson and David Hughes spotted an odd sparrow in a bush near the refuge headquarters. They made note of the stubby tail, chunky appearance, white crown stripe bordered by two dark stripes, a buffy-orange coloration, and fine streaking on the sides. They identified the bird as a Le Conte's Sparrow and were able to show it to a dozen or so other field trip participants about 15 minutes later when the bird cooperated nicely by sitting high in a myrtle bush in the bright sun. A Le Conte's Sparrow, probably the same bird, was seen in the same location during the Back Bay Christmas bird count on 29 December 1974 (Paul McQuarry, Peter and Robert Pyle, and P. W. Sykes).

The "invasion" ended with a sighting of another Le Conte's Sparrow at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach, by P. W. Sykes, Jr., during the Little Creek Christmas count on 31 December 1974.

UNUSUAL FALL AND WINTER SPARROWS. Single Lark Sparrows were noted at Wallops Island, Accomack County, Virginia, for at least a week beginning 1 August 1974 (C. R. Vaughn), at Back Bay Refuge on 22 September 1974 (R. L. Ake and W. P. Blakeslee), and at the south end of Chincoteague Island on 21 October 1974 (D. F. and J. M. Abbott). An immature Harris' Sparrow was seen by many observers between 8 January and 27 March 1975 at Elm Hill Wildlife Management Area, Mecklenburg County, Virginia (K. M. Fielder and J. M. Lynch). The bird had a conspicuously buffy face and a pink bill. The black "splotching" on the throat and breast joined to form a partial black bib, and its overall size was larger than that of the White-crowned Sparrows with which it associated. This represents the most southeasterly of Virginia's several recent records for this species. It seems that coastal Virginia will be the last section of the state to find a Harris' Sparrow among its fall and winter White-crowns. In Mecklenburg County a group of eight Tree Sparrows was still present on 27 March 1975 (Fielder). Records of this species from the southern Piedmont are rather unusual.

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 47

DECEMBER 1976

NUMBER 4



Courtesy of Waiter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$125.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Williamsburg, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971.

BREEDING OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS OF VIRGINIA DURING 1874

MARCUS B. SIMPSON, JR.

The Passenger Pigeon, *Ectopistes migratorius*, was once among the most abundant animals of North America. The stories of its incredible numbers and its equally remarkable extinction are well known to all ornithologists. Since the species' decline and disappearance occurred prior to the time when bird study was a widespread activity, many details of its history are unknown, particularly with regard to the peripheral limits of its breeding range. In the definitive study of the Passenger Pigeon, Schorger (1955) was unable to find any acceptable nesting records for Virginia, and Murray (1952) considered the bird as only a winter resident and migrant in the state. Nevertheless, Dr. Paul B. Barringer has provided a convincing account of the species' breeding in Virginia, and his report has apparently been overlooked by most naturalists.

Paul Brandon Barringer (1857-1941) was born in Concord, North Carolina, attended Kenmore School near Charlottesville, and received his Doctor of Medicine degrees from the University of Virginia in 1877 and the University of the City of New York in 1878. From 1889 to 1903, he served on the staff of the University of Virginia as chairman of the medical and university faculties, and from 1907 to 1912 he was President of Virginia A & M College, later known as Virginia Polytechnic Institute. As a young boy, he became interested in natural history through association with Dr. John Bachman, the eminent ornithologist and mammologist from Charleston, South Carolina. Under Bachman's tutelage, Barringer developed a lifelong fascination in bird life, and he later corresponded with Spencer F. Baird and Elliott Coues regarding his observations. Equally accomplished as a herpetologist, Barringer published *The Poisonous Reptiles of the United States and the Treatment of Their Bites* in 1902. Barringer's recollections and experiences were published posthumously as a set of memoirs (1949), and the description of the Passenger Pigeon nesting is contained in the section dealing with his years at the Kenmore School.*

"It was, I think, in the spring of 1874 that a great event occurred at Kenmore.

"One may imagine my excitement and fervid interest when the wild pigeons of the eastern Atlantic decided to make a great nesting place on the slopes of the Nelson County mountains only a short distance away. Technically, these were passenger pigeons. . . .

"First we would see flocks of several dozens, then flocks of hundreds, and ere long, flocks of thousands, all heading for the Three Ridge Mountain some miles off. We did not get up early enough in the morning . . . to see their morning flight, but of course we saw the evening flight, and when I state that the sun would oft times be literally darkened, I am not exceeding the truth. . . . At times, their passing overhead concealed the whole heavens."

