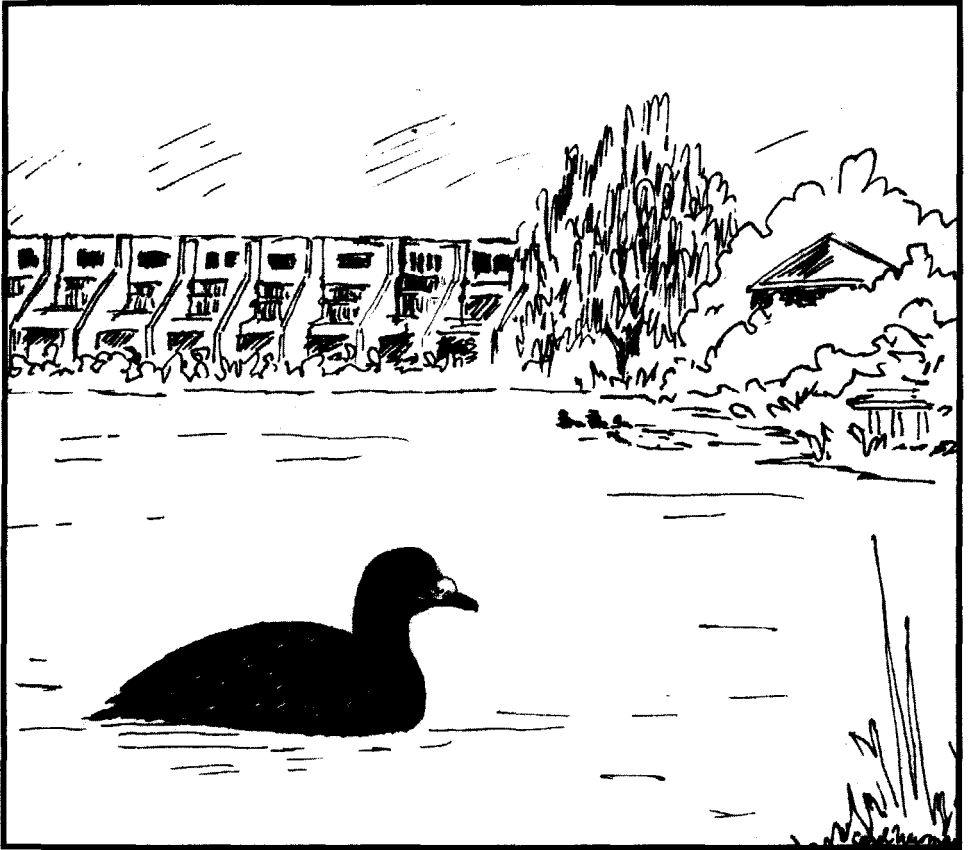
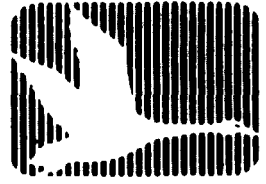


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# MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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**Cover:** Black Scoter on Wilde Lake, Columbia, Maryland. See page 29. Drawing by Carol Newman



## **BARN OWL DIETS FROM EASTERN SHORE MARSHES**

**PETER R. BENDAL AND GLENN D. THERRES**

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) food habit studies have been conducted throughout North America and Europe (Clark et al. 1978). Most of the food habit data from these studies were obtained through the analysis of owl pellets. Owls cannot digest bones, hair, or feathers, so these materials are regurgitated as a compacted pellet (Marti 1987) and provide an ideal means of examining owl diets. Barn Owls feed primarily on small mammals, especially rodents, in open grassland habitats. The meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) is the most important prey animal in the northeastern United States (Rosenburg, in press). Lee et al. (1972) reported on the diet of a pair of Barn Owls from Irish Grove Sanctuary in Somerset County. However, little additional information on the Barn Owl's diet exists from Maryland.

As part of a study conducted to evaluate nest box use by Barn Owls in marsh ecosystems from 1988 through 1990, we were able to document the diets of Barn Owls from Eastern Shore marshes. Our study area included the marsh ecosystems of Fishing Bay in Dorchester County and Monie Bay in Somerset and Wicomico counties. These large marshes are dominated by salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), salt meadow cordgrass (*S. patens*), big cordgrass (*S. cynosuroides*), spikegrass (*Distichlis spicata*), needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*), and Olney three-square (*Scirpus olneyi*), with scattered ponds, tidal creeks, and rivers distributed throughout.

We collected 189 intact pellets from 24 active nest boxes after the nesting seasons of 1988 through 1991. Barn Owls routinely shred pellets and use them as nest material, so the numbers collected do not reflect total prey items consumed by the birds. In total, 260 identifiable animal remains were analyzed from these pellets (Table 1). Remains were identified by skulls following Ernst (1975). Mammals comprised 99.6% of the remains. Meadow voles were the most frequent prey item (91.5%). Lee et al. (1972) found small mammals comprised 90.3% of the diet of a pair of Barn Owls at Irish Grove Sanctuary, meadow voles accounting for 66.5%. Birds accounted for only 0.4% of the diet in our study. Lee et al. (1972) found birds comprised 9.7% of the diet of the Irish Grove owls. The carcasses of the Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) and a Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were also found in one of our nest boxes and that of a young muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) was found under another box, but were not included in the analysis. Apparently, birds and other types of animals are of little consequence in Barn Owl diets (Colvin et al. 1984, Colvin and McLean 1986, Rosenburg 1986).

The prey selection of mammals is consistent with prey availability. Though mammal trapping was not conducted as part of this study, meadow voles and marsh

rice rats are the most abundant small mammals inhabiting short grass marshes in Maryland (Paradiso 1969). Short-tailed shrews are encountered in meadows and grassland habitats, such as tidal marshes. White-footed mice and masked shrews are primarily forest species, and would be found only on the edges of marshes and thus are not readily available to Barn Owls. House mice are usually associated with buildings, which occurred infrequently in our study areas.

**Table 1. Contents of 189 Barn Owl pellets collected during 1988-1991 from nest boxes in Eastern Shore marsh ecosystems.**

Prey species	Number Individuals	Percent Individuals
Meadow vole ( <i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i> )	238	91.5
Marsh rice rat ( <i>Oryzomys palustris</i> )	12	4.6
Short-tailed shrew ( <i>Blarina brevicauda</i> )	5	1.9
Masked shrew ( <i>Sorex cinereus</i> )	2	0.8
White-footed mouse ( <i>Peromyscus leucopus</i> )	1	0.4
House mouse ( <i>Mus musculus</i> )	1	0.4
Unidentified bird	1	0.4
	260	100.00

Barn Owls using salt marsh habitats in eastern North America have a fairly monotypic diet. Jemison and Chabreck (1962) found that 97.5% of the contents of Barn Owl pellets from Louisiana salt marshes were composed of marsh rice rats. In New Jersey, Colvin et al. (1984) found that meadow voles comprised 80.5% of the Barn Owl diet and averaged 96.2% of prey during nesting. Our findings were similar to those in New Jersey, with meadow voles, followed by marsh rice rats and short-tailed shrews, being the most common prey items taken. This indicates that Barn Owls from Maryland salt marshes have a more northern character to their prey selection.

Klaas et al. (1978), examining the prey contents of pellets collected from off-shore duck blinds in the lower Potomac River, found that meadow voles accounted for 63.7% of the prey remains. This is comparable to that found by Colvin et al. (1984) from Ohio, but substantially lower than what we found from the Eastern Shore marshes. Even though these birds nested in off-shore locations, the lack of large expanses of salt marsh habitat on the western shore forces Barn Owls to forage more over upland areas.

This may explain the lower percentage of meadow voles. Barn Owls that forage inland have a slightly more diverse diet, and do not generally rely so heavily on one prey species (Ottieni *et al.* 1972, Marti 1973, Knight and Jackman 1984, Marra *et al.* 1989).

Habitat conditions, prey conspicuousness, and catchability are all factors influencing why a particular species is selected (Rosenburg 1986). Colvin *et al.* (1984) believed Barn Owls select an optimum prey size that is the most energy efficient. Meadow voles apparently are that prey in Maryland marshes.

In conclusion, the results of this study are comparable to those of other investigations in eastern North America. Meadow voles are the primary prey item in Barn Owl diets from Eastern Shore marshes.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was made possible with the assistance of DNR's Watermens Compensation Program, which provided materials and personnel to construct and erect nest boxes. Additional financial support was provided by contributions to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund. S.A. Smith helped collect the pellets and G. W. Willey, Sr. helped analyze them.

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## SNOW BUNTINGS IN ALLEGANY COUNTY

JIM PAULUS

Early in the morning of October 29, 1991, while hawkwatching at the Route 40 scenic overlook on Town Hill, Allegany County, I noticed two Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). The two birds, a male and a female, were feeding with a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) along the edge of the gravel parking lot at the overlook. The next morning the male was gone, but the female remained in the area for two weeks.

The female appeared to be healthy and capable of normal flight. It demonstrated the species' fondness for open spaces, typically being found foraging in the parking lot or perched on the roof of a hotel across the road or on the roof of the pavilion at the overlook.

Although the owners of the hotel maintained bird feeders, the Snow Bunting was never seen visiting them, feeding elusively on the seeds of grasses and weeds growing around the edge of the parking lot.

The bird was photographed on October 30 while it was perched on one of its favorite spots, the guard rail along the east side of Town Hill. It was last seen on November 14. During its stay, the bird was very obliging, and virtually every visitor to the hawkwatch saw it.

This is the first record of Snow Bunting in Allegany County that is documented by a photograph or specimen. There are six published records of the species in the county. Eifrig (1902) reported a single bird near Will's Mountain on November 16, 1901 and three at the same place on February 8, 1902. The other four reports all come from *Maryland Birdlife*: 15 at Spring Gap on December 28, 1960; 1 at Dan's Rock on November 19, 1977 and again on October 24, 1978; and 4 at Rocky Gap on December 6-7, 1989.

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*P.O. Box 1883, Cumberland, Maryland 21501*

# THE SEASON



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## FALL MIGRATION, AUGUST 1 - NOVEMBER 30, 1991

DANIEL R. SOUTHWORTH and LINDA SOUTHWORTH

Dry conditions over much of Maryland continued into the fall. Precipitation was below normal, particularly in western Maryland. This affected water levels at some locations, concentrating food and exposing mud flats, and producing some inland concentrations of waders and shorebirds. Many observers commented that the fall flight for warblers, flycatchers, vireos, and thrushes was again poor with no major waves of birds.

In analyzing the relative lateness of a species' arrival or departure the medians listed in Table 1 are invaluable. By utilizing the ten-year medians an observer can determine whether a particular sighting is normal or extraordinary. For most passerines a date within a week of the median is normal, within one to two weeks it is of particular interest, and beyond two weeks it is extraordinary. When an extraordinary date is recorded the observer should be especially careful in the identification.

*Observers:* George & Henry Armistead, Maurice Barnhill, Polly Batchelder, John Bjerke, Rick Blom, Connie Bockstie, Larry Bonham, David Brinker, Carol & Don Broderick, Martha Chestem, John Churchill, Dave Czaplak, Lynn Davidson, Bob Dixon, Margaret Donald (banding at Adventure), Jon Dunn, Ethel Engle, Jane Farrell, Jerry & Roberta Fletcher (reporting for Caroline County), Harold Fogleman, Jane & Ralph Geuder, Greg Gough, Jim & Patricia Gruber (banding at Damsite), Doug Hackman, Dan Haft, Dave & Maureen Harvey, Marvin Hewitt, Robert Hilton, Mark Hoffman, Marshall Iliff, Ottavio Janni, Kye Jenkins, George Jett, Greg Kearns, Ray Kiddy, Bill Kulp, Jr., Doug Lister, Nancy Magnusson, Pat Melville (banding at Bristol), Stauffer Miller, Dolly Minis, Lee Murray (reporting for Monument Knob hawk watch), Paul & Carol Newman, Mariana Nuttle, Michael & Paul O'Brien, Bonnie Ott, Jim Paulus, Betty Pitney (reporting for Wicomico Bird Club), Sue Probst, Kyle Rambo, Jan Reese, Carole Renfrew, Sue Ricciardi, Robert Ringler, Chan Robbins (banding at Laurel), Barbara Ross (banding at Irvine), Steve Sanford, Norm & Fran Saunders, Gene Scarpulla, Sharon Schwemmer, Bill Scudder, L.T. Short, Steve Simon, Teresa Simons, Don & Marcia Simonson, Connie Skipper, April Smith, Jo Solem (reporting for Howard County), Dan & Linda Southworth, Jim Stasz, Chris Swarth, Charles Swift, Bill Thompson, Mary Twigg, Charles Vaughn, David Walbeck, Mark Wallace, Robert Warfield, Joy Wheeler, Hal Wierenga, Jim Wilkinson, Erika Wilson, Helen Zeichner, Julie Zickefoose. Banders are acknowledged here but the names of only the banding stations will be found in the text.

*Pelagic Reports:* Pelagic trips organized by Gene Scarpulla out of Ocean City this fall contributed a number of excellent sightings. The trip leaders are acknowledged under the Observers but sightings are listed in the text as (Scarpulla+).

*Abbreviations:* DC—District of Columbia, DNR—Department of Natural Resources, NWR—National Wildlife Refuge, PRNAS—Patuxent River Naval Air Station, SP—State Park, UMCF—University of Maryland Central Farm, WMA—Wildlife Management Area.

*Locations:* The following is a list of locations (with counties in parentheses) that are not in the index of cities and towns on the State highway map: Adventure Sanctuary (Montgomery), Assateague Island (Worcester), Black Hill Park (Montgomery), Blackwater NWR (Dorchester), Bristol (Anne Arundel), Broad Creek (Prince George's), Brown Station Landfill (Prince George's), Damsite (Kent), Dan's Rock (Allegany), Deep Creek Lake (Garrett), Eastern Neck NWR (Kent), Eden Brook (Howard), Hains Point (DC), Hart-Miller Dredged Material Containment Facility (Baltimore), Hooper Island (Dorchester), Hughes Hollow (Montgomery), Irish Grove Sanctuary (Somerset), Irvine Natural Science Center (Baltimore), Lake Elkhorn (Howard), Lake Kittamaquidi (Howard), Liberty Lake (Carroll unless stated otherwise), Little Meadows Lake (Garrett), Little Seneca Lake (Montgomery), Loch Raven (Baltimore), McKeldin Area of Patapsco Valley State Park (Carroll), PRNAS (St. Mary's), Pennyfield (Montgomery), Piney Run Park (Carroll), Queen Anne (Queen Anne's unless noted otherwise), Remington Farms WMA (Kent), Rock Creek Park (DC unless noted otherwise), Rockburn Branch Park (Howard), Rocky Gap SP (Allegany), Sandy Point SP (Anne Arundel), Schooley Mill Park (Howard), Town Hill (Allegany), Triadelphia Reservoir (Howard unless noted otherwise), Tuckahoe SP (Caroline unless noted otherwise), UMCF (Howard), Violettes Lock (Montgomery), Washington Monument SP (Washington/Frederick), Wills Mountain (Allegany).

