

The Raven

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

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1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.
2. Other forays or field trips lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.
3. A journal, *The Raven*, published twice a year, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.
4. A newsletter, published quarterly, containing current news items of interest to members and information about upcoming events and pertinent conservation issues.
5. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

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JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

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**BANK SWALLOWS AT
PRESQUILE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE: 1975-1989**

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INTRODUCTION

The Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) has a highly localized distribution in Virginia, nesting colonially in burrows excavated in earthen banks. In Virginia the species is near the southeastern edge of its known breeding range and only a few colonies have been found in the state (Kain 1987). A prominent Bank Swallow colony has been present for more than 30 years on the James River near Presquile National Wildlife Refuge about 3 km west of Hopewell, Virginia (Blem 1979). This site is a steep riverbank more than 5 m high in some places. The bank resulted from the creation of a shipping channel in the late 1930s. In the late 1960s the colony was large and vigorous, and we estimate that more than 600 pairs of birds were present by 1970. By 1981 the swallows were having difficulty nesting at the traditional site, and were attempting to nest at alternative, nearby parts of the riverbank. By 1987 it appeared that the colony would fail, and no successful nests were found in 1988 and 1989. Because of this, as well as the current interest in the status of birds that winter in South America, we present here a demographic history of one of the largest Bank Swallow colonies known in Virginia over the past two decades.

METHODS

We investigated Bank Swallows at this site in the springs (April-May) of 1975 through 1989. During a period of several years (1975-1979) we captured 422 swallows and banded them with federal bands. Additionally, many birds were weighed on a triple beam balance to the nearest 0.1 g and their wing chords were measured to the nearest mm. Swallows were mist-netted from early morning to dusk as they left their burrows. Most captures were made at the Presquile colony, but a few birds were netted at nearby gravel pits in eastern Henrico County. The sex of each bird was determined by the presence or absence of the brood patch (Petersen 1955). Burrows were counted by visual inspection. All partially excavated burrows (i.e., those less than 30 cm deep and not containing nest materials) were excluded from counts. Mark-recapture statistics (see Blem 1979; Brower and Zar 1984) were used to estimate the number of adults swallows actually present at the colony.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bank Swallows typically arrived at the breeding site from mid- to late-April and usually began nest excavation by the last week in April. Eggs were present in May and June. The maximum number of active nests usually was reached by mid-May. It appeared that only one clutch was produced by most birds and fledged was

synchronized in the colony. In most years only a few nests remained active in early June.

TABLE 1. *Abundance of Bank Swallows nesting at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge, 1975-1989.*

Year	Number of burrows	Number of birds ¹
1975	435	927
1976	388	875
1977	71	160
1978	106	243
1979	188	412
1980	283	-
1981	120	-
1982	202	-
1983	111	-
1984	162	-
1985	86	-
1986	118	-
1987	40	-
1988	0	-
1989	0	-

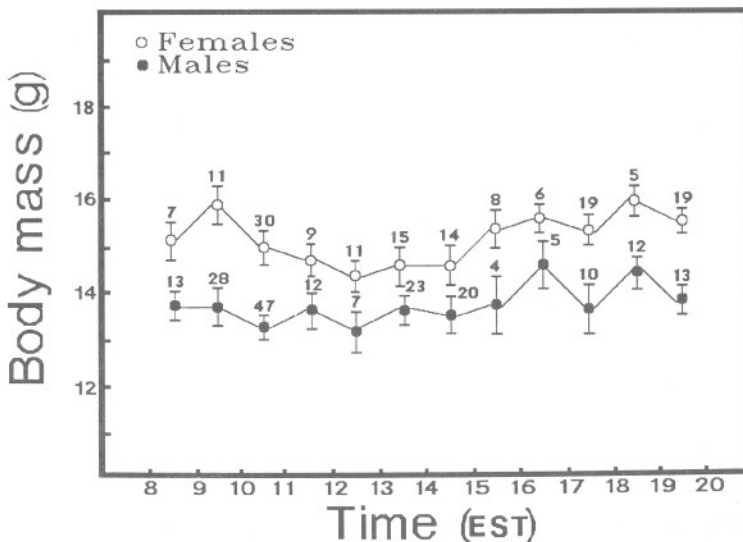
¹ Mark-recapture estimates

Colony size at Presquile varied greatly from year to year (Table 1). In some years the number of burrows declined severely over the course of the breeding season due to the collapsing (slumping) of riverbank in which the colony existed. On one occasion we found dead adults buried in collapsed riverbank. Predation by black rat snakes (*Elaphe obsoleta*) on adult and immature Bank Swallows was severe in some years (Blem 1979). We removed rat snakes from the colony whenever we encountered them. The colony generally declined over the period of this study. Although a few birds attempted to nest each of the past few years, it now seems unlikely that it will become re-established again. We believe that the failure of the colony at this site has been caused, at least in part, by a change in the texture of the riverbank. The section of the bank in which the birds nested was part of a man-made channel excavated in the 1930s. Slumping of the bank over decades has resulted in the widening of the channel and the disappearance of soft sand and gravel in the substrate. The current consistency of the bank is that of fairly compact soil. The colony moved to alternate sites as a result of the slumping. In the early

and mid-1970s all nesting attempts were on the mainland side of the Presquile channel. By the late 1970s birds began to excavate burrows on the Presquile National Wildlife Refuge side of the channel. At least a few birds moved to nearby gravel pits and other banks. A Bank Swallow banded as an adult at Presquile was recaptured the next year at the nearby gravel pit, indicating that at least some successful shifting of sites was occurring. In the past few years these gravel pits have closed or have been leveled, eliminating nesting habitat. Other graving operations have begun in new areas; undoubtedly some swallows have found nesting sites within these.

During our banding we recaptured 55 of our own marked birds, plus two birds banded by other banders working at Presquile. Forty-three of these were captured in the same year they were banded and 10 were captured in the following year. Most of the birds we banded were at least one year old, although we captured and banded 17 juveniles. Assuming no bias in their capture, the survival rate of adult Bank Swallows > 1 year old must be quite low; we recaptured only 10 of a possible 262 in this age class. However, this may simply reflect movement of birds from the Presquile colony to other areas. Using simple mark-recapture statistics (Brower and Zar 1984), we estimated populations during the breeding seasons of 1975-1979. The numbers of birds estimated from mark-recapture always exceeded 2x the number of burrows, indicating that more than a single pair of birds might be present per nest site. The difference ranged from 3.0 to 14.6% of the population expected from counts of burrows. The overestimates suggest either than unpaired adults were present and were visiting unfinished burrows or burrows belonging to

FIGURE 1. *The daily cycle of body mass of Bank Swallows during breeding season.*



other pairs. However, high counts may be obtained if banded birds are less likely to be recaptured than previously unbanded birds. Movement to other colonies with replacement by unbanded birds or avoidance of capture could produce such overestimates. None of the 422 birds we banded were ever recovered elsewhere (i.e., away from the capture site), except for one bird we captured at a nearby gravel pit. We banded more males (184) than females (154), but the ratio did not differ significantly from 50:50 (chi-square = 2.66; $P > 0.05$).

In conjunction with the banding activities, we obtained weights of 338 swallows during the breeding cycle. Weights of females (15.0 ± 0.1 g; mean \pm standard error, $N = 154$) were greater than those of males (13.6 ± 0.1 g, $N = 184$; $t = 12.7$, $P < 0.01$). Time of day had little effect on weight of Bank Swallows (Fig. 1, p. 5). There are few published measurements of Bank Swallow weights, but birds at the Presquile site were similar to those breeding in Wisconsin (females 14.8 g, males 13.7 g; Petersen 1955) and New York (females 15.6 g, males 14.0 g; Stone 1936). Females in this colony also have slightly longer wings (100.7 ± 0.2 mm) than males 99.7 ± 0.2 mm; $t = 3.6$ $P < 0.01$). Wing length (mm) and weight (g) are correlated significantly (weight = 0.1 wing length + 4.2), but the relationship has a low correlation coefficient ($r = 0.28$).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to the personnel of Presquile National Wildlife Refuge for permission to visit the refuge and to band birds there. Mr. Harold Olson especially was helpful in this regard. M. Banner, H. Laprade, R. Peer, and J. W. Steiner helped make many field measurements.

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HOW DOES A PILEATED WOODPECKER CHOOSE A DRUMMING POST?

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While on an early morning walk along a dirt road on 14 May 1987, in Mathews County, Virginia, I was attracted by a loud drumming, which I traced to a huge dead cottonwood. The drumming bird was a male Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) sitting perched on a nearly horizontal barkless limb, about eight to ten inches thick and 30 feet above the ground. The drumming spot was an apparently hard flange of wood, perhaps part of a knot, on the upper edge of a typical oblong Pileated Woodpecker hole. The bird continued to drum in two- to three-second bursts which started slowly with long head strokes and then accelerated to a roll so rapid that its head was a blur. I could not tell if the branch was hollow to its tip, but the resonance (intensification of sound) produced was remarkable. Later, I could hear the bird clearly from more than a half a mile away. During the more than half an hour of my observation the bird never left its drumming spot, and the bursts of drumming, timed over nearly 11 minutes, were separated by an average of 39 seconds. The next morning the same bird (presumably) was back at the drumming spot, hammering on that same small flange of wood at the edge of the hole.

Why did this woodpecker choose that exact spot for its drumming activities? Was it random chance that the drumming spot was at the edge of an opening in the branch? Had the bird selected that spot for maximum amplitude (volume of sound), for the frequency (pitch) of sound produced, or for some combination of the two that might produce sound audible over the greatest distance? Was this choice the result of instinctive or learned behavior, or was it simply random? Did the bird select the edge of a resonating chamber to hammer on by trial and error, drumming until it found the spot that gave the "best" results?

A search of the literature produced some interesting hints. Lawrence (1966) suggested that the function of drumming in woodpeckers, "corresponds largely to the song of the songbirds...comprising self-announcing or self-assertive objectives in relation to territory, pairing, and defense." She further stated that the woodpeckers she had studied had, "one or several favorite posts" and that the birds picked them out, "by tapping or trial drumming for its good resonance." Kilham (1959) suggested that Pileated Woodpeckers drum throughout the year and that this serves both as an advertisement of dominance within a territory and to attract potential mates. Hoyte (1957) described a male Pileated Woodpecker's selection of a drumming spot, "The male alighted on a dead limb at the top of a tree, began to climb it, and pecked hard at one place after another. Finally he struck a spot which gave a deep hollow sound, and there he remained, to drum repeatedly." The great carrying capacity of a Pileated drumming was pointed out by Vickers (1914) who suggested that the sound carried for two miles from a drumming post in a, "big hollow arm of a great tulip-tree." Many authors, including Vickers, have noted that the drumming spot was often a hard spot or hard piece of wood.

This rather sparse literature hints in an anecdotal way that Pileated Woodpeckers select their drumming posts for superior resonance (technically in this case, an amplification of sound produced by the bird striking the tree limb at a rate equal to the wood's natural vibrational frequency, thus producing sympathetic vibrations). But I found no comments about their drumming at the edge of a hole in a hollow limb, which might produce interesting resonance characteristics, other than a comment by Kilham (1959) that one Pileated Woodpecker drummed, "on an oak stub where an old woodpecker cavity gave added resonance." In many string and percussion instruments, openings into hollow resonating chambers enhance sound reproduction (try plugging the hole in a guitar box or removing the hollow gourds from under marimba keys). Unfortunately, the factors which influence sound pitch and amplitude are enormously varied (e.g. position of the hole in the resonating chamber, chamber diameter and shape, hardness or density of the wood), and analysis of drumming posts would be complicated and difficult at best. But I agree with Vickers (1914) who, seventy-four years earlier, had written about the hollow arm of a tulip tree, "It would have been good to have taken its caliber and that of the cavity within and to have examined that smooth hard spot where he [a Pileated Woodpecker] had smote full lustily so oft."

If drumming serves to advertise territorial dominance and attract mates, then natural selection should favor those individuals that succeed in producing the loudest or "highest quality" sound. It would not be surprising, then, to find that woodpeckers have evolved methods for selecting high quality resonating drumming posts and spots. However, the factors that led my particular Pileated Woodpecker to choose a spot at the edge of a hole may have been unrelated to the quality of sound produced. It may have been, for example, that it chose this drumming spot because it was harder than others nearby. Nevertheless, the questions raised are intriguing, and I shall watch drumming woodpeckers in the future with these thoughts in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank George LeSuer for his thoughtful discussions about the enormously complex variables involved in sound production and John C. Kricher for critically reading an earlier draft of the manuscript.

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ROSS' GOOSE AT CURLES NECK FARM NEAR RICHMOND

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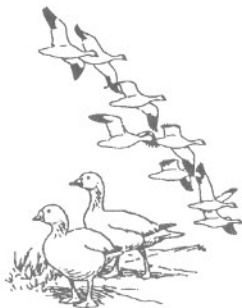
(Editor's Note: A photograph taken by Tom Armour of Williamsburg was included with the documentation that was reviewed by the records committee and accepted in April 1989 as the second authenticated occurrence of this species in Virginia.)

The twenty-first of February 1988 was a typical winter day. The wind was gusting to 20 m.p.h and the temperature was below freezing, but at least the sun was shining. I left Richmond at 8 a.m. with Diane Nichols and three students from Charlottesville. We arrived at Curles Neck Farm about 10 a.m. after making several birding stops along the way.

Upon entering the farm, we began looking for Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*). By the time we reached the farm office we still had not seen any. Continuing on, we drove about a half mile past the office and crossed the heavy equipment road. As I glanced in the rear view mirror, I suddenly saw birds flying toward us. I slowly brought the car to a stop and we watched a flock of approximately 120 Snow Geese and 20 Blue Geese approach. They circled twice and landed in a field about 300 yards away. We retraced our route back to the heavy equipment road and drove to a spot directly across from the geese.

The Ross' Goose (*C. rossii*) was found from this vantage point as soon as we scanned the flock using 10 x 50 binoculars and a 20-60 zoom spotting scope. At this distance, which was less than 100 yards, we made the following observations: it was an all-white bird except for black primaries and was about one-third smaller than the nearby Snow Geese; the bill and feet were pinkish; the neck was only half as long as those of the other birds; the bill was shorter and more triangular in shape, and we could discern no "grin patch." We also observed gray warty protuberances near the nostrils at the base of the bill.

The goose was easily distinguishable at 100 yards, but we could not separate it from the others in the flock at greater distances. We watched the bird for about 30 minutes as it fed in the field with the other geese.



BACHMAN'S SPARROW IN SUSSEX COUNTY**ROBERT HILTON***22 Manor Circle, Apartment G-2
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My story begins on 9 June 1989 when I was visiting Sue Ridd in Richmond to receive priority block assignments for the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas. She told me that she knew the location of a Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*) in Brunswick County. Since neither of us had previously observed this species, at least in Virginia, we quickly planned our next day's Atlas activities around seeing this bird. On our second trip of the day to that site, and after searching for two hours, we found two birds, one of which sang. I was excited to finally see this species and learn its song.

On 3 July, I was atlasing in Sussex County. At 1:30 p.m. I left a priority block. On a whim I stopped at an extensive clearcut in a different block. Imagine my surprise when I heard what sounded like a Bachman's Sparrow song coming from the clearcut! I could barely believe my ears. I got out of my car and heard the song again; it was coming from an area about 100 m distant. Because of my inexperience with this species, I spent about 15 minutes by the side of the road to make absolutely sure that I was indeed hearing a Bachman's Sparrow. Noise from nearby lumbering operations and the bird's distance contributed to my uncertainty. I finally became convinced that I was hearing a Bachman's Sparrow; the song was distinctly different from the songs of both Rufous-sided Towhees (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) and Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla*) that were also singing in the clearcut. From familiarity with the Atlas workbook, I already knew that this was a new breeding-season site for the species. I suspected that either the Atlas verification committee or the VSO checklist committee (or both) might require written notes in order to substantiate this observation, so I went into the clearcut in order to see the bird (I normally do not enter private property without permission and did so at only one other time during the 1989 Atlas field season). If this site had been in North Carolina, where this species is far more common, I would not have left the road.