*The direct quotations from Barringer's book are reproduced by the permission of the University of North Carolina Press.

After describing their feeding habits in some detail, Barringer proceeds with more observations:

"Mr. Strode took a couple of two-horse wagons and those who wished to go drove over eight or ten miles to the heart of the hatchery. I limited myself to one side of the ridge and therefore cannot speak as to the real size of the area on the other side. There must have been seventy-five or a hundred acres on this side of the ridge in which primitive nests and young covered every available inch of space on the trees. I am told that a neighboring peak, the Priest, also had miles and miles of area devoted to these same hatcheries.

"Even then I recall wondering about the problem of nesting material for so great a host. I had seen them gathering sticks and straw around Kenmore ten or more miles away. . . .

". . . We used to stand on the high hill behind Kenmore, and using BB shot, we fired until the guns were dangerously hot. We ate the pigeons until we were nauseated and gave the surplus to the kitchen. . . . But ere long, by mild suggestions that the young were hatched and the death of each pigeon would result in useless suffering for the young, Mr. Strode broke up the wanton shootings."

According to Brooks (1944) the Passenger Pigeon nested extensively in the Ohio and Kanawha River valleys of nearby West Virginia, and Schorger (1955) points out a number of well-documented reports of nesting outside the normal breeding range of the species, including several from Georgia and Mississippi. In most instances, Schorger believed that such peripheral nestings were largely a matter of the availability of mast for supporting the large population of adults and young. The extensive oak forests of the Blue Ridge Mountains south of Charlottesville would probably have provided a sufficient foraging area in many years. Barringer does not state whether Mr. Strode, who lived at Kenmore, had ever observed nesting in the area during previous years, but he does mention that it was the "accepted custom" for farmers to load their wagons with squab for feeding their hogs, *perhaps* implying that the area might have been a nesting site in earlier or subsequent years.

This appears to be the only extant account of the Passenger Pigeon's breeding in the state of Virginia. Although Stansted (1893) reported a nesting near Highgate, Virginia, Schorger felt the documentation was not adequate for accepting the record. While additional information might prove interesting, Barringer's description of personally seeing "primitive nests and young" covering "every inch of available space" in "seventy-five or a hundred acres" of forest on the slopes of the Three Ridge Mountain in Nelson County during the spring of 1874 is sufficiently detailed evidence for the authenticity of the record.

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The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland 21205

FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF BREWSTER'S WARBLER IN VIRGINIA

JOHN PANCAKE

On 5 July 1975 Barry Kinzie and I descended into a snake, briar, and bug infested hollow on Pine Mountain in the Blue Ridge of northwest Botetourt County, Virginia, where an ice storm in January 1969 had destroyed the timber, which was later clearcut. The elevation here was about 2100 feet. After scrambling down a 40- or 50-foot bank, we reached a small, grassy marsh about half the size of a tennis court. Kinzie soon located the hybrid Brewster's Warbler, "*Vermivora leucobronchialis*," which had been in the area since early May. It was singing the typical song of the Blue-winged Warbler, *V. pinus*, as well as a four-note variation of the same quality. Neither of us were familiar with this more complicated vocalization nor were we sure it was coming from the Brewster's until we watched it open its bill and utter the phrases.

Soon after finding the male Brewster's Warbler, we began hearing a *chip* a bit like that of an Indigo Bunting. We soon located its owner, a female Blue-winged Warbler flitting about a stand of locusts 15 to 20 feet high. We moved into this thicket at the clearing's edge. While both birds flitted over our heads with green caterpillars in their bills, it was the Blue-winged female we repeatedly saw fly into the waist-high foliage beneath the locusts. The Brewster's came with food at least twice, however.

We waited another 20 minutes or so, watching the birds move around the area and occasionally scold. Then, as we started to circle the area, there was an explosion of cries from the bushes 10 feet away. The young chicks began to scatter. The first two to appear, which were able to fly short distances, were well-marked Brewster's hybrids with gray backs, bright yellow foreheads, and large yellow splotches on the breasts.