*Loons, Grebes.* An adult **Red-throated Loon** was at Hains Point on Nov. 10 (Czaplak, Hilton+). One or two were sighted each day during Nov. 11-15 at North Beach (Stasz). A large movement, over 100 in an hour, was reported at Ocean City on Nov. 30 (M. O'Brien). **Common Loon** reports included 1 at Loch Raven on Sept. 3 (Simon), 43 flying over Town Hill on Oct. 20 (Paulus), over 500 sighted during the DNR oyster survey on the Choptank River on Oct. 22 (Kravitz), and 200 on the Tred Avon River, near Oxford, on Nov. 9 (Short). Concentrations of **Pied-billed Grebes** included 59 in DC on Oct. 6 (Czaplak), 30 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien), 22 at Seneca on Nov. 8 (O'Briens), and 56 at Loch Raven on Nov. 23 (Simon). Five early migrant **Horned Grebes** were near Bellevue on Oct. 19 (H. Armistead). Czaplak tallied 45 in DC on Nov. 11.

*Tubenoses, Gannets, Pelicans.* Birders participating in the fall pelagic trips out of Ocean City were not disappointed. Sightings in Maryland waters on the August 17 trip included 87 **Cory's Shearwaters**, 30 **Greater Shearwaters**, 18 **Audubon's Shearwaters**, and 22 **Wilson's Storm-Petrels**. The Sept. 23 trip yielded 14 Cory's and 5 Greater Shearwaters and a **Northern Fulmar**. On the Nov. 23 trip 287 Greater Shearwaters, 16 **Manx Shearwaters** and 127 **Northern Gannets** were spotted (Scarpulla+). The first reported gannets of the season were 250 at Ocean City on Oct. 11, and there was a season high of 1000 at Assateague Island on Nov. 30 (M. O'Brien). Gannets were also spotted from North Beach with 12 adults and 5 immatures on Nov. 11 (Stasz). **Brown Pelicans** included a high of 220 at Assateague on Sept. 7 (M. O'Brien, Wierenga) and a late bird in Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien).

*Cormorants.* An immature **Great Cormorant** was at Point Lookout on Aug. 25 (Blom), and 3 were noted there on Nov. 27 (M. O'Brien). Other Great Cormorant



sightings included 1 at Sandy Point on Nov. 9 (Wierenga, Davidson), an immature on Nov. 10 at Ocean Pines (Ringler+), and 3 at Ocean City on Nov. 12 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Wierenga). High counts of **Double-crested Cormorants** were 600 at Point Lookout on Aug. 25 (Blom) and 25 inland at Centennial on Oct. 20 (Magnusson, Farrell, Solem). Extraordinarily late inland were the bird at Loch Raven on Nov. 23 (Simon) and the immature at Piney Run on Nov. 28 (Ringler, Pete Webb, LeAnne and Mark Pemburn).

*Hérons, Ibises.* Single **American Bitterns** were at West Ocean City on Aug. 23 (Warfield), Centennial on Sept. 12-13 (Solem, Chestem, Zeichner), and Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien). The only reported **Least Bitterns** were the 2 or 3 sighted at Lilypons through Sept. 13 (Miller+). A **Great Blue Heron** was observed migrating over the ocean on the Sept. 28 pelagic trip (Scarpulla+), and high counts included 59 in DC on Aug. 3 (Czaplak) and 39 at Pennyfield on Aug. 26 (Bonham). Interesting reports of **Great Egrets** included 1 at North Branch on Aug. 4 (Kiddy), 15 on Aug. 7 at Loch Raven (Simon), a late bird at Chestertown on Oct. 29 (Minis), and the single bird seen by several birders at Lilypons throughout November. The 6 spotted by Ringler at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 11 were typically late there. **Snowy Egrets** of note were 40 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien), 1 at the east end of the Bay Bridge on Oct. 25 (Reese), and 25 at Assateague on Oct. 29 (M. O'Brien). Ringler spotted 2 late birds at Blackwater on Nov. 11. Steve Simon reported 4 **Little Blue Herons** at Loch Raven on Aug. 22. A **Tricolored Heron** seen by Norm and Fran Saunders on Aug. 25 at Triadelphia, an unusual location, became the first Howard County record. Other reports of Tricoloreds were 1 at Ocean City on Nov. 10 and 4 at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 11 (Ringler). High counts for **Cattle Egret** were 115 near Golden Hill on Aug. 24 (Armisteads), 55 near Hollywood on Aug. 25 (Blom), and 60 in a field at Lothian on Oct. 11 (Swarth). There were also 7 Cattle Egrets at Adamstown on Oct 19 (Miller), 4 later birds at Denton on Oct. 29 (Nuttle), and 1 very late in Ocean City on Nov. 25 (M. O'Brien). High counts of **Green-backed Herons** were 15 at Loch Raven on Aug. 1 (Simon), 9 at Cumberland on Aug. 16 (Twigg), and hundreds flying over Assateague at night heard by M. O'Brien, Brinker and Wierenga on Sept. 11. A late immature was spotted at Assateague on Nov. 13 (M. O'Brien). Inland **Black-crowned Night-Herons** included an immature near Lake Elkhorn on Aug. 11 (Wilkinson), an immature at Cumberland on Sept. 14 (Simons, Ringler), an immature at Lilypons on Oct. 20 (Miller), and 1 at Seneca on Nov. 19 (Bonham). Stauffer Miller reported from 1 to 3 adult **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** at Adamstown Creek during July 19-Aug. 4 with one immature bird there from Aug. 14 to the end of September. The only **Glossy Ibis** reports were of 1 at Scotts Cove, Howard County, on Aug. 21 (N. Saunders), 100 seen over West Ocean City on Sept. 11 (Warfield), and 3 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien).

*Swans, Geese.* Early **Tundra Swans** were 10 near Bellevue on Oct. 14 (H. Armistead). Other reports were of 930 at Tanyard on Oct. 20 (Engle) and 390 at Town Hill on Nov. 8 (Paulus). The high count for **Mute Swans** was 585 at Hooper Island on Aug. 24 (Armisteads). There were 53 Mute Swans at Harbor Cove, Talbot County, on Sept. 7 (Gwen Burkhardt, Walbeck) and there was an unusual inland sighting of 1 bird at Loch Raven on Nov. 23 (Simon). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was once again spotted at Gaithersburg during Nov. 11-21 (Haft, O'Briens, Bjerke+). Czaplak reported an adult pink-billed White-front at Rockville on Nov. 17, the first of this type reported in Maryland. A **Ross' Goose**, first reported at Blackwater on Oct. 28 (M. O'Brien), was seen by many birders into December. The first **Snow Geese** reported were 25 at Blackwater on Sept. 28 (H. Armistead); 12 were sighted at Assateague on Sept. 29 (M. O'Brien+), and 2 immatures were flying over Town Hill on Oct. 1 (Paulus). Other Snow Geese noted included 3 at Laytonsville on Oct. 18 (P.O'Brien), 1100 at Blackwater on

**Table 1. Median Arrival and Departure Dates, Fall 1991**

Species	Arrivals		Departures	
	10-YR	1991	10-YR	1991
Common Loon	10/6	10/4	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	9/13	8/5	-	-
Horned Grebe	11/1	11/4	-	-
Double-crested Cormorant	7/30	7/12	11/11	11/15
Great Egret	7/26	7/14	10/19	10/15
Snowy Egret	7/30	7/18	10/10	10/14
Little Blue Heron	7/28	7/15	9/15	9/29
Cattle Egret	7/31	7/17	10/10	10/20
Green-backed Heron	-	-	10/9	10/6
Glossy Ibis	-	-	9/21	9/11
Tundra Swan	11/6	11/13	-	-
Snow Goose	10/9	9/30	-	-
Canada Goose	9/27	9/30	-	-
Wood Duck	-	-	11/10	11/13
Green-winged Teal	9/3	8/17	-	-
Northern Pintail	9/25	9/3	-	-
Blue-winged Teal	8/15	8/10	10/14	10/27
Northern Shoveler	9/15	9/23	-	-
Gadwall	10/15	10/14	-	-
American Wigeon	9/28	10/1	-	-
Canvasback	11/1	11/3	-	-
Redhead	11/10	11/10	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	10/17	10/20	-	-
Lesser Scaup	10/19	10/21	-	-
Oldsquaw	11/3	11/8	-	-
Black Scoter	10/17	10/10	-	-
Surf Scoter	10/14	10/2	-	-
White-winged Scoter	10/22	10/31	-	-
Common Goldeneye	11/6	11/5	-	-
Bufflehead	10/31	10/29	-	-
Hooded Merganser	11/9	11/5	-	-
Common Merganser	11/19	11/28	-	-
Red-breasted Merganser	11/8	11/11	-	-
Ruddy Duck	10/7	10/16	-	-
Osprey	8/17	8/4	10/30	10/29
Northern Harrier	9/6	8/25	-	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9/13	9/10	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	9/17	9/12	-	-
Broad-winged Hawk	8/24	9/1	10/5	10/8
Rough-legged Hawk	11/7	11/11	-	-
American Kestrel	8/14	8/4	-	-
Merlin	9/23	9/12	-	-
Sora	8/30	8/17	-	-
American Coot	10/10	10/8	-	-
Black-bellied Plover	8/10	7/23	10/21	11/2
Lesser Golden-Plover	9/7	9/13	10/8	10/19
Semipalmated Plover	7/26	7/16	10/5	10/3

**Table 1. Median Arrival and Departure Dates, Fall 1991**

Species	Arrivals		Departures	
	10-YR	1991	10-YR	1991
Greater Yellowlegs	7/18	7/9	11/10	11/15
Lesser Yellowlegs	7/12	7/5	10/30	11/1
Solitary Sandpiper	7/18	7/11	9/25	9/26
Spotted Sandpiper	7/16	7/10	10/7	10/6
Upland Sandpiper	7/30	7/2	8/27	8/29
Sanderling	7/26	7/21	11/1	-
Semipalmated Sandpiper	7/20	7/14	10/5	-
Western Sandpiper	7/26	7/16	10/26	11/9
Least Sandpiper	7/15	7/11	10/11	10/27
White-rumped Sandpiper	8/16	-	10/30	11/15
Pectoral Sandpiper	7/24	7/19	10/31	11/2
Dunlin	10/7	10/3	11/12	11/13
Stilt Sandpiper	7/28	7/14	10/6	10/31
Short-billed Dowitcher	7/16	7/12	9/16	9/15
Long-billed Dowitcher	9/5	-	11/25	11/14
Common Snipe	9/16	9/6	-	-
Laughing Gull	-	-	11/26	11/21
Bonaparte's Gull	10/31	11/8	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	7/15	7/14	-	-
Caspian Tern	7/21	7/11	10/16	10/21
Royal Tern	8/18	7/27	11/8	11/3
Common Tern	7/31	7/27	9/25	9/22
Forster's Tern	7/12	7/8	11/15	11/17
Least Tern	-	-	8/25	9/5
Black Tern	7/27	-	9/5	9/4
Black-billed Cuckoo	-	-	9/17	9/7
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	-	-	10/2	9/24
Common Nighthawk	8/22	8/20	9/19	9/18
Chimney Swift	-	-	10/10	10/13
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	9/25	9/26
Red-headed Woodpecker	9/22	9/21	-	-
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	9/30	10/4	-	-
Northern Flicker	9/16	9/16	-	-
Eastern Wood-Pewee	-	-	10/2	10/6
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	8/20	-	9/22	9/20
Acadian Flycatcher	-	-	9/20	9/24
Traill's Flycatcher	8/16	8/16	9/14	9/14
Least Flycatcher	8/21	8/14	9/25	9/23
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	10/31	11/14
Great Crested Flycatcher	-	-	9/13	9/11
Eastern Kingbird	-	-	9/11	9/13
Purple Martin	-	-	9/3	9/1
Tree Swallow	7/29	7/19	10/23	10/30
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	7/21	-	10/4	10/13
Bank Swallow	7/13	7/13	9/14	-
Cliff Swallow	-	-	9/6	9/8
Barn Swallow	-	-	9/27	9/27
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9/13	9/21	-	-

**Table 1. Median Arrival and Departure Dates, Fall 1991**

Species	Arrivals		Departures	
	10-YR	1991	10-YR	1991
Brown Creeper	10/1	9/28	-	-
House Wren	-	-	10/14	10/16
Winter Wren	10/1	9/25	-	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10/3	10/4	-	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9/21	9/20	-	-
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	-	9/17	9/20
Veery	8/27	8/25	9/27	10/2
Gray-cheeked Thrush	9/18	9/16	10/9	10/12
Swainson's Thrush	9/3	9/2	10/16	10/14
Hermit Thrush	10/8	10/8	11/6	11/10
Wood Thrush	-	-	10/9	10/11
Gray Catbird	-	-	10/29	10/27
Brown Thrasher	-	-	10/12	10/31
American Pipit	10/19	10/13	-	-
Cedar Waxwing	8/28	8/25	-	-
White-eyed Vireo	-	-	10/2	10/7
Solitary Vireo	9/22	9/21	10/19	10/19
Yellow-throated Vireo	-	-	9/14	9/19
Warbling Vireo	-	-	9/13	9/12
Philadelphia Vireo	9/12	9/7	9/28	9/22
Red-eyed Vireo	-	-	10/7	10/12
Blue-winged Warbler	8/19	8/15	9/13	9/15
Golden-winged Warbler	8/21	-	9/10	9/11
Tennessee Warbler	8/30	9/1	10/10	10/13
Orange-crowned Warbler	10/10	10/6	10/30	-
Nashville Warbler	9/1	8/27	10/10	10/13
Northern Parula	-	-	10/2	10/11
Yellow Warbler	-	-	9/15	9/25
Chestnut-sided Warbler	8/23	8/25	9/26	9/25
Magnolia Warbler	8/25	8/24	10/11	10/13
Cape May Warbler	9/1	9/4	10/7	10/6
Black-throated Blue Warbler	8/30	8/25	10/12	10/13
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9/25	9/29	-	-
Black-throated Green Warbler	9/2	9/1	10/11	10/11
Blackburnian Warbler	8/24	8/20	9/24	9/22
Yellow-throated Warbler	-	-	9/10	9/20
Pine Warbler	-	-	10/8	10/13
Prairie Warbler	-	-	9/24	9/29
Palm Warbler	9/17	9/19	10/24	10/29
Bay-breasted Warbler	9/3	9/2	10/1	9/26
Blackpoll Warbler	9/11	9/7	10/8	10/3
Black-and-white Warbler	8/19	8/15	10/6	10/10
American Redstart	8/14	8/10	10/7	10/12
Worm-eating Warbler	-	-	9/10	9/13
Ovenbird	8/18	8/11	10/8	10/14
Northern Waterthrush	8/15	8/10	9/25	10/9
Louisiana Waterthrush	-	-	8/25	8/26
Kentucky Warbler	-	-	9/6	9/5