After almost 45 minutes of following the singing bird around the clearcut without seeing it, I was ready to leave. I was writing down my final notes about the song when it began to sing very close by. After I finally located it, I only watched it for about 90 seconds because it was quite agitated. I did not write notes on the bird's appearance until I returned to my car. The bird appeared to be similar in build and as long, or longer, than a Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*). The head was flat; the bill was medium thick—between Song and Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) in thickness—and appeared entirely black. The eye was black and large. I looked for an eye-ring but did not note a prominent one. The superciliary stripe was gray. The crown, which appeared to be undivided (on 9 July I saw a light streak in the center nape), and the eye-line (which was only present behind the eye) were uniform with the predominant back color, which resembled the back color of a Field Sparrow. The throat and belly were gray; the breast had a wash of the rufous back color, and there was an irregular division between the throat and belly. The

legs were red and the tail was not short. The song began with one usually whistled note, and was followed by a trill longer and usually purer than any Rufous-sided Towhee that was singing in the clearcut. Sometimes there were two trills on different pitches. Successive introductory notes and trills were on different pitches. It usually sang 1-3 songs at a time, then was silent for long intervals before it sang from a new location. It seemed to be singing from perches not much higher than the general level of the vegetation, which was about 1 m high. When I saw the bird, it was on a branch about 2 m high in a dead tree. I left the area for about one half hour to write a description; when I returned at 3:30 p.m. it was still singing.

This bird was found in a recent clearcut, perhaps four years old, that appeared to be regrowing naturally. Some parts show signs of an earlier fire. There were sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), oak (*Quercus*, sp.), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), cherry (*Prunus*, sp.), and maple (*Acer*, sp.) seedlings, huckleberries (*Gaylussacia*, sp.), and several species of grasses. Between the July visits and the 14 August visit (see below), at least one species of grass had grown so much as to give a different "look" to the clearcut.

On 6 July Teta Kain and Mary Pulley found the bird, and took notes. I returned on 9 July with Susan Savage, in order to upgrade this Atlas record from possible to probable. We found the bird, which was not agitated, and we spent about 90 minutes observing it. During this time the bird sang 10 to 15 songs at a time, each within one minute of the other. It terminated each song bout by flying to a new perch; these perches were 2 to 5 m high branches on snags. One such branch was about 5 m up in a particularly high tree. After each period of singing it moved to a higher branch on the same tree instead of flying to a new tree. It gradually ascended this tree, moving from branch to branch, ultimately singing from a branch at least 10 m above the ground, near the top of the tree. Finally it flew to another tree far enough away so that we did not immediately relocate it; at this point we left. According to Kain, at least one other person visited the site between 9 July and 14 August and noted only a singing bird.

On 14 August I returned with Gail MacKiernan to look for young birds; almost the first bird she saw in the clearcut (from a 5-8 m distance) was a Bachman's Sparrow that was much grayer brown than the singing bird, observed later. The male was not agitated this time. Gail made a close approach with her camera, and took seven photographs. The bird sang consistently from low perches, generally fallen tree trunks on limbs, within 1-2 m of the ground. The bird would sing for 30-45 seconds or more, then fly low over the ground to another perch about 30 meters distance. During the period of observation, the bird sang in area roughly 500 m in diameter. We were present from 9:40 to about 12:00 p.m. This bird also sang twice on 25 August when Sue Ridd and John Dillard visited.

On 9 July Savage and I stopped at a similar-looking clearcut about 0.3 miles from the 3 July site. We heard a Bachman's Sparrow singing from about 100 m away. As we had just spent well over an hour in the hot sun looking at the other individual, neither one of us wanted to pursue the new bird right away. We spent about 15 minutes under some shade, but the bird stopped singing shortly after we left the car and did not resume for the rest of our stay. We left the area to look for other birds. On 14 August, MacKiernan and I spent half an hour at this second site but

did not hear or see any Bachman's Sparrows. Ridd and Dillard were likewise unsuccessful on 25 August.

On 14 August MacKiernan and I stopped in a priority block, because she wanted to look at a nearby blackwater swamp. Adjacent to the swamp is a clearcut, so we decided to stop by the side of the road for only a few minutes, because we had to return to Washington. A few minutes turned in to an hour because I thought I heard Bachman's Sparrow songs. When we looked for this bird, I did not hear any similar songs. I played a tape (two or three songs at a time, with one to two minute pauses), figuring that this late in the breeding season it would not interfere with reproductive activity. A decidedly rusty colored, long-tailed sparrow flew repeatedly around and between two groups of snags about 100 yards from where we were. We approached the location but never got there; on the way Gail briefly observed two brown, flat-headed long-tailed sparrows flying together that could only be Bachman's Sparrows. We then decided to leave because we were now late in returning to Washington. These three birds indicate that a pair of sparrows may have successfully nested at this clearcut, or nearby, during the summer.

As Murray (1952) does not specifically mention Sussex County as being within the range of Bachman's Sparrow, these three sites appear to be the first Sussex County records for this species. These stations also represent three of only a small number of Virginia Coastal Plain records (Murray 1952; Kain 1987 and pers. comm.; Atlas workbook). The Atlas workbook shows a "possible" (i.e. recorded once in suitable breeding habitat) record in Southampton County for the 1985-1988 period. Previous Coastal Plain records were in eastern Fairfax County as late as 1964, eastern Henrico County on 25 April 1949, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel 11 September 1980 and 12 October 1985, and Cape Charles Christmas Count 28 December 1975.

The Bachman's Sparrow is an elusive species that seemingly disappeared from Virginia during the 1960s. Since 1986 it has been found breeding at three locations in Brunswick County, in the southern Piedmont. These locations are approximately 50 km from the Sussex County locations.

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A PACIFIC LOON AT VIRGINIA BEACH

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On 30 April 1987, while driving north of False Cape State Park/Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Beach south of Virginia Beach, we saw a single loon on the beach just above the water. At a distance the bird was thought to be a Common Loon (*Gavia immer*). We picked up the bird, which made no attempt at escape. The loon was unable to hold its head erect and the nictitating membrane was closed. The bird was smaller than a Common Loon and, based on bill characteristics, did not appear to be a Red-throated Loon (*G. stellata*). The specimen was collected (under Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' federal salvage permit).

The bird was delivered to Judith McIntyre at Utica College in New York State who identified the bird as an Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*). The specimen was then sent to Robert W. Storer at the University of Michigan. Dr. Storer (pers. comm.) identified the loon, based on wing measurement and plumage characteristics, as a second-year Pacific Loon (*G. pacifica*). The Virginia specimen's wing measurement was 267 mm which is within the range of *G. pacifica* and the measurement for *G. arctica* is 272 mm, based on a sample of about 2500 loons (Storer, pers. comm.).

In Virginia (Larner *et al.* 1979), the Pacific Loon has never been listed as a separate species. The Arctic Loon was listed as hypothetical, based on a sighting off Chincoteague (Scott 1976). Kain *et al.* (1987) deleted the Arctic Loon from the revised Virginia list, owing to lack of evidence of the bird's presence in Virginia. The Pacific Loon, formerly a subspecies of the Arctic Loon, was raised to species status by the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature (American Ornithologists' Union 1985).

Identification of the two species is difficult unless the specimen is in the hand, and sight records listed as other than Arctic/Pacific Loon (*Gavia*, sp.), would be questionable. It is our opinion that identification, from sightings of single birds in winter plumage, as Common or Arctic/Pacific Loon would be difficult.

In reviewing the literature, we found that few specimens of Arctic/Pacific Loon have been collected along the eastern seaboard. Eaton (1909) reports a specimen from New York and Edscorn (1977), Clapp *et al.* (1982) and Ortega (1983) report specimens from Florida. Bent (1919) stated that the New York bird was a Pacific Loon and not an Arctic Loon. Sight records are known from many localities along the East coast. Spring sightings of birds in breeding plumage have been reported from Rhode Island (Vickery 1977), Maine (Vickery 1978), New Hampshire (Vickery 1981) and Massachusetts (Nikula 1983). Sightings of birds in winter plumage are known from North Carolina (Clapp *et al.* 1982) New Brunswick, Canada (Vickery 1979) and Maine (Vickery 1981). Maryland (Robbins and Bystrak 1977)

and North Carolina (Lee and Fundenburg 1978) field lists record the Arctic Loon as hypothetical because reported sightings have been inadequately documented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Judith McIntyre and Robert Storer for all the help in obtaining a positive identification on the specimen and their comments on the draft. The specimen was saved as a pelt and skeleton, and the University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology catalogue number is 227,139.

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NEWS AND NOTES

TETA KAIN

CORRIGENDUM: The entry concerning the nesting record of Chuck-will's-widow in the News and Notes column of Vol. 60, p. 11 of *The Raven* should be amended to read: FIRST RECORD OF CHUCK-WILL'S WIDOW NESTING IN THE MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS REGION OF VIRGINIA.

FRANKLIN'S GULL AT HUNTING CREEK: On 7 August 1989, David Abbott and David Czaplak observed a Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) on Hunting Creek on the Potomac River south of Alexandria in Fairfax County. It is the seventh Franklin's Gull to appear at Hunting Creek since the first was seen there in June 1977. It was in the company of hundreds of Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*) and was apparently in "first summer" plumage.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW AT BACK BAY NWR: A Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) wintered in a little marshy corner bordering the east side of the east service road about one mile south of the refuge headquarters and was observed on three separate occasions — 7 and 28 December 1988, and 28 January 1989. A detailed account of the sightings is filed in the VSO archives.

FEMALE RUFF AT NEW HOPE, AUGUSTA COUNTY: On 9 May 1987 Stephen Rottenborn found a Reeve (*Philomachus pugnax*) feeding with various other shorebirds on a farm pond on rt. 776 near New Hope. A photograph of the bird, along with documentation by Rottenborn, was reviewed and accepted by the Records Committee in August 1989. This is the first record of this species for the Mountains and Valleys region of the state.

ALBINO FINCH IN LANCASTER COUNTY

JOYCE F. RUSSELL

Route 1, Box 3441
Kilmarnock, VA 22482

On 12 December 1988, a lady from Merry Point, Lancaster County, reported seeing an albino finch in a flock of small birds on the rt. 3 roadside about a mile south of Lancaster Courthouse. I drove there the next day but saw no birds. On 9 January 1989 Mrs. Philip (Connie) Purrington called to share her sighting of a small, solid white bird in a flock in the same area. Again, I could not find the bird.

Twice in June 1989 George "Sonny" Thomas of Kilmarnock spotted an albino bird about two miles farther south, near the home of Susan and Thomas Smither. Since the Smithers are young nature lovers, I contacted them. They had, indeed, seen "Snow White" all summer; in fact, she had built a nest in a cylindrical terra cotta bluebird house near their garden. Although her mate had not helped her with construction, he had sat upon a limb nearby, all ruffled up, singing encouragement to her. Thomas thought he was a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*).

The domed nest, large and sloppy, mainly of grasses, contained bits of clear plastic, wads of cotton and a filter cigarette butt. She laid five eggs, one medium grey with slightly darker grey mottling, one tan with chocolate mottling, and two ivory with brown speckles. The other must have disintergrated. Although the identified female faithfully incubated the eggs, they did not hatch. Eventually she abandoned the nest and disappeared.

Thomas said she behaved erratically, appearing to have seizures. Once she turned four somersaults in flight, landed with wings outspread and lay still for some time, then recovered and flew off. She seemed fearless, allowing them to mow near her. He conjectured that the reason she had escaped predation was that she scared enemies away by being so odd.

At the end of the summer, the Smithers cleaned out the bird box, carefully preserving the nest. I took it to the VSO field trip at Back Bay in December 1989. Fenton Day, Allen Hale and Peggy Spiegel agreed it belonged to a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*), but I did not have an opportunity to explain all the details I have included here. Jerry Via and Bill Akers believed it to a House Sparrow's (*Passer domesticus*) nest and, on reflection, the Smithers concur. Via suggested her peculiar behavior may have been the result of brain and nerve damage from an electrical shock.

Paper received January 1990.

VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—1988-89 SEASON

TETA KAIN

*Route 5, Box 950
Gloucester, VA 23061*

In 1988-89 the same number of Christmas bird counts—38—were held as in 1987-88, and about the same number of people—714—participated (705 took part in 1987-88). It is regrettable that the Kerr Reservoir count, after such a spectacular showing, was not held this year. Another loss was the Breaks Interstate Park count in Dickenson County. It is an important count and the only one ever held in Dickenson County over the 86-year span of counts in Virginia. On the other hand, the Lake Anna and Gordonsville counts were resurrected, supplying much needed data for the Piedmont region—an area which has been relatively neglected in Christmas count coverage over the years when compared to the Coastal Plains and Mountains and Valleys regions of the state.

The Christmas counts in Virginia have stabilized over the past decade. Since 1980-81, 38 counts have been held each year except 1985-86 and 1986-87 when there were only 36. Total numbers of observers have held relatively steady with a low of 897 in 1983-84 and a high of 971 in 1985-86. This consistency over such a long span provides excellent statistics for a myriad of bird studies. It is one of the reasons why count data must be “scrubbed clean” before it is presented. Ensuring accuracy of count data adds extra burdens on counters and compilers alike, but it is essential if we are to use Christmas count records in a meaningful way.

(continued on page 42)

Explanation of abbreviations used on page 39:

AWO = All water open	MPO = Moving water partly open
CLD = Skies cloudy	MWO = Moving water open
CLR = Skies clear	PCD = Skies partly cloudy
FOG = Foggy	PCR = Skies partly clear
LGR = Light rain	RAI = Rain
LHR = Light/heavy rain	SNW = Snow
LSN = Light snow	SPF = Still water partly frozen
MPF = Moving water partly frozen	SPO = Still water partly open
	SWF = Still water frozen
S(1-10) = Snow on the ground (number denotes depth in inches)	

TABLE 1. (following 24 pages) *The 1988-89 Christmas counts in Virginia. The bold, underlined figures indicate an unusual species or an unusual number of individuals for that particular count. “CW” indicates that the species was seen during count week, but not on count day.*

	Red-throated Loon	Common Loon	Pied-billed Grebe	Eared Grebe	Horned Grebe	Northern Gannet	American White Pelican	Brown Pelican	Great Cormorant
1. Chincoteague	10	51	3	CW	25	2	2	...	...
2. Wachapreague	10	48	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
3. Cape Charles	106	144	27	...	241	96	...	...	11
4. Little Creek	2	4	46	...	7	118	...	11	4
5. Back Bay	53	78	4	...	1	345	...	9	...
6. Newport News	...	9	21	...	10	...	...	...	2
7. Mathews	...	20	4	...	14	...	...	...	...
8. Williamsburg	...	1	24	...	...	...	...	...	...
9. Hopewell	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
10. Brooke	...	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	...	3	5	...	3	...	...	...	...
12. Manassas-B.R.	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	...	1	CW	...	...	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	...	2	12	...	9	...	...	...	...
15. Gordonsville
16. Charlottesville	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
17. Warren	7	...	...	...	...	...	...
18. Banister WMA
19. Lynchburg	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
20. Danville	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
21. Philpott Res.	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
22. Calmes Neck
23. N. Shen. Valley
24. Shen. NP-Luray	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.
26. Rockingham Co	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
27. Augusta Co.
28. Waynesboro
29. Lexington	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter
31. Clifton Forge
32. Fincastle
33. Roanoke	2	...	1	...	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
35. Tazewell
36. Glade Spring	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
37. Nickelsville
38. Wise County
Total individuals	181	364	188	...	313	561	2	20	17

Double Crested Cormorant	cormorant, sp.	American Bittern	Great Blue Heron	Great Egret	Snowy Egret	Little Blue Heron	Tricolored Heron	Black-crowned Night Heron	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Tundra Swan	Mute Swan
5	...	2	78	CW	6	...	7	1	...	360	2
8	33	...	...	...	...	5	...	3	...
270	13	1	135	3	...	...	5	1	...	66	3
2360	...	2	315	56	1	2	1	18	...	...	...
12	...	5	16	14	...	...	4	2	...	1300	...
693	40	2	...	...	...	19	CW	61	1
...	...	1	52	...	...	...	...	...	...	322	...
234	104	...	...	...	...	1	...	97	1
12	...	1	303	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	75	...	...	...	...	...	...	28	2
...
...	...	1	162	...	...	...	...	...	...	778	3
...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
1	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	CW	...
...	35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	16	...	...	...	...	2	...	4	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
...	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3595	13	13	1550	75	7	2	17	49	...	3024	16