The third chick was a sad case. Olive above and lighter below, it was a drab little thing about half the size of the other two. It could flutter only weakly and still retained the stubby tail of a very young bird. Kinzie caught it without much trouble, and its problem was immediately obvious. There were two open wounds on its head and one on its body. These holes went deep into the little bird's flesh, like those made by a blowfly's larvae. Though it was so poorly

developed we could not be sure, we judged from its olive back that the ill-fated chick would have the plumage of a Blue-winged Warbler if it matured, which seemed unlikely. It gave a buzzy distress call identical to those of the young Brewster's chicks. We saw the other two young attract the adult birds with their cries, and although we did not see any feeding, we did see the Blue-winged and Brewsters' adults fly to perches next to the young while holding caterpillars.

We found the chicks not in the marshy area but on slightly higher, drier ground. Though we could not find a nest, we felt—in view of the presence of the weakened chick—it was probably nearby.

This is the second year the Brewster's hybrid has been seen in this area. John and Thelma Dalmas of Lynchburg found the bird in early May in 1974 and 1975. Subsequent visits to the area this year turned up Blue-winged, Golden-winged (*V. chrysoptera*), and Brewster's Warblers. A number of VSO members found them at this spot during the annual meeting field trips on 10 and 11 May. On 8 June of this year males of all three types were found in the area where the young were later located.

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BANDING RESULTS AT KIPTOPEKE BEACH IN 1975

F. R. SCOTT

The Virginia Society of Ornithology sponsored a fall banding project at its Kiptopeke Beach Field Station for the thirteenth year during the 58 days between 30 August and 26 October 1975. The station was open every day during this period, though on some days rain allowed only a few hours of operation. The location of the station was the same as in previous years—on a bluff overlooking Chesapeake Bay in southern Northampton County, Virginia, and as in 1974, up to 43 mist nets (about 30-mm mesh) were in use from dawn to mid or late afternoon as weather and personnel permitted. About half of the nets were set up in second-growth mixed or pine woods, and the rest were divided between the woodland-farmland edge, a hedgerow, and a myrtle thicket on the upper beach.

Numerical results were considerably lower than in 1974. Total new birds banded were 9870 of 95 species in 20,328 net-hours, which compares with 15,600 of 102 species in 19,009 net-hours in 1974. These figures work out to 49 new birds per 100 net-hours in 1975 versus 82 in the previous year. In addition, there were 720 repeats, 19 different returns from previous years, and three foreign retraps. The lower number of new birds trapped in 1975 versus that of the previous year—a decline of 37%—was judged to be the result of two factors: (1) there were fewer strong cold fronts in 1975, and this station is dependent on these for maximum sampling of migrating flights; and (2) the arrival of the bulk of winter residents was later in 1975, thus throwing peak numbers of many of these species past the station's closing date.

Although most species were lower in numbers as compared to 1974, well over half of the decline can be accounted for by the reduction in Yellow-rumped Warblers (2509 in 1975 versus 4286 in 1974) and American Redstarts (1320

versus 2740). All winter residents except for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet were trapped in smaller numbers. Among the other 1975 totals that declined were Catbird, 311 (618 in 1974); White-eyed Vireo, 22 (43); Red-eyed Vireo, 117 (279); Nashville Warbler, 20 (71); Cape May Warbler, 76 (125); Ovenbird, 250 (558); and Common Yellowthroat, 634 (944).

Species in higher numbers than in 1974 included Sharp-shinned Hawk, 87 (51 in 1974); Winter Wren, 80 (62); Swainson's Thrush, 347 (234); Gray-cheeked Thrush, 214 (184); Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 696 (659); and Bay-breasted Warbler, 78 (49). The 1975 totals for Sharp-shins, Winter Wrens, Ruby-crowns, and Bay-breasts were all 13-year/record high counts for this station. Details of the 1974 results, with tabulated comparisons with previous years, have been published previously (Scott, *Raven*, 46: 65-67, 1975). Interesting daily high totals included 24 Sharp-shins on 2 October, 25 Winter Wrens on 21 October, 74 Gray-cheeked Thrushes and 180 Common Yellowthroats on 29 September, and a remarkable 245 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 65 Black-throated Blue Warblers, and 27 Bay-breasted Warblers on 3 October. No particularly rare species were trapped here this year, the most unusual probably being a Blue-winged Warbler on 14 September.