**Table 1. Median Arrival and Departure Dates, Fall 1991**

Species	Arrivals		Departures	
	10-YR	1991	10-YR	1991
Connecticut Warbler	9/6	9/8	9/30	10/1
Mourning Warbler	8/22	8/14	9/25	9/25
Common Yellowthroat	-	-	10/19	10/20
Hooded Warbler	-	-	9/19	9/20
Wilson's Warbler	9/2	9/2	9/24	10/6
Canada Warbler	8/19	8/15	9/20	9/19
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	-	9/18	9/22
Summer Tanager	-	-	9/18	9/21
Scarlet Tanager	-	-	10/5	10/7
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/5	9/6	10/6	10/6
Blue Grosbeak	-	-	9/26	9/29
Indigo Bunting	-	-	10/8	10/16
American Tree Sparrow	11/20	11/12	-	-
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	11/3	11/6
Savannah Sparrow	9/23	9/17	11/8	11/16
Fox Sparrow	10/29	11/5	-	-
Lincoln's Sparrow	9/20	9/23	10/18	10/19
Swamp Sparrow	10/1	9/25	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	9/27	9/29	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	10/10	10/13	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	10/1	10/7	-	-
Snow Bunting	11/3	11/3	-	-
Bobolink	8/18	7/21	9/22	9/19
Rusty Blackbird	10/22	10/21	-	-
Orchard Oriole	-	-	8/28	8/31
Northern Oriole	-	-	9/15	9/21
Purple Finch	10/11	10/19	-	-
Pine Siskin	10/24	10/16	-	-

Oct. 27 (H.Armistead), and 7000 at Ruthsburg on Oct. 30 (Grubers). A **Bar-headed Goose**, probably escaped, was seen on Sept. 8 at Easton (M. O'Brien) and Nov. 19 at Wye Mills (Glenn Therres, Brinker). **Brant** reports from Ocean City were 3 on Oct. 11 and hundreds flying by on Oct. 29 (M. O'Brien). A **Brant** was grazing on a lawn near Deep Run, Carroll County—only the 2nd County record—on Oct. 24 (Dave & Debbie Sawtelle, Kulp, Ringler). Other Brants were an immature on the Potomac between Broad Creek and Mason Neck on Nov. 2-3 (Bjerke, Janni, Kearns), 2 at Sandy Point on Nov. 9 (Wierenga, Davidson), 1 at Gunpowder State Park on Nov. 10 (Swift), and 5 at Piscataway on Nov. 11 (Czaplak). The Armisteads tallied 490 **Canada Geese** at Blackwater on Aug. 24 and Hilton counted 550 the same day in Laytonsville. Steve Simon counted 148 local birds as well at Loch Raven on Aug. 28. Some of the later high estimates were 20,000 at Church Hill on Oct. 16 (Grubers) and 20,000 at Blackwater on Oct. 27 (H.Armistead). Harry Armistead also noted a goose of the small form at Blackwater on Nov. 2, and 2 more of the same type were at Barnesville on Nov. 10 (M. O'Brien, Czaplak, Janni).

*Dabbling Ducks.* The high count for **Wood Ducks** was 40 at PRNAS on Oct. 18 (Rambo, Lister). Early **Green-winged Teal** were 50 at Decoursey Bridge, Dorchester

County, on August 4 (M. O'Brien), 1 at Triadelphia on Aug. 6 (Magnusson), and 3 in Cumberland on Aug. 17 (Paulus, Twigg). Higher counts included 650 at Blackwater on Oct. 27 (H. Armistead), 39 at Deep Creek Lake on Nov. 16 (Skipper), and 3720 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz). **Black Duck** reports were very low with Czaplak reporting the high of 100 in DC on Nov. 17. Notable numbers for **Mallards** were 625 on Aug. 30 at West Ocean City (M. O'Brien), 195 at Deep Creek Lake on Nov. 9 (Skipper), and 1000 at Blackwater on Nov. 10 (H. Armistead). The Grubers reported the first **Northern Pintail** at Remington Farms on Aug. 19, and Kathy Mariano saw a male at Lake Elkhorn on Sept. 3. High counts for Pintail were 162 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 22 (Blom, Stasz), 350 at Remington Farms on Sept. 30 (Grubers), 100 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien), 700 at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead), and 180 in DC on Nov. 17 (Czaplak). High counts for **Blue-winged Teal** were 19 at North Branch on Aug. 20 (Paulus) and Sept. 19 (Simons), and 45 at Easton on Aug. 27 (M. O'Brien). Late reports for Blue-wings were 4 on the Potomac between Broad Creek and Mason Neck on Nov. 17 (Bjerke, Kearns) and a male at Centennial Lake on Nov. 18 (Farrell). High counts of **Northern Shovelers** were 162 on Sept. 30 at Chestertown (Grubers) and 337 on Nov. 16 at Hart-Miller (Stasz). Early **Gadwalls** were 2, which may have summered, seen by Czaplak at DC on Aug. 3. Chestem found 1 Gadwall at Lake Kittamaquondi on Sept. 30 (Chestem). Overall, Gadwall numbers were again low with 20 at Deep Creek Lake on Nov. 16 (Skipper); the highest count for the season was 68 at DC on Nov. 11 (Czaplak). A male **American Wigeon** was at Centennial Park on Sept. 12 (Farrell, Solem) and 3500 were estimated at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 with a drake **Eurasian Wigeon** (M. O'Brien, Smith), seen by many birders, still present on Nov. 6 (Bonham). One hundred ten American Wigeon were seen on Nov. 11 on the lower Potomac in Prince George's County (Czaplak) and 140 at Loch Raven on Nov. 16 (Simon).

*Aythya Ducks.* Dave Czaplak tallied 68 **Canvasbacks** in DC and 110 on the lower Potomac River, Prince George's County, on Nov. 11. The high count for the season, also by Czaplak, was 600 at Fishing Bay, Dorchester County on Nov. 29. **Redheads** were once again scarce with 2 at Little Seneca Lake on Nov. 5 (O'Briens), 1 at Loch Raven on Nov. 16 (Simon), and 1 in DC on Nov. 17 (Czaplak). An early migrant **Ring-necked Duck** was discovered at Piney Run on Oct. 14 by Ringler. High counts were 220 on Oct. 29 at Georgetown Reservoir, DC (Czaplak), 137 at Little Seneca Lake on Nov. 9 (P. O'Brien), 131 at Deep Creek Lake on Nov. 16 (Skipper), and 300 on Nov. 24 at Loch Raven (Simon). **Greater Scaup** sightings were few and far between with 1 at Little Meadows Lake on Nov. 10 (Kiddy+), 2 at DC on Nov. 11 (Czaplak), 1 on the Potomac between Broad Creek and Mason Neck on Nov. 17 (Bjerke, Kearns), and 1 female at Centennial Lake from Nov. 15 to Dec. 4 (Farrell+). A very early **Lesser Scaup** was near La Plata on Sept. 7 (Jett); 32 at Triadelphia on Oct. 19 was a high inland count (Farrell, Solem). Higher counts were 210 at DC on Nov. 11 and 800 on the lower Potomac the same day (Czaplak). A mixed flock of scaup totaling 4300 (mostly Lessers) was noted by Stasz at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16.

*Other Diving Ducks.* The only **Common Eider** reported was an immature female at Ocean City from Nov. 12 into December (M. O'Brien, Blom+). A first-summer male **King Eider** was sighted at Ocean City on Aug. 2 by M. O'Brien and Wierenga. A first-winter male was at Laytonsville Nov. 5-9 (O'Briens+) and another first-winter male was seen from Nov. 29 into December at Ocean City (M. O'Brien, Jay McConnaughey+). Inland sightings of **Oldsquaw** included 4 on Nov. 8 at Triadelphia (Zeichner, Chestem). An inland fallout of **Black Scoters** included 1 at Wilde Lake on Oct. 29 by Helen Zeichner, the first Howard County record, 22 at Little Seneca Lake on Oct. 29 (P. O'Brien), and 2 at Hains Point on Nov. 10 (Hilton+). Mike O'Brien and Hal Wierenga

recorded 4 early Black Scoters on Aug. 29 at the north end of Assateague and Harry Armistead noted 2 near Bellevue on Sept. 21. Others reported were 150 for the high count of the season at Ocean City on Nov. 12 (M. O'Brien) and 3 at Nanticoke and Bivalve on Nov. 25 (Blom). **Surf Scoters** noted were 4 at Assateague on Sept. 11 (M. O'Brien, Brinker, Wierenga), 1 at Hains Point on Nov. 10 (Czaplak, Hilton+), 150 at Ocean City on Nov. 12 (M. O'Brien), and 100 at Nanticoke and Bivalve on Nov. 25 (Blom). Mike O'Brien reported 12 **White-winged Scoters** on Nov. 27 at Point Lookout. A good sighting of **Common Goldeneyes** was the 250 at Fishing Bay, Dorchester County on Nov. 29 (Czaplak). The first **Buffleheads** of the season were 11 at Triadelphia (Magnusson, Farrell) and 12 in DC on Oct. 20 (Czaplak). Other Buffleheads observed included 100 at Triadelphia on Nov. 8 (Chestem). Ringler noted a very early drake **Hooded Merganser** at Piney Run on Oct. 14 and Simon reported 29 at Loch Raven on Nov. 28. **Red-breasted Mergansers** of note were 1 at Wolfsville on Nov. 10 (Miller) and 40 in Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). **Ruddy Duck** reports were few this season but Czaplak estimated 1030 in DC on Nov. 17.

*Vultures.* Sightings of **Black Vultures** in Allegany County were 1 at the Narrows in Cumberland on Aug. 11, 9 there on Sept. 11 (Twigg), 4 at Wills Mountain on Sept. 11, and 1 at Rocky Gap on Nov. 4 (M. O'Brien). **Turkey Vulture** reports included 22 birds at the Narrows in Cumberland on Sept. 6 (Twigg), 43 at Dan's Rock on Oct. 22 (M. O'Brien, Gough), and Reese observed 52 on Nov. 24, possibly flushed by hunters, flapping above the tree tops in near total darkness at Royal Oak.

*Eagles, Hawks, Falcons.* Check Table 2 for the results of the fall hawk watch at Town Hill, and Table 3 for Monument Knob. Tardy **Ospreys** reported this season were 1 on the Potomac between Broad Creek and Mason Neck on Nov. 17 (Bjerke, Kearns), 1 at Loch Raven on Nov. 23 (Simon), and 1 bird at Triadelphia on Nov. 28 (Farrell). Frederick County reports of **Bald Eagles** were an adult flying over the Monocacy River on Aug. 4 and 1 over Braddock Heights on Aug. 25 (Miller) and 1 adult near Sam's Creek eating a groundhog on Nov. 12 (Carl Baker). Other reported Bald Eagles included 4 sightings in Allegany County away from the Town Hill hawkwatch from Aug. 25 to Oct. 21 (Paulus, Simons, Twigg+), 1 adult and 11 immatures at Remington Farms on Sept. 24 (Grubers), 1 adult at Broadford Reservoir, Garrett County, on Oct. 17 (Skipper), 1 near Marriottsville on Oct. 26 (Geuders), and 1 with nesting material at Blackwater on Nov. 10 (H.Armistead). The first migrant **Northern Harrier** was on Aug. 16 near Lilypons (Wilson) and 1 was noted at Cumberland on Aug. 17 (Paulus, Twigg). Other harrier reports were of 1 on Aug. 24 at White Hall (Thompson, Zickefoose) and 3 at Schooley Mill on Aug. 25 (Magnusson, Solem, Chestem). The first migrant **Sharp-shinned Hawk** recorded was at Wills Mountain on Aug. 17 (Paulus). The **Cooper's Hawk** seen on Aug. 17-19 in the White Hall area (Thompson, Zickefoose) may not have been a migrant. Two Cooper's were noted at Greensboro on Aug. 25 (Hewitt) and another the same day, an adult female, at Point Lookout (Blom). Harry Armistead counted 16 Cooper's near Bellevue on Sept. 21 and Paulus reported the first **Northern Goshawk**, an adult, at Cumberland on Oct. 13. Twigg spotted a Gos on Nov. 19 at Snyders Landing on the C&O Canal and on Nov. 28 Robert Strong recorded 1 at Eastern Neck. Notable **Broad-winged Hawk** flights were 698 seen within 35 minutes at Eden Brook on Sept. 21 (Farrell, Solem) and 500 in two kettles in Rockville on Sept. 22 (Hilton). The high count for **Red-tailed Hawks** was 73 over Dan's Rock on Oct. 22 (M. O'Brien, Gough). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was at Damsite for the first report on Nov. 3 (Grubers). Bonham spotted 1 near Lilypons on Nov. 8 and there were 2 at Keyzers Ridge on Nov. 10 (Kiddy+). A light morph was seen flying over I-695 in Baltimore County on Nov. 17 (M. O'Brien, Gough), Miller reported a Rough-legged near Middletown

**Table 2. Hawk Migration at Town Hill, Allegany County, Fall 1991**

compiled by Jim Paulus

Species	First	Last	Ttotal	Best Days
Black Vulture	9/30	10/16	13	5 on 10/12
Turkey Vulture	10/16	11/14	98	98 on 10/16
Osprey	9/2	10/26	41	4 on 9/11
Bald Eagle	8/25	11/8	10	2 on 9/11 & 10/26
Northern Harrier	9/9	11/14	42	6 on 10/14
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9/3	11/1	1135	120 on 10/12, 80 on 10/10
Cooper's Hawk	9/14	11/8	257	30 on 10/16, 24 on 10/14
Northern Goshawk	10/16	11/8	4	10/16, 10/28, 11/5, 11/8
Red-shouldered Hawk	9/13	11/17	49	9 on 10/18
Broad-winged Hawk	9/3	10/1	1102	409 on 9/13, 253 on 9/14
Red-tailed Hawk	9/5	11/19	1022	90 on 10/26, 45 on 11/8
Golden Eagle	10/16	11/17	27	6 on 11/1, 5 on 11/2
American Kestrel	9/9	10/29	111	13 on 9/20
Merlin	9/28	10/22	18	5 on 10/14, 3 on 10/9
Peregrine Falcon	10/2	10/14	6	3 on 10/9
Unidentified			44	
<hr/>				
Total (70 days, 316.5 hrs) 8/5		11/19	3979	418 on 9/13, 258 on 9/14

on Nov. 19, Czaplak noted 5 at Elliott Island on Nov. 29, and 5 were spotted at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 30 (Wierenga, Davidson). **Golden Eagles** reported were 1 south of Salisbury on Oct. 10 (Brodericks), 1 immature flying over Parkville on Oct. 19 (Hackman), 1 flying over Ellicott City on Oct. 28 (Ott), 2 adults and an immature at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead), 1 at Elliott on Nov. 7 (Wierenga), and 1 at Laytonsville on Nov. 9 (Janni). The high count for migrating **American Kestrels** was 15 at Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien). Also at Point Lookout was an early adult male **Merlin** on Aug 25 (Blom). Other Merlin reports came from 10 counties and DC including 2 at Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien), 9 at Assateague on Sept. 21 by Wierenga and Davidson, 1 at Bellevue the same day (H. Armistead), 1 at Gilbert Run Park, Charles County, on Oct. 5 (Jett), and 2 at Assateague on Nov. 30 (M. O'Brien+). Large numbers of **Peregrine Falcons** were again observed with Czaplak spotting an early arrival hunting shorebirds over the hydrilla in DC on Sept. 1. Reese found a Peregrine on Sept. 8 one mile southwest of Massey, the first of five reports from Kent County. Other notable Peregrine reports were of single birds at Kent Narrows, Queen Anne's County on Oct. 1 (Grubers), in Howard County on Oct. 10, Oct. 15, and Nov. 30 (Ott, Chestem, Wallace), and 1 adult at Blackwater on Nov. 28 (Czaplak).