	Snow Goose	Snow Goose (blue form)	Brant	Canada Goose	Canada Goose (small forms)	goose, sp.	Wood Duck	Green-winged Teal (European)	Green-winged Teal (American)
1. Chincoteague	6245	11	7042	1556	...	...	...	...	15
2. Wachapreague	20	...	1825	372	...	...	...	1	51
3. Cape Charles	544	...	6021	2153	...	...	5	...	59
4. Little Creek	56	1	3000	86	...	...	16	...	69
5. Back Bay	4125	18	...	510	...	...	17	...	386
6. Newport News	...	...	288	<u>192</u>	...	...	7	...	...
7. Mathews	...	...	...	253	...	...	...	...	...
8. Williamsburg	...	...	...	1281	...	...	23	...	73
9. Hopewell	122	600	...	21153	...	...	949	...	26
10. Brooke	<u>160</u>	...	...	120	...	...	...	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	14	...	...	3393	...	...	13	...	561
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	...	...	995	...	...	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	...	1	...	1340	6	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	...	...	...	195	...	...	<u>3</u>	...	...
15. Gordonsville	...	...	...	<u>1897</u>	...	...	...	...	...
16. Charlottesville	...	...	...	716	...	...	...	...	...
17. Warren	4	9	...	1238	...	...	15	...	15
18. Banister WMA	...	...	...	14	...	...	15	...	...
19. Lynchburg	...	...	...	<u>45</u>	...	1	11	...	6
20. Danville	...	...	...	48	...	...	18	...	...
21. Philpott Res.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
22. Calmes Neck	1	...	...	3042	...	...	CW	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	...	...	...	752	...	...	4	...	36
24. Shen. NP-Luray	...	...	...	10	...	...	1	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	...	...	...	<u>90</u>	...	...	2	...	2
29. Lexington	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CW
30. Peaks of Otter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
31. Clifton Forge	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
32. Fincastle	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
33. Roanoke	...	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	3
34. Blacksburg	...	...	...	133	...	...	3	...	...
35. Tazewell	...	...	...	16	...	...	...	...	9
36. Glade Spring	...	...	...	69	...	...	...	...	...
37. Nickelsville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
38. Wise County	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Total individuals	11291	640	18176	41677	6	1	1109	1	1311

American Black Duck	Mallard	Northern Pintail	Blue-winged Teal	Northern Shoveler	Gadwall	Eurasian Wigeon	American Wigeon	Canvasback	Redhead	Ring-necked Duck	Greater Scaup
3066	962	50	...	709	188	...	16	...	1	...	8
485	402	...	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	15	9
1696	846	50	...	60	<u>357</u>	1	617	...	151	193	1
240	840	4	...	53	151	1	287	121	23	154	2
500	400	184	...	58	34	...	100	...	...	...	...
44	629	1	...	...	35	...	238	146	37	48	68
13	198	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
57	581	14	...	3	28	...	119	1748	80	317	...
578	2541	26	...	...	14	...	163	...	...	319	...
60	320	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2166	3339	137	<u>2</u>	171	475	...	269	5372	96	531	852
6	112	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
18	259	...	...	...	CW	...	CW	...	...	CW	...
4	198	...	...	...	6	...	2	...	...	...	1
29	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	105	...
19	38	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
82	132	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...
60	280	1	...	...	...	...	...	CW	...	...	...
28	<u>189</u>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	...
12	107	...	...	...	2	...	1	1	...	...	...
2	171	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
196	<u>770</u>	...	...	...	...	...	12	2	...	19	...
104	1105	3	...	2	6	...	8	1	...	9	...
5	67	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
2	238	...	...	1	8	...	48	...	...	19	...
15	117	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
6	191	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
6	70	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
49	321	1	...	...	7	...	2	...	...	8	...
47	231	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3	128	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
40	372	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...
...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
9658	16199	474	2	1058	1312	2	1885	7391	388	1757	941

	Lesser Scaup	scaup, sp.	Common Eider	Harlequin Duck	Oldsquaw	Black Scoter	Surf Scoter	White-winged Scoter	scoter, sp.
1. Chincoteague	25	...	CW	...	195	50	208	CW	105
2. Wachapreague	...	...	...	...	22	18	55	8	100
3. Cape Charles	20	...	...	...	35	780	1815	47	277
4. Little Creek	43	...	...	2	1	9	20	2	...
5. Back Bay	1	...	...	...	...	1	44	4	...
6. Newport News	49	...	...	...	19	3	24	3	...
7. Mathews	1	...	...	...	5	3	15	...	25
8. Williamsburg	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
9. Hopewell	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10. Brooke	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	21100	4460	...	...	1	...	...	1	...
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15. Gordonsville	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
16. Charlottesville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
17. Warren	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
18. Banister WMA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
19. Lynchburg	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20. Danville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
21. Philpott Res.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
22. Calmes Neck	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
29. Lexington	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
31. Clifton Forge	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
32. Fincastle	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
33. Roanoke	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
35. Tazewell	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
36. Glade Spring	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
37. Nickelsville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
38. Wise County	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total individuals	21256	4460	...	2	278	864	2181	65	507

Common Goldeneye	Bufflehead	Hooded Merganser	Common Merganser	Red-breasted Merganser	merganser, sp.	Ruddy Duck	duck, sp.	Black Vulture	Turkey Vulture	Osprey	Bald Eagle
17	328	106	...	512	...	24	...	5	153	...	3
20	181	201	...	31	...	1	...	7	58	...	6
328	1309	172	...	519	...	24	...	92	212	...	8
33	700	745	26	181	...	179	...	...	4	5	2
4	...	7	...	181	...	26	...	28	140	1	1
181	536	244	...	15	...	1152	...	...	8	...	...
158	677	11	...	160	...	317	...	11	51	...	3
117	217	182	...	4	...	867	...	7	62	...	9
...	11	142	277	5	...	12	...	3	11	...	89
4	2	4	48	...	...	...	...	6	91	...	7
7	800	299	348	29	...	4525	...	...	1	...	30
...	...	10	...	...	...	37	...	...	...	...	...
...	CW	2	CW	...	...	CW	...	43	283	...	CW
1	36	8	CW	...	...	...	...	36	34	...	2
1	4	3	...	1	...	1	...	37	90	...	...
...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	22	48	...	...
4	...	7	1	...	...	...	...	99	102	...	...
...	1	15	...	...	...	...	...	1	9	...	3
...	...	12	...	...	...	2	...	266	366	...	...
...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	7	82	...	...
1	22	26	...	...	...	...	...	12	30	...	...
2	...	6	2	2	...	1	...	29	80	...	1
1	1	2	...	...	...	2	...	11	32	...	3
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	51	...	...
...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
CW	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	7	58	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27	477	...	...
...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	50	84	...	...
1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	52	47	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	13	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	5	...	...
...	31	86	5	...	...	...	...	10	27	...	...
...	25	15	...	...	5	...	2	103	14	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	85	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
...
880	4882	2314	710	1640	5	7170	2	1095	2727	6	167

	Northern Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Accipiter, sp.	Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Buteo, sp.	Golden Eagle
1. Chincoteague	29	13	...	1	3	20	...	...	...
2. Wachapreague	14	2	3	...	1	13	...	1	...
3. Cape Charles	53	22	9	...	8	41	...	...	...
4. Little Creek	6	11	2	...	3	28	...	...	...
5. Back Bay	45	13	3	...	7	30	...	...	1
6. Newport News	7	8	1	...	5	17	...	2	...
7. Mathews	11	12	1	...	4	5	...	1	...
8. Williamsburg	6	9	1	1	12	20	...	...	...
9. Hopewell	12	3	...	...	13	30	...	...	...
10. Brooke	1	1	2	...	13	19	2	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	2	10	4	...	34	24	...	...	...
12. Manassas-B.R.	6	3	...	...	15	18	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	13	3	4	...	15	61	1	...	...
14. Lake Anna	1	...	...	...	6	5	...	...	...
15. Gordonsville	2	1	4	...	4	24	...	...	...
16. Charlottesville	...	4	...	...	2	12	...	...	...
17. Warren	2	5	4	...	4	22	...	...	...
18. Banister WMA	1	1	1	...	CW	4	...	...	...
19. Lynchburg	...	5	1	...	1	23	...	...	...
20. Danville	CW	2	3	...	1	23	...	...	...
21. Philpott Res.	...	...	...	...	1	14	...	...	...
22. Calmes Neck	4	3	6	...	...	49	...	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	15	11	5	...	1	70	3	...	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	...	7	4	...	...	50	2	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	4	1	...	...	24	...	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	4	3	2	...	...	48	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	1	3	1	1	3	27	...	...	...
29. Lexington	...	...	1	...	3	9	...	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...
31. Clifton Forge	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
32. Fincastle	...	6	1	...	...	16	...	...	...
33. Roanoke	...	6	4	...	2	13	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	2	2	3	1	1	16	...	...	...
35. Tazewell	...	2	...	...	...	15	...	...	2
36. Glade Spring	...	3	2	...	...	11	...	...	...
37. Nickelsville	1	2	3	...	2	10	...	...	...
38. Wise County	...	1	2	...	1	...	...	...	...
Total individuals	239	181	78	4	165	817	8	4	3

	American Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	hawk, sp.	Ring-necked Pheasant	Ruffed Grouse	Wild Turkey	Northern Bobwhite	Clapper Rail	King Rail	Virginia Rail	Sora
47	3	5	...	...	...	...	...	127	3	...	1	...
40	25	5	...	...	...
72	1	5	...	2	...	...	...	66	68	1	13	...
41	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	28	10	...	1	...
80	29	...	5	...	1
20	16	4	...	...	...
13	5	1	...	...	...
17	13	1	...	...	...
29	3	44	...	...	...	...
8	8	...	...	...	...
10	6	...	1	...	...
22	2	7	...	...	...	...	...
64	24	22	...	...	...	...	...
11	1	8	...	...	...	...	...
16	2	16	...	...	...	...	...
8	1	...	...	...	...
14	41	...	...	...	...
3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
13	3	22	...	...	...	...	...
22	30	...	...	...	...	...
6	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
21	5	9	6	45	...	...	...	...	...
45	1	...	20	41	...	...	...	...	...
31	7	1	48	...	...	...	...	...
...	7	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
32	4	...	8	...	...	...	...	...
57	37	...	...	...	...	...
25	2	...	27	...	...	...	...	...
6	4	...	CW	...	...	...	...	...
...	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
6	1	4	7	...	...	...	...	...
19	5	22	...	...	...	...	...
26	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
13	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
4	1	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
36	3	...	9	...	...	...	...	...
19
3	5	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
899	5	10	1	9	54	96	758	92	7	15	1	...

	Common Moorhen	American Coot	Black-bellied Plover	Semipalmated Plover	Killdeer	American Oystercatcher	Greater Yellowlegs	Lesser Yellowlegs	yellowlegs, sp.
1. Chincoteague	181	...	12	315	30	12	...
2. Wachapreague	39	10	40	10	21	1	...
3. Cape Charles	2	3	290	2	16	627	<u>135</u>	7	10
4. Little Creek	...	314	13	<u>20</u>	149	<u>160</u>	1	9	...
5. Back Bay	...	1	10	...	116	...	28	2	...
6. Newport News	...	13	18	...	91	...	2	2	...
7. Mathews	...	2	...	...	67	...	...	...	...
8. Williamsburg	63	...	1	...	...
9. Hopewell	125	...	...	...	...
10. Brooke	...	5	...	...	5	...	...	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	...	2856	...	...	35	...	...	...	...
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	67	...	...	3	...	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	5	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	...	10	...	...	CW	...	...	...	...
15. Gordonsville	1	...	...	...	...
16. Charlottesville
17. Warren	8	...	...	...	...
18. Banister WMA	11	...	...	...	...
19. Lynchburg	...	6	...	...	9	...	...	...	...
20. Danville	...	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	...
21. Philpott Res.
22. Calmes Neck	...	1	...	...	9	...	...	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	...	1	...	...	43	...	...	...	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	38	...	...	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.
26. Rockingham Co	...	3	...	...	18	...	...	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	...	1	...	...	10	...	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	...	1	...	...	8	...	...	...	...
29. Lexington	3	...	...	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter
31. Clifton Forge	9	...	...	...	...
32. Fincastle	11	...	...	...	...
33. Roanoke	31	...	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	13	...	...	...	...
35. Tazewell
36. Glade Spring	7	...	...	...	...
37. Nickelsville	3	...	...	...	...
38. Wise County	3	...	...	...	...
Total individuals	2	3285	551	32	966	1112	218	33	10

[illegible]

	Long-billed Dowitcher	dowitcher, sp.	Common Snipe	American Wood-	Pomarine Jaeger	Parasitic Jaeger	Laughing Gull	Little Gull	Bonaparte's Gull
1. Chincoteague	1	...	2	8	...	...	7	...	5
2. Wachapreague	...	10	...	1	...	...	...	...	24
3. Cape Charles	...	61	19	63	...	...	2	...	15
4. Little Creek	9	5	...	...	3	2	1030
5. Back Bay	86	1	1	1	328	...	620
6. Newport News	1	3	...	...	11	...	1
7. Mathews	5	...	...	...	...	...
8. Williamsburg	4	1	...	...	3	...	5
9. Hopewell	35	1	...	...	...	...	3
10. Brooke	2	...	...	...	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	73	6	...	...	...	...	3
12. Manassas-B.R.	1	...	...	...	...	...
13. Nokesville	CW	1	...	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	3
15. Gordonsville	1	3	...	...	...	...	...
16. Charlottesville	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
17. Warren	7	CW	...	...	...	...	...
18. Banister WMA	12	...	...	...	...	...	22
19. Lynchburg	1	...	...	...	...	...
20. Danville
21. Philpott Res.	2	...	...	...	...	...
22. Calmes Neck	10	1	...	...	...	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	35	1	...	...	...	...	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.
26. Rockingham Co	13	...	...	...	...	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	7	...	...	...	...	...	...
29. Lexington	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter
31. Clifton Forge	1	...	...	...	...	...
32. Fincastle	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
33. Roanoke	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
35. Tazewell	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
36. Glade Spring
37. Nickelsville	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
38. Wise County	1	...	...	...	...	...
Total individuals	1	71	344	108	1	1	354	2	1731

Ring-billed Gull	Herring Gull	Island Gull	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Great Black-backed Gull	gull, sp.	Forster's Tern	Dovekie	Rock Dove	Mourning Dove	Common Barn-Owl	Eastern Screech-Owl
2399	2263	...	1	526	...	...	...	164	288	1	2
3616	1963	...	...	48	250	...	...	142	431	...	13
2347	2465	...	...	606	...	1	CW	454	413	...	18
14000	5525	...	6	790	...	41	...	1100	880	...	18
8750	815	...	...	131	...	41	...	160	400	...	3
3089	925	...	...	132	...	...	...	542	1140	...	3
1044	379	...	...	46	...	1	...	3	361	...	5
1030	146	...	...	45	...	30	...	51	450	...	9
6601	395	...	...	75	...	40	...	146	373	1	3
2800	400	...	...	142	...	...	...	80	170	...	...
17219	553	...	4	198	...	...	...	243	1154	1	1
165	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	62	559	...	2
1347	527	1	2	18	...	...	...	388	537	7	5
231	CW	...	...	...	...	...	...	44	115	...	5
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	103	159	...	4
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	68	228	...	5
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	228	572	...	2
275	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	199	...	...
4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	503	483	...	14
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1253	314	...	1
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22	168	...	5
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	897	290	...	12
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1230	1095	1	27
27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	518	790	...	29
...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	955	679	...	2
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	340	855	...	3
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	323	515	...	18
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	133	32	...	7
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13	...	5
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	163	6	...	2
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	222	252	...	18
213	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	648	604	...	20
4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	590	563	...	7
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	54	98	...	6
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	234	616	1	1
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31	166	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	116	27	...	5
65162	16360	1	13	2757	250	154	...	12217	15995	12	280