Some 13 cold fronts moved through the area during the period the banding station was open. Most of these were mild, and only eight produced significant flights at Kiptopeke. The best of these flights produced 307 birds banded on 22 September, 556 on 28 September, 856 on 29 September, 835 on 3 October, 470 on 13 October, and 608 on 17 October. Curiously, a flight on 21 October that resulted in 824 birds was not associated with the passage of a cold front, a rare phenomenon here. As usual, most of the September flights were dominated by American Redstarts and the October ones by Yellow-rumped Warblers. Exceptions were the flight of 29 September, with Common Yellowthroats outnumbering all others, and those of 3 and 7 October, when Ruby-crowned Kinglets predominated.

All three foreign retraps were direct recoveries of immature (HY) birds. Two were Sharp-shinned Hawks banded by W. S. Clark at Cape May Point, New Jersey, on 6 and 21 October 1975 and retrapped at Kiptopeke on 20 and 24 October, respectively, by Roger and Dorothy Foy. The third was a Blackpoll Warbler originally banded at Waite Hill, Willoughby, Ohio, by Annette B. Flanigan on 17 September 1975 (and last repeating there on 1 October) and recovered at Kiptopeke on 24 October, also by the Foy's. This last was apparently only the second long-range direct recovery of the Blackpoll on record (see Flanigan, *Inland Bird Banding News*, 48: 186-188, 1976). In addition, a HY Sharp-shinned Hawk banded at Kiptopeke on 15 October 1975 by the Sydney Mitchells was recovered in April 1976 at Lac Megantic, Quebec, near the New Hampshire and Maine borders. Of the 19 returns from previous years, 12 were probably permanent residents, six were summer residents, and one, a Yellow-rumped Warbler banded in 1974, was probably a winter resident. The oldest return, a White-eyed Vireo originally banded here in the spring of 1972 by W. P. Smith, had also been retrapped in 1974.

As in 1974 (Scott, *op. cit.*), attempts were made to tabulate the primary wing situation (notching on the leading edge) of some of the thrushes. Results were quite similar to those obtained in 1974. All 261 Swainson's Thrushes checked had only the seventh and eighth primaries sinuated (counting from the inside out), all 139 Gray-cheeks checked had the sixth through eighth

notched, and all 44 Hermits had the fifth through eighth cut out. Again, it seemed difficult to make a determination on some of the Veeries, but of the 162 checked, 158 were judged to have the sixth through eighth sinuated, but four appeared to have only the seventh and eighth notched.

Age ratios of birds trapped and banded were essentially similar to those of 1974, with HY birds ("hatching year"—birds hatched in the calendar year banded) outnumbering AHY birds ("after hatching year"—birds hatched in a calendar year prior to the one in which banded) about nine to one, ranging from about 80% HY for Red-breasted Nuthatches and 87% for Veeries to 94 to 95% HY for Black-throated Blue and Yellow-rumped Warblers and American Redstarts and 100% for a number of species trapped in limited numbers.

Operation of the station was essentially similar to that of previous years, with one licensed bander being in charge of the station, usually for a week at a time. These were Mrs. J. P. Church, Mr. and Mrs. Roger W. Foy, C. W. Hacker, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Mitchell, F. S. Schaeffer, F. R. Scott, and W. P. Smith. Assisting these were over 130 other banders and helpers whose aid was essential to the project. The banders are indebted to Robert Hillman of Amagansett, New York, agent for the property owners, and John Maddox, of Virginia Beach, for permission to use the land on which the station was located. Thanks are also extended to Walter P. Smith, who did the initial laborious editing of the field records and tabulated the daily results.

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IN MEMORIAM: ARTHUR H. FAST

Arthur H. Fast was born in Hillsboro, Kansas, on 6 July 1887 and died in Arlington, Virginia, on 21 February 1976 after a short illness. He remained alert and active throughout the span of nearly 89 years and was planning to welcome the Northern Virginia Chapter of the VSO to his home on 27 March 1976. This meeting had become one of the highlights of each year, with an outstanding program, the enjoyment of the birds at his many feeders, and a delicious lunch which chapter ladies served for him. His house rang with wonderful talk among the members on this special day.

Arthur was a graduate of Baker University in Baldwin, Kansas, and received a law degree from the University of Kansas in Lawrence and a master's degree in law from George Washington University in Washington, D. C. He practiced law in Kansas and then was a lawyer for the Department of Agriculture for four years before joining the Internal Revenue Service, where he remained until retirement in 1953 as Assistant Head, Appeals Division.