*Gallinaceous Birds, Rails, Coots.* Interesting **Ring-necked Pheasant** reports were of 1 at Chestertown on Oct. 10 (Grubers) and 1 at Rocky Gap on Oct. 22 (M. O'Brien, Gough). Francis Hartley found a **Wild Turkey** at Loch Raven on Aug. 2 and



**Table 3. Hawk Migration at Monument Knob, South Mountain, Washington County, Fall 1991**

compiled by Lee Murray

Species	First	Last	Total	Best Days
Osprey	8/24	10/26	137	14 on 10/6, 13 on 9/14
Bald Eagle	9/2	10/5	7	2 on 9/21
Northern Harrier	8/24	11/16	76	10 on 10/14, 8 on 10/28
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8/24	11/9	1825	225 on 10/14, 142 on 10/5
Cooper's Hawk	9/12	11/9	120	13 on 10/19, 12 on 10/13
Northern Goshawk	10/27	11/16	3	also 1 on 10/28
Red-shouldered Hawk	9/21	12/15	102	14 on 10/19, 13 on 10/27
Broad-winged Hawk	9/1	11/13	2164	546 on 9/14, 367 on 9/12
Red-tailed Hawk	8/25	12/15	1020	133 on 10/28, 131 on 10/19
Rough-legged Hawk	11/13		1	
Golden Eagle	10/14	10/25	2	
American Kestrel	8/31	11/2	139	31 on 10/6, 17 on 9/20
Merlin	9/22	10/23	17	5 on 10/14, 3 on 10/13
Peregrine Falcon	10/5	10/27	13	5 on 10/5, 5 on 10/6
Unidentified			199	
<b>Total (91 days, 396 hrs)</b>	<b>8/16</b>	<b>12/15</b>	<b>5825</b>	<b>608 on 9/14, 358 on 9/21</b>

again on Aug. 9. The Grubers spotted 3 at Peters Corners on Aug. 12 and Joe Buchanan found 2 at Prettyboy Watershed, Baltimore County, on Aug. 20. There was a flock of 20 Wild Turkeys near Washington Monument SP, Frederick County, on Sept. 10 (Miller). Rick Blom reported a **Clapper Rail** on Nov. 25 near Nanticoke, and Mary Kilbourne noted a **King Rail** on Oct. 7 at the mouth of Western Branch where it enters the Patuxent. A **Virginia Rail** was at Lilypons on Aug. 7 (Walbeck). Late Virginia Rail reports were of 2 at Easton on Oct. 27 (Reese) and 2 near Vienna on Nov. 2 with one **Sora** (H. Armistead). An immature Sora was seen at Laytonsville on Aug. 3 (Hilton) and from Aug. 17 until the end of Sept. an immature was seen at Lilypons (Miller). Other Soras reported were 1 at Chesapeake Beach on Aug. 21 (Stasz) and 1 in Rockville on Sept. 23 (P.O'Brien). The high count for Soras at Jug Bay, Anne Arundel County was 50+ on September 28 (Bjerke, Kearns), down significantly from previous years. Dave Czaplak spotted an early migrant **American Coot** on Aug. 24 in the DC hydrilla and 3 were noted on Sept. 24 at Loch Raven (Simon, Jenkins). High coot reports for the season were as follows: 350 in DC on Oct. 20 (Czaplak), 128 at Seneca on Nov. 6 (Warfield), 300 on the Potomac in Prince George's County on Nov. 11 (Czaplak), and 225 at Deep Creek Lake on Nov. 16 (Skipper). The Brodericks estimated 700 coots at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 19 and Simon recorded 620 at Loch Raven on Nov. 23.

*Plovers, Oystercatchers, Stilts, Avocets.* The best count for migrating **Black-bellied Plovers** was 282 on Assateague on Aug. 14 (M. O'Brien, Wierenga). Czaplak

observed 1 adult Black-bellied in DC on Aug. 25 and a juvenile there on Sept. 7. Other reports included: 1 at Loch Raven on Sept. 10 (Simon), 1 at Frederick on Sept. 13 (Miller), 1 at Tilghman Island on Sept. 22 (Reese), 50 near Chestertown on Sept. 24 (Grubers), and 1 at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H.Armistead). **Lesser Golden-Plover** reports were of 2 to 4 seen at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2-4 (O'Briens, Dixon, Gough), 4 at DC on Sept. 19 (Czaplak), 2 near Chestertown on Sept. 24 (Grubers), and nice high counts of 40 near Lilypons on Oct. 2 (Miller), and 42 near Church Hill on Oct. 7 (Grubers). Other Golden for the season were 1 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien, Smith), 28 at Ruthsburg on Oct. 18 (Grubers), 7 at Blackwater on Oct. 27 (H.Armistead), and 1 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 for the last report (Stasz). The high count of **Semipalmated Plovers** was 176 in Ocean City on Aug. 16 (M. O'Brien, Davidson, Wierenga) and a very late bird was noted at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz). Mike O'Brien and Hal Wierenga spotted 6 **Piping Plovers** at the north end of Assateague on Aug. 29 and Jim Stasz found a migrant at Hart-Miller on Sept 15. High counts for **Killdeer** were 54 at PRNAS on Aug. 19 (Rambo, Lister), 75 at Laytonsville on Aug. 31 (Hilton), 105 on Sept. 14 at Green Manor Turf Farm, Howard County, (Solem), 68 on Oct. 7 at Queen Anne (Grubers), and 110 at Blackwater on Oct. 27 (H.Armistead). On Aug. 16, 98 **American Oystercatchers** were counted at Ocean City (M. O'Brien, Davidson, Wierenga); 56 were still there on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman), and another was at Bellevue on Sept. 21 (H.Armistead). A **Black-necked Stilt** was reported in Columbia near Wilde Lake on Sept. 18 (P. Newman) and an **American Avocet** was at Hart-Miller on Aug. 25 (Walbeck+).

*Fringine Sandpipers.* High counts for **Greater Yellowlegs** were 25 at Remington Farms on Aug. 19 (Grubers) and 40 at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead). Late Greaters were 3 at Loch Raven on Nov. 23 (Simon), 5 at Assateague on Nov. 25 (M. O'Brien), and 2 at Denton on Nov. 29 (Hewitt). **Lesser Yellowlegs** numbered 140 at Cambridge on Aug. 4 (M. O'Brien), 86 in DC on Aug. 30 (Czaplak), and 559 at reliable Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 (Stasz+). The high count for **Solitary Sandpipers** was 12 on Aug. 3 at Loch Raven (Simon). A **Willet** was feeding in the hydrilla at DC on Aug. 14 (Hilton) and the Willet Czaplak saw there on Aug. 24 was identified as the western subspecies, still present on Aug. 31. Mike O'Brien also spotted 5 Willets of the western subspecies on Aug. 27 at the north end of Assateague and 9 more there on Aug. 29. Farrell found a late **Spotted Sandpiper** at Triadelphia on Oct. 19.

*Curlews, Godwits, Turnstones.* High counts of **Upland Sandpipers** were 25 at PRNAS on Aug. 19 (Rambo, Lister), 20 at Frederick on Aug. 27, and 15 near Lilypons on Aug. 28 (Miller). Late reports were of 1 at Tuckahoe Neck, Caroline County on Sept. 12, and 3 were still there on Sept. 19 (Short). An offshore **Whimbrel** was seen during the Aug. 17 pelagic trip off Ocean City (Scarpulla+). Other Whimbrel reports included 7 at Assateague on Aug. 14 (M. O'Brien, Wierenga) and 3 there on Sept. 27 (Davidson, Wierenga). Single **Marbled Godwits** were seen this season at Hart-Miller on Sept. 4 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough) and at Tilghman Island on Sept. 22 (Reese). Also at Hart-Miller on Oct. 20 were 2 **Hudsonian Godwits** (M. O'Brien, Dixon). The high count for migrating **Ruddy Turnstones** was 70 on Aug. 14 on Assateague (M. O'Brien, Wierenga) and an unusual inland turnstone, an immature, was at Loch Raven on Sept. 6-7 (Jenkins, Simon).

*Calidridine Sandpipers.* The only **Red Knots** reported for the season were 5 at Assateague on Aug. 14 (M. O'Brien, Wierenga), 7 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 8 (Stasz+), and 1 in non-breeding plumage at Liberty on Sept. 13 (Ringler)—only the third inland record

for Maryland. Inland **Sanderlings** were reported from Allegany, Howard, Baltimore, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties with a high of 13 at Sandy Point on Sept. 21 (Wierenga, Davidson). The high coastal count was 2877 at Assateague on Aug. 28 (M. O'Brien, Wierenga). Counts of **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were low this season with 136 at Assateague on Aug. 14 the high for the season (M. O'Brien, Wierenga), and Czaplak found 60 Semipalms in DC on Sept. 2. Notable **Western Sandpipers** were 1 at Laytonsville on Aug. 3 (Hilton), 2 at Hughes Hollow on Aug. 27 (Bonham), 1 in DC on Aug. 31 (Czaplak), 1 at Denton on Sept. 21 (Hewitt), a late 2 at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead), 1 at North Branch on Nov. 19 (Kiddy), 1 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz), and 1 at Ocean City on Nov. 24 (O'Briens). Mike O'Brien turned in the high report for the season with 50 Westerns at West Ocean City on Sept. 13. Reports of **Least Sandpipers** were also low this season with 24 in DC on Aug. 30 (Czaplak), 1 at Triadelphia on Oct. 27 (Magnusson), and very late reports of 7 at Loch Raven on Nov. 12 (Simon), and 2 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz). Mike O'Brien found 2 adult **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Easton on Sept 6 and 1 in West Ocean City on Sept. 8 and 22. Five late birds were at Chesapeake Beach on Nov. 12, 11 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz), 1 still there Nov. 17 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough,+), and 1 or 2 seen at Hughes Hollow on Nov. 18-21 (Bonham, P.O' Brien). The high for **Baird's Sandpipers** was at Hart-Miller with 8 on Sept. 4 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough). Other Baird's were 1 at North Branch on Aug. 11 (Twigg), 2 there on Aug. 20 (Paulus), 3 there on Aug. 22 (Simons), and 1 at Easton on Sept. 6 (Wierenga). There were 25 **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Harmony on Aug. 22 (Short), 69 in DC on Sept. 1 (Czaplak), 135 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 8 (Stasz), 15 at Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien), 18 at Lilypons on Oct. 13 (Ringler), 20 at North Branch on Oct. 20 (Twigg), 17 at Hughes Hollow on Oct. 26 (Haft, Renfrew), 45 at Blackwater on Oct. 27 (H. Armistead), 55 in DC on Oct. 30 (Janni), and up to 7 late Pectorals still at Hughes Hollow on Nov. 14 (P.O'Brien, Bonham). Ringler observed 23 **Purple Sandpipers** in OC on Nov. 10. The first **Dunlins**, 2 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 were a little early (Stasz+), and 1 was in DC on Sept. 19 (Czaplak). Other Dunlin counts were 375 at Blackwater and Taylors Island on Oct. 27 (H. Armistead), 4 at Triadelphia on Nov. 2 (Farrell, Chestem, Solem), 2 at Little Meadows Lake on Nov. 4 (M. O'Brien), and up to 5 at Hughes Hollow through Nov. 21 (O'Briens). Stasz reported 460 Dunlins at Hart-Miller for the season high on Nov. 16. There were 18 more at Easton on Nov. 25 (Blom). **Stilt Sandpiper** counts were low compared to other seasons with 11 at Cambridge on Aug. 4 and 34 at Easton on Aug. 27 (M. O'Brien), 31 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 8 (Stasz+), and 7 at West Ocean City on Sept 13 (M. O'Brien). Late Stilts were 1 at Cambridge on Oct. 29 (M. O'Brien), 2 at Hughes Hollow on Nov. 2 (Haft, Sanford), and 2 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 17 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough+). **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** included 1 at Laytonsville during Aug. 31-Sept. 2 (O'Briens, Czaplak, Hilton), and 2 on Sept. 2, 17 on Sept. 8, and 12 on Sept. 22 at Hart-Miller (Stasz, Blom,+). Single **Ruffs** were found at Hart-Miller on August 25 (Walbeck) and on Sept. 2 and 4 (Stasz+, M. O'Brien+).

*Dowitchers, Snipe, Woodcocks.* **Short-billed Dowitchers** included 3 at North Branch on Aug. 15 (Twigg) and 9 seen on the Aug. 17 pelagic trip (Scarpulla+). Quite early were 6 **Long-billed Dowitchers** noted by Mike O'Brien at Cambridge on Aug. 4 and 1 adult in breeding plumage on Sept. 12 in DC (Czaplak). Other reports were of 48 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 (Stasz+), 1 in West Ocean City on Sept. 8 (M. O'Brien, Gough), 15 at Blackwater on Sept. 28 (H. Armistead), 1 at North Branch on Oct. 24 (Twigg), 3 on Oct. 27 at Easton (Reese), 2 more at Little Meadows Lake on Nov. 6 (Skipper), 11 at Cambridge on Nov. 11 (Ringler), 4 at Blackwater on Nov. 14 (Wilson), and 4 at Hart-Miller on Nov. 17 (Stasz+). The first report for **Common Snipe** was 8 at Easton on Sept. 6 (M. O'Brien). Others noted were 1 on Sept. 7 at Loch Raven (Simon), 15 at Lilypons

on Oct. 13 (Ringler) and 13 at Hughes Hollow on Nov. 8 (P.O'Brien). Michael O'Brien found an **American Woodcock** at Hart-Miller on Nov. 17, and Reese reported 9 at Tuckahoe SP on Nov. 17.

*Phalaropes.* Once again **Wilson's Phalaropes** were widespread during the early fall season with the first noted at Triadelphia on Aug. 11 (Magnusson, Farrell, Solem). Another at the Easton sewage ponds on Aug. 16 and 1 feeding in the hydrilla in DC on Aug. 23 were reported by Czaplak. Czaplak also noted 3 Wilson's at DC on Sept. 2. Hart-Miller continued to be a hot spot with 11 on Sept 8 (Stasz+). **Red-necked Phalaropes** held their own with 1 at Cambridge on Aug. 24-26 (Iliff). Czaplak found an adult in DC on Aug. 30 and 1 at Seneca on Sept. 26 that was seen by several other birders. Easton had a Red-necked present during Sept. 6-8 (M. O'Brien) and reliable Hart-Miller hosted 5 on Sept. 8 (Stasz+). Not to be outdone, **Red Phalaropes** were to be found at Hart-Miller also with 2 on Sept. 4 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough). Other Red Phalaropes were 2 seen at Sycamore Landing on Sept. 26 (M. O'Brien, Czaplak+) and pelagic birders were treated to 37 on the Nov. 23 trip from Ocean City (Scarpulla+).

*Jaegers, Gulls.* Mike O'Brien spotted 2 **Pomarine Jaegers** on Sept. 23 off Ocean City at Baltimore Canyon and 6 more were counted on the Sept. 28 pelagic trip (Scarpulla+). An immature Pomarine was noted at North Beach on Nov. 11 for an extraordinary Chesapeake Bay record (Stasz) and the Nov. 23 pelagic trip yielded 2 others (Scarpulla+). On Sept. 23, 2 **Parasitic Jaegers** were spotted at Baltimore Canyon and 1 about a mile off Ocean City (M. O'Brien); the Nov. 23 pelagic trip produced another (Scarpulla+), and 3 were seen chasing Bonaparte's Gulls at Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). An immature **Long-tailed Jaeger** was also checked off on the Sept. 28 pelagic trip along with a total of 7 unidentified jaegers. Completing the jaegers were 8 unidentified birds at Baltimore Canyon on Sept. 23 and 1 at Ocean City on Oct. 11 (M. O'Brien), and 1 immature flying over Ocean City on Nov. 10 (Ringler+). A **Laughing Gull**, rare in Allegany County, was seen on the Potomac River at Cumberland on Aug. 14 (Simons, Kiddy). Inland Laughing Gulls included 21 at Laytonsville on Aug. 10 (O'Briens). High counts were 4000 at Salisbury on Sept. 6 (M. O'Brien), 1500 at Upper Marlboro on Sept. 21 (Ringler+), and 2200 at Cambridge and 2300 at Vienna on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead). Among the other Laughing Gulls noted were 8 lingering at Triadelphia on Nov. 24 (Chestem). A winter-plumaged adult **Franklin's Gull** was in DC on Aug. 28-30 (Hilton, Wilson+). Other Franklin's reported were 1 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 (Stasz+), 1 first-winter at Ocean City on Oct. 11 (M. O'Brien), and 1 at Brown Station on Nov. 9 (Stasz). A very early **Little Gull** was noted at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2-4 (M. O'Brien+, Stasz+) and Mike O'Brien recorded Little Gulls in Ocean City with 1, Nov. 12-25, and 3 on Nov. 21, and 1 adult was at Assateague on Nov. 30 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Stasz). Solo **Common Black-headed Gulls** were reported at Ocean City on Nov. 12 (M. O'Brien) and Nov. 24 (Blom, Hoffman). The first-summer **Bonaparte's Gull** at Ocean City during Aug. 2-13 and the 2 Bonaparte's seen at Hart-Miller on Sept. 4 were probably summering (M. O'Brien). Inland reports included 8 at Centennial on Oct. 27 (Chestem), 8 at Laytonsville on Nov. 7 (M. O'Brien), 25 flying over Town Hill on Nov. 8 (Paulus), 1 at Lewistown on Nov. 11 (Miller), 32 at Vienna, unusual that far upriver, on Nov. 11 (Ringler), 150 at Tilghman Island on Nov. 17 (Reese), about 1000 counted during the Nov. 23 Ocean City pelagic trip (Scarpulla+), and an incredible 50,000 estimated at Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). The high count for **Ring-billed Gulls** at Ocean City was around 5000 on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). In Allegany County there was an immature **Herring Gull** at North Branch on Sept. 14 (Simons, Ringler). High counts for Herrings were 6500 at St. George Island on Aug. 25 (Blom) and 5000 in early November at Laytonsville (M. O'Brien). Not only

are **Lesser Black-backed Gull** sightings increasing in number but they seem to be arriving earlier with 2 in DC on Aug. 3 (Czaplak), 1 at Ocean City on Aug. 6 (Jenkins), 1 at Tilghman Island on Aug. 11 (Reese), and another, a third-summer bird, at St. George Island on Aug. 25 (Blom). Other reports were of 3 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 22 (Stasz, Blom), 1 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 (M. O'Brien, Smith), 5 in Ocean City on Oct. 11 (M. O'Brien), 1 at Blackwater on Oct. 27- Nov. 10 (H. Armistead, M. O'Brien), 1 at Salisbury on Oct. 28 (M. O'Brien), 2 to 7 seen at Laytonsville on Nov. 1-9 (M. O'Brien+), 2 near Hebron and 1 near Hurlock on Nov. 3 (Stasz), 1 at Triadelphia on Nov. 24 (Chestem), and 2 seen during the Nov. 23 pelagic trip (Scarpulla+). The high count for **Great Black-backed Gulls** was 567 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 (Stasz+). Stasz spotted a **California Gull** on Sept. 1-2 at Hart-Miller and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** at Brown Station, for the earliest Fall record, on Nov. 9. The Nov. 23 Ocean City pelagic trip yielded 12 **Black-legged Kittiwakes** (Scarpulla+). Others reported were 1 adult and 1 immature at Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman) and 2 first-winter birds at Assateague on Nov. 30 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Iliff, Stasz).

*Terns, Skimmers.* **Caspian Terns** showed their affinity for Hart-Miller with a high count of 476 on Sept. 8 (Stasz+). Also popular was Blackwater with 115 on Sept. 28 (H. Armistead). Other Caspians noted were 4 at Seneca on Aug. 19 (P. O'Brien), 5 at Loch Raven on Aug. 28 (Simon), 2 at Triadelphia on Sept. 20 (Chestem), 2 at Rocky Gap on Oct. 11 (Simons) and a late Caspian at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead). Eighty **Royal Terns** were on hand at Tilghman Island on Aug. 11 (Reese). The high count for Royals was 290 at Ocean City on Aug. 16 (M. O'Brien) and 5 late birds were noted there on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). **Sandwich Terns** were seen regularly by several birders this season at Ocean City, Aug. 1-29, with a high of 10 there on Aug. 16 (Wierenga+). Other Sandwich Tern reports were of 1 at Hooper Island on Aug. 24 (H. Armistead), 2 at Point Lookout on Sept. 2 (M. O'Brien), and 4 at the north end of Assateague on Sept. 8 (M. O'Brien, Gough). Rick Blom estimated 400 **Common Terns** at St. George Island on Aug. 25; other reports were of 250 at the east end of the Bay Bridge on Sept. 2 (Iliff), 1 in DC on Oct. 6 (Czaplak), 2 at Sandy Point on Oct. 17 (M. O'Brien), and 5 in Ocean City on Nov. 24 (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman). Dave Czaplak discovered an out-of-place, first-summer **Arctic Tern** at Ocean City on Aug. 18. Reported **Forster's Terns** were 4 at Seneca on Aug. 12 (P. O'Brien), 300 at Sandy Point on Aug. 15 (Wierenga, Davidson), 250 for DC on Aug. 31 (Czaplak), 780 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 4 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough), 130 at Point Lookout on Oct. 6, 200 at Eastern Neck on Nov. 8 (Grubers, Minis), 8 at Hains Point on Nov. 10 (Hilton), 75 at Sandy Point on Nov. 12 (M. O'Brien), 2000 on Nov. 24 at Ocean City (M. O'Brien, Blom, Hoffman), and 4 late birds at Blackwater on Nov. 28 (Czaplak). Five **Least Terns** were getting a late start southward at Blackwater on Aug. 24 (Armisteads) with even later reports of 1 on Sept. 2 at Point Lookout (M. O'Brien) and 10 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 4 (M. O'Brien, Dixon, Gough). This was another good season for **Black Terns** with 1 at Triadelphia on Aug. 18 (Magnusson, Farrell, Solem), 1 at Hooper Island on Aug. 24 (Armisteads), and up to 21 at DC off and on from Aug 3 to Sept. 8, and 3 on Sept 19 (Czaplak, Hilton, Janni). About 440 **Black Skimmers** were at Ocean City on Aug. 16 (M. O'Brien, Davidson, Wierenga), 2 immatures at Sandy Point on Sept. 5 and 14 (Wierenga, Davidson), 4 at Point Lookout on Oct. 6, and 15 in Ocean City on Oct. 28 (M. O'Brien).

*Alcids.* To the delight of those aboard, the Nov. 23 pelagic trip out of Ocean City notched a **Dovekie**, 18 **Razorbills**, for the earliest State report, and 3 unidentified large alcids (Scarpulla+).

*Doves, Cuckoos.* The high count for **Mourning Doves** was 1100 near Scaggsville on Oct. 27 (Solem, Farrell). A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was heard the night of Aug. 5 flying over Bishop's Head and 1 was seen at Assateague on Sept. 7 (M. O'Brien). Another was spotted at Lake Elkhorn on Aug. 10 (Wilkinson, Alex & Helene Hammer) and another was banded on Oct. 7 at Laurel.

*Owls, Caprimulgids.* **Snowy Owls** had a rough time of it with 1 found electrocuted under an electric pole near Chester on Nov. 11 (Ralph Baker, Ben Hren, Reese), and another found dead on Nov. 10 at Keysers Ridge following a sighting there on Nov. 4 (Kiddy). Another Snowy was seen in Barnesville on Nov. 8 (Simonsons, Chet Anderson, Jim Harwell) and Stasz found a Snowy at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16. A **Short-eared Owl** was reported at Irish Grove on Nov. 1 (Stasz), another on Nov. 15 near Queen Anne (Grubers), and another at Hart-Miller on Nov. 16 (Stasz). Wierenga and Davidson noted 3 at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 30. The first reported **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was 1 banded on Oct. 31 at Adventure, another was banded at Bristol on Nov. 17, and 1 was reported at Millington on Nov. 27 (Floyd Parks). Early **Common Nighthawks** were 1 at Farm Creek Marsh, Dorchester County, on Aug. 6 (M. O'Brien), 3 in Parkville on Aug. 12 (Hackman), and 3 at Dayton on Aug. 13 (Wallace). Others noted were 14 at Chesapeake Beach on Aug. 21 (Stasz), 85+ flying over White Hall on Aug. 24 (Thompson, Zickefoose), at least 200 at Rock Creek Park on Aug. 28 (Hilton), and 1 very late nighthawk near Germantown on Nov. 1 (M. O'Brien). The Grubers noted a **Chuck-will's-widow** at Damsite on Sept. 3 and single **Whip-poor-wills** were banded there on Aug. 25 and Oct. 5.

*Swifts, Hummingbirds, Kingfishers.* No really major counts of **Chimney Swifts** were reported with the high for the season 500 at Cresaptown on Sept. 27 (Simons). **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** netted at Damsite totaled 55 for the season. Late Rubys reported were 1 at Kingstown on Oct. 8 (Wilson) and one at Concord on Oct. 26 (Scudder). A **Rufous Hummingbird** that appeared at a feeder near Pocomoke City on Oct. 13 was seen through November by many (Doug Bruce+). Assateague was the unusual locale for 4 **Belted Kingfisher** migrants seen by Mike O'Brien on Sept. 22.

*Woodpeckers.* The female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** seen in the Snow Hill area on Aug. 3 could have summered there (Southworths). The earliest migrant Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers tallied were 1 at Schooley Mill on Sept. 21 (Magnusson), 1 the same day at Triadelphia (Chestem), and the high count was 50 at Tilghman Island on Oct. 13 (Reese). High counts of **Northern Flickers** were hundreds at Assateague on Sept. 21 (M. O'Brien+) and 175+ at Bellevue on Oct. 13 (Reese, H. Armistead+). Birders on the Sept. 28 pelagic trip out of Ocean City spotted 5 flickers offshore (Scarpulla+). Fogleman reported nice sightings of 6 **Pileated Woodpeckers** on Oct. 12-13 at Tilghman Island.

*Flycatchers.* Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were found on Aug. 25 at Rock Creek Park (Hilton), Sept. 16 and Sept. 24 at Pennyfield (Bonham), Sept. 21 in DC (Czaplak, Janni), Sept. 21 at Green Ridge, Allegany County (Simons), and Oct. 11 at Assateague (M. O'Brien). **Eastern Wood-Pewee** counts were modest this season with late reports of 10 at Point Lookout on Oct. 6 and 2 near Bellevue on Oct. 13 (H. Armistead). At Damsite 30 **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were banded for the season, the first one on Aug. 18, a high of 6 on Sept. 2, and the last 2 on Sept. 22. On Aug. 25 at Damsite 14 "**Trail's Flycatchers**" were banded. An **Alder Flycatcher** was heard calling at Hughes Hollow on Aug. 27 (O'Briens, Gough), and 3 **Willow Flycatchers**

were identified near Bellevue on Aug. 25 (Armisteads). The earliest reported **Least Flycatcher** was the bird banded at Irvine on Aug. 7. Others included a single bird at Point Lookout on Sept. 2 (M. O'Brien) and 2 in Rockville on Sept. 24 (M. O'Brien, Gough). **Eastern Phoebe** movements were noted on Oct. 13 with 20 at Tilghman Island (Reese) and 27 near Bellevue (H. Armistead). Czaplak documented an immature male **Vermilion Flycatcher** at Assateague on Sept. 29 for possibly the first state record. Late **Great Crested Flycatchers** were 1 bird on Sept. 28 near Bellevue (H. Armistead) and another on Sept. 29 at Assateague (O'Briens, Hoffman). No peak numbers of **Eastern Kingbirds** were reported but late birds were 1 in Eldersburg on Sept. 13 (Ringler), 1 at Severna Park on Sept. 14 (Iliff), and 1 at Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien). Mike and Paul O'Brien also notched a **Western Kingbird** in Rockville on Sept. 16.

*Swallows.* Swift noted high counts for **Purple Martins** in Harford County with 150 on Aug. 3 at Flying Point Park and about 2,000 on Aug. 30 at Joppatowne. Swift also counted 400 **Tree Swallows** in Joppatowne on Aug. 5. Other high estimates for Tree Swallows were 2900 at Black Hill Park on Sept. 10 (Czaplak), 1500 at Eastern Neck on Sept. 15, and 1500 at Ruthsburg on Oct. 2 (Grubers). Late birds were 1 at Triadelphia on Nov. 8 (Chestem, Zeichner), 1 at Denton on Nov. 10 (Nuttle), and 1 at Assateague on Nov. 30 (Ringler+). The Grubers estimated 300 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at Ruthsburg on Aug. 8 and M. O'Brien noted hundreds at Violettes Lock on Sept. 1. Very late Rough-wings were seen in Montgomery County on Oct. 31 (Bonham) and in Frederick County on Nov. 11 (Miller). The high count for **Bank Swallows** was 700 at Ruthsburg on Aug. 8 (Grubers) and an extraordinarily late bird was noted at Seneca on Oct. 29 (M. O'Brien). Ringler discovered a **Cliff Swallow** feeding a young bird in a very late nest at Liberty Lake, Baltimore County, on Aug. 24. Other reports were of 3 at Hooper Island on Sept. 8 (Southworths), 1 at North Branch on Sept. 15 (Ringler, Simons), and single birds at Sycamore Landing, Montgomery County and Seneca on Sept. 27 (M. O'Brien). Pelagic birders spotted an offshore **Barn Swallow** on August 17 (Scarpulla+) and high counts included 100 at Bradenbaugh, Harford County on Aug. 30 (Swift), and 150 at Ruthsburg on Sept. 27 (Grubers). Late Barn Swallows included 1 at Gum Swamp, Dorchester County on Oct. 27 (H. Armistead), 1 at Blackwater on Oct. 28, and 2 at Seneca on Oct. 29 (M. O'Brien).

*Corvids, Parids.* The first report for migrant **Blue Jays** was of 2 at Tilghman Island on Aug. 25 (Reese); the high count, 600 at Eastern Neck on Oct. 9 (Grubers). Ringler reported 700 **Fish Crows** at South Point, Worcester County on Nov. 10 and 910 were flying near Bellevue on Nov. 3 (H. Armistead). Paulus saw 5 **Northern Ravens** together at Town Hill on Oct. 16. There were no reports of **Black-capped Chickadees** outside their breeding range this fall. Reese noted migrant **Tufted Titmice** at Tilghman Island with 1 each on Aug. 18, Sept. 8, and Nov. 17.

*Nuthatches, Creepers, Wrens.* Nuthatches were very scarce this fall with an early **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in DC on Sept. 1 (Czaplak) and the seasonal high of 6 found at Assateague on Nov. 25 (M. O'Brien, Hoffman). Ringler spotted a **Brown Creeper** at McKeldin on Sept. 8 which could have been either an early migrant or a breeder. Nuttle spotted a **Carolina Wren** carrying nesting material on Aug. 12 at Denton. **House Wren** reports of interest were 20 at Assateague on Sept. 22 (M. O'Brien) and a late one there on Nov. 25 (M. O'Brien, Hoffman). Very early **Winter Wrens** noted were 1 at Lake Elkhorn on Sept. 12 (Wilkinson) and 2 banded at Damsite on Sept. 13. Other reports were of 1 near Ocean City on Sept. 21 (M. O'Brien, Gough), 4 in DC on Oct. 20

(Czaplak), and 7 at Point Lookout on Nov. 27 (M. O'Brien). **Marsh Wren** reports were of 6 in Rockville between Sept. 17 and Oct. 26 (O'Briens, Gough), 1 banded at Adventure on Sept. 28, 1 at Point Lookout on Oct. 6 (M. O'Brien), 1 at Easton on Oct. 27 (Reese), and 3 at Day's Cove, Baltimore County, on Oct. 27 (Swift). A **Sedge Wren** was at Chesapeake Beach on Aug. 1 (Stasz) and at Elliott Island on Aug. 10 (Wierenga, Davidson). Others tallied were 2 in Rockville, Sept. 17-26 (O'Briens, Gough), 1 at Irish Grove on Nov. 2 (Stasz), and 2 late birds at Assateague on Nov. 29 (M. O'Brien).

*Kinglets, Gnatcatchers.* The first **Golden-crowned Kinglet** report was of 1 at Rockburn on Sept. 22 (Chestem). Reese reported the high counts for Golden-crowns with 40 at Bellevue and 60 at Tilghman Island on Oct. 13. Czaplak bagged an early **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** on Sept. 8 in DC, and large counts reported were 100 at Eastern Neck on Oct. 9 and 100 banded at Damsite on Oct. 14 (Grubers), and 200 at Tilghman Island on Oct. 20 (Reese). Early reports of **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were of 1 at Tilghman Island on Aug. 4 (Reese) and 1 at Denton on Aug. 8 (R. Fletcher). Mike and Paul O'Brien found a late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Point Lookout on Oct. 12 and 1 was seen near Bellevue on Oct. 13 (H. Armistead).

*Thrushes.* The high count of **Eastern Bluebirds** was 65 at Tilghman Island on Nov. 3 (Reese). The first migrant **Veery** was banded at Damsite on Aug. 15, Reese reported 4 at Tilghman Island on Aug. 25, and the Southworths spotted another the same day at Taylors Island. The high Veery report was 25 on Sept. 1 at Tilghman Island (Reese). Czaplak spotted a very early **Gray-cheeked Thrush** in DC on Sept. 8 and also reported 3 on Sept. 22 at Black Hill Park and 5 more on Sept 27 in DC; another early bird was at Salisbury on Sept. 7 (Brodericks). The earliest reported **Swainson's Thrushes** were 2 at Taylors Island on Aug. 24 (Southworths) and 1 in Worcester County on Aug. 29 (M. O'Brien). Mike O'Brien heard a few hundred flying over Rockville the night of Oct. 11-12. The earliest **Hermit Thrush** noted was in DC on Sept. 27 (Czaplak). Another was at Ocean Pines on Sept. 29 (Dick & Jeanne Woods); high counts were 150 on Oct. 13 at Tilghman Island (Reese) and 19 birds banded at Adventure on Oct. 17. Late **Wood Thrushes** were 1 at Talbot Landing on Oct. 20 (Geuders) and 1 in DC on Oct. 26 (Czaplak). High counts for **American Robins** were 1500 at Chestertown on Oct. 19 and 1000 at Hope on Nov. 8 (Grubers).

*Mimids, Pipits.* Mike O'Brien reported thousands of **Gray Catbirds** on Assateague on Sept. 12. Other high counts were 50 at Bellevue and 40 at Tilghman Island on Oct. 13 (Reese). Mike O'Brien also noted 8 migrating **Northern Mockingbirds** at Assateague on Sept. 22 and another interesting mockingbird sighting was the 15 Czaplak found in a small field in DC on Nov. 5, also probably migrating. Thirty **Brown Thrashers** were at Assateague on Sept. 12 (M. O'Brien), and Piedmont stragglers were 1 at Wilde Lake on Nov. 17 (Zeichner) and 1 at Black Hill Park on Nov. 27 (Czaplak). The first reported **American Pipits** were 2 in Rockville on Sept. 30 (M. O'Brien). Other pipits reported were 50 near Germantown on Nov. 1 and 150 in southern Frederick County on Nov. 2 (M. O'Brien), and 83 on Nov. 16 at Hart-Miller (Stasz).

*Waxwings, Shrikes.* Reports of migrant **Cedar Waxwings** began with 30 at Morgan Station, Carroll County, on Aug. 18 (Ringler) and continued with 18 to 20 on Aug. 22-23 in Frostburg (Churchill). Large numbers of waxwings noted were 283 at Wills Mountain on Sept. 1 (Paulus), 150 at Fair Hill on Sept. 19 (Reese), 250 at Chestertown on Sept. 29 (Grubers), 353 at Town Hill on Oct. 21 (Paulus), 200 at Washington Monument SP on Nov. 9 (M. O'Brien, Gough), and 350 at Tilghman Island



on Nov. 24 (Reese). Nuttle watched a Cedar Waxwing feeding three young at Denton on the late date of Sept. 27 and 2 were notched on the Sept. 28 Ocean City pelagic trip (Scarpulla+). The only **Northern Shrikes** reported were an adult and an immature seen on Assateague from Nov. 25 into early December (Hoffman+). **Loggerhead Shrikes** this season were 1 at Greensboro on Aug. 22 (Hewitt), 1 at North Branch on Aug. 24 (Simons, Kiddy), 1 in Priestland Valley, Carroll County on Oct. 14 (Ringler, Kulp), and 1 at Town Creek, Allegany County on Nov. 2 (Simons+).

*Vireos.* Mike O'Brien estimated 50 **White-eyed Vireos** on Assateague on Sept. 13 and a late White-eyed was seen at Damsite on Oct. 27 (Grubers). Another late-comer, an immature, was noted at Point Lookout on Nov. 27 (M. O'Brien). The first reported **Solitary Vireo** was at Salisbury on Sept. 7 (Brodericks) and the first banded at Adventure was on Sept. 14. Other Solitary Vireo counts were 10 at Tilghman Island on Oct. 12-13 (Fogleman), 5 banded at Damsite on Oct. 13, 3 at Union Bridge on Oct. 14 (Ringler, Kulp), and 3 at Town Hill on Oct. 22 (M. O'Brien, Gough); Janni reported the last Solitary of the season in DC on Nov. 2. Czaplak and Hilton noted a relatively late **Yellow-throated Vireo** in DC on Sept. 22. Another tardy Yellow-throated was at Loch Raven on Sept. 24 (Jenkins). **Warbling Vireos** reported were 7 at Violettes Lock on Sept. 1 and 2 near the Ocean City airport on Sept. 8 (M. O'Brien), and 1 in DC on Sept. 8 (Czaplak). The single **Philadelphia Vireos** banded at Damsite on Aug. 20 and seen at Carrollton on Aug. 24 (Ringler) were surprisingly early. Czaplak spotted 1 in DC on Sept. 2. Other reports for the Philadelphia included 1 at Ocean City on Sept 7 (Pitney), 1 at Liberty on Sept. 7 (Harveys), 1 at Soldiers Delight on Sept. 14 (Walbeck, Gwen Burkhardt), 2 at Pennyfield on Sept. 19 (M. O'Brien), 1 there on Oct. 2 (Bonham), and 1 at Assateague on Sept. 22 (M. O'Brien, Wayne Klockner). There were 25 **Red-eyed Vireos** in DC on Sept. 7, a late bird there on Oct. 20 (Czaplak, Janni), and another late Red-eyed was banded at Damsite on Oct. 27.

*Vermivora Warblers, Parula.* Late **Blue-winged Warblers** were 1 banded at Damsite on Sept. 20 and 1 in DC on Sept. 27 (Czaplak). A **Golden-winged Warbler** was banded at Irvine on Aug. 31, Wheeler spotted 1 at Loch Raven on Sept. 1, the Newmans notched 1 at Wilde Lake on Sept. 11, and Janni found 1 in DC on Sept. 14. Mike O'Brien found the rare hybrid **Brewster's Warbler**, an immature, in Rockville on Aug. 26 and another, an adult male, was spotted in DC on Sept. 2 (Hilton, Czaplak, Janni). A rare hybrid **Lawrence's Warbler** was reported by Dan Niven in the Davidsonville area on Sept. 10. Reports of the rare **Orange-crowned Warbler** were 1 at Meyers Station, Anne Arundel County on Sept. 28 (Wilkinson), 1 in Rockville, Oct. 6-16 (O'Briens, Gough), 1 in DC on Oct. 13 (Janni), 1 near Bellevue on Oct. 14 (G. Armistead), and a late sighting at Popes Creek on Nov. 11 (Jett). An extraordinarily early **Nashville Warbler** was at Loch Raven on Aug. 13 (Wheeler). Later reports included 4 banded at Damsite on Oct. 13, one banded there on Oct. 28, and 1 seen at Schooley Mill on Oct. 19 (Magnusson). Reports of **Northern Parulas** included 10 on Sept. 22 at Assateague (M. O'Brien), 2 at Point Lookout on Oct. 12 (O'Briens, Jett), and 1 in Columbia on Oct. 18 (Zeichner).

*Dendroica Warblers.* Mike O'Brien spied a late **Yellow Warbler** at Point Lookout on Oct. 6 and Stasz recorded an even later Yellow at Chesapeake Beach on Oct. 19. Pitney reported the first **Chestnut-sided Warbler** on Aug. 17 at E.A. Vaughn WMA, Worcester County. Other Chestnut-sided counts were 13 in DC on Sept. 7 (Czaplak), a late bird at Point Lookout on Oct. 12 (O'Briens, Jett), and another on Oct. 13 at Triadelphia (Magnusson). The Brodericks noted an early **Magnolia Warbler** on Aug. 13 at Deal Island WMA, 15 were seen in DC on Sept. 7 (Czaplak), and a late bird was

banded at Laurel on Oct. 18. **Cape May Warbler** counts were 100 on Sept. 21 at Assateague (M. O'Brien), 6 at Salisbury on Sept. 23 (Brodericks), 2 spotted offshore during the Sept. 28 pelagic trip (Scarpulla+), and a late bird on Nov. 7 at Salisbury (Brodericks). **Black-throated Blue Warblers** arrived at both Damsite and Irvine on Aug. 22 with 165 banded at Irvine and 166 banded at Damsite for the season. Other reports were of 1 bird in DC on Aug. 25 (Hilton), 1 on Taylors Island on Aug. 25 (Southworths), 25 at Assateague on Sept. 21 (M. O'Brien, Gough), and 10 in DC on Oct. 5 (Czaplak). A late bird was banded at Laurel on Oct. 20. The first **Yellow-rumped Warbler** reported was 1 near Triadelphia on Sept. 13 (Wallace). High counts of Yellow-rumps were 300 at Assateague on Oct. 11 (M. O'Brien) and 500 seen at Damsite on Oct. 19 (Grubers). Janni noted an early **Black-throated Green Warbler** in DC on Aug. 22 and 10 were at Violettes Lock on Sept. 1 (M. O'Brien). Other reports included 23 in DC on Sept. 21 (Czaplak), 10 at Tilghman Island on Sept. 22 (Reese), 12 near Eden Brook on Sept. 27 (Chestem, Zeichner), and later counts of 1 in DC on Oct. 26 (Czaplak), and 1 at Loch Raven on Nov. 6 (Wheeler). Wheeler found 3 early **Blackburnian Warblers** at Loch Raven on Aug. 13 and Czaplak noted 1 at Black Hill Park on Aug. 16. Later Blackburnians reported included 8 at Eden Brook on Sept. 21 (Solem, Farrell) and the last one on Oct. 5 in DC (Czaplak). September reports of **Yellow-throated Warblers** included 1 at Daniels on the 18th (Chestem), 4 at Eastern Neck on the 21st (Grubers), and 1 on the 23rd in Salisbury (Brodericks). **Migrant Pine Warblers** were few as usual with Howard County birders noting single birds from Sept. 12 (Wilkinson) to Sept. 28 (Chestem, Farrell, Solem). Short reported a very late **Prairie Warbler** Oct. 29 in Denton. An early **Palm Warbler** was at Point Lookout on Sept. 2 and 2 were at Assateague on Sept. 7 (M. O'Brien). Palm Warblers were right on time at Sandy Point with 20 on Sept. 20 (Wierenga, Davidson). Other high counts for Palms were 14 (all western) in Rockville on Sept 18 (M. O'Brien), 24 at Assateague on Sept. 29 (Czaplak), and 30 near Bellevue on Oct. 13 (H. Armistead). Late Palm reports were of 1 at Blackwater on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead), 1 yellow banded at Damsite on Nov. 4, 1 on Nov. 9 at Schooley Mill (Magnusson), 1 western in Ocean City on Nov. 10 (Ringler), 1 yellow in DC on Nov. 11 (Czaplak), 1 western on Nov. 13, and 1 eastern on Nov. 25 at Assateague (M. O'Brien, Hoffman). Exceptionally early **Blackpoll Warblers** were at Pennyfield on Sept. 1 (M. O'Brien) and in DC on Sept. 2 (Czaplak). A Blackpoll was seen offshore on the Sept. 28 pelagic and the only multiple count for Blackpolls was on Oct. 6 with 10 at Point Lookout (M. O'Brien).

*Black-and-white Warblers through Waterthrushes.* High counts for **Black-and-white Warblers** were 14 on Taylors Island on Aug. 25 (Southworths) and 20 at Tilghman Island on Sept. 1 (Reese). Hackman found an early **American Redstart** on Aug. 1 in Parkville. The redstart seen during the DNR census in Snow Hill on Aug. 3 may have been a local breeder (Southworths). High counts for redstarts were 50 at Tilghman Island on Sept. 1 (Reese), 38 banded at Damsite on Sept 2, 75 at Point Lookout on Sept. 20, and 40 at Assateague on Sept. 21 (M. O'Brien). Janet Millenson discovered a very late female in Potomac on Nov. 7. The only August **Prothonotary Warblers** seen were 5 near Blackwater on Aug. 24 (Armisteads). Czaplak saw 1 **Worm-eating Warbler** in DC on Sept. 7 and there was another sighting there on Sept. 15 (Janni); Oct. 1 was a late date for 1 banded at Adventure. Damsite hosted a late Worm-eating Warbler banded on Sept. 21 and an early **Ovenbird** banded on Aug. 8. The last Ovenbird of the season was banded at Laurel on Oct. 20. An early **Northern Waterthrush** was banded at Damsite on Aug. 4 and the high count was 6 seen at Point Lookout on Sept. 20 (M. O'Brien). A late Northern was seen at Point Lookout on Oct. 12 (O'Briens) and the last 1 was banded at Adventure on Oct. 16. A very late **Louisiana Waterthrush** was reported by Chestem on Sept. 16 at Eden Brook.

*Oporornis Warblers through Chat.* Adventure banded a total of 21 **Connecticut Warblers** including the first reported for the season on Aug. 31 and 3 on Sept. 12. Bristol banded 2 each on Sept. 22 and 28. Damsite reported 1 each banded on Sept. 2nd and 8th and the first arrival at Irvine was on Sept. 8 with 10 banded for the season, the last on Oct. 4. Czaplak found 1 adult male Connecticut at Rock Creek Park on Sept. 8, another was reported near Lilypons on Sept 13 (Miller), 1 at Assateague on Sept. 21 (M. O'Brien, Gough), and a juvenile at Rock Creek Park on Sept. 21 (Czaplak, Janni). The first **Mourning Warbler** was banded on Aug. 4 at Damsite which banded 13 for the season, the last one, a late one on Oct. 13. Other late sightings were 1 near Buckeystown on Sept. 27 (Miller) and a bird banded at Adventure on Oct. 9. High counts for **Common Yellowthroats** were 30 at Tilghman Island on Sept. 1 (Reese), hundreds at Assateague on Sept. 7, and 30 at Point Lookout on Sept 20 (M. O'Brien). The Common Yellowthroat on Nov. 23 at Deal Island WMA was probably wintering (Batchelder, Pitney). Late **Hooded Warblers** reported were 1 banded at Damsite on Sept. 20, 1 seen at Rockburn on Sept. 21 (Chestem), and a bird banded at Adventure on Sept. 28. Banded at Damsite on Aug. 25 were 4 **Wilson's Warblers**. A very late Wilson's was the male seen in Salisbury on Nov. 28 (Vaughn). A very early **Canada Warbler** was at Columbia on Aug. 5 (Probst). October reports for the **Yellow-breasted Chat** were 1 banded at Adventure on Oct. 4, 1 seen at Point Lookout on Oct. 12 (O'Briens), and another on Oct. 14 at Phoenix (Jenkins).

*Tanagers, Cardinaline Finches.* Few **Summer Tanagers** were seen beyond mid-August; the 2 near Ocean City on Sept. 19-21 were the latest (M. O'Brien, Gough, Dick & Jeanne Woods). The Brodericks reported a fairly late **Scarlet Tanager** at Salisbury on Oct. 15. Simons spotted an early **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Pinto Marsh on Aug. 24 and Czaplak counted 17 in DC on Sept. 21 and saw a late one there on Oct. 26. Lingering **Blue Grosbeaks** were 24 at Blackwater and Hooper Island on Aug. 24 (Armisteads) and 15 on Sept. 2 and 2 on Oct. 6 at Point Lookout (M. O'Brien). Very late Blue Grosbeaks were 1 on Oct. 14 at Union Bridge (Ringler), 1 in Rockville on Oct. 15 (M. O'Brien), and 1 at Schooley Mill on Oct. 19 (Magnusson). Signs of late breeding were 2 dependent young **Indigo Buntings** at McKeldin on Sept. 2 (Ringler); late Indigos noted were 2 in Rockville on Oct. 19 (M. O'Brien, Czaplak), and 1 at Schooley Mill on Oct. 26 (Magnusson). Mike O'Brien reported sightings of an adult female **Dickcissel** at Point Lookout on Sept. 2, an immature at Assateague on Sept. 22, and 1 in Rockville on Sept. 23. Stasz saw an immature male Dickcissel at Chesapeake Beach on Oct. 25-27.

*Sparrows.* A very early **American Tree Sparrow** was at Schooley Mill on Oct. 26 (Magnusson). The high count for **Chipping Sparrows** was 300 at Damsite on Oct. 20 (Grubers). The latest migrants were 2 birds in Rockville on Nov. 28 (M. O'Brien). **Clay-colored Sparrows** reported were 1 in Rockville on Sept. 20-21 (O'Briens), 1 at the north end of Assateague on Sept. 22 and another farther south on Sept. 29 (O'Briens, Hoffman), 1 at Schooley Mill on Oct. 5 (Magnusson), 1 in DC on Oct. 8 (Czaplak), 1 at Pemberton Park, Salisbury on Oct. 13 (Sam Dyke), and 1 in Rockville on Oct 18-21 and Nov. 14 (M. O'Brien). Czaplak tallied 27 **Field Sparrows** at Boyds on Oct. 25. Late migrant **Vesper Sparrows** included 3 near Germantown on Nov. 1 and 1 in Rockville on Nov. 9 (M. O'Brien). On Oct. 4 in Rock Creek Park Czaplak discovered a **Lark Sparrow** that was photographed on the 6th by Janni. Early **Savannah Sparrows** were 2 at Hart-Miller on Sept. 2 (Stasz+) and 2 at North Branch on Sept. 14 (Ringler, Simons). Higher counts were the 30 Savannahs seen by H. Armistead at Blackwater on Sept. 28 and the 40 birds seen in Rockville on Oct. 15 (M. O'Brien). **Grasshopper Sparrow** sightings were 1 adult and 2 juveniles in Rockville on Sept. 22 (Czaplak), 1 in Rockville

on Oct. 19 (M. O'Brien), 1 at Boyds on Oct. 25 (Czaplak), and 1 at Pinto Marsh on Oct. 26 (Simons). Czaplak noted a **Henslow's Sparrow** in DC at Battery Kemble Park on Sept. 24. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** reports were of 1 bird in Rockville on Sept. 21-26 (O'Briens+) and 1 at Deal Island WMA on Oct. 10 where Mike O'Brien also found a **Seaside Sparrow** the same day. The high counts for **Song Sparrows** were 150 in Rockville on Oct. 18-21 and 40 at Point Lookout on Nov. 27 (M. O'Brien). **Lincoln's Sparrows** were widespread with the first arriving at Irvine on Sept. 12, 1 at Schooley Mill on Sept. 15 (Farrell, Solem), and 14 individuals sighted in Rockville between Sept. 17 and Oct. 23 (M. O'Brien). Other Lincoln's included: 1 near Buckeystown on Sept. 26 (Miller), 3 near Union Bridge on Oct. 14 (Ringler, Kulp), 3 the same day in DC (Janni), and 4 at Schooley Mill on Oct. 19 (Magnusson). Late Lincoln's were 1 near Scaggsville on Oct. 27 (Farrell, Solem) and 1 in DC on Nov. 5 (Czaplak). The first **Swamp Sparrow** seen by Mike O'Brien in Rockville was on Sept. 20, and high counts for Swamps were: 35 in Rockville on Oct. 23 (M. O'Brien) and 35+ at Tilghman Island on Nov. 17 (Reese). The first **White-throated Sparrows** were 2 at Schooley Mill on Sept. 22 (Magnusson). Mike O'Brien noted a record-early **White-crowned Sparrow** at Point Lookout on Sept. 20, H. Armistead reported 3 on Oct. 14 near Bellevue, and 16 were at Pinto Marsh on Oct. 19 (Simons).

*Juncos, Longspurs, Snow Buntings.* The high count for **Dark-eyed Juncos** was the 300 recorded by the Grubers at Damsite on Oct. 20. **Lapland Longspurs** were seen at more locations this season with 2 on Nov. 2 near Lilypons (M. O'Brien), 6 at Keysers Ridge on Nov. 7 (Skipper), 1 at Laytonsville on Nov. 9 (Czaplak), and 2 at Sandy Point on Nov. 10 (Wierenga, Davidson, Ricciardi). **Snow Buntings** began with 2 at Town Hill on Oct. 29 with 1 into November (Paulus+), 1 at Seneca on Nov. 2 (Hilton), 1 seen on Nov. 3-9 at Preston (Engle+), 1 at Deal Island WMA on Nov. 4 (Swarth), 3 there on Nov. 11 (Ringler+), 1 flying over Seneca on Nov. 5 (O'Briens, Gough), and 5 at Keysers Ridge on Nov. 7 (Skipper). Other reports were of 6 on Nov. 8-10 at Sandy Point (Wierenga, Davidson, Ricciardi), 1 flying over Rockville on Nov. 9 (M. O'Brien, Gough), and 3 at Point Lookout on Nov. 27 (M. O'Brien). The only large Snow Bunting flock was at Hart-Miller where Jim Stasz counted 174 on Nov. 16.

*Icterines.* Martha Chestem was treated to a very early sighting of **Bobolinks** when she found 6 immatures and 1 male in late molt at UMCF on Aug. 3. Mike O'Brien reported 100 Bobolinks at Mason Landing, Worcester County, on Sept. 7 and 100 at Assateague on Sept. 12, and very late sightings of 2 at Assateague on Oct. 11 and 1 in Rockville on Oct. 26. George Armistead turned in an interesting **Red-winged Blackbird** sighting: an albino near Bellevue on Oct. 14. Migrant **Eastern Meadowlark** reports were the 1 seen in Rockville on Sept. 26 and the 4 seen at Assateague on Sept. 29 (M. O'Brien). Chestem noted 2 at Lake Kittamaquidi on Oct. 17 and M. O'Brien reported 15 in Rockville on Oct. 19 and 25 at Assateague on Oct. 29. Dave Czaplak observed a male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Laytonsville on Nov. 6. **Rusty Blackbirds** were a tad early with 2 near Bellevue on Oct. 13 (H. Armistead), and other reports the same day of 4 at Lilypons (Ringler) and 1 at Tilghman Island (Wilkinson). A flock of 25-50 was at Hughes Hollow on Oct. 26 (Haft & Renfrew) and 45 were at Damsite on Oct. 28 (Grubers). The only **Brewer's Blackbird** reports were of 2 on Nov. 14 at Shorters Wharf, Dorchester County (Wilson) and 4 there on Nov. 21 (Wierenga). Harry Armistead found 3 **Boat-tailed Grackles** at Taylors Island on Oct. 27. High estimates for **Common Grackles** were 60,000 at Vienna on Nov. 2 (H. Armistead), 10,000 at Hughes Hollow on Nov. 15 (O'Briens), 7000 at Tilghman Island on Nov. 24 (Reese), and 10,000 flying over Rockville on Nov. 27 at dawn (M. O'Brien). High counts for **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were as follows: 125 at Town Hill on Oct. 31 (Paulus),

3000 in DC on Nov. 10 (Czaplak), 1500 at Poolesville on Nov. 11 (M. O'Brien), and 15,000 at Hope on Nov. 21 (Grubers). Scudder reported a very late **Orchard Oriole** on Sept. 21 in Denton. **Northern Oriole** reports were of 20 at Point Lookout on Sept. 2 and 15 running a bit late on Sept. 21 at Assateague (M. O'Brien). The latest Northern Orioles were 2, a male and a female, at Schooley Mill on Oct. 14 (Magnusson) and 1 in DC on Oct. 16 (Czaplak).

*Cardueline Finches.* Purple Finches were once again scarce with high counts of 12 at Rockville on Oct. 19 and 13 in DC on Nov. 17 (Czaplak). High counts for **House Finch** were 300 at Chestertown on Oct. 19 (Grubers) and 500 on Tilghman Island on Nov. 24 (Reese). Early **Pine Siskins** were single birds in Rockville on Oct. 13 (M. O'Brien) and near Bellevue on Oct. 14 (G. Armistead). A couple of young **American Goldfinches** were observed being fed on Sept. 18 at Salisbury (Brodericks). High counts for goldfinches were 500 at Sycamore Landing, Montgomery County on Sept. 26 (M. O'Brien), and 500 at Tilghman Island on Nov. 24 (Reese). There were few **Evening Grosbeaks** reported; a very early one was near Bellevue on Oct. 12 (H. Armistead).

9763 Early Spring Way, Columbia, Maryland 21046

## BLACK SCOTER IN HOWARD COUNTY

HELEN ZEICHNER

On October 29, 1991, a mild sunny morning, I was passing Wilde Lake, in Columbia, Maryland, as I do each time I leave my home and return. I make a habit of pulling over at various check points to scan with my binoculars, which are always in my car, to see if anything new has arrived. I noticed a duck among the Ruddy Ducks that looked different. Because the duck was sleeping with its head buried, I could not see any field marks on the head or bill. What was visible appeared to be completely black with a stiff tail like a Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), only larger.

At my second observation, about 9:45 A.M., nothing had changed; the duck was still sleeping. Next I noticed Bill Van Horn approaching on the path and called him over to observe. He agreed that something looked different and so I decided to return after lunch with my scope and field guides. I was happy to find on my return that the duck was now in an active position with head and bill completely visible. After seeing the rounded black head, large orange knob on the bill and larger size, I was able to identify a mature Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*).

It was so very exciting to think that this unusual sea bird was here on Wilde Lake and I should have been fortunate enough to find it. The next important step was to immediately call and alert other birders. This resulted in the quick arrival of Connie Bockstie, Bonnie Ott, Jo Solem, and David Holmes. The Black Scoter was still resting with an occasional lifting of the head, enough to get a glance at the orange knob. Because of the angle and lighting of the duck, it was not good for photographing, so David, Connie and I continued around to the other side of the lake where David was able to get some better light and closer shots.

Back home I finally reached Marty Chestem, and the report quickly went out on the RARE BIRD ALERT, but only a few were able to see the scoter before dark. Early the next morning, the Black Scoter was nowhere to be found. It had rested here for one day before moving on.

10167 Pasture Gate Lane, Columbia, Maryland 21044.

## EMERGING FROM THE SILENT MAJORITY: DOCUMENTING RARITIES

CLAUDIA WILDS AND ROBERT HILTON

Ever found a rare bird? What did you do? Many people do nothing at all, perhaps thinking that no one will believe them. A minimal step, if you are birding in a park or refuge, is to put it on the wildlife sighting sheet. That way somebody else might see the bird too, and report it to a birding hotline or take notes on it and send them to the appropriate rarities committee. Or you might call a knowledgeable birder you know and let that person decide what to do. With a little more self-confidence you might call the nearest birders' hotline yourself and subject yourself to questions by the operator.

Making contact with anybody on this subject takes courage, unless you are such a novice that you expect your report to be accepted without question. With more experience you know that your identification, like that of any other birder, will be challenged and you will have to defend it. (After all, rare birds are not supposed to be here. The odds are good that you have confused it with a species that *is* supposed to be here, perhaps one in a plumage with which you are unfamiliar.) If you are not convincing, your report may be met with skepticism or incredulity, and you may decide never to report a rare bird again.

That is a pity, because any active birder will come across several—perhaps many—rare birds that should get into the record books. Quite aside from the pleasure of providing excitement for fellow birders and getting some credit for it, the real value of reporting a rarity is the contribution to scientific knowledge: increasing the understanding of patterns of vagrancy or documenting the first stages of expansion of a species' range or (sadly) the last records of a disappearing species. The more information contained in a report, the more value it has to people interested in distribution and conservation. Detailed notes can demonstrate to future researchers that a certain species actually occurred at a given place and time. A report not accepted immediately could be validated at a later date as additional information about field characters or distribution patterns accrues.

There is a myth that the only birders with credibility in a state are a group of elitists who believe all of each other's reports and none from anybody else. Not true—everybody runs into skepticism, and everyone can learn to write an acceptable report. If there *were* an insiders' club it would be wide open for membership. Anyone could join who repeatedly reported the rarities he or she discovered and had at least some of them confirmed by experienced birders. Experienced observers show the patience to spot easily overlooked birds (rare ones that look a lot like common ones), and make a conscientious effort to submit documentation on rarities to a local records committee.

What is good documentation? A dead bird taken to a natural history museum and stored there as a prepared specimen, tagged as to date, location, and finder is an almost impossible and usually undesired solution for most birders. Next best is a photograph or series of photographs showing all the details needed to identify the bird conclusively. Because most birders don't have cameras or long lenses, and even those who do can never be certain that the photographs *will* show everything, or will even come out right, the basic requirement for every report is a set of notes *taken in the field*. Whether you just want to get your bird onto a rare bird alert or you want to establish a first state record, you need to have a notebook and a pen or pencil in your pocket whenever you go birding.

So you see the bird. Then what? Look at it closely, not taking your eyes off it until you have told yourself (put into words in your head) every feature you can see (and hear, if you are lucky). This includes not only the diagnostic fieldmarks but the details that paint a verbal portrait of that individual. Then take pictures, if you have a camera, or write down your mental words, or both (taking the pictures first). If you can sketch the bird, do so. Even if you are hopelessly inept as an artist, you may be able to draw a wing or tail pattern or a bill shape or pattern. If similar birds are in the vicinity, write down its differences from them. When you have run out of things to say about its appearance, record its behavior, including posture, and try to transcribe or describe its vocalizations.

If you are with other birders, do not assume that they will write notes, though you might encourage them to do so. If several of you are taking notes at the same time, the ideal procedure is for each person to write details without influencing the others. A suggestion to look at the eye-ring, for example, helps focus attention on a potentially key identification mark, whereas a statement that the eye-ring is quite striking may influence the content of the documentation. Similarly, consulting references during the note-writing process can suggest the presence of features that are not actually present. Resist the temptation to record what you "know" is there. In a group situation, different observers' notes will be different. Do not worry about missing a detail that someone else recorded—your notes will have value as an independent document.

At any time the bird may leave you, of course. That is why it is important to verbalize right away what your eyes see. Most of us do not have a photographic memory that would enable us to reconstruct later the precise details from a general impression.

The points that can wait until after the bird has gone are the notes on your distance from the bird, the relative position of the bird, the sun, and you, the habitat, exact location, time and date, the optics you used, the names of your fellow observers, and your previous experience with the species.

The hardest habit to break is looking at your field guide when you should be looking at the bird and writing down what it looks like. Force yourself to leave the books alone, at least until you have written the best description you can. If you add anything to your notes after consulting field guides, indicate which features were prompted by looking at the books (and specify which books).

Your notes may be a disorganized mess, but they are the core of your documentation. You will probably want to write up a neat, coherent version of them. Just don't leave out any detail. (Do make a note of features not observed, though, if you are aware of them.) Armed with notes (and photos, if you have them), you can answer any challenger's questions with confidence and accuracy, within the limits of what you were able to observe.

You will find this whole procedure not nearly as intimidating as it sounds if you prepare yourself for an unexpected rarity in two ways. First, memorize the terminology describing the parts of a bird in one of your field guides. In the introductory section they all have a bird or two with the parts labeled. Most of the guides supply a simplified terminology suitable for beginning users. In our opinion, the most complete, precise, and useful set of terms is found inside the front and back covers of Kenn Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* (Houghton Mifflin 1990). Second, after learning the terminology, practice on the local birds in your yard or neighborhood, and force yourself to describe

one bird every time you go out birding (a songbird one day, a raptor the next, a shorebird or waterbird the next, and so on).

If you have documented a species on the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee's list for review, send the secretary a photocopy of your field notes (as well as a tidied up version, if you like) and copies of photos, if any. The neat version need not be a well-written narrative suitable for publication. If the subject is worthy of an article in *Maryland Birdlife*, you can later add colorful prose that evokes the whole experience or provides information about the distribution of the species in the region, but only the details about the bird and the observation are important to reviewers of the record.

To illustrate what serious efforts at documentation may look like and how the committee analyzes them, we present and critically assess two records that have been reviewed.

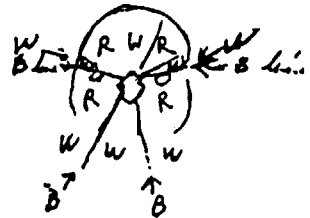
Read the reports and decide how you would have evaluated them before turning to page 34 and finding out what the committee decided and why. Think carefully about whether each observer included all the information you need. Did they eliminate the possibility that a different species might have been under observation? Can you visualize exactly what the bird looked like? If not, what is missing from the description? Does that make a difference in your decision?

### Lark Sparrow

W-white

B-black

R-reddish brown  
(rufous)



Elliott Drive, less than 100 yards south of Tridelphia Mill Road, Clarksville, MD.

Howard County book map p. 13, block K6.

Bluebird-size sparrow seen with a flock of House Finches at first at 1732 hours for 3 min. on 10-12-88. Temp. in low 40s.

Body white underneath with small black spot on breast, white throat with black whiskers, brown back with no wingbars.

Black line through eye, sparrow bill.

Rufous cheek patches.

White 1/2 ring under eye.

Alternating rufous and white bands on top of head.

Yellowish-brown bill and legs.

Came out of a weedy field on west side of street and landed in sapling above weeds and bush on east side and turned to face me.



In flight took a few flaps and then glided.

Slower wing beat than most sparrows.

Some white on tail, but bird didn't show me a clear view of the type of tail. No obvious wingbars seen.

Bird seen in full sun most of the time, observer looking east, range less than 50 feet, sky partly cloudy. Moderate wind from west.

Used 7 x 50 binoculars while sitting in pickup truck.

[Transcribed directly from notes taken in the field.]

### Franklin's Gull

On Sunday, October 27, 19—, I met X— at Loch Raven reservoir. X— had been making a series of observations from a point of land on the north shore of the lake, and I was anxious to learn of the spot. During the fall X— had seen a Piping Plover there on September 27 and, beginning on October 10, Laughing Gulls. The Laughing Gulls had built to a population of 48 birds by October 25, although none were present on October 26.

At 10 a.m., X—, Y—, Z—, and I met at the reservoir, and X— led us through the woods to a point of land that jutted out into the lake, just east of the main Dulaney Valley bridge, at the north side of the lake. About 50 feet offshore was a very small island that had been exposed because of the abnormally low water conditions. On the island were 2 Great Black-backed Gulls, 6 Herring Gulls, and several dozen Ring-billed Gulls. As the others began to search for waterfowl, I noticed a flock of birds that were just pin dots through my binoculars, high in the sky to the east. Using my 30-power telescope, I could make out what I thought to be a flock of Laughing Gulls. Soon they began to spiral downward, and within a few minutes they had reached the water level and were flying toward the island. Upon alighting, they were identified as 13 adult and 2 juvenile Laughing Gulls.

Over the past few years I have grown accustomed to meticulously examining every bird that I see in a flock. This I began to do with the flock of gulls in front of me on the island. Soon I noticed a smaller bird among the laughers. I advised the others, and soon all four scopes were trained on the island about 50 yards away. I told them that I thought I had a Franklin's Gull. The characteristics that separated this bird from the Laughing Gulls were easy to see, since a Laughing Gull was immediately behind the bird in question. Differences were noted as follows: first, the bird was in adult, non-breeding plumage, as was the nearby Laughing Gull. Most notable was the size difference. The Franklin's was about 20 percent smaller, with obviously shorter legs and a smaller, slighter bill. The color of the mantle was a half-shade lighter than the Laughing Gulls. (I had never noticed this difference before, but subsequent research has shown this to be true.) The spectacle-like white eye ring was outstanding, and the nape and side of head were covered with dark gray feathers that appeared like a partial hood. All of these field marks were compared with the neighboring Laughing Gulls. We are all convinced that we observed a Franklin's Gull, a first for Maryland's piedmont.

The large flock of Laughing Gulls was itself an unusual occurrence in this location, and the Franklin's Gull even more so. One must assume that the Franklin's arrived on the island with the Laughing Gulls, since only large gulls were on the island when we arrived. Whether the high-flying flock was migrating, or whether it represented some of the Laughing Gulls seen by X— two days before (but not the day before) can only be speculated. My four previous observations of Franklin's Gull in Baltimore County have all occurred within the September 20-October 27 period. Apparently there is a late fall migration that pushes this bird to the east coast during this time period.

The Lark Sparrow report, though terse, was complete, and it convinced all members of the committee of its accuracy on its first circulation.<sup>1</sup> As one member wrote:

"The combination of features is compelling: white belly, black breast spot, black whiskers and eyeline, rufous cheeks and head stripes, lack of wingbars, white in the tail. Bluebird size is good, too."

The head sketches and the precise details of location, time, length of observation, light conditions, distance, weather, and optics in addition to the details of appearance and behavior make this a model record.

An adult Lark Sparrow, of course, is not a difficult bird to identify, but the exactness with which this individual was described by Mark Wallace exemplifies the kind of verbal portrait that answers the questions that any report of a rarity raises.

The Franklin's Gull record, though much longer, is not nearly so detailed in respect to essential information. On the first circulation most committee members voted for it, but questions and doubts emerged from the comments. "I am not entirely convinced that the bird was not a Florida first-winter Laughing Gull. These birds aren't much different in size from a Franklin's Gull. The description given of the partial hood sounds a bit like either species and doesn't convince." "I am curious why nothing about the wing pattern was noted: no conspicuous white markings? Was the bird extremely worn, or molting? Why was it considered an adult? Could it have been in first-summer plumage?" "The description does not describe the hood clearly as more extensive than those of the laughers, which would be showing more variation in head pattern at this time. The white apical spots on the primaries should be larger than those of the laughers."

On the second round the vote changed to 4-4. A new committee member noted: "Diagnostic field marks are lacking. The shorter legs and slighter bill would be expected of a bird 20 percent smaller, and size alone cannot be convincing for a gull of unknown sex. There is much more variability in size among Laughing Gulls than between Laughers and Franklin's. The eye ring and hood remnants could belong to either species. The birds were watched in flight as they approached the island, but no one at that time noticed the characteristic wing pattern of a Franklin's."

With half the committee still supporting the record, it was given a third chance. This time the number of negative votes reached five, and the record was assigned to the "not accepted" category. The cumulative doubts about whether the information that had been provided (or not provided) on the size, head pattern, and wingtips eliminated Laughing Gull outweighed the case for Franklin's Gull, with which the details were certainly compatible.

This report was submitted by a Records Committee member. Although he was (or should have been) aware of the level of detail needed for acceptance, anyone can forget to put in some important facts, especially if no field notes are taken on the spot. We don't know if that is what happened in this case. What we do know is that no copy of any field notes was submitted with the narrative and that none of the other three observers sent descriptions to the Records Committee. The failure of this record may have been a problem only of exposition, but there is no way to know whether the observers talked about the wing pattern or even thought about this key character.

Compare the polished after-the-event presentation of this report with the immediacy of the Lark Sparrow notes and see for yourself what was missing in one and present in the other. Then make a habit of taking your pen and notebook into the field and get your birding friends and

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<sup>1</sup>The voting procedure of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee is as follows: to be accepted or rejected on the first round, the votes on a record must be unanimous. To be accepted on the second round, they must also be unanimous. Records with up to four negative votes go on to a third round. On the third round a record is accepted if it receives no more than one negative vote. Records with two negative votes (but no more) on the third round are discussed in a committee meeting and later given one last chance to be accepted, with one negative vote allowed on a fourth round

companions to do the same. Remember that photocopies of everybody's notes (or even those of a single observer) scribbled on the spot are more likely to provide the committee with the observations it needs to make its decisions than an account based on a recollection, even one just a few hours old. Above all, remember that your reports are invited and appreciated, that the most well-known birders have had (and continue to have) reports not accepted, and that the most unknown birders have had reports accepted. The only rarity sightings that have no chance at all of becoming records are the ones kept secret from the Records Committee.

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### BOOK REVIEW

**SPRING IN WASHINGTON.** Louis J. Halle. Illustrated by Francis L. Jacques. Foreword by Roger Tory Peterson. Reprint edition published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. 1988. 234p., pprbk., \$7.95.

My introduction to Louis Halle did not come until 1979 when he, along with Chandler Robbins received the Audubon Naturalist Society's Paul Bartch Award for outstanding contributions to the field of Natural History. Later, while in a used book store I found the book most often mentioned that night at the award ceremony, *SPRING IN WASHINGTON*. A real bargain at \$2, I bought it and read it eagerly. Where was I in 1947 when Halle was having such a good time birdwatching in Washington, DC, of all places? Certainly not birdwatching, only having picked up binoculars in 1970. The DC I know 40 years later holds little interest for me and my binoculars, atlasing reports notwithstanding. It does seem a very personal misfortune that an expanding capital city could so effectively erase the opportunities that must have been there for Louis Halle, but not for me. Yet even then it took a keen and faithful observer. How many of DC's other citizens were driving blindly by the gullies and wet places unaware of the changing scene within? What remains unchanged is Halle's lovely clear prose as he reported spring's deceptively simple happenings, turning them into images to inspire us, adding even wider dimensions to our own favored perceptions of the season. Halle, back in Washington from his home in Switzerland in 1988 was asked by a radio interviewer how Washington seemed to him after living in Europe for the greater portion of his life. Even more beautiful than he'd remembered; all the more so because of the plentiful mockingbirds among the shrubbery in the streetside parks, was his reply.—*Joy Wheeler*

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