

Mid-Atlantic Region

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Hurricane *Fran's* forceful impact on the Region set the tone for much of this season's report. The storm passed straight through the Virginia Piedmont early Friday, September 6, and Maryland's Chesapeake Bay was at the eastern limit that same evening. Several observers were out in Virginia that day despite the weather. A party at Kerr Reservoir arrived early that morning in 35 knot winds and constant rain, and their day-long survey was the most impressive and comprehensive chronicle of the storm from the Virginia Piedmont. During the afternoon some observers hit the Bay shore, and numerous parties were out looking for storm-driven birds over the weekend. The result was certainly the best coverage of such a storm ever in the Region. Compared to *Bertha* earlier this year, *Fran* did displace large numbers of Sooty Terns, but did not move many storm-petrels. Many migrants were grounded, and Cory's Shearwaters and Black-capped Petrels were the primary Procellariidae rarities. A full report on the storm will be published in an upcoming issue of *Birding*. Hurricane *Josephine* came through October 8, but was weak and produced few significant bird records.

Otherwise the season was generally cool and wet. High water levels at inland reservoirs discouraged shorebirds from stopping. Brian Sullivan again manned the Kiptopeke hawk watch platform, putting in a monumental 966.5 hours. Passerine flights were noted as poor to very poor, waterfowl counts were down in comparison to the last couple years, and Northern Saw-whet Owls and winter finches were non-existent. Reporting has been improving, especially with increasing email use by birders, but we still lack much data. Thanks to all who braved the storm and put time in the field this quarter. Thanks also to Teta Kain for her efforts compiling *Gloucester*, Virginia, for the past year. She will not be continuing, and a replacement is needed.

Abbreviations: Assat. (*Assateague I. National Shore*); Bay (*Chesapeake Bay*); Black. (*Blackwater N.W.R.*); C.B.B.T. (*Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel*); Chinc. (*Chincoteague N.W.R.*); Craney (*Craney I. Disposal Area*); D.C. (*District of Columbia*); E.S.V.N.W.R. (*Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R.*); Hart (*Hart-Miller I.*); Kipt. (*Kiptopeke S.P.*); p.a. (*pending acceptance by state records committee*); P.N.A.S. (*Patuxent Naval Air Station*); P.W.R.C. (*Patuxent Wildlife Research Center*); S.P.S.P. (*Sandy Point S.P.*).

Loons to Waterfowl

One juv. Pacific Loon was at Sunset Beach, *Northampton, VA* Nov. 26 (p.a. BS), not particularly surprising since they have been turning up regularly on the East Coast recently. Red-throated Loons appeared at Loch Raven Res., *Baltimore,*

Oct. 29–Nov. 25 (SWS) and Bush R., *Harford, MD* Nov. 14 (LE), and a bird in alternate plumage, unusual on so late a date, was at South R. Park, *Anne Arundel, MD* Nov. 6 (DRS). Just two Red-necked Grebes appeared, one at Hooper's I., *Dorchester, VA* Nov. 16 (MW *et al.*) and one at Chinc., *Accomack, VA* Nov. 29 (OJ, DS). An Eared Grebe at Beltsville Sept. 9 (†DB) provided a *Prince George's* first, while others were at Northampton County Landfill, *Northampton, VA* Sept. 21 (NB, TG, DSc) and Hart, *Baltimore, MD* Sept. 28–Oct. 5 (EJS). A Western Grebe found Nov. 20 by Stinson at Sandy River Res., *Prince Edwards, VA* pleased many through at least Nov. 27 (NB) and provided Virginia's 3rd Piedmont record.

SA Hurricane *Fran*, which hit s. Virginia in full force Sept. 6, carried numerous tubenoses far inland, and deposited numbers of Black-capped Petrels, Cory's Shearwaters, and storm-petrels on the Great Lakes. Many active field observers realized the birding potential of this storm and got out early to survey local lakes, rivers, and reservoirs for rarities. The resultant collection of reports spans many of the better locales across the 2 states. Six Black-capped Petrels were counted at Kerr Res., *Mecklenburg, VA*, Sept. 6 (p.a. NB, BP *et al.*), and two were at the C.B.B.T. the next day (NB, BPa, BT). Unidentified Procellariidae were too distant to be identified at North Beach, *Calvert, MD* and Kerr Res. (p.a. NB *et al.*), while singles over the Potomac, *Prince George's, VA* across from Bellehaven, *VA* Sept. 7 (p.a. †PP, RH), and S.P.S.P., *Anne Arundel, MD* the next day (p.a. LMD, HLW, †GM *et al.*) were identifiable only as *Pterodroma* sp. The real gems of the storm were the single Fea's Petrel at Kerr Res. (p.a. †NB), present briefly in the morning, and the light-morph Herald Petrel observed at leisure there through the day (p.a. †NB, BP *et al.*). A single Cory's Shearwater was over the Potomac across from Bellehaven (p.a. †PP) Sept. 7, and four were at Kerr Res. (p.a. NB, BP *et al.*) Sept. 6, with two there the next day (p.a., *fide* NB). A White-faced Storm-Petrel and eight Wilson's Storm-Petrels at Kingsmill on the James R., *Surry, VA* (p.a. BW), and a Greater Shearwater seen from another locale on the James R., Sept. 6 (LW) rounded out the list of *Fran's* unusual inland tubenose deposits. A pelagic trip off Virginia



Beach Sept. 8 (NB *et al.*) surveyed its effects on birds offshore, and recorded a record-high Regional count of 2165 Cory's Shearwaters, as well as a good fall count of 87 Greater Shearwaters; 49 Audubon's Shearwaters and 112 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were entirely typical of the date and locale. The implications for the Maryland and Virginia state lists are too many to list here.