He served three years on the Board of Directors of the VSO and was also on the Board of the Audubon Naturalists Society of the Central Atlantic States and of the Eastern Bird Banding Association from 1952 to 1963. During his tenure on the VSO Board he was instrumental, in collaboration with Harry Frazier, III, of Richmond, in having the VSO incorporated as a nonprofit organization. He was also active in the Rock Spring Congregational Church and had been a member of its Board of Deacons.

Arthur began his serious bird work in early 1946, when the first real influx of Evening Grosbeaks reached this area. He obtained a banding permit and that year banded 51 of the 52 grosbeaks banded in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. He became fascinated with these birds, and he became widely known as an authority on them. His article, "The Evening Grosbeaks in Northern Virginia" (*Bird-Banding*, 33: 181-191, 1962) gave an excellent summary of his work up to that date, and my wife Claire and I treasure a personally inscribed reprint from him. Several of Arthur's articles have also appeared in *The Raven*.

Between February 1946 and December 1961, Arthur banded 20,000 birds of 85 species, 92% of them on his acre in Arlington. He gave most generously of his time in countless bird talks to young and old, scouts at all levels, church and civic groups, garden clubs, and others. He always took along a bird or two to demonstrate the banding process and wove in a conservation theme. He averaged about 45 talks per year to groups for many years, welcoming many to his home station.

Due to many month-long winter trips to such places as Jamaica, Guatemala, and Trinidad, he became very familiar with the birds of these areas. He was most helpful to many friends with information on local birders in these places, best habitats, and those many other bits of information which make a trip successful. Many of our Northern Virginia Chapter members followed in his footsteps to the land of the sun and sometimes accompanied him. He provided the same information for the New England states, where he went each summer to enjoy his favorite birds, the thrushes. Although Arthur traveled widely, he did not neglect his beloved Virginia.

Every one who knew Arthur loved him. He had a myriad friends and kept in regular touch, as on Christmas Day he would telephone a "Merry Christmas"; other times we would have a call, either by phone or a visit from him each week. We are just one example of how he treasured his friends. The day he entered the hospital, he called to inform us and remarked cheerily that he had a "full and good life"—and that is the way we all remember him.

Arthur is survived by a daughter, a son, and four grandchildren.

James W. Eike

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NEWS AND NOTES

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RAPPAHANNOCK WILDLIFE AREA PURCHASED. During 1955 and 1956 about 3800 acres on the upper Rappahannock River were to be acquired by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, with the cooperation of The Nature Conservancy, as a wildlife management area. Near Summerduck in Fauquier County, the area includes about 5.5 miles of river frontage.

FALCONRY PERMITS REQUIRED. As of 17 February 1976 new Federal regulations took effect for falconers, and permits are now being required. The regulations, published in the *Federal Register* for 15 January 1976, set standards for falconer competence and care of captive birds and restrict the species and numbers of individual raptors that can be removed from the wild.

AVIAN CHOLERA EPIDEMIC. About 25,000 American Coots died as a result of an infection of avian cholera which struck the Back Bay coot population in early 1975. The disease was first detected on 4 February 1975 on the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Following that, 19,000 coots presumed to have died from cholera were removed from the bay and an additional 6000 were exterminated to prevent the disease from being passed along to migratory birds using Back Bay as a stopover resting place on their way north. The extermination involved spraying the areas of the bay where the coots were rafting with a detergent which left the birds flightless. The birds were then captured, exterminated in carbon dioxide chambers, and buried. The source of the epidemic is unknown, but Dr. Milton Friend, director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's health laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, said that certain chemical pollutants working in conjunction with disease bacteria may cause cholera epidemics. The last major coot cholera outbreak on the East Coast was in Chesapeake Bay in the winter of 1969-70 and killed between 80,000 and 100,000 birds.

GLOSSY IBIS IN VALLEY. A small pond near Daleville, Botetourt County, Virginia, produced a Glossy Ibis on 20 April 1975. First seen by John Pancake, it was later shown to Barry Kinzie, N. C. Middleton, and others. This may be the westernmost record of this species in Virginia.

SNOW GOOSE HUNTING SURVEY. According to biologists of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 490 Snow Geese were taken in the Back Bay area of Virginia during the hunting season of 1975. This was the first year since 1933 that hunting for this species has been allowed on the East Coast.