	Great Horned Owl	Barred Owl	Long-eared Owl	Short-eared Owl	owl, sp.	Belted Kingfisher	Red-headed Woodpecker	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
1. Chincoteague	1	...	...	...	...	25	...	32	2
2. Wachapreague	6	...	...	...	...	11	...	19	5
3. Cape Charles	13	...	...	2	...	36	1	73	10
4. Little Creek	15	1	...	...	...	53	1	79	10
5. Back Bay	4	...	...	...	...	15	...	45	2
6. Newport News	5	...	...	1	...	35	...	45	9
7. Mathews	CW	...	...	...	...	31	...	27	6
8. Williamsburg	6	5	...	...	...	29	12	76	16
9. Hopewell	8	6	...	4	...	19	7	90	28
10. Brooke	...	2	...	...	...	12	12	75	14
11. Fort Belvoir	13	2	...	...	...	47	21	397	25
12. Manassas-B.R.	1	...	...	...	...	7	1	56	3
13. Nokesville	21	2	...	1	...	1	CW	74	12
14. Lake Anna	9	1	...	...	...	25	1	29	3
15. Gordonsville	3	1	...	...	...	6	...	24	15
16. Charlottesville	3	...	...	...	...	13	...	73	21
17. Warren	2	1	...	...	...	13	8	80	40
18. Banister WMA	...	3	...	...	...	9	45	9	10
19. Lynchburg	6	...	...	...	...	9	2	87	38
20. Danville	...	1	...	...	...	1	8	10	5
21. Philpott Res.	2	...	...	...	...	6	...	21	9
22. Calmes Neck	8	2	...	...	...	14	9	174	16
23. N. Shen. Valley	5	5	...	...	...	38	3	131	29
24. Shen. NP-Luray	13	3	2	...	...	13	...	58	11
25. Big Flat Mt.	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	10	11
26. Rockingham Co	2	...	...	...	...	9	3	21	2
27. Augusta Co.	2	1	...	...	...	17	...	46	1
28. Waynesboro	12	1	...	...	1	16	1	45	15
29. Lexington	...	...	...	...	...	10	...	22	4
30. Peaks of Otter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	28
31. Clifton Forge	2	1	...	...	...	3	2	6	5
32. Fincastle	6	...	...	...	...	12	8	34	12
33. Roanoke	6	...	...	...	...	20	...	24	28
34. Blacksburg	...	...	...	...	...	14	1	35	19
35. Tazewell	3	4	...	...	...	9	2	11	3
36. Glade Spring	5	1	...	...	...	11	...	27	2
37. Nickelsville	1	...	...	...	...	5	3	9	12
38. Wise County	1	1	...	...	...	2	...	6	1
Total individuals	186	44	2	8	1	598	151	2089	482

Downy Woodpecker	Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Flicker	Pileated Woodpecker	Eastern Phoebe	Horned Lark	Tree Swallow	Barn Swallow	Blue Jay	American Crow	Fish Crow	crow, sp.
49	11	89	4	7	21	...	...	45	214	6	22
21	3	58	1	5	5	...	...	70	245	4	...
61	8	166	2	4	14	21	...	279	482	9	...
75	14	204	38	2	5	...	...	176	2290	1510	...
49	3	98	23	4	...	152	2	63	315	12	...
42	4	107	21	...	3	...	...	193	409	4	...
21	...	90	3	3	...	...	...	64	595	...	...
53	6	108	27	6	...	...	...	109	236	13	...
61	6	111	16	11	14	...	...	81	359	53	...
49	6	70	25	2	...	...	...	355	500	20	...
288	71	392	71	4	2	...	...	896	2567	1092	...
94	8	68	8	1	...	...	...	583	613	9	...
448	6	69	16	...	CW	...	...	664	1269	767	...
24	5	14	8	3	CW	...	...	485	604	...	...
34	10	37	20	1	...	...	...	680	829	...	...
73	15	81	28	3	...	...	...	561	545	14	...
96	14	99	29	3	...	...	...	776	888	...	...
10	7	42	3	1	...	...	...	112	231	...	...
85	16	90	29	8	6	...	...	490	581	...	...
16	5	35	2	1	...	...	...	248	444	...	...
32	9	18	28	9	...	...	...	131	328	...	...
137	15	91	45	1	...	...	...	214	274	2	...
172	32	107	66	1	13	...	...	688	977	1	...
117	15	33	28	1	102	...	...	977	1675	1	...
24	4	10	12	...	...	...	...	5	18	...	...
41	4	7	10	1	207	...	...	155	399	101	...
81	5	24	8	...	75	...	...	916	1612	35	...
95	2	32	30	2	34	...	...	561	1605	242	410
49	7	27	13	2	5	...	...	309	550	...	...
38	13	14	24	2	...	...	...	33	79	...	...
15	4	2	7	3	150	...	...	116	220	...	...
49	6	27	31	6	57	...	...	503	1007	...	...
24	5	63	23	2	6	...	...	212	403	...	...
106	12	25	14	3	31	...	...	510	1177	...	...
30	5	2	4	...	41	...	...	121	140	...	...
47	2	6	7	2	...	...	...	232	464	...	...
22	4	13	13	4	...	...	...	207	530	...	...
36	1	11	8	...	...	...	...	86	173	...	...
2764	363	2540	745	108	791	173	2	12906	25847	3895	432

	Common Raven	Black-capped Chickadee	Carolina Chickadee	chickadee, sp.	Tufted Titmouse	Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Brown Creeper
1. Chincoteague	...	...	129	...	29	...	...	39	19
2. Wachapreague	...	...	89	...	20	...	1	18	2
3. Cape Charles	...	...	238	...	40	...	...	5	8
4. Little Creek	...	...	382	...	206	2	16	29	27
5. Back Bay	...	...	198	...	44	1	15	2	15
6. Newport News	...	...	192	...	125	...	4	...	8
7. Mathews	...	...	128	...	49	...	1	13	3
8. Williamsburg	...	...	216	...	117	3	62	8	20
9. Hopewell	...	...	176	...	68	1	19	...	11
10. Brooke	...	...	248	...	135	1	38	...	9
11. Fort Belvoir	...	...	1423	...	1004	1	235	...	49
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	...	224	...	177	1	44	...	17
13. Nokesville	...	...	257	...	110	...	65	...	22
14. Lake Anna	...	...	99	...	56	...	13	...	4
15. Gordonsville	...	2	122	...	77	1	37	...	8
16. Charlottesville	2	1	161	...	160	2	43	...	11
17. Warren	2	...	151	...	82	2	41	...	10
18. Banister WMA	...	...	35	...	33	1	11	6	3
19. Lynchburg	...	...	354	...	233	8	50	...	13
20. Danville	...	...	166	...	101	...	18	...	5
21. Philpott Res.	4	...	147	76	79	...	52	...	7
22. Calmes Neck	4	18	461	...	391	1	209	...	57
23. N. Shen. Valley	16	80	558	...	362	6	158	...	60
24. Shen. NP-Luray	74	38	422	...	360	7	125	...	20
25. Big Flat Mt.	5	...	53	...	24	...	14	...	1
26. Rockingham Co	5	8	68	...	63	CW	17	...	6
27. Augusta Co.	6	8	205	...	122	...	51	...	3
28. Waynesboro	34	3	254	...	174	1	93	...	11
29. Lexington	3	22	32	57	77	...	34	...	2
30. Peaks of Otter	10	33	84	...	58	...	42	...	9
31. Clifton Forge	6	2	73	...	68	5	43	...	9
32. Fincastle	10	19	101	...	131	2	38	...	9
33. Roanoke	10	7	225	...	90	3	27	...	18
34. Blacksburg	7	13	207	112	243	2	62	...	11
35. Tazewell	15	16	75	...	89	3	55	...	3
36. Glade Spring	...	1	139	...	110	...	32	...	7
37. Nickelsville	...	...	76	...	65	2	23	...	2
38. Wise County	4	...	141	...	125	1	52	...	...
Total individuals	217	271	8309	245	5497	57	1840	120	499

Carolina Wren	Bewick's Wren	House Wren	Winter Wren	Sedge Wren	Marsh Wren	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher	Eastern Bluebird	Hermit Thrush	American Robin
100	...	2	11	...	4	73	8	...	102	7	446
71	4	...	...	11	2	...	247	16	348
257	...	8	26	21	9	146	22	...	65	49	71
189	...	7	5	...	3	276	59	3	4	20	870
118	...	3	9	3	21	58	27	...	139	4	3250
84	...	1	1	...	...	26	9	...	11	...	272
67	31	11	...	582	11	316
91	...	3	...	...	1	58	48	...	157	10	148
110	...	3	13	...	...	66	46	...	131	25	284
73	5	...	...	44	6	1	187	16	69
453	16	...	1	150	39	...	212	45	475
80	2	...	...	36	1	...	99	2	83
66	4	...	...	58	4	...	290	5	168
22	53	2	...	153	8	44
30	3	...	...	18	1	...	103	7	73
113	14	...	...	76	13	...	130	24	242
87	...	1	9	...	...	103	6	...	108	11	56
24	5	...	...	19	25	...	31	7	480
146	33	...	...	120	18	...	235	18	37
36	2	...	...	27	3	1	215	...	264
54	8	...	...	114	10	...	188	32	100
103	14	...	...	41	2	...	255	...	161
62	20	...	1	77	4	...	449	6	11
93	...	1	1	...	...	69	1	...	258	10	50
13	7	...	...	10	1	...	4	6	2
17	3	...	...	3	...	...	56	1	99
43	3	...	...	7	1	...	224	...	556
54	13	...	1	34	17	...	142	16	1
28	...	1	3	...	...	132	7	...	63	20	54
21	4	...	...	32	3	...	72	15	...
25	3	...	...	31	20	...	27	10	20
74	...	1	11	...	...	89	6	...	188	11	23
72	16	...	...	102	13	...	81	11	322
78	16	...	...	55	4	...	91	7	136
26	2	...	...	14	...	...	20	6	59
42	1	...	...	68	6	...	47	...	3
16	1	...	3	...	...	3	...	...	64	2	41
41	10	...	...	8	...	...	36	3	48
3079	1	31	300	24	41	2338	445	5	5466	441	9782

	Gray Catbird	Northern Mockingbird	Brown Thrasher	Water Pipit	Cedar Waxwing	Loggerhead Shrike	European Starling	White-eyed Vireo	Solitary Vireo
1. Chincoteague	8	33	2	265	138	...	5437	...	...
2. Wachapreague	9	67	3	...	48	...	1189	...	...
3. Cape Charles	26	85	9	400	415	...	3634	...	1
4. Little Creek	6	153	14	22	158	...	7220	...	1
5. Back Bay	9	35	5	65	346	...	2550	...	1
6. Newport News	5	183	6	...	88	...	3123	...	...
7. Mathews	5	73	6	...	1602	...	1134	...	...
8. Williamsburg	3	66	11	7	271	...	736	1	...
9. Hopewell	6	56	14	...	383	...	2343	...	...
10. Brooke	5	100	1	...	310	...	800	...	...
11. Fort Belvoir	2	312	...	11	1258	...	1688	...	...
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	72	...	...	582	...	2710	...	...
13. Nokesville	...	136	...	73	399	CW	2184	...	...
14. Lake Anna	...	48	...	...	888	2	951	...	...
15. Gordonsville	...	66	...	...	344	CW	1478	...	...
16. Charlottesville	...	77	...	...	929	2	5451	...	...
17. Warren	...	80	...	...	369	1	468	...	...
18. Banister WMA	...	22	2	...	180	1	313	...	...
19. Lynchburg	1	113	1	...	888	1	12555	...	...
20. Danville	...	53	2	...	161	1	2137	...	...
21. Philpott Res.	...	19	...	...	91	...	194	...	1
22. Calmes Neck	...	151	1	...	178	5	8661	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	2	365	2	...	141	9	45705	...	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	...	163	2	...	73	1	67282	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.	...	1	...	...	192	...	2	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	76	...	...	115	7	4066	...	...
27. Augusta Co.	...	182	...	3	115	5	18569	...	...
28. Waynesboro	CW	117	1	...	37	6	8020	...	...
29. Lexington	...	40	1	...	18	...	344	...	...
30. Peaks of Otter	...	5	...	...	78	...	45	...	...
31. Clifton Forge	...	21	...	...	7	...	90	...	...
32. Fincastle	...	114	1	2	65	2	1183	...	...
33. Roanoke	...	89	...	...	204	1	2610	...	...
34. Blacksburg	...	105	...	1	146	2	1892	...	...
35. Tazewell	...	14	...	...	...	2	629	...	...
36. Glade Spring	...	60	2	...	36	5	2831	...	...
37. Nickelsville	...	23	...	...	...	6	602	...	...
38. Wise County	...	2	2	...	...	...	460	...	...
Total individuals	87	3377	88	849	11253	59	221286	1	4

Orange-crowned Warbler	Cape May Warbler	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Pine Warbler	Palm Warbler	Northern Waterthrush	Common Yellowthroat	Yellow-breasted Chat	Northern Cardinal	Painted Bunting	Rufous-sided Towhee	American Tree Sparrow
...	...	1992	10	3	...	...	...	93	...	13	...
...	...	1613	...	4	...	...	...	95	...	1	...
2	...	6039	17	5	...	2	1	202	...	53	45
3	...	732	35	3	...	...	...	242	...	59	...
...	...	1860	34	7	1	4	...	106	CW	20	...
...	...	566	5	...	...	...	...	185	...	20	...
...	1	454	1	10	...	CW	...	249	...	44	1
...	...	679	23	1	...	1	...	120	...	46	1
...	...	270	...	2	...	...	...	313	...	37	...
...	...	57	...	...	...	...	...	187	...	23	10
...	...	172	...	...	...	5	...	1057	...	46	21
...	...	64	...	...	...	...	...	306	...	13	...
...	...	113	...	...	...	...	...	371	...	15	2
...	...	47	...	...	...	...	...	111	...	9	CW
...	...	138	...	...	...	...	...	157	...	12	...
...	...	231	...	...	...	...	...	370	...	38	...
...	...	243	...	...	...	...	...	190	...	34	13
...	...	44	...	...	...	...	...	53	...	8	2
...	...	114	2	...	...	...	...	271	...	76	...
...	...	36	1	...	...	...	...	84	...	8	...
...	...	21	...	...	...	...	...	121	...	22	...
...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	480	...	5	10
...	...	104	...	...	...	...	...	630	...	3	32
...	...	75	2	...	...	...	...	531	...	2	6
...	23	...	...	...
...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	142	...	1	...
...	...	101	...	...	...	...	...	237	...	2	...
...	...	67	1	...	...	...	...	229	...	6	CW
...	...	169	...	...	...	...	...	107	...	10	1
...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	34	...	2	...
...	61	...	2	...
...	...	43	...	...	...	...	...	247	...	8	...
...	...	61	...	...	...	...	...	204	...	8	...
...	...	23	...	...	...	...	...	384	...	29	...
...	55	...	5	...
...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	193	...	11	...
...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	206	...	26	1
...	133	...	9	...
5	1	16152	131	35	1	12	1	8779	...	726	145

	Chipping Sparrow	Field Sparrow	Vesper Sparrow	Lark Sparrow	Savannah Sparrow	Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	Seaside Sparrow	Fox Sparrow
1. Chincoteague	132	39	1	...	73	3	5	9	4
2. Wachapreague	38	24	...	...	35	17	4	...	4
3. Cape Charles	...	174	3	...	213	9	37	26	68
4. Little Creek	38	110	...	...	24	...	8	6	14
5. Back Bay	33	52	...	1	114	...	3	1	3
6. Newport News	6	13	...	...	7	...	2	1	2
7. Mathews	37	60	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
8. Williamsburg	34	...	...	...	39	...	...	...	1
9. Hopewell	...	79	...	...	38	...	...	...	4
10. Brooke	...	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
11. Fort Belvoir	...	78	...	...	1	...	...	...	3
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
13. Nokesville	...	56	...	...	45	...	...	...	...
14. Lake Anna	4	83	...	...	CW	...	...	...	5
15. Gordonsville	...	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
16. Charlottesville	...	69	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
17. Warren	...	78	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
18. Banister WMA	1	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
19. Lynchburg	...	39	...	...	4	...	...	...	3
20. Danville	...	53	...	...	41	...	...	...	2
21. Philpott Res.	...	45	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
22. Calmes Neck	...	44	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	1	114	...	...	1	...	...	...	2
24. Shen. NP-Luray	1	47	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25. Big Flat Mt.	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
27. Augusta Co.	...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
28. Waynesboro	...	44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
29. Lexington	...	56	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
30. Peaks of Otter	...	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
31. Clifton Forge	...	1	...	...	5	...	...	...	1
32. Fincastle	3	41	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
33. Roanoke	...	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
34. Blacksburg	...	24	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
35. Tazewell	...	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
36. Glade Spring	...	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
37. Nickelsville	...	114	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
38. Wise County	...	44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total individuals	328	1757	4	1	641	29	59	43	166