Fourteen Wilson's Storm-Petrels seen from the Pt. Lookout-Smith I. Ferry in both *Somerset* and *St. Mary's* represented a high count for the Maryland portion of the Bay Aug. 4 (JLS, MJI). Though they certainly occur there regularly, so high a number could have been related to mid-July's hurricane *Bertha*. A pelagic trip Aug. 18 off Ocean City recorded a state record count of 31 Audubon's Shearwaters, as well as four Greater Shearwaters, 22 Cory's Shearwaters, and 117 Wilson's Storm-Petrels. A single Manx Shearwater was seen off Virginia Beach Nov. 30 (NB *et al.*).

A major displacement of Am. White Pelicans occurred in the northeast this fall. Sullivan recorded them at Kipt., *Northampton*, VA, on 3 dates, with three Oct. 4, a loner Oct. 24, and seven Nov. 3 (reportedly the same group was seen by other observers both north and south of the Region on this date). One lingered at Hog Island W.M.A., *Surry*, through at least Sept. 15 (BT, BW), and another appeared at Chinc., Sept. 14 (JLS, VK) and Nov. 9 (JH). At Smith I., *Somerset*, MD, 85 Brown Pelicans were counted Aug. 3 (MJI, JLS), and two wayward birds were on the Chester R. near Chestertown Aug. 19 for a first *Kent* record. Another transported itself to *Talbot* Sept. 7 for Armistead's first yard record at his Bellevue home. Their increase in the Region continues unabated, with 3-figure counts from several locales and two lingering at New Pt. Comfort, *Mathews*, VA, through Nov. 29 (JBB). Northern Gannets did not appear in the Bay at all this fall, and were poorly reported even from the coast. A 2nd-year Great Cormorant was at Conowingo, *Harford/Cecil*, Nov. 3-9 (EJS, EB), the only Piedmont location where they can be expected. Anhingas at Stumpy L., Virginia Beach, included one male Aug. 8 (MS), and two of unspecified sex Aug. 22 (LW) to Sept. 7 (SE). Additionally a female was at Chinc., Aug. 1 (SD).

The imm. Tricolored Heron that appeared at Sandy River Res., Sept. 7 (MS) almost certainly was pushed into the Piedmont by hurricane *Fran*, and two Cattle Egrets at Huntley Meadows,



Immature Roseate Spoonbill at McAn National Wildlife Refuge, Smith Island, Maryland, August 2, 1996. Photograph/Mike Haramis.

Fairfax, VA, the same day (AH) may also have been storm related, as they are unusual there. The last Green Heron was at Hashawa, *Carroll*, Nov. 16 (RFR). An imm. White Ibis at P.R.N.A.S., *Saint Mary's*, was a good find Sept. 11 (KR, DL), though 37 at E.S.V.N.W.R., *Northampton*, VA, Oct. 12 were more expected, if a bit late (MJI, JLS). A continuing phenom from the summer was the imm. Roseate Spoonbill at Martin N.W.R., *Somerset*, seen Aug. 23 (p.a., † ph. MH, DJ, MHa). After a fleeting look in July, and unsuccessful searches by numerous birders, it was again found by the researchers who saw it initially, and—fortunately—was well-documented, providing Maryland's 2nd record.

November 1-2 saw the arrival of the first Tundra Swan flocks to the Region (v.o.). Five young Mute Swans seen with adults at Smith I., *Somerset*, Aug. 3-4 (JLS, MJI) supplied an overdue, if unfortunate, first *Somerset* breeding. Single Greater White-fronted Geese cavorted with Canada Geese at Bradenbaugh, *Harford*, Nov. 1 (DK) and Oak Hill Farm Pond, *Loudoun*, Nov. 27+ (NB, MS); the latter was specifically noted to be orange-billed. Ross' Geese were at Black., *Dorchester*, with three Nov. 28 (MAT, †DC), and Chinc., with one Nov. 29 (OJ). Flocks of 35, 30, and 64 Brant respectively at S.P.S.P., Nov. 1 (ASe), the Miles R., *Talbot/Queen Anne's*, (JR) and Hart Nov. 9 (EJS) were all remarkably high numbers for the Bay in recent years. One in Ft. Hunt, VA Nov. 20 provided the only inland report (p.a. DP). The only small

race Canada Goose was at Schoolhouse Pond, *Prince George's*, Oct. 30 (JLS).

The ♂ Wood Duck x Mallard returned to Centennial Park, *Howard*, Oct. 29 and Nov. 7 (JF). A White-cheeked Pintail at Burke L., *Fairfax*, Sept. 7 (JP) & 28 (KM) may have deserved more attention: Its first appearance was the day after *Fran* passed through. Virginia has 2 old accepted records of this species, so its potential for (storm-assisted?) vagrancy should not be discounted. Despite an exceptional breeding year for prairie ducks, numbers of all waterfowl seemed low in comparison to recent years. The best duck counts were headlined by an outstanding 1850 N. Shovelers at Craney, *Portsmouth*, VA Nov. 2 (NB), with 150 Redhead at Loch Raven Res., Nov. 13 (SWS) also being of interest. Eurasian Wigeons visited Airlie, *Fauquier*, Oct. 13-14 (VK), West Ocean City, *Worcester*, Nov. 2, and Sunken Meadow, *Surry*, Nov. 6 (FD). Common Eiders showed well, with one female at the Rudee Inlet, VA Nov. 2 (NB), a big flock of 21 staying at the C.B.B.T., *Northampton*, VA Nov. 24+, and 13 at Ocean City Inlet, *Worcester*, Nov. 30 (PP, MO, PO, OJa). Goldeneye and scaup seemed especially scarce, and virtually no counts were received of more than a few birds. King Eiders were scarcer, as expected, but two showed at both the C.B.B.T., Nov. 24 (NB) and Ocean City Inlet Nov. 30 (PP, MO, PO, OJa). Finally, a triplet of Harlequin Ducks appeared at 3 locales: Point Lookout S.P., *Saint Mary's*, Nov. 3 (PC, AB) for a rare Bay sighting, while one-three birds at both the C.B.B.T. and

Ocean City Inlet in November (v.o.) were to be expected. Although scoter numbers were low in *Mathews* (JBB), several appeared inland, with single Blacks dropping in at Little Seneca Res., Oct. 19 (MAT) and Triadelphia Res., Nov. 17 (RB), both *Montgomery*. Surfs appeared at Centennial Park, with one Oct. 23 (R&NP), and Sandy River Res., with four Nov. 2 (MS). Single exotic Egyptian Geese, Mandarin Ducks, and Falcated Teal were found this season (v.o.).

Hawks to Shorebirds

Sullivan manned the hawk watch platform at Kipt. again this fall, and his 966.5 hours of coverage between Sept. 1–Nov. 30 produced more surprises. The 69,118 raptors for the season was 10,000 below last year's total, mostly due to unfavorable conditions in September. Westerly winds in that month produced a very low count of only 16,669 raptors, compared >42,000 last year. Sharp-shinned Hawks and Am. Kestrels were most notably effected, with less than 1/5 of the numbers of last September. The seasonal totals for both species recovered in the 2nd half of October, unusually-late timing for a big flight of these species. Highlights included new seasonal highs for Black Vulture (2630), Turkey Vulture (12,417), Osprey (5775), Bald Eagle (an exceptional 354), N. Goshawk (19 immatures, two adults), Merlin (2282), and Peregrine Falcon (1428). The falcon counts corresponded very well with Cape May's counts to the north, as did the high eagle numbers (individual birds were often seen at both sites and usually took one–two days to reach Kipt.) and very low N. Harrier counts. Single day highlights included new Kipt. records for Peregrines (195 Sept. 27), Bald Eagle (34 Oct. 29), and Golden Eagle (six Nov. 3), and what may have been an international one-day record for Osprey—1053 Sept. 20. The peak Merlin flight was surprisingly late, with an exemplary 189 Oct. 22. The best overall flight day was Oct. 4, with 4077 raptors, mostly Sharp-shinned Hawks and Am. Kestrels, though Nov. 3 was a great day as well, with good eagle counts. Four Swainson's Hawks were recorded, and should be expected annually at this locale with comparable coverage: Light-morph juveniles were seen Sept. 10 and Oct. 11 & 16, and a Basic I bird was seen Nov. 3. Even rarer was the probable "Black" Merlin (subspecies *suckleyi*) seen Oct. 25 (†BS), the first Regional and possibly the first East Coast sighting of this race. Many thanks to Sullivan for his spectacular effort. Copies of his detailed summary for the fall 1996 Kiptopeke hawk

watch are available from Kiptopeke Environmental Station Research Education Laboratory (K.E.S.T.R.E.L.).

Mississippi Kites continued at Woodbridge, *Prince Williams*, VA, through Aug. 31, where Studholm discovered Virginia's first known nest Aug. 11 and watched the two adults feed the nearly-fledged juvenile a Chimney Swift. The single young kite was fledged by Aug. 14 (BSt). No N. Goshawks were seen away from Kipt. except for one at Price Nov. 28 (JG, BSn), a *Queen Anne's* first. There were several good mid-September flight days for Broad-winged Hawks in the Piedmont; 3700 passed over Northeast, *Cecil*, Sept. 15 (SM), 900 were over Baltimore Sept. 18, and numerous participants in the Fall Migration Count saw kettles Sept. 21, including 3812 in *Howard* (*fide* JS), 4203 over Manassas, *Manassas*, VA (AW), and 2000 over Layhill Park, *Montgomery* (BC). Golden Eagles away from migration sites were reported from *Talbot*, *Dorchester*, *Kent*, *Fairfax*, and *Charles*, MD, the latter a first county record Nov. 23 (GMJ), but Rough-legged Hawks were remarkably scarce with only one report, a dark morph Oct. 31 at Schoolhouse Pond, *Prince George's* (JLS). A brown Merlin at Smith I., *Somerset*, Aug. 4 (JLS) tied the record-early Maryland date. Finally, an imm. dark-morph *Swainson's Hawk* reported from Black., Nov. 30 would provide a 2nd record for Maryland, if accepted (p.a. WLH).

A Yellow Rail found dead at Pt. Lookout S.P., Oct. 4 (p.a. *MC) represented a *Saint Mary's* first. Easton W.W.T.P. has changed the management of its large pond, which now has much emergent vegetation and supports a healthy population of Com. Moorhens; 19 were there Sept. 1 (JLS), including two families with young. American Coot numbers did not match last year's, mirroring the lower duck numbers. Four Sandhill Cranes overflowed U.V.A. at Charlottesville, *Albemarle*, Oct. 10 (p.a. NB), while an immature present in the Cape Charles area, *Northampton*, VA, through Nov. 3 (BS, BPa, NB) had arrived Oct. 29 (BS), when it was chased in succession by both eagle species. An ad. Sandhill Crane joined the immature at the Kipt. hawk watch Nov. 3 (BS, BPa, NB). A group of ten birds visited the pens of captive Sandhills at P.W.R.C., *Prince George's*, Nov. 24–26 (*fide* DM), not the first time a free-flying flock has been attracted here.

Descriptions of a possible Greater Golden-Plover off Rte. 607 in *Loudoun*, VA, Sept. 13 (p.a. †PP, DA) will be subject to intense scrutiny by the Virginia Rarities Committee, as it would represent a first

Regional and 2nd East Coast record. American Golden-Plovers made a superb showing from widespread locales and in excellent numbers, with the highest being 61 along Smith's Swich Rd., *Loudoun*, Sept. 14 (RH) and 57 along New Design Rd., *Frederick*, Oct. 18 (MAT).

The very wet fall had both good and bad effects on shorebirding in the Region. Usually-productive inland reservoirs had high water levels and no shorebirds, while puddles created good shorebirding at turf farms and rain pools. The latest Black-necked Stilt occurred at Chinc., Sept. 7 (HY), and Craney sported excellent Am. Avocet numbers through mid-September, the best count being 44 Sept. 6 (LW), with numbers remaining into November (v.o.). Two Am. Avocets returned Nov. 3 (JBB) to the same New Pt. Comfort, *Mathews*, VA, spot that produced the first county record last fall, and one was at Saint Jerome's Cr., *Saint Mary's*, Aug. 8 (†PC). Hart's shorebird habitat has been completely restored, and the better counts from this season included 1310 and 897 Lesser Yellowlegs Aug. 3 and Sept. 14, respectively; a Marbled Godwit Aug. 17–18; 97 and 115 Sanderlings Aug. 11 and Sept. 28, respectively; 5065 Semipalmated Sandpipers Aug. 3; 19 Buff-breasted Sandpipers Sept. 7; 297 Short-billed Dowitchers Aug. 3; and one Red-necked Phalarope Aug. 25 (EJS *et al.*) Craney held 50 White-rumped Sandpipers Aug. 16–18 (NB). *Wicomico* rarities at Hampshire Rd. Sod Farm included White-rumped Sandpipers in early August (SHD *et al.*) and a Baird's Sandpiper Aug. 15–16 for a county first (SHD). A juv. Curlew Sandpiper at Chinc. pleased the team working a big day in that area Sept. 21 (NB, TG, DS), while two cooperative Buff-breasted Sandpipers added one to the *Saint Mary's* list as they graced the P.R.N.A.S. grounds Sept. 4 (KR, LL), one of 8 locales for the species this fall. A Marbled Godwit at Tilghman I., Aug. 18 (JR) was a great find for *Talbot*, and a Red Knot at Winter Harbor Aug. 31 (JBB) was only the 2nd ever found in *Mathews* in the fall. Unusual shorebirds for D.C. were headed by the Red Phalarope on Georgetown Res., Sept. 19 (DC, MAT).

Hurricane *Fran* created a major shorebird fallout at Kerr Res., and included >12 species, many with only a few previous reports from the Virginia Piedmont. The most notable among these were two Willets (p.a.), seven Ruddy Turnstones (p.a.), 73 Sanderlings, 43 Red-necked Phalaropes (p.a.), and a single Red Phalarope (p.a., NB, BPa, BS, FD). *Fran*-assisted shorebirds elsewhere included a Willet and a

Marbled Godwit at S.P.S.P., Sept. 6 (LD, HLW), a Whimbrel which was grounded in a courtyard in Rappahannock, *Lancaster*, VA Sept. 5–6 (ph. MD), a Sanderling and a Semipalmated and two Stilt sandpipers at Briery Creek Res., *Prince Edward*, Sept. 6 (MS), and a Red-necked Phalarope at the C.B.B.T., Sept. 7 (NB, BPa, BT).

Jaegers to Alcids

SA The other major chapter in *Fran's* effects on the Regional birdlife focused on jaegers, gulls, and terns. A juv. dark-morph Pomarine and a sub-adult light-morph Parasitic jaeger discerned at Kerr Res., Sept. 6 (p.a. NB, BPa, BS) provided 2nd and first records for the Virginia Piedmont respectively, and a jaeger sp. was present as well. Other jaegers were a Parasitic moved to *Baltimore* Sept. 6 (p.a. EJS, EB), an unidentified at S.P.S.P., Sept. 7 (LD, GM, BC), and a fly-by ad. Long-tailed Jaeger at Lilypons, *Frederick*, Sept. 8 (p.a. BPe, MG) for Maryland's first report away from the coast. Gulls pushed inland to Kerr Res., Sept. 6 were >150 Laughing Gulls, 15 Herring Gulls, and two Great Black-backed Gulls, along with an alternate-plumaged ad. Sabine's Gull, which was the 7th Virginia record and the first Regional Piedmont record (p.a. NB, BPa, BS, FD). Coastal terns also strayed inland, with the Sept. 6 Kerr Res. squad recording three Caspians, >40 Royals (p.a.), two Sandwich (p.a.), one ad. Roseate Tern (p.a. NB), >35 Commons (30 the next day), one first-fall Arctic (p.a. BS, NB), >20 Forster's, two Least (p.a., adult and immature), and a Black Skimmer (p.a., ph. MS). Rare terns elsewhere in Virginia were the three Royals at Lake Anna, *Queen Anne's*, VA Sept. 6 (p.a. J&CG) and a Sandwich there Sept. 7 (p.a., *fide* NB), and a Sandwich (p.a.) and two Common terns at Briery Creek Res., Sept. 6 (MS). All but the Herring Gulls and Caspian and Forster's terns are extraordinary for the Virginia Piedmont. Marylanders found fewer rare terns, but three Gull-billeds were at Pt. Lookout S.P., Sept. 8 and one Sept. 9 (MC). Stasz found *Calvert's* first Gull-billed, a single Sandwich, and the third non-coastal Maryland report of a Roseate Tern (p.a.) among 9 tern species at North Beach Sept. 7, and Dyke found a county record with two Gull-billeds Sept. 7 at Vienna, *Wicomico*. Two

more Roseate Terns were over the Wilson Bridge, D.C./*Prince George's* Sept. 6 (p.a. †PP). Sooty Terns, of course, are typically the centerpiece of such storms and *Fran* was no exception. Sightings Sept. 6 included 24 at Kerr Res. (NB, BPa, BS, FD, MS), an adult and a juvenile at Black Hills Res. (p.a. †DC), >12 at S.P.S.P. (p.a. HLW, LD), six on the James R., Surry, (BW), one adult at North Beach (p.a. JLS), two adults at the C.B.B.T. (BA), an adult and a juvenile at Ocean City Inlet (p.a. JB), one adult in the Potomac R., *Prince George's* (p.a. PP), and 15–20 at East Pt., *Baltimore* (p.a. EJS, EB). Reports Sept. 7 were fewer, as Sooty Tern tends to push out very rapidly, but the following reports were received: one adult at Rigby's Folly (p.a. †HTA) and an adult and juvenile at Tilghman I. (p.a. †JR), *Talbot*, one at North Beach (p.a. JLS), six at the C.B.B.T. (NB, BPa, BT), and five at S.P.S.P. (p.a. †PD, †PH). Bridled Terns were found on the James R., with one Sept. 6 (BW), across from Anacostia Naval Air Station, D.C. (a first report there), with one adult Sept. 7 (p.a. †DG), and at the C.B.B.T., with five Sept. 7 (NB, BPa, BT). Finally, Caspian and Black terns occurred widely in inland locations where they are unusual.

Other records of note included a juv. Long-tailed Jaeger, Maryland's 2nd well-documented report, photographed, and described in detail, at Baltimore Canyon on the Aug. 18 pelagic trip (p.a., BPa, †ph. DC, ph. JLS), and one the day before in Virginia waters (VK). Taber watched an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger and eight Parasitic Jaegers (two dark morph) stream past C.B.B.T. Island #1 in the wake of hurricane *Josephine* Oct. 8. A lone Parasitic was seen at Kipt., Nov. 3 (BS *et al.*), and single Parasitics and Pomarines were off Virginia Beach Nov. 30 (NB *et al.*).

More Franklin's Gulls cropped up in the Region than anytime in the past decade, with one adult at Hains Pt., D.C., Sept. 17 (OJa), one first-winter gull at Hunting Cr., *Fairfax*, VA Oct. 5–6 (OJa), an adult at Diamond Pt., *Baltimore*, Oct. 26 (†EJS, †EB), a first-winter and a 3rd-winter at Schoolhouse Pond Oct. 28 (JLS), with the former seen again Nov. 7 (JLS), and one 2nd-winter at Craney Nov. 2 (NB, TG). Maryland's 11th and 12th California Gulls came rapid-fire with one at Hart Oct. 26 (p.a. †EJS, †EB) and an adult at Schoolhouse Pond Oct. 30 & 31 (p.a. JLS), a



Juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger seen during a pelagic trip to Baltimore Canyon, off Maryland, August 18, 1996. Photograph/Jim Burns.

Prince George's first. One Glaucous Gull at the C.B.B.T., Nov. 30 (BA, *fide* NB) was the only white-winged gull reported. Maryland's first Black-legged Kittiwake away from Tidewater was an adult (!) at Seneca, *Montgomery*, Oct. 19 (p.a., †DC, MAT) apparently brought down by poor weather. The extraordinary count of 2716 off Virginia Beach Nov. 30 (NB *et al.*) was probably a product of a front of abnormally cold water off the mid-Atlantic that also affected greater than normal numbers of cold water species off the mid-Atlantic through the winter.

Craig reported 2000 Com. Terns at Pt. Lookout S.P., Aug. 8, an excellent tally, while 11 at Hains Pt. provided a good D.C. count Sept. 16 (DC, MAT), and one at L. Elkhorn, *Howard*, Oct. 8 (JW) was the best bird garnered in Maryland during *Josephine*. Bridled Terns have become expected on any late August pelagic off Maryland or Virginia, but eight Aug. 18 (BPa, JLS, DC *et al.*) doubled the previous Maryland high. The three in Virginia waters the day before was a less surprising total (VK). An Atlantic Puffin off Virginia Beach was the earliest Virginia record by almost a month Nov. 30 (NB *et al.*).

Cuckoos to Shrikes

Five Black-billed Cuckoos passed the Kipt. hawk watch Sept. 19 (BS) for a superb coastal count. The only Snowy Owl in our Region was an immature at Ocean City Inlet Nov. 29 (SHD, NS). In contrast to last year's invasion, only a little >100 N.

Saw-whet Owls were banded at Kipt., and only two were found elsewhere. Only two Long-eared Owls were found, and Short-eared Owls were just as scarce, with a pair at Bowling Air Force Base, D.C., being the most interesting (LC). The one good Com. Nighthawk flight was reported from the coast; Sullivan counted 563 at Kipt., Sept. 9. A late nighthawk was in *Carroll* Oct. 21 (DH).

Just two *Selasphorus* graced the Region this season, but included a fly-by immature at Kipt., Sept. 5 (BS), and an immature at Chevy Chase, *Montgomery*, Nov. 4–18 (MAB, PO, LO). An albino Red-bellied Woodpecker was reported from *Baltimore* Oct. 20 (AS). Among nine reported, Maryland's 2nd-earliest Olive-sided Flycatcher was most notable Aug. 3 at Hart (RFR, BK). Kiptopeke has a strong showing of western flycatchers, with single W. Kingbirds Oct. 9, 10, 26 & 30, and Nov. 4 (all BS), and even better treasures such as a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Sept. 24 (BS) and a *Say's Phoebe* Oct. 1 (BS, HLW, LMD). A very late buffy-rumped swallow at Kipt., Oct. 13 was not seen well enough to eliminate the rarer Cave Swallow (MJI). Red-breasted Nuthatches were conspicuous only by their absence, with <10 reports for the entire season. There was also little evidence of a White-breasted Nuthatch movement, in contrast to last fall, and Brown Creeper seemed very low as well. Expected but often overlooked in the Bay and coastal marshes, an inland Sedge Wren at Myrtle Grove W.M.A., *Charles*, Oct. 13 (FW) was noteworthy. Nothing short of phenomenal was the count of 600,000 Am. Robins migrating past the hawk watch platform at Kipt. Nov. 1 (BS). *Catharus* numbers seemed absolutely abysmal for all species except Hermit, according to banding stations and field observer reports. Loggerhead Shrike reports came from only 3 locales, about average for recent years. One in *Frederick*, MD (WLH, IRC *et al.*), was probably a resident, as was a single at Brackett's Farm, *Louisa*, Sept. 15 (JBB), while one at Chester, *Chesterfield*, Sept. 23–Nov. 23 (m.ob.) was certainly a non-nester.

Vireos to Finches

A tardy White-eyed Vireo remained with a small landbird flock at New Pt. Comfort Nov. 4 (JBB), while a Red-eyed at Centreville, *Queen Anne's*, Nov. 17 (JR *et al.*) was enough behind schedule to set a Maryland late date.

Some effort was made to tally passerine flights at the Kipt. hawk watch platform, with Sept. 14, 19 & 21 highlighted as the

best flight days in terms of numbers and variety (not only of warblers, but also cuckoos, flycatchers, woodpeckers, and vireos). An estimated 40,000–50,000 passerines passed by Sept. 19, while an even larger flight Oct. 23 of 387,000 warblers was noted, almost entirely Yellow-rumped and Palm (BS). Warbler numbers seemed discouragingly low overall, though this could have been a product of the reporting as much as the migration. Czaplak and Todd also reaped the bounty of a good Sept. 14 flight, with a nice numbers on Assat. punctuated by 200 Am. Redstarts and two Connecticut Warblers. Of a respectable 16 Golden-winged Warblers found, the male Oct. 6 at Rock Cr. Park, D.C. (OJa), was the latest and set a D.C. late date by 3 days. A few late warbler reports included Black-and-whites at S.P.S.P., Nov. 16 (BC) and the C&O Canal, *Montgomery*, Nov. 28 (HE), and a Blackpoll banded at P.W.R.C., Nov. 6 (DD). An early Palm Warbler (yellow race) foraged in groundsel bushes at New Pt. Comfort Sept. 1 (JBB)

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks passed over Kipt. in numbers Sept. 19, with 247 clicked off by Sullivan. A very late Blue Grosbeak nesting was evidenced by a female at New Pt. Comfort seen carrying food Sept. 2 and a fecal sac Sept. 9 (JBB). Scattered Dickcissels were found into November, and Kipt. had quite a nice flight, with 19 passing the hawk watch platform on 10 dates, mostly in October (BS). American Tree Sparrows were very scarce compared to last year, but in low numbers typical of most recent years. One Clay-colored Sparrow at McKee-Besher's W.M.A., *Montgomery*, Nov. 10 (MAT, ph. DC) shared the limelight with singles at Kipt., Oct. 12 (BS) & 26 (BS). Lark Sparrows were represented by one from *Caroline* Aug. 7 (JLS), singles at Assat., Sept. 14 (MAT, DC) & 21–22 (SHD *et al.*), and one at Kipt., Oct. 18 (BS). An Ipswich Sparrow on Hart Nov. 16 was a great rarity there. Although there are several reports from the Maryland Bay shore, none are well-documented, and the species' occurrence away from the coast is unclear. There is one previous report from Hart.

Several observers in the Region put some effort into sorting out the Sharp-tailed Sparrow complex, but despite this only 4 reports of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow were generated: one *nelsoni/alterus* was at Irish Grove, *Somerset*, Oct. 11 (ph. MJL, JLS), one *nelsoni/alterus* was at the C.B.B.T., Oct. 12 (LW *et al.*), one probable *subvirgatus* was at Black., Nov. 11 (DD), and seven *nelsoni/alterus* and one *subvirgatus* were near Kipt., Nov.

24 (NB). Lincoln's Sparrows put in a nice showing through late October, with one outlier Nov. 27 at Lucketts (NB, MS). A White-crowned Sparrow in *Frederick* Sept. 21 (LK) tied the state arrival date. Numbers of "Oregon" Dark-eyed Juncos occurred in the East this year, but a pair of probable *oreganus* at Clover Hollow Tree Farm, *Page*, Nov. 11+ were the only ones in our Region. Fifteen Lapland Longspurs off Oland Rd., *Frederick*, Nov. 24 (BC) was a great count, but overall the species seemed scarce.

Unprecedented and amazing in the Region was the pure flock of 1000 Brewer's Blackbirds roosting and feeding in Sweet Gum trees on Hart Nov. 23 (†EJS). This flock must have stuck closely together, since the only other report was of a lone male at Surry, *Surry*, VA Nov. 28 (NB). Congratulations to Williams and Taber for sorting through a painful amount (>500) of Brown-headed Cowbirds in northeast *Surry*. Their reward was a ♂ **Shiny Cowbird**, a state and Regional first, which was relocated later that day (NB) and the next (BPa). New Pt. Comfort funneled a healthy 115 Baltimore Orioles down the Bay shore Sept. 2 (JBB). A Purple Finch flight at Kipt. of >1500 birds had many hoping it would be a good year for the species, but it was not the case. Four Red Crossbills appeared, one at a *Fairfax* feeder Aug. 7 (EM), two at Patuxent R. Park, *Howard*, Oct. 12 (JSh), and singles that passed Kipt., Oct. 23 (BS) and Nov. 3 (BS, BPa). One Com. Redpoll flock was all we had for this season, but comprised a nice 21 birds at Kipt., Nov. 24 (NB), with one at a nearby feeder the same day (BS). Pine Siskins were extremely scarce, with only 6 reports. Evening Grosbeaks were missed entirely. Irruption is right! Two exotic Range-checked Waxbills closed out the season, arriving Aug. 31 and spending over a month at Huntley Meadows (*vide* AH).

Corrigenda

Please delete the May 18, 1996, sighting of a Black-throated Gray Warbler from the Skyline Dr., VA, in the Spring report. The Virginia Records Committee has voted on the documentation and unanimously found it to support Black-and-white Warbler.

Observers (area compilers in boldface):

Henry T. Armistead, John B. Bazuin Jr., Mary Ann Berberich, Jim Biggs, Eirik Blom, David Bridge, Ned Brinkley, Rod Burler, Larry Cartwright, Barry Cooper, **Ian R. Cornelius** (*Frederick*, 7321 Old Middletown Rd., Middletown, MD 21769), **Patty Craig** (*Saint Mary's*, P.O.

Box 84, Lexington Park, MD 20653), Marty Cribb, Dalcio Dacol, Mike Davenport, Lynn M. Davidson, Fenton Day, Steve Duvesky, Samuel H. Dyke, Les Eastman, Howard Elitzak, **Ethel Engle** (*Caroline*, MD, 20789 Dover Bridge Rd., Preston, MD 21655), James & Colvin Gibson, Doug Gill, **Gary Griffith** (*Cecil*, 55 Sarah Drive, Elkton, MD 21921), Jim Gruber, Mary Gustafson, Tom Gwynn, Mike Haramis, Mike Harrison (MHa), Dave Harvey, Wilbur L. Hershberger, Andy Higgs, Jane Hill, Robert Hilton, Odette James, Ottavio Janni, **George M. Jett** (*Charles*, 9505 Bland Street, Waldorf MD 20603), Dennis Jorde, Val Kitchens, Bill Kulp, Doug Lister, Lisa Lister, Ed Mathews, Sean McCandless, Katherine Messina, Dave Mozurkewich, Michael O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Brian Patteson (BPa), Bruce Peterjohn, Don Peterson, Ray and Norma Peterson, Paul Pisano, **Elizabeth Pitney** (*Wicomico*, 7218 Walston Switch Rd., Parsonsburg, MD 21849), Jeff Price, Jan Reese, Robert F. Ringler, Eugene J. Scarpulla, Don Schwab, Alex Segarra (ASe), Jay Sheppard (JSh), Steve W. Simon, David R. Smith, Bill Snyder (BSn), **Jo Solem** (*Howard* 10617 Graeoch Rd., Columbia, MD 20723), Dave Stewart (DSt), Susan Stoneman, Bob Studeholm, Brian Sullivan, Brian Taber, Mary Ann Todd, **Dave Webb** (*Harford*, 107 Royal Oak Drive, Bel Air, MD 21015), Leo Wiegand, Hal L. Wierenga, Jim Wilkinson, Bill Williams, **Les Willis** (Virginia Birdline), Anita Wilson, **Erika M. Wilson** (Voice of the Naturalist), Frank Witebski, Howard Youth.

—*Marshall J. Iliff, report to James L. Stasz, P.O. Box 71, North Beach, MD 20714 or jlstasz@aol.com.*

Southern Atlantic Coast Region

RICKY DAVIS

Due to weather, this fall season was a good one for birders! Temperatures were cooler than normal and there was a number of strong cold fronts bringing northwest winds (and migrants) to our Region, especially in late September. Precipitation ranged from less than normal (August, November) to higher than normal (September, October). And in North Carolina, one cannot forget the unwelcome visit by hurricane *Fran*. Apart from hurricane sightings, some of the more interesting birds included North Carolina's first Groove-billed Ani, Georgia's second Townsend's Warbler, and an intriguing report of a White-chinned Petrel off North Carolina.

Abbreviations: C. Hatt. (*Cape Hatteras, NC*); E.L.H. (*E. L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton Co., GA*); H.B.S.P. (*Huntington Beach State Park, SC*); K. Mt. (*Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, GA*); N.C.B.R.C. (*North Carolina Bird Records Committee*).

Loons to Wood Stork

Inland Red-throated Loons were noteworthy in Georgia, where one was at L. Juliette, Rum Creek W.M.A., Nov. 4 (TJ) and another was on L. Lanier Nov. 21 (GB, AB). In North Carolina one was on Salem L., *Forsyth*, Nov. 4 & 10 (RS *et al.*). The only report of Pacific Loon came from the most regular location in the Region, Figure Eight I., NC, where one was present Nov. 30 (DC). A Red-necked Grebe at Sullivan's I., SC Nov. 23 (BS, GB, B&BM) was hopefully a sign of things to come for the winter. The Eared Grebe continues to increase in the Region. This fall's best counts included \leq five at L. Juliette, GA Nov. 23 (JS *et al.*), \leq six at L. Lanier, GA Nov. 21 (GB, AB), and \leq nine at the Goldsboro, NC, Wastewater Treatment Plant through the fall (ED).

Pelagic birding off North Carolina was quite productive. Exciting *Pterodroma* reports included a peak count of 247 Black-capped Petrels off Hatteras Aug. 4 (BP *et al.*); another Fea's Petrel off Oregon Inlet Aug. 10 (TM *et al.*); and \geq 8 sightings of Herald Petrel Aug. 3–18 (TM *et al.*, MT *et al.*, BP *et al.*). In the unexpected and amazing department was the report of a **White-chinned Petrel** observed October 12 & 17 ENE of Oregon Inlet (RF). There is one previous report of this species in the Northern Hemisphere: A bird was photographed near Galveston, TX Apr. 26, 1986. The North Carolina bird was photographed (although not well) and the report is under review by the N.C.B.R.C. This occurrence proves that much remains