FULVOUS TREE DUCKS AT CRANEY ISLAND. During a summer field trip to Craney Island landfill in Portsmouth on 20 July 1975, members of the Cape Henry Audubon Society, including R. L. Ake and D. L. Hughes, were exploring the shorebirds along one of the dikes which projects into the interior of the impoundment. As the end of the dike was reached, three strange waterfowl flushed from the grassy edge and flew off to the southwest. As they departed, the warm brown feathering, distinctive white tail band, long necks, and long trailing bluish legs could clearly be seen in the bright sun. Up went the cry, "tree ducks," and indeed the birds were Fulvous Tree Ducks. The birds were seen sporadically through the remainder of the summer.

Completely unaware of this observation, Glenn and Sue Burroughs who were in Portsmouth on a business trip decided to stop by Craney Island on their way home on 26 July 1975. They were disappointed to find the main area closed. However, they drove over to a nearby area where they could do a little birdwatching. They had been birding about an hour when they noticed a group of about 12 brown ducks land approximately 300 yards from them. They noticed the unusually long necks and immediately thought, "tree ducks." Fortunately the birds remained in the area for 30 minutes and allowed a sufficiently careful study of all the essential fieldmarks that the identification as Fulvous Tree Ducks was confirmed. During several short flights around the mud flats the white semicircular tail, the dark wing tops with cinnamon leading edges, and the white side marking were clearly visible. The white neck markings and sides were observed easily while the ducks were on the water at closer range. In flight their legs were clearly visible trailing behind their tail

feathers. They had a slightly awkward appearance in flight when compared to other ducks, holding their heads at a downward angle.

This species is a rare vagrant to Virginia that occasionally stages an irruption such as occurred during the winter of 1964-65 when flocks of up to 35 birds were seen. In recent years the visits have become more regular although not necessarily regularly reported. It is recorded almost annually in small numbers with most recent records in the late spring or late summer, though it has occurred in all seasons. Most are found near the coast, although a flock appeared in December 1972 at a pond near Waynesboro (*Raven*, 45: 37, 1974), and a large flock was recorded at Hog Island in Surry County during the January 1965 invasion (*Raven*, 36: 27-28, 1965).

SORA INLAND IN WINTER. A remarkable record for the Valley was a Sora picked up dead on the side of U. S. Route 11 just north of Middletown, Frederick County, Virginia, on 16 February 1976 by Kelly D. Ramsey. The specimen was prepared as a study skin and is now in the collection of Lord Fairfax Community College. We are not aware of any other winter records of this species west of the Blue Ridge, and migration does not normally begin until early April.

UNUSUAL SHOREBIRDS AT TROUTVILLE. A pond near Troutville, Botetourt County, is proving an interesting place for fall shorebirds. In the fall of 1975 a single Dunlin was seen here 26-29 September by Barry Kinzie and John Pancake. Also here an American Avocet appeared for only four hours on 11 October and was noted by Kinzie and Almon English. Again in 1976 Dunlins reappeared near Daleville, also in Botetourt County, and four remained here from 27 October to 16 November (Barry Kinzie, Bill Opengari, John Pancake, and others).

SPOTTED SANDPIPERS IN WINTER. Several observations of Spotted Sandpipers in Virginia were made during the winter of 1974-75. On 21 December 1974 Jackson M. and Robert Abbott found a Spotted Sandpiper at Fort Belvoir during the Christmas bird count. On the Newport News count on 30 December 1974 Jose Hernandez and David Lundt recorded three of this species. On 4 February 1975 along the York River about two miles west of Yorktown, Chris Stinson saw a Spotted Sandpiper in winter plumage, noting the dark bill which was slightly longer than the head, a shoulder mark, and flesh-colored legs. The bird was standing on a sandy spit with six Ring-billed Gulls and two Killdeer. On the bright sunny afternoon of 5 January 1975 Elizabeth D. Peacock and her husband were standing on the bridge over Fox Creek near Capahosic on the York River in Gloucester County when a Spotted Sandpiper gave its alarm note and flew stiffly to a stub in the middle of the creek where it perched, bobbing all the while, allowing the viewers to examine it carefully with a 20x scope. They noted the pure white underparts, the crescent of the typical winter plumage, as well as yellow at the base of the bill. On 22 March 1975 Mrs. Peacock and Mary Pulley saw what was presumed to be the same bird in the same place. This bird remained at least until 1 April. These records represent a large number of individuals north of their usual winter range. Coastal South Carolina would be a more normal northern limit to their wintering range.

LITTLE GULLS IN THE FALL. During the late summer and fall of 1974 three different Little Gulls were observed at Chincoteague National Wildlife

Refuge. On 8 August Claudia P. Wilds noted a subadult bird flying in the crabbing area of the refuge along the road between F pool and Tom's Cove. The bird had an unmarked pale gray mantle, a pure white tail, and the underwings were blotchy without any real pattern to the light and dark markings. This bird was seen by several observers who were able to note gradual plumage changes. The auricular spot and pale gray nape seemed to darken over a period of weeks. By 27 September, the last time the bird was seen, the underwings were entirely dusky (Phil Stoddard). In addition to this individual two immature birds were seen in the same area of the refuge on 11 November (Wilds). These had the inverted W pattern on the gray upper wing, no white in the primaries, squared tail narrowly tipped with black, and white underwing linings.

The year 1974 witnessed large numbers of Little Gulls occurring in the Middle Atlantic area with Craney Island, Virginia, and Little Creek, Delaware, having flocks with peak numbers of 14 and 30, respectively. However, no Little Gulls were recorded during the early summer in Virginia after 5 June (*Raven*, 46: 71, 1975), although Delaware and New Jersey had small oversummering populations. The fall Chincoteague birds apparently indicated a movement back into the state. A single adult Little Gull was recorded in Virginia Beach, Virginia, during the Little Creek Christmas bird count on 31 December 1974 (R. L. Anderson and W. W. Fogleman).

FORSTER'S TERNS NEAR DALEVILLE. A Forster's Tern, accompanied by three Common and two Black Terns, was found at a pond near Daleville, Botetourt County, Virginia, on 7 September 1975 by Bill Opengari, who later showed the birds to Barry Kinzie and Norwood Middleton. The following year a single Forster's Tern was seen at the same place on 16 August 1976 by Kinzie, Myriam Moore, and Bobby Schamerhorn.

PUFFINS OFFSHORE. During a joint research cruise with the U. S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency on 6 February 1975 Richard A. Rowlett observed five Common Puffins in the area south of Baltimore Canyon 40 to 45 miles off Chincoteague, Virginia (*Maryland Birdlife*, 31: 51-56, 1975). All the birds were immatures and appeared reluctant to fly, preferring to dive to get out of the way of the boat. Identification was based on observation of the large dirty gray facial area of the bird and the shape of the all-dark bill. The prevailing current along the outer continental shelf is from the northeast, and Rowlett speculated that the occurrence of puffins in Virginia waters could be the result of simply drifting southward from the Canadian Maritimes with the help of the Labrador Current. The only previous report of the Common Puffin in Virginia was that of a sight record of a bird at Back Bay Refuge on 1 January 1955 (*Raven*, 28: 51, 1957). This new, well-documented report complete with photographic evidence will allow the Common Puffin to be moved from the hypothetical list to the accidental category of the official list of the birds of Virginia.

Other species seen on the 6 February 1975 cruise included 125 Gannets, 27 Red Phalaropes, two Great Skuas, 345 Black-legged Kittiwakes, five Dovekies, and a large unidentified alcid. This appears to be the first winter record of the Red Phalarope for Virginia.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO NESTING. Nests of the Black-billed Cuckoo are hard to come by in Virginia, but Barry Kinzie found a pair of Black-bills and a nest with four eggs near the top of Apple Orchard Mountain, Botetourt County, on 3 June 1975. The altitude at this part of the Blue Ridge was about 4000 feet. The nest was photographed and shown to John Pancake, Paul McQuarry, and others.

GREAT HORNED OWLS NESTING. On 12 January 1975 Jackson M. and David F. Abbott discovered a Great Horned Owl incubating eggs in an old crow nest high in a pine tree at Dyke marsh, Fairfax County, Virginia. Later, one owlet was seen. This bird is an early nester with a normal clutch of two eggs. In Georgia eggs are laid in early January along the coast or late February north of the Fall Line (T. D. Burleigh, *Georgia Birds*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1958). In Kentucky the clutches are usually completed sometime around 1 to 10 February (R. M. Mengel, *Birds of Kentucky*, American Ornithologists' Union, 1965), and the earliest egg date for Maryland is 27 January (R. E. Stewart and C. S. Robbins, *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia*, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 1958). The Dyke marsh nest date appears to be somewhat on the early side.

Another nest of the Great Horned Owl containing one adult and one large young was found in a shallow cave in the side of a cliff near Murray's Pond in Roanoke County on 12 April 1975 by Barry Kinzie, who showed it to many others. A photograph of the young bird was obtained the following day.

LONG-EARED OWLS IN VALLEY. Five Long-eared Owls were seen at a roost in a pine plantation near Boyce, Clarke County, Virginia, on 23 January 1976 by Cliff Hupp, Terry Leight, and Jim Fitzgerald. A dead individual of this species was picked up along a road in neighboring Warren County near Front Royal on 10 January 1976 by Janice Bursey. The specimen is now in the Lord Fairfax Community College collection.

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES OUT OF RANGE. Dan Puckette added a new bird to the Lynchburg area list (R. S. Freer, *Birds of Lynchburg, Virginia, and Vicinity*, Lynchburg College Press, 1973) when he found a Brown-headed Nuthatch at Rustburg, Campbell County, on 15 March 1975. The bird was seen several times through 20 April. On 23 November 1975 John B. Bazuin, Jr., unexpectedly found a Brown-headed Nuthatch in a group of Virginia Pines in the Green Springs area of western Louisa County. The bird was carefully studied and the white spot on the nape was seen as it foraged through the pine cones. Both of these records are well out of the normal range of this species, which lies east and south of Richmond, though a good population extends well west on the Piedmont along the North Carolina border.

BREEDING PLUMAGE IN MIDWINTER. On 7 February 1976, while looking over a number of birds attracted to a bit of suet in a yard at Waverly, Virginia, C. C. Steirly observed a male Yellow-rumped Warbler in full breeding plumage. The bird was in association with a half dozen other Yellow-rumps, all of which were in normal winter plumage. The bird remained in the area for several days feeding on suet and the berries of a nearby waxmyrtle.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER AGAIN. On 16 January 1975 a Black-throated Gray Warbler appeared in Mike and Dorothy Mitchell's backyard in Newport News. This was not the first time a bird of this species had visited the Mitchell's yard. On 9 September 1973 a male and on 20-31 January 1974 an apparent female were seen, and later on 9 March 1974 another male was also sighted here (*Raven*, 45: 75, 1974). This year, however, the Mitchells were able to band the bird on 23 January 1975, identify it as an immature male, and take some beautiful colored photographs before releasing it. The bird was seen four times in February, twice in March, and for the last time on 13 April 1975. Each time the band was clearly visible. This group of well-documented sightings represents at least the fourth record for Virginia and places the species firmly on the state's accidental list. The first Virginia record of this bird was a male seen by Jackson M. Abbott and 14 others at Fort Belvoir on 1 October 1949 (*Wood Thrush*, 5: 92-93, 1949).

Most of the records for this species in the East are during the spring and fall for northern or midwestern states and during the late fall and winter for the southeastern states. With Virginia lying geographically between these regions, it is not surprising that the Mitchells' records include both patterns. It is hoped that their visitors will continue to return to Virginia.

WINTER BLUE GROSBEAKS. On 8 January 1975 while birdwatching in the Elm Hill Wildlife Management Area, Mecklenburg County, Virginia, J. Merrill Lynch discovered a Blue Grosbeak and later showed it to Keith M. Fielder. A return trip to the same area on 18 January 1975 by Lynch, Fielder, and others yielded not only one, but two Blue Grosbeaks. On both occasions the birds were associating with a large flock of Field, Savannah, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows. Both birds were described as appearing largely brownish except for bluish tails. Their larger size, large conical beaks, brown wing bars, and constant tail-flicking made them conspicuous among the sparrows.

A year later on 27 February 1976 in Virginia Beach Robert J. Tripician watched a female Blue Grosbeak at his feeder for 20 minutes. The lighting was perfect, so he was able to take some colored slides through the kitchen window. The heavy dark beak and large size of the bird were obvious field marks. The only other recent near-winter report of this species was one observed at Curles Neck, eastern Henrico County, on 3 March 1974 (F. R. Scott and D. W. Sonneborn).

The Blue Grosbeak normally winters south of the United States. However, it occasionally occurs on Christmas bird counts in Louisiana, Florida, and Arizona, and in 1973 two were recorded on the Durham, North Carolina, count on 16 December.

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