	Song Sparrow	Lincoln's Sparrow	Swamp Sparrow	White-throated Sparrow	White-crowned Sparrow	Harris' Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco	Snow Bunting	Red-winged Blackbird	Eastern Meadowlark	Rusty Blackbird	Brewer's Blackbird
123	...	63	305	19	...	...	289	2	9282	269	2	...
119	...	11	587	...	...	...	256	14	3303	88	...	...
610	...	263	1155	...	...	...	187	...	1712	294	4	...
284	1	58	830	1	...	...	294	...	380	21	85	...
226	...	47	341	...	...	...	205	2	30350	282	156	...
206	...	5	406	...	...	...	329	...	2403	59	6	...
104	...	14	399	...	...	...	1335	...	1548	137	...	...
283	...	84	477	...	...	...	608	...	1104	82	...	...
223	...	16	980	21	...	...	517	...	5146	97	1	...
172	...	6	640	1	...	...	340	...	580	25	3	...
458	...	42	1224	6	...	...	1367	...	2796	7	142	...
131	...	1	215	15	...	...	956	...	6027	26	...	...
236	...	5	215	42	...	...	1161	...	307	87	8	2
114	...	10	195	22	...	...	602	3	2	24	17	...
50	285	15	...	...	597	...	...	58	...	...
231	...	8	672	26	...	...	850	...	360	3	...	...
312	...	25	674	29	...	...	946	...	11	83	...	...
233	...	70	343	6	...	...	345	...	7	36	1	...
192	...	10	886	18	...	...	863	...	200	29	...	...
56	...	46	115	2	...	...	668	...	500	3	...	...
150	...	1	268	34	...	...	558	...	6	11	...	...
305	...	5	356	200	...	...	473	...	60	23	8	...
149	...	8	184	168	...	...	1874	...	190	183	5	1
199	...	6	272	134	...	...	1884	...	6	11	11	...
4	130	...	...	...	144	...	...	...	...	...
108	...	1	57	102	...	...	348	...	...	1	51	...
55	95	92	...	...	701	...	131	75	...	...
152	...	11	145	133	...	...	317	...	1001	49	6	...
74	...	4	249	2	...	...	453	...	...	44	...	...
12	44	...	...	...	137	...	70	...	...	...
11	...	41	...	...	...	...	90	...	7	22	...	...
154	...	3	224	115	...	...	545	...	18	95	...	...
219	228	37	...	...	336	...	1	9	...	...
206	...	1	443	64	1	...	625	...	3	4	...	...
80	...	2	19	14	...	...	94	...	...	17	10	...
112	78	22	...	...	107	...	1	26	...	...
98	...	2	110	23	...	...	373	...	2	37	14	...
70	33	4	...	...	140	...	4	...	1	...
6521	1	869	13879	1367	1	21914	21	67554	2317	531	3	...

	Boat-tailed Grackle	Common Grackle	Brown-headed Cowbird	blackbird, sp.	Orchard Oriole	Northern Oriole	Purple Finch	House Finch	Pine Siskin
1. Chincoteague	433	16223	180	...	...	...	5	392	...
2. Wachapreague	507	1176	431	...	...	...	123	372	...
3. Cape Charles	852	343	59	...	...	...	2	262	...
4. Little Creek	150	11300	3100	...	...	...	4	256	5
5. Back Bay	260	2400	560	...	1	...	22	85	...
6. Newport News	97	7376	557	85	...	...	...	237	...
7. Mathews	...	284	237	...	...	1	1	443	1
8. Williamsburg	...	796	79	...	...	1	3	232	...
9. Hopewell	...	4306	277	...	...	1	49	301	...
10. Brooke	...	590	18	...	...	...	75	260	...
11. Fort Belvoir	...	2179	305	...	...	...	14	864	4
12. Manassas-B.R.	...	1150	70	...	...	...	8	357	2
13. Nokesville	...	17	272	...	...	...	9	533	...
14. Lake Anna	...	5	...	...	...	...	2	578	...
15. Gordonsville	...	1014	3	...	...	...	2	365	...
16. Charlottesville	...	351	...	...	...	...	111	442	...
17. Warren	1	...	...	...	56	815	...
18. Banister WMA	...	5	2	...	...	...	...	60	...
19. Lynchburg	...	56	8	...	...	CW	31	866	...
20. Danville	...	187	...	...	...	...	193	318	...
21. Philpott Res.	3	...	...	...	26	16	...
22. Calmes Neck	...	16	88	...	...	...	1	153	...
23. N. Shen. Valley	...	11	53	...	...	...	18	1280	17
24. Shen. NP-Luray	...	2540	989	...	...	...	3	386	1
25. Big Flat Mt.	1	...	...
26. Rockingham Co	...	11	2	...	...	...	5	577	...
27. Augusta Co.	...	226	287	...	...	...	18	1124	...
28. Waynesboro	...	100	95	...	...	...	14	248	...
29. Lexington	64	129	...
30. Peaks of Otter	2	6	...
31. Clifton Forge	2	18	7
32. Fincastle	6	131	...
33. Roanoke	5	168	...
34. Blacksburg	...	2	1	...	...	...	115	395	...
35. Tazewell	...	11	2	...	...	...	13	43	5
36. Glade Spring	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	72	...
37. Nickelsville	...	4	1	...	...	...	3	112	90
38. Wise County	...	1	2	...	...	...	8	234	11
Total individuals	2299	52681	7682	85	1	3	1014	13130	143

			(See p. 17 for an explanation of abbreviations.)				
American Goldfinch	Evening Grosbeak	House Sparrow	Date	Time in field (A.M. to P.M.)	Water/snow conditions	Skies (A.M.)	Skies (P.M.)
147	...	93	28 Dec	6:30-5:00	AWO	CLR	PCD
108	...	40	17 Dec	6:00-5:30	SPO,MWO	CLR	PCD
220	...	110	27 Dec	5:00-5:30	AWO	CLR	PCD
189	...	830	31 Dec	5:45-6:00	AWO	PCD	CLR
350	...	151	28 Dec	5:30-6:00	AWO	CLD	PCD
87	...	477	17 Dec	4:50-5:00	SPO,MWO,S(0-1)	CLR	PCD
288	...	85	1 Jan	6:00-5:00	AWO	CLD,FOG,LHR	CLD,LGR
218	...	84	18 Dec	6:40-5:30	SPO,MWO	CLR	PCD
201	...	59	18 Dec	6:00-4:45	SPF,MWO	CLR	PCD
115	...	95	19 Dec	6:15-5:00	SWF	CLR	PCD
479	...	996	2 Jan	5:00-4:30	AWO,S(0-1)	CLD,FOG	CLD,FOG
140	...	184	1 Jan	4:15-5:00	AWO,S(1)	CLD,RAI,SNW	CLD,RAI,SNW
231	...	350	18 Dec	4:00-5:30	SPO,MPO	CLR	CLR
59	...	74	1 Jan	4:00-5:00	AWO	CLD,FOG,LGR/LSN	CLD,FOG,LGR
3	...	62	18 Dec	7:00-5:00	SWF,MPF	CLR	PCD
200	...	66	1 Jan	5:30-6:00	AWO	FOG,LGR	FOG,LGR
219	...	42	18 Dec	5:00-6:00	SPF,MWO	PCD	CLD
82	...	458	18 Dec	6:45-6:00	SWF	CLR	CLD
191	2	63	17 Dec	5:00-5:30	SWF,MPO,S(0-1)	PCD,LSN	PCD
19	...	76	17 Dec	7:00-6:00	SPF,MWO	PCD	PCD
96	...	89	31 Dec	5:00-5:30	AWO	CLD	PCD
259	...	326	31 Dec	12-1,5:30-7:00	SPF,MWO	CLD	PCD
318	...	686	18 Dec	12:01-6:00	SWF,MPO	CLR	PCR
132	...	342	18 Dec	5:15-6:00	SPF,MPF	PCD	PCD
8	17 Dec	6:30-3:00	SPO,S(0-5)	CLD	PCD
16	...	993	17 Dec	8:00-5:00	SWF,MWO	PCD	PCD
50	...	499	17 Dec	7:15-5:15	SWF,MPF	PCD	PCD
123	...	231	31 Dec	7:00-6:00	AWO	CLR	CLR
92	...	22	26 Dec	5:00-4:30	SPO,MWO	CLR	PCD
14	20 Dec	7:30-3:30	SWF,MWO	PCD	PCD
8	...	22	18 Dec	8:00-5:00	SPF,MWO,S(2)	CLR	CLR
87	...	158	18 Dec	4:00-5:00	SWF,MPF	PCD	PCD
161	...	82	17 Dec	4:00-4:45	AWO	PCD	PCD
276	...	209	17 Dec	6:00-5:30	SPF	LSN	LSN
64	2	98	29 Dec	5:00-5:00	AWO	CLR	CLR
96	...	264	31 Dec	4:00-4:30	AWO	FOG	PCD
51	...	31	18 Dec	6:00-5:00	SPF,MWO,S(1)	PCD	CLR
88	...	61	17 Dec	6:40-5:30	SPO,MPF,S(2)	CLD,LSN	CLD,LSN
5485	4	8508	...	...	...	...	...

	Temperatures (° Fahrenheit)	Wind direction	Wind speed (miles/hour)	Total species	Total individuals	Number of field observers	Number of field parties (non-owling)	Number of feeder observers
1. Chincoteague	42-60	S-SE	10-30	133	69160	26	14-17	...
2. Wachapreague	23-31	NW	0-20	112	10057	21	11	1
3. Cape Charles	33-60	NE-SE	0-10	150	59216	40	9-22	...
4. Little Creek	39-50	SE	0-10	148	67939	29	11-13	...
5. Back Bay	50-75	SE-SW	10-40	132	66640	39	11-21	...
6. Newport News	23-35	N-NW	0-15	114	29337	40	12	...
7. Mathews	30-44	NE	10-20	91	14984	39	12	4
8. Williamsburg	18-30	N	15	108	15947	17	11	1
9. Hopewell	20-34	N	10-25	99	52862	36	10-13	1
10. Brooke	24-49	SW	0-10	84	11001	20	10	...
11. Fort Belvoir	37-47	SW	0-5	110	97912	90	27-42	5
12. Manassas-B.R.	33-38	W-NE	10-12	71	17366	34	14	2
13. Nokesville	19-32	W-NW	5-13	80	16275	25	14	1
14. Lake Anna	34-40	E-SE	0-15	77	6536	11	7	1
15. Gordonsville	20-32	SSW	1-3	70	9237	14	7-8	10
16. Charlottesville	35-37	E	0-5	65	14100	20	14	...
17. Warren	19-31	SW	0-15	76	10057	14	11	1
18. Banister WMA	15-31	NW	15	73	4413	5	4	...
19. Lynchburg	22-33	NW	8	77	22232	28	12-14	3
20. Danville	22-38	NW	5-25	71	8328	11	7	4
21. Philpott Res.	35-58	S	5	62	3729	9	5	...
22. Calmes Neck	23-55	W-NW	0-5	85	20078	28	13	4
23. N. Shen. Valley	17-30	NW	0-10	98	61257	56	20	...
24. Shen. NP-Luray	5-34	NW	5-25	81	81408	36	18	5
25. Big Flat Mt.	20-28	NW	0-20	38	765	2	2	...
26. Rockingham Co	18-28	NW	5	73	10156	23	12	...
27. Augusta Co.	18-33	SW	0-10	64	28650	24	23	2
28. Waynesboro	30-52	VAR	0-5	77	16503	28	13-14	1
29. Lexington	27-52	N	0-5	64	3754	17	2-7	1
30. Peaks of Otter	30-55	...	0	42	1150	10	6	...
31. Clifton Forge	13-25	NW	5-15	61	1502	3	3	4
32. Fincastle	15-25	NW	10	67	6391	28	13	...
33. Roanoke	24-35	NE	10	74	8410	24	14	...
34. Blacksburg	20-28	W	25	76	9762	39	14-17	27
35. Tazewell	2-18	NW	3-5	64	2309	6	4	2
36. Glade Spring	37-45	...	0	62	6694	17	7	1
37. Nickelsville	14-32	NW	7-9	61	3308	10	4	...
38. Wise County	16-28	SW	30	54	2274	12	8	...
Totals	...	...	...	196	884579	931	...	81

[illegible]

(continued from page 17)

Breaking down the activities of the 714 participants we find that 563 attended one count each, 106 participated in two counts, 30 went on three, 10 took part in four, 4 hung in there for five counts and 1 went the distance for a total of six counts, making the number of combined field observers 931.

Only 196 species were tallied on Virginia's 1988-89 Christmas bird counts. This total is down slightly from the 200 or more that are usually found throughout the state. Some of the most spectacular species proved to be frustratingly elusive and could not be included in the final tally because they were not seen on count days. A prime example was the Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) at Back Bay. This bird has been a regular visitor to feeder in the parking lot of a newly established grill just south of the stop light in "beautiful downtown Pungo" for over a year. Dozens of birders have stopped by to view the bird while enjoying a tasty sandwich in the restaurant; however, the spirit of cooperation was not the heart of this little fellow and it earned only a "CW" (seen during count week) rating on the final tally.

Another tantalizing discovery was an "apparently freshly killed" Dovekie (*Alle alle*) on the Cape Charles count. The editors of *American Birds* frown upon dead birds being included in count tallies, but in the words of Claudia Wilds as she wrote the Virginia summary for that publication: "Although there is no reason to conclude with certainty that the bird had been in the count circle the day before or was captured and killed within the circle (especially since the [Fisherman] island is on the edge of it), its demotion to count week status, rather its loss from the list altogether, is an understandable stretch of the rules for a (luckily) rare situation." "Rare" is indeed the word to apply here. The last time a Dovekie was recorded on a Christmas count was in 1975 when one was found on the Chincoteague and the Back Bay censuses.

An Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) and a Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) were "CW" birds at Chincoteague but two American White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) and one Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*) on count day helped illuminate that count's final total.

Five Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) at Little Creek and one at Back Bay seem to follow the trend set by coastal North Carolina counts which have consistently reported Ospreys the past few years. Perhaps this indicates an increasing habit of this species to winter along the southeastern coast. The Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) at Back Bay was only the third Christmas count sighting along the coast in a decade. Tazewell chalked up two, continuing its record of finding at least one, and sometimes two, Golden Eagles every year since 1983.

Two Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) were at Back Bay for only the second Christmas count record in eight years (one was found on the Warren count in 1982). Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) numbers were up considerably with five counts turning in record numbers. The aggregate state total of 12,906 was up from 4170 in 1987-88.

The Nickelsville Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) represents the second count sighting of this species in the decade. Only Wise County found one in 1980-81. House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) put in their usual sporadic appearances throughout the western half of the state (Warren, Shenandoah-Luray, Lexington, and Fincastle), but the singular Marsh Wrens (*Cistothorus palustris*) on the Northern Shenandoah Valley and Waynesboro counts were only the second and third occurrence of this species in the Mountains and Valleys region over a 10-year period.

Mathews County again came up with an all-time high of Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) with a total of 582. Calmes Neck and N. Shenandoah Valley usually give Mathews a run for its money on bluebird numbers, but neither area has been able to outstrip Virginia's "bluebird capital" at Mathews. The steady increase at Mathews tends to overshadow a startling increase at Wachapreague. In the early 1980s, only five to eight bluebirds were recorded each year. The only exception was 1983-84 when the total reached 91. A downhill trend followed with only 13 found in 1985-86. Since that time, increases have been impressive: 71 in 1986, 159 in 1987, and 247 in 1988.

We have grown accustomed to Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (*Polioptila caerulea*), White-eyed Vireos (*Vireo griseus*) and Solitary Vireos (*Vireo solitarius*) turning up on the southeastern counts, but the Solitary Vireo on the Philpott Reservoir count, along with the single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Brooke and Danville, are remarkable. Philpott seems to have potential for some interesting statistics, but lack of observers have curbed efforts since its beginnings in 1983. This is somewhat understandable since it is relatively remote from other centers of birding activity.

Mathews County birders were lucky enough to find a Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*) and photograph it the next day along with a Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) in the same vicinity, another first for that census. Other warbler finds were a Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) at Back Bay and a Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) at Waynesboro.

The sparrows were well-represented with a Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) at Back Bay, a Lincoln's (*Melospiza lincolni*) at Little Creek, a count high of 41 Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) at Danville and a record 26 Seaside Sparrows (*Ammodramus maritimus*) at Cape Charles. House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) continue to mushroom in numbers with this year's state total of 13,130 higher than that of any previous count season.

As in the past the counts are arranged generally from east to west and north to south with 1-11 in the Coastal Plain, 12-21 in the Piedmont, and 22-33 from the Blue Ridge westward.



CHRISTMAS COUNT DESCRIPTIONS

1. CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. 37°58'N; 75°22'W
Center: 2 miles north of center of Chincoteague.
Compiler: F.R. Scott (115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond VA 23226)
2. WACHAPREAGUE. 37°40'N; 75°42'W
Center: intersection rts. 789 and 715.
Compiler: Irvin Ailes (RFD 1, Box 365-22, Chincoteague VA 23336)
3. CAPE CHARLES. 37°12'N; 75°56'W
Center: 1.5 miles southeast of Capeville Post Office.
Compiler: Henry Armistead (523 E. Durham St., Philadelphia PA 19119)
4. LITTLE CREEK. 36°51'N; 76°06'W
Center: 3.8 miles northeast of Kempsville in Virginia Beach.
Compiler: Paul Sykes, Jr. (1080 Forest Rd., Watkinsville GA 30677)
5. BACK BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. 36°39'N; 76°00'W
Center: 1.5 miles east of Back Bay.
Compiler: Paul Sykes, Jr. (1080 Forest Rd., Watkinsville GA 30677)
6. NEWPORT NEWS. 37°05'N; 76°25'W
Center: Northern corner of Magruder & Cmdr. Shepard Blvds.
Compiler: Teta Kain (Rt. 5, Box 950, Gloucester VA 23061)
7. MATHEWS. 37°25'N; 76°18'W
Center: 0.5 mile east of Beaverlett Post Office.
Compiler: Mary Pulley (Redart VA 23142)
8. WILLIAMSBURG. 37°17'N; 76°42'W
Center: Colonial Williamsburg Information Center.
Compiler: Bill Williams (108 Deerwood Dr., Williamsburg VA 23185)
9. HOPEWELL. 37°23'N; 77°17'W
Center: Curles Neck.
Compiler: Larry Robinson (3320 Landria Dr., Richmond VA 23225)
10. BROOKE. 38°22'N; 77°20'W
Center: At road 3 miles east southeast of Brooke.
Compiler: David Stewart (10715 Midsummer Dr., Reston VA 22091)
11. FORT BELVOIR. 38°41'N; 77°12'W
Center: Pohick Church.
Compiler: David F. Abbott (8501 Doter Dr., Alexandria VA 22308)
12. MANASSAS-BULL RUN. 38°50'N; 77°26'W
Center: Centreville.
Compiler: Ken Bass (12604 Valley View Dr., Nokesville VA 22123)
13. NOKESVILLE. 38°37'N; 77°33'W
Center: Fleetwood Dr. (rt. 611) at Cedar Run.
Compiler: Ken Bass (12604 Valley View Dr., Nokesville VA 22123)

14. LAKE ANNA. 38°05'N; 77°49'W
Center: center of bridge over Lake Anna on rt. 208.
Compiler: Michael R. Boatwright (204 Patterson Ave., Fredericksburg VA 22401)
15. GORDONSVILLE. 38°09'N; 78°12'W
Center: jct. of rts. 15 & 33 north of the town of Gordonsville.
Compiler: Donald R. Ober (PO Box 6, Orange VA 22960)
16. CHARLOTTESVILLE. 38°04'N; 78°34'W
Center: near Ivy.
Compiler: Charles Stevens (615 Preston Pl., Charlottesville VA 22903)
17. WARREN. 37°51'N; 78°33'W
Center: at Keene.
Compiler: Charles Stevens (615 Preston Pl., Charlottesville, VA 22903)
18. BANISTER RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS. 36°43'N; 78°48'W
Center: at Banister River WMAs.
Compiler: Jeffrey Blalock (103 Elizabeth Court, South Boston VA 24592)
19. LYNCHBURG. 37°24'N; 79°11'W
Center: Lynchburg College.
Compilers: John and Thelma Dalmas, 502 Rainbow Forest Dr., Lynchburg VA 24502)
20. DANVILLE. 36°34'N; 79°25'W
Center: Ballou Park.
Compiler: Penultima J. Wiseman (162 Howeland Cir., Danville VA 24541)
21. PHILPOTT RESERVOIR. 36°53'N; 80°03'W
Center: near intersection rts. 605 and 623.
Compiler: Clyde Kessler (PO Box 3612, Radford VA 24143)
22. CALMES NECK. 39°07'N; 77°54'W
Center: Castlemans Ferry Bridge, rt. 7 and the Shenandoah River.
Compilers: Gregory Justice (PO Box 226, Millwood, VA 22646) and Frances Endicott (Rt. 1, Box 448, Bluemont, VA 22012)
23. NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY. 39°03'N; 78°10'W
Center: junction Crooked Run and rt. 606.
Compiler: Rob Simpson (Rt. 1, Box 154-B, Stephens City, VA 22655)
24. SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK—LURAY. 38°35'N; 78°28'W
Center: Hershberger Hill.
Compiler: Terry Lindsay (Shenandoah National Park, Rt. 4, Box 348, Luray, VA 22835)
25. BIG FLAT MOUNTAIN. 38°11'N; 78°43'W
Center: on Pasture Fence Mountain.
Compiler: Charles Stevens (615 Preston Pl., Charlottesville, VA 22903)

26. ROCKINGHAM COUNTY. $38^{\circ}26'N$; $79^{\circ}02'W$
Center: Ottobine.
Compiler: Max Carpenter (Rt. 1, Box 396, Dayton VA 22821)
27. AUGUSTA COUNTY. $38^{\circ}12'N$; $78^{\circ}59'W$
Center: junctions rts. 780 and 781.
Compiler: John Mehner (Mary Baldwin College, Staunton VA 24401)
28. WAYNESBORO. $37^{\circ}59'N$; $78^{\circ}57'W$
Center: Sherando at intersection of rts. 610 and 664.
Compiler: Allen Hale (Rt. 1, Box 242, Shipman VA 22971)
29. LEXINGTON. $37^{\circ}51'N$; $79^{\circ}29'W$
Center: Big Spring Pond.
Compiler: Bob Paxton (460 Riverside Dr., #72, New York NY 10027)
30. PEAKS OF OTTER. $37^{\circ}27'N$; $79^{\circ}36'W$
Center: Peaks of Otter Visitor Center.
Compiler: Barry Kinzie (PO Box 446, Troutville VA 24175)
31. CLIFTON FORGE. $37^{\circ}49'N$; $79^{\circ}46'W$
Center: junction rts. 42 and 60.
Compiler: Allen Leheuw (POD 602, 76 Allegheny, Clifton Forge VA 24422)
32. FINCASTLE. $37^{\circ}31'N$; $79^{\circ}52'W$
Center: north of Fincastle near intersection of rts. 220 and 679.
Compiler: Barry Kinzie (PO Box 446, Troutville VA 24175)
33. ROANOKE. $37^{\circ}18'N$; $79^{\circ}56'W$
Center: Oakland Blvd. and Williamson Rd.
Compilers: Mike Donahue (440 Atherly St., NE, Roanoke VA 24012) and Peggy Spiegel, 303 Market St., Roanoke VA 24011)
34. BLACKSBURG. $37^{\circ}14'N$; $80^{\circ}25'W$
Center: intersection rts. 685 and 657.
Compiler: Clyde Kessler (PO Box 3612, Radford VA 24143)
35. TAZEWEEL. $37^{\circ}08'N$; $81^{\circ}30'W$
Center: Fourway.
Compiler: Sarah Cromer (Box 765, N. Tazewell VA 24630)
36. GLADE SPRING. $36^{\circ}47'N$; $81^{\circ}47'W$
Center: junction rts. 750 and 609.
Compiler: Steven L. Hopp (Box 11, Emory VA 24327)
37. NICKELSVILLE. $36^{\circ}45'N$; $82^{\circ}25'W$
Center: Nickelsville.
Compiler: Betsy McConnell (PO Box 293, Coeburn VA 24230)
38. WISE COUNTY. $36^{\circ}57'N$; $82^{\circ}39'W$
Center: at Dorchester.
Compiler: Richard Peake (Clinch Valley College of U. Va, College Ave., Wise VA 24293)

IN MEMORIAM: SYDNEY "MIKE" MITCHELL

Sydney Mitchell of Newport News died at his home on 7 October 1989. A native of Belfast, Ireland, he was a graduate of Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School and a senior designer for Newport News Shipbuilding for 46 years until his retirement in 1977. "Mike" as he was known to family and friends was the organizer and first president of the Hampton Roads Bird Club which was founded in 1952. He and his wife, Dorothy, were familiar figures at all club meetings and were responsible for sustaining much of the interest and activity in the organization.

Both Mike and Dorothy were licensed bird banders of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and could be found at Kiptopeke banding station on Virginia's Eastern Shore every autumn for many years. In the latter part of the 1980s they moved their banding operations to their home in Newport News. As a team they operated their station both in the spring and fall, and were always ready to share their knowledge and appreciation of birds with anyone who dropped by to visit them. Mike's involvement with bird banding spanned 29 years during which he and Dorothy banded more than 108,000 birds of 196 species.

Mike was a member of Morrison United Methodist Church and sang in the church choir all his life. He taught Sunday School for 20 years and received the Torch and Flame Religious Award for Methodist adult leaders. At the time of his death, he was chairman of the administrative board and treasurer for the church's Men's Club.

Of all his accomplishments, Mike will probably be remembered most by the many boy scouts, past and present, who were influenced by his life of faith and 62 years of service to scouting. He was a former scoutmaster of Troop 41 in Hilton Village and organized Morrison Troop 14 in the early 1950s. He was an Eagle Scout, Vigil Honor Member of the Order of the Arrow, and a Woodbadge Leader in the scouting organization. Mike was also the recipient of the Silver Beaver Award for Distinguished Service in Peninsula Council Boy Scouts.

One of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon Mike was the 1969 conservation award from the Virginia Wildlife Federation, which he shared with Dorothy, for their audio-visual presentations about birds to more than 10,000 Virginia school children. The award also cited his long involvement with community service through scouting and church activities. Senator William B. Spong, Jr. summarized the importance of the Mitchells' contributions when he wrote in 1970, "I congratulate you upon receiving the conservation award from the Virginia Wildlife Federation. Conservation of our national resources is one of our most important endeavors, and those who make special contributions in this field assuredly deserve the recognition which the Federation gives."

A memorial service was held at the Morrison United Methodist Church in Newport News on 9 October 1989. Mike is survived by his wife, Dorothy Langslow Mitchell, two daughters, one sister, one brother, and five grandchildren. His many contributions to the betterment of his community and to the world of birds will be remembered by many, as will his humor, thoughtfulness and compassion.

Dorothy Silsby

1989 VIRGINIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT RESULTS

SUE RIDD

P. O. Box 6837
Richmond, Virginia 23230

The sixth field season of the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project (VAP) has been completed. It was highlighted by some unusual and exciting discoveries.

In Region 1, the Northern Shenandoah Valley, Regional Coordinator Julie Simpson reported finding the nest and young of a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) in a freshwater marsh in Clarke County. A singing Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) and a King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) were also observed in the same area. She noted that the unusual sighting of the flycatcher may be an extension of its breeding range. Also in 1989 there appeared to be a lack of Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*).

Northern Virginia (Region 2) continues to produce some exciting records. An American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) at Huntley Meadows Park was suspected of feeding young when Ken Howard saw two young on 3 July—the first breeding observation recorded in 21 years according to the VSO annotated checklist. Huntley Meadows also continues to produce nesting King Rails, Least Bitterns (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax violaceus*), despite the continual threat of highway development.

In the priority block of the Widewater quadrangle, one of Region 2's coordinators, Stephen Eccles, was "chased off" by local landowners and then later asked to return. (While being asked to leave is not a new occurrence for an Atlaser, being asked to return, is. The landowner is interested in protecting his land from development.) More than 80 species were recorded, including a Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flying overhead.

Eccles reports new locations of Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*), Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), Dickcissels (*Spiza americana*), Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), and Blue-winged Warblers (*Vermivora pinus*) in the quadrangles of Thoroughfare Gap, Richardsville, Catlett, Quantico, and Nokesville, respectively. He also stated that Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) and Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) had been confirmed (carrying food to young [CF] and fledglings present [FL]) in the Old Rag quadrangle. Pairs of Upland Sandpipers (*Bartramia longicauda*) continued to be observed in the Waterford quadrangle by the Northern Virginia Chapter of the VSO as a special club project.

Byron Swift, Region 2's northern coordinator, stated that a new location for the state endangered species, the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), had been discovered. In Thoroughfare Gap, a number of sightings of Blue-winged Warblers were reported, and one confirmed in Bluemont (CF). He also confirmed Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) in the Ashby Gap quadrangle (Region 1).

Region 3, the Central Mountains and Valleys, is "basically finished" according to Clair Mellinger, one of Region 3's coordinators. Two new records for this region were nesting Bald Eagles in Bath County and Great Blue Herons in Highland County. Two adult and three young Northern Waterthrushes (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) were seen near the Locust Spring picnic area while two adult and one immature Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) were observed on Shenandoah Mountain. Two new sites for Dickcissels were reported, as well as an immature and mature Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. A colony of Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) was also observed but the number of birds was fewer than the previous summer. Mellinger also said he observed more Vesper Sparrows (*Poecetes gramineus*) than usual.

YuLee Larner reported Bobolinks for a second consecutive year near Swoope (Churchville quadrangle). Courtship flight was observed within the safe dates period but young were not found. She and John Mehner also reported a Black-billed Cuckoo's nest in Staunton.

In central Piedmont, Region 4, Coordinator Teresa Shaner reported a 15 percent success rate in the 40 Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*) nest boxes that were begun this year in Orange County. Some unusual species discovered in Albemarle County by C. E. Stevens were Dickcissels, Willow Flycatchers, and Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*).

Lawrence Latane II, Region 5's coordinator, noted two rarities for the Middle and Northern Neck region. An American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) was present and a Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) was confirmed in the Machodoc quadrangle. He thanked Dick Gauthery, Robert Hilton, Chan Robbins and Stephen Rottenborn for their assistance. Latane also thanked Region 2 atlasers who conducted a miniforay near Fredericksburg. Val Kitchens and her group confirmed Dickcissels and Bank Swallows there.

A Least Bittern on the Rappahannock River, Worm-eating Warblers (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) in the Colonial Beach South quadrangle, and a nesting Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) at Plum Tree National Wildlife Refuge were other highlights for Region 5.

On the Eastern Shore, Region 6, a Northern Harrier was thought to be a possible nester on the Chincoteague marsh near the wildlife refuge causeway according to regional coordinators Irv and Marilyn Ailes. Along the barrier islands, Bill Williams reported confirmed records for Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), American Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*), Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Seaside Sparrows (*Ammodramus maritimus*), Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Common Barn-Owls, American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*), and Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*). He noted that 28 of 37 Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) nests contained eggs on Fisherman Island.

Region 7, the far southwest, began its exciting news with a Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) nesting in a flying squirrel's box, and a pair of Bewick's Wrens (*Thryomanes bewickii*) discovered near a cave entrance. This region was visited by a number of blockbusters to complete its priority blocks. In the coal mining

counties "there was very little habitat diversity, keeping the species numbers relatively low" according to Clair Mellinger. He was impressed by the number of White-eyed Vireos (*Vireo griseus*), and found Cerulean (*Dendroica cerulea*), Black-throated Blue (*D. caerulescens*), Black-and-white (*Mniotilta varia*), and Hooded (*Wilsonia citrina*) Warblers "pleasantly numerous." Rick Blom and Julie Simpson wrote: "Hooded, Kentucky (*Oporornis formosus*), Black-and-white Warblers, and American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) are common. The incredible thing is that one fourth to one third of the species in each block are warblers!"

Woody Middleton was shown a nesting Bewick's Wren along a coal mine "high wall" in Dickenson County by Sue Ridd. As the first confirmed breeding record since 1986, the nest and an addled egg are now at the Smithsonian Institution.

In the southern Mountains and Valleys, Region 8, several new locations were reported of the Loggerhead Shrike and Common Barn-Owl, including a confirmed sighting of the shrike in the Pulaski quadrangle, according to Regional Coordinator Clyde Kessler. He thanked Don Mackler and Napier Shelton for their blockbusting efforts. While a Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) was found in McDonalds Mill central east (CE) block, a Whip-poor-will (*C. vociferus*) provided a superb distraction display, confirming this species in the Strom southeastern (SE) block.

One unusual observation was a Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) carrying a chicken feather to its own nest building site in White Gate SE. There were several sightings of adult Bald Eagles in the Radford South quadrangle, but breeding evidence has not been confirmed. Also present was a Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) in the Radford North SE block. On Bent Mountain near Roanoke, Pine Siskins (*Carduelis pinus*) were confirmed breeding.

Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were reported as confirmed breeders for the first time this year in Region 9, the southwest Piedmont. Regional Coordinators John and Thelma Dalmas received some exciting news from Jeff Blalock. John writes: "The breeding Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) is absolutely mind-boggling—I do believe that this is *another* first Piedmont breeding record! One adult and nine young were in a swamp along the Banister River. Assuming these records are accepted, we are now up to 141 species with 112 confirmed breeders." Clayton Ferrell was the atlaser who discovered the Hooded Merganser and reported it to Jeff Blalock. Of the 94 priority blocks in this region, the total species ranged from 43 to 86 with an average of 56 species per block and 28 percent in the confirmed category in 14 hours of field work.

In the southeast Piedmont, Region 10, Regional Coordinators Larry Robinson and Mary Arginteanu reported finding Loggerhead Shrikes in several locations and a confirmation in the Chase City quadrangle. A Least Bittern was observed in the Darvills SE block, making this a first for Region 10.

Overall, Northern Bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) were found in *every* SE block of Region 10. Robinson also acknowledged the help of Stephen Rottenborn and Bob Russell who upgraded numerous blocks. Twenty blocks were upgraded in 1989, and an average number of 62 species per block was achieved.

Region 11, the southwestern Coastal Plain, found three sets of couples block-busting this summer—Julie and Dana Bradshaw, Thelma and John Dalmás, and YuLee and Si Lerner. Most of the uncovered blocks were in Southampton and Isle of Wight Counties and Thelma wrote: “We found Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) on every section that we surveyed. They would boom out a reply to their taped call even in broad daylight. We also saw Prothonotary Warblers (*Protonotaria citrea*), Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra*), Blue Grosbeaks, and Orchard Orioles (*Icterus spurius*).

Perhaps the highlight of this region is Robert Hilton’s new location for Bachman’s Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis*) making it the most northern site known for this species in Virginia. Bob Russell found Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) near the North Carolina border for the second consecutive year.

The southeastern Coastal Plain, Region 12, regional coordinators Becky White and Townley Wolfe III reported that upgrading was the main aim this summer since all blocks had been covered. Two highlights were nesting Piping Plovers and a pair of Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) at Craney Island. One atlaser recalled a time when Piping Plovers nested with some regularity at Craney.

BANDING RESULTS AT KIPTOPEKE BEACH – 1989

WALTER P. SMITH

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The twenty-seventh consecutive year of operation of the Kiptopeke Beach banding station opened on 2 September 1989 and ran continuously through October 21, a total of 50 days. Of those 50 days, there was only one day during which the station did not open, due to inclement weather.

The station, which overlooks Chesapeake Bay at the southern tip of the Eastern Shore peninsula, is operated by the Research Committee of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. There were 26 mist nets used for the passerine banding portion of the station, with an additional six nets for the raptor banding portion. The station procedures were essentially similar to those of previous years.

During the 1989 season, 3400 birds of 93 species were banded in 7661 net hours. There were 10 returns of birds banded at the station in previous years, and 184 repeats of birds banded there this year. There were three foreign recoveries of birds banded elsewhere.

Our banding results at Kiptopeke in 1989 were truly ones of extremes, and as usual, I blame the weather. Anyone who watched the jet stream as avidly as we did at the station noticed its unusual location all year. It, in turn, affected the number and strength of the cold fronts we received, and consequently, our birds. We had only one major cold front and three minor ones. Too much rain, particularly in September, resulted in many days during which we opened the nets late or closed them early. All of the above resulted in a decline from the normal in numbers of most species.

The most commonly banded bird was, as usual, Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) (1182), followed by Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) (388), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) (247), Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) (204), and Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) (197). Our prize for the year was a Lawrence's Warbler (*Vermivora pinus X chrysoptera*) which was our first ever and species (and/or subspecies) number 151 for the station. Other unusual species were: Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) (1), Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) (1), and Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) (1). Species notable in their absence this year were Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*), Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). In spite of the decrease in numbers of most species, we banded 24 Yellow Palm Warblers (*Dendroica palmarum*) and 102 Western Palm Warblers, the most since 1976.

Licensed banders who alternated in charge of the station were Don Schwab, John Dillard, John Buckalew, Charlie Hacker, Karen Terwilliger, and Walter Smith. As in the past, the banders were aided by many assistants. The help at the station this year was the most in recent years and was greatly appreciated. We also entertained many educational, civic and scientific groups at the the station this year.

Permission to use the private land on which the station is located was again kindly extended by Mr. John Maddox. Concerning the possible development of this property, there have been many individuals and groups throughout our state who are working hard to ensure that it will continue as an important staging area for the passerines on their fall migration along the Atlantic flyway. We are optimistic that we will return next year.



INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The following information should be of help to anyone wishing to submit articles to be considered for inclusion in future editions:

The Raven, the official journal of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, functions to publish original contributions and review articles in ornithology, not published elsewhere, mostly relating to the birdlife of Virginia. *The Raven* may also rarely reprint an article published elsewhere if it appears to be of particular interest to VSO members. Although most bird papers published in this journal concern the distribution, abundance, and migration of birds in Virginia, other aspects of ornithology are also covered, such as historical and bibliographic reviews and life-history and behavioral notes, especially when these are based on observations in Virginia. The activities of various public and private organizations engaged in biological and conservation work in Virginia is also of interest to the readership of *The Raven*. In addition, the journal serves to publish the official proceedings of the Society and other formal items pertaining to all aspects of the Society's activities. It may also print articles pertaining to the activities of VSO chapters and the various public and private organizations engaged in biological and conservation work in Virginia.

All contributions should be sent to the editor (Route 5, Box 950, Gloucester, Virginia 23061). Those having IBM compatible computers at their disposal are urged to submit materials for publication on either high- or low-density 5 1/4-inch diskettes, preferably using WordPerfect word-processing program. If computer use is not possible, manuscripts, tables, and literature cited should be typewritten (*everything*, including tables and literature cited) and double-spaced on only one side of 8 1/2 x 11-inch good quality paper. Handwritten materials are discouraged.

At this time, only black-and-white photographs, graphs, maps, illustrations, figures, etc. may be used in *The Raven*. Generally the original size should not exceed 5 x 7 inches, keeping in mind that all such materials must be reduced substantially for final copy.

Format of *The Raven* generally follows guidelines set by the Council of Biology Editors as outlined in *CBE Style Manual*, 5th edition, published by Council of Biology Editors, Inc., Bethesda, Maryland 20814. It is standard policy that most manuscripts will be reviewed by someone qualified in the subject matter. The editor will acknowledge, by phone or letter, receipt of all articles submitted and will discuss reviewing policies with the author at that time.

Under most circumstances vernacular and technical names of birds should adhere to those in the Sixth edition of the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds and subsequent supplements. For bird measurements and weights, metric units are now the accepted standard. All figures and tables should be on separate pages and not included in the narrative text, and figures must be in a form suitable for photographic reproduction. Any extensive changes in figures must be charged to the author.

Deadlines for submission of articles are 1 January for the spring issue and 1 August for the fall issue. Authors contemplating submitting lengthy papers requiring review or those with extensive tabulations or figures should contact the Editor in advance.



The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

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

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.
2. Other forays or field trips lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.
3. A journal, *The Raven*, published yearly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.
4. A newsletter, published quarterly, containing current news items of interest to members and information about upcoming events and pertinent conservation issues.
5. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

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

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities, or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society, are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$10.00 for active members, \$15.00 for sustaining members, \$25.00 or more for contributing members, \$250.00 for life members, and \$18.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife and their dependent children).

Editorial queries and comments may be directed to Teta Kain, Rt. 5, Box 950, Gloucester, Virginia 23061.

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The Raven

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UPLAND SANDPIPERS IN NORTHERN LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA—HISTORY AND 1989 RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

The Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) is a declining breeding species in Virginia, now biologically proposed for endangered status in the state. On the Virginia Piedmont, only the area of Loudoun County north of Leesburg has been a stable breeding area for this species over a long period of time. This area, however, is now strongly threatened by development.

The author has, therefore, undertaken a project to document this Upland Sandpiper breeding locale and provide a basis from which to work for protection. All available historical records for this area have been gathered. In 1989 a field survey of the current breeding population was performed. This paper is a compilation of the results of the work so far.

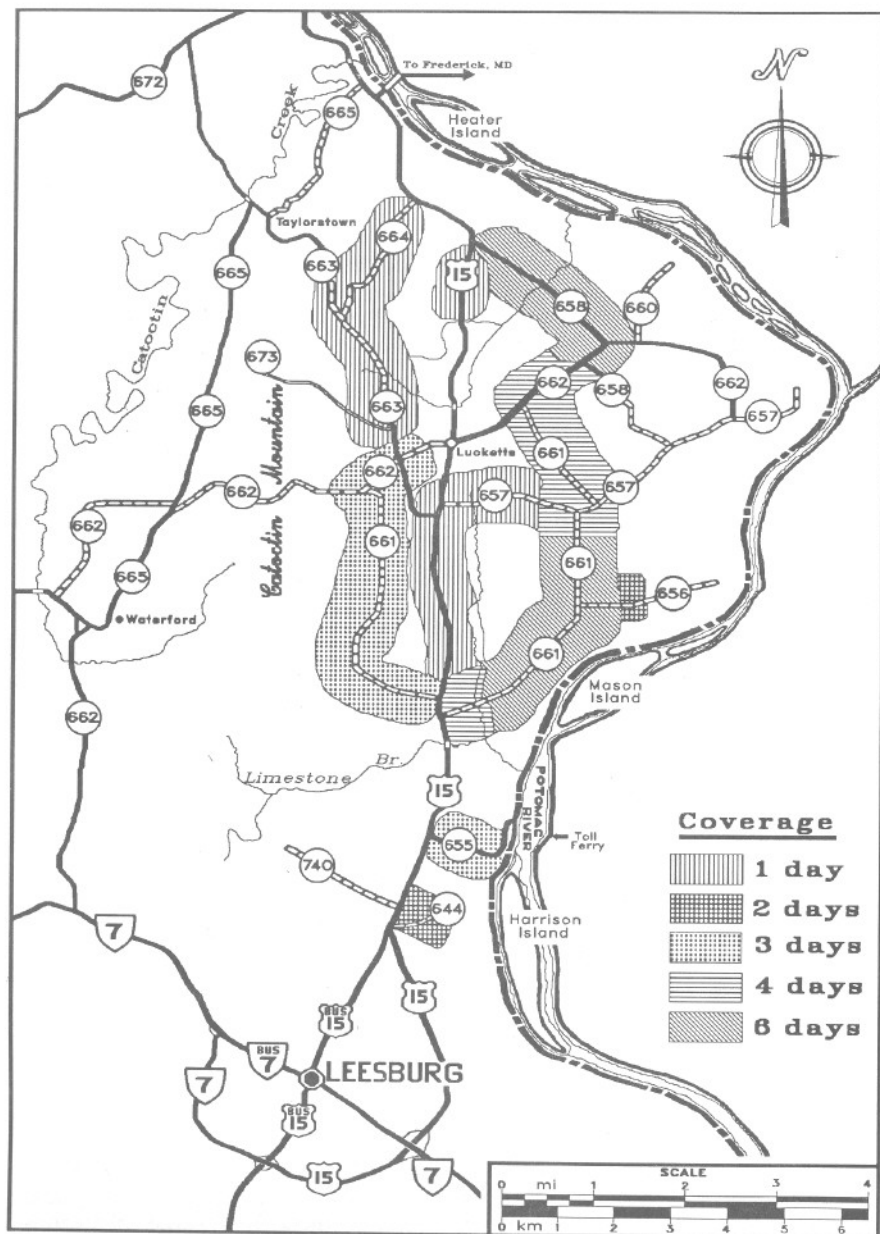
HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Upland Sandpipers were first reported in the area of Loudoun County north of Leesburg in 1938 by W. L. McAtee (Murray 1938). He thought that at least three pairs were present along the road (assumed to be what is now U.S. 15) between Leesburg and Point of Rocks. The next report did not come until 1954, when two were found "near Leesburg" on 17 July (Davis 1954). In 1955 one was reported "near Leesburg" on 22 April and two were found in the White's Ferry area on 14 May (Davis 1955). No written reports are available for the rest of the 1950s and 1960s but I have been told by Jane Church, a resident of the area during that period and a bird bander and naturalist, that Upland Sandpipers bred "all over" the area north and east of Leesburg then.

Starting in the early 1970s, sightings of this species in northern Loudoun County became much more regular, with reports in 1973-1975, 1978, 1980, and 1984-1988 (pers. records; VSO Master List; Armistead 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b, 1989; DuMont and DuMont 1973, 1975, 1976; Kain 1987; Scott 1978, 1980; Scott and Cutler 1974). The map in figure 1 on page 56 should be consulted for the locations of the following sightings.

In 1973 I found five birds (groups of two and three) flying in various directions in the vicinity of the intersection of rts. 661 and 656 on 20 May and four (two pairs) flying and foraging in the same area on 23 May. They were probably nesting there. In 1975 Mike Britten and I found one perched on a fence post west of rt. 661 about 0.5 mile north of its intersection with rt. 656 on 16 May. At the time of these three sightings, the habitat in this area was a farmland mixture of large, tall orchard-grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) hayfields and pastures; a large plowed field; some calciferous

FIGURE 1. Coverage of northern Loudoun County during 1989 Upland Sandpiper studies.



rock outcrops; fences and power lines along roads and through fields; a few small woodlots; and lines of deciduous trees and shrubs along some of the roads. By the late 1970s much of this area had been converted to a corn monoculture and Upland Sandpipers could no longer be found there. They have remained absent from the area during the 1980s in spite of a change in farming practices that has created habitat conditions much like those of the early 1970s.

On 14 June 1978 the VSO foray to Loudoun County (Scott 1980) found nine Upland Sandpipers (possibly two family groups) in one hayfield near the intersection of rts. 658 and 662. At about this same location J. M. Abbott (VSO Master List) reported two adult and five flying immature birds in a short pasture on 7 July 1985. This area is still present in similar habitat. On 10 May 1980 I found an Upland Sandpiper foraging in a medium-height grassy field with scattered deciduous trees and numerous calciferous conglomerate rock outcrops near the intersection of rts. U.S. 15 and 644 (Ball's Bluff Road). The bird seemed likely to be a breeder. That field still exists but is now adjacent to a massive new housing development.

The most dependable location for Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County has been the area along and southwest of rt. 658 from its intersection with U.S. 15 southeastward for about 0.4 to 0.5 mile. Jane Church, who lived adjacent to this area during the 1960s, has told me that this species nested there regularly during that period. Paris and Alice Coleman, of Alexandria, also found Upland Sandpipers at this location during the early 1970s and visited there regularly during the breeding season for a number of years thereafter, usually finding the species. Mr. Coleman has told me that the Upland Sandpipers there were often observed calling and that the Colemans were sometimes harrassed by the birds. The VSO foray to Loudoun County in 1978 (Scott 1980) also found four of these birds together in this area on 16 June. On 7 June 1980 I watched a pair of Upland Sandpipers making long flights, calling, and perching together over and along the field southwest of rt. 658 to as far as 600 yards from the road. In 1984 Erika Wilson, Maggie Hawk, and Valerie Kitchens watched four birds, including two males, involved in territorial boundary defense, in and over the same field on 23 June (Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project Verification Form). They had first seen the sandpipers there on 11 May. On 10 June 1987 Roger A. Anderson (pers. comm. and Armistead 1987b) obtained the first confirmation of breeding of this species for the Virginia Piedmont when he found two adults and two half-grown young in this same field. They were just southwest of rt. 658 about 0.4 mile southeast of U.S. 15. The field in which almost all of these sightings were made has remained in essentially the same habitat for at least 16 years and is described in the Results section below (see the Area 1 habitat description on page 62).

Various other reports of Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County during May and June are available for the 1980s, but the location they provide is only "Lucketts" or "Lucketts area."

Available annual cycle information for Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County is as follows. The earliest spring record is 22 April (Davis 1955) but most of the records have been in May and June. Judging from statewide information, most or all the birds present by early- to mid-May are probably

breeders, and some breeding pairs could already have eggs in the nest as early as late April. In northern Loudoun County territorial and courtship activities have been observed from 20 May (1973; pers. records) to 23 June (1984; Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project Verification Form) but the only observation of nests, eggs, or non-flying young has been of the two half-grown young with both parents on 10 June 1987 seen by Anderson. Flying family groups have been observed from 14 June (1978; Scott 1980) to 7 July (1985; VSO Master List). The latest summer record for Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County is 17 July (1954; Davis 1954).

Identifiable activity areas of Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County through the years have therefore been five (see the map in Figure 1 on page 56 for locations):

- 1) Near the intersection of rts. U.S. 15 and 644 (Ball's Bluff Road).
- 2) In the vicinity of White's Ferry (probably along rt. 655 or U.S. 15).
- 3) The area around the intersection of rts. 661 and 656, extending north about 0.5 mile along rt. 661.
- 4) From the intersection of rts. U.S. 15 and 658 (on the northwest) southeast along rt. 658 for about 0.5 mile, and southwest of rt. 658 (east of U.S. 15) for about 0.4 mile.
- 5) In the vicinity of the intersection of rt. 662 and the southeastern leg of rt. 658.

The record scatter makes it difficult to decipher how many breeding pairs of Upland Sandpipers may have occurred in this area during any one breeding season through the years, but it seems unlikely that the concurrent number of pairs ever exceeded six.

STUDY DESIGN

During the breeding season of 1989 I undertook a study of the northern Loudoun County breeding Upland Sandpiper population. The study area was north of Leesburg, east of Catoctin Mountain, and south and west of the Potomac River. The research plan was to spend as much of one day as possible every two weeks (the most time available) during the breeding season engaged in two activities in the study area. The first was searching for Upland Sandpipers in areas with apparently at least marginal habitat suitability. The second was observing located birds to see what their actions were, determine their activity areas, and obtain the most substantial evidence of breeding possible. All field work was done from roads — either on foot or from a car. Observational car stops of ten to fifteen minutes each were made approximately every half mile in suitable habitat. Observations were written up in the field and later transferred to a more permanent notebook. Precise locations of activity areas were drawn in the field on photocopies of the USGS 7½-minute Waterford, Virginia, topographic quadrangle. The areas covered and time allotted to searching versus observing were continually

re-evaluated as the study progressed. Searching was generally more intense east of U.S. 15 because that is where virtually all locationally precise Upland Sandpiper records had historically come from. Observation of located birds became increasingly the dominant activity as the season progressed.

The Northern Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, sparked by the interest of Valerie B. Kitchens and Erika Wilson, also decided to work on northern Loudoun County Upland Sandpipers during 1989. Its members provided information on numbers and general locations of birds during the season to Kitchens and Wilson, who compiled them and provided the records to me.

RESULTS

All reports of Upland Sandpipers from the study area during the period are presented below in Table 1. General locations are rt. 658—between rts. U.S. 15 and 662; rt. 662—between U.S. 15 and the northwestern leg of rt. 658; and rt. 661—within 0.2 mile of rt. 662. All locations are east of U.S. 15.

The locations and intensity of personal coverage of the area are presented in Figure 1 on page 56. All areas in which Upland Sandpipers were previously found were studied. Coverage was most intense along rt. 661, the northwestern leg of rt. 658, and the section of rt. 662 that joins them. These were the areas indicated by

TABLE 1. *Observations of Upland Sandpipers in northern Loudoun County, Virginia in 1989.*

Date	Number of birds	General location (route)	Observer
24 April	1	658	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
1 May	3	658	Bill Bruni
7 May	1	658	Judy Uehlein
8 May	2	658	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
13 May	2	658	Judy Uehlein
14 May	1	662	Lola Oberman
15 May	2	658	Steve Broughtonborn
20 May	4	662	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
20 May	1	658	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
20 May	2	661	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
27 May	1	658	Howard Elitzak
28 May	4	662	Erika Wilson
28 May	1	658	Erika Wilson
4 June	1	658	Ottario Janni
5 June	2	661	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
5 June	2	662	John B. Bazuin Jr.
5 June	2	658	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
18 June	4	662	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
18 June	1	658	John B. Bazuin, Jr.
20 June	2	662	Valerie B. Kitchens
20 June	1	658	Valerie B. Kitchens

recent historical information as being most likely to harbor breeding Upland Sandpipers. Data for each personal research day in the study area are presented below in Table 2. No effort was made to quantify driving miles because of the nature of the overall driving pattern. The weather was quite cool early in the period and this may have inhibited sandpiper activities. Later weather was quite seasonable, however, and probably not a substantial factor in the results of the work. It would have been desirable to have continued the study into late July or early August but this was impossible.

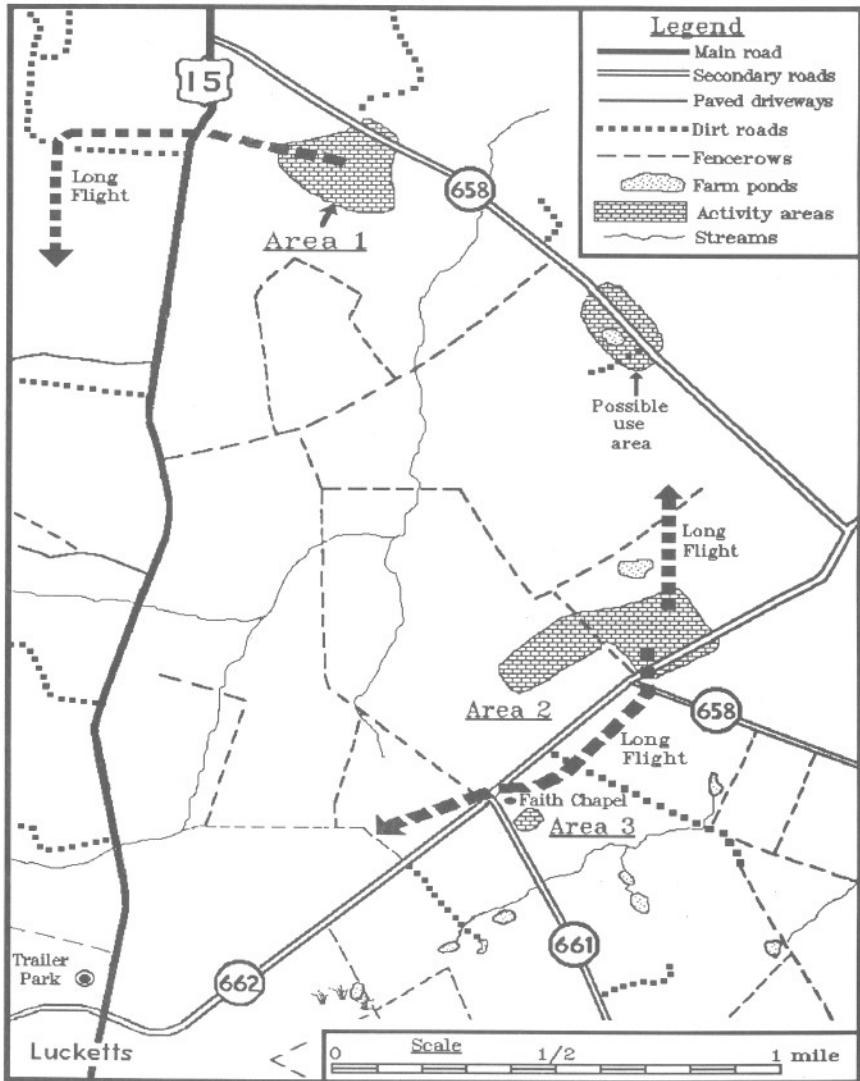
Upland Sandpipers were found in only three discrete locations in the study area. These locations are shown on the map in Figure 2 on page 61 and designated Areas 1, 2 and 3. These areas were plotted by combining all daily activity plots

TABLE 2. *Time periods, field hours, miles on foot, number of Upland Sandpipers found, and weather conditions during field studies in northern Loudoun County in 1989.*

Date	Time period(s)	Field hours	Miles on foot	Total birds	Weather
10 April	7:50 AM-4:10 PM	8.3	12.5	0	Mostly overcast early, then partly cloudy late; upper 30s to low 40s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds NW at 15-30 mph.
24 April	6:50 AM-5:10 PM	10.3	15.0	1	Clear; 30 (general frost) to upper 60s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds calm early to NW at 12 mph late.
8 May	6:20 AM-10:00AM 11:15 AM-4:10 PM	8.3	11.5	2	Cloudy early, then partly cloudy late; 30s to 60s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds W at 15 mph.
20 May	6:10 AM-2:30 PM 3:10-4:00 PM	9.5	6.6	4 - 7	Mostly cloudy early with brief sprinkle, then clear; 60s to low 80s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds calm early, then NW at 10-25 mph.
5 June	5:20-11:30 AM	6.5	2.0	6	Overcast; 70 to 80s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds mostly calm, sometimes light and variable.
18 June	5:20 AM-12:00 PM	6.7	2.0	5 - 6	Partly cloudy early, then clear; mid 50s to low 80s ($^{\circ}$ F); winds variable, 0-12 mph, W to NW; moderate early morning ground fog.
	Totals	49.6	49.6		

onto one map to show the full activity areas used by the Upland Sandpipers during observations in the course of the study. Two other verbal reports indicated that the Upland Sandpipers may have also at least occasionally used a fourth area, along rt. 658 between Areas 1 and 2. This is shown in Figure 2 as a "Possible use area." Determination of the activity areas of the birds was complicated by three obser-

FIGURE 2. Upland Sandpiper activity areas in northern Loudoun County in 1989.



uations of one or two Upland Sandpipers making long flights (until they were out of sight) away from their normal activity areas. These flights are also shown on the map in Figure 2. The two such flights from Area 2 occurred on 20 May and the one from Area 1 occurred on 18 June. It was unclear where these birds ultimately went or when they returned. These long flights were also high, up to an estimated 600 feet above the ground.

The habitat in each Upland Sandpiper activity area during the study period is as follows:

Area 1: The area utilized by the Upland Sandpipers was part of a large, fallow, tall-grass field with scattered rock outcrops of a conglomerate containing non-calcareous gravel- to cobble-sized pieces in a matrix of limestone or dolomite. The area also contained a few small, scattered deciduous trees. The rest of this field is similar in habitat but contains more rock outcrops in places and also generally has more, although isolated and clumped, trees and shrubs. This habitat has remained almost identical for over 16 years. Neighbors indicate that the unchanging nature of the habitat is a result of the former owner's use of the field as part of a very large and diffuse grazing area for a herd of cattle. Thus, the field has not regenerated towards oldfield yet but has not been heavily grazed either. The birds were also found once northeast of and along rt. 658, which is a paved, light-duty secondary road that has a string of power poles and wires along it on the northeast side and fencelines on each side with some large shrubs and small trees along them.

Area 2 : A large, moderately-grazed, grassy pasture with the grass irregularly short to medium height. Rt. 662 is also bordered on the northwest side by a bare fenceline and on the southeast side by a string of power poles and wires. (The birds at times perched on all of these structures.) During the last day of observations (18 June) a pair of birds also sometimes used part of a recently-mowed hayfield adjacent to the above field and to its west.

Area 3 : The habitat in the northwestern half of this area was a tall, grassy hayfield and in the southwest half was a very short, grassy horse pasture, with a bare fenceline separating the two. However, sometime in mid-June the hayfield was cut and no Upland Sandpipers were found in this area on 18 June.

The time period over which each of the areas was observed to be used by Upland Sandpipers was as follows:

Area 1: 24 April to 18 June
Area 2: 20 May to 18 June
Area 3: 20 May to 5 June

The activity periods and general locations of Upland Sandpipers that were located and observed, as well as the time periods during which I observed each area, are presented in Table 3 on page 64. Observed activity periods of the birds were almost entirely confined to the 6:15-10:10 AM time period during a day, with only one observation occurring later in the day. The birds were much more active and vocal in Area 2 than in Area 1, probably because there were often two pairs

in Area 2 but only one in Area 1. Therefore, the greater activity in Area 2 was probably attributable to pair (territorial) interaction, though no aggressive encounters were seen. In Area 1 hours could be spent without detecting the pair there. It was unclear if the pair of Upland Sandpipers in Area 3 was one of the two pairs that were sometimes encountered together in Area 2, but seems likely. Consequently, I believe there were three pairs of this species in the study area altogether. The probable territorial interaction in Area 2 was the highest level of breeding evidence obtained in the study area during the period.

SUMMARY

A field study in 1989 indicates that about three pairs of Upland Sandpipers remain as breeders in northern Loudoun County, Virginia. They utilized just three (possibly four) areas in an area covering about 0.8 to 1.0 square mile. Their breeding activity period ran at least from 24 April to 18 June. Since no flying young were seen by the end of the observations, mandatory breeding activities probably extended into early July (or else there was no successful breeding). Long flight beyond their normal activity areas are documented and are puzzling. They may indicate that the sandpipers have home ranges that are much larger than the activity areas identified in this study (Buss 1951). These long flights could also cause miscounting of the sandpipers in an area if the birds are going to some other area to forage or perform some other activity. Territorial interaction between pairs was the highest level of breeding evidence obtained during the study. The period of the day during which the sandpipers were most active was from near dawn to shortly after 10 AM.

FURTHER ACTION

It was obvious during the work that development pressures are rapidly increasing in the northern Loudoun County Upland Sandpiper breeding area. Many properties were being, or had recently been, percolation-tested and development northeast of Leesburg is proceeding at a fast pace. There may not be many years left before the Upland Sandpiper breeding area in northern Loudoun County is destroyed. Protection needs to be afforded to it soon and research should be continued.



TABLE 3. *Specific Upland Sandpiper observations in northern Loudoun County in 1989.*

Date	Location	Observation Period	Activity Period	Number of birds	General activities of the birds
24 April	Area 1	ca. 10:00 AM	ca. 10:00 AM	1	Foraging in tall fallow field; quiet
8 May	Area 1	7:15-9:26 AM	7:15-9:26 AM	2	Preening; foraging in tall fallow field; three low flights of 200-400 yards in area; flight or alarm calls
20 May	Area 2	7:15-8:32 AM	7:15-8:26 AM	4	Foraging in short to medium height pasture as two pairs; several low flights around area; perching on fenceposts; repeated "singing" on ground or from perch; several flight or alarm calls; both pairs made long, high flights out of area
20 May	Area 1	9:35-11:30 AM	10:06-10:09 AM	1	One low flight in area; one flight or alarm call; one "song"; foraging in tall fallow field
20 May	Area 3	3:38-3:54 PM	3:38-3:54 PM	2	Loafing on fenceposts; alarm calls; short low flight in area
5 June	Area 3	6:16-6:30 AM	6:16-6:30 AM	2	Perched on fenceposts
5 June	Area 2	6:46-7:46 AM	6:46-7:46 AM	2	Perched on fenceposts and power line; two "songs" on ground and in flight; low flights around area; flight or alarm calls; probably also foraging
5 June	Area 1	8:00-10:00 AM	8:58-9:08 AM	2	Perched on rock outcrop and power pole; numerous alarm calls; two low flights in area; probably also foraging
18 June	Area 2	6:23-7:25 AM	6:23-7:25 AM	4	Perched on fenceposts and power pole; repeated "singing" and alarm or flight calls on ground or in flight; repeated low or high flights around area; probably also foraging
18 June	Area 1	7:50 AM-NOON	8:54-9:32 AM	1-2	Repeated "singing" on ground; one low flight in area with flight or alarm call; preening on rock outcrop; probably also foraging; one long, high flight out of area (one bird)

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THREE YEARS OF OBSERVATIONS AT A BREEDING COLONY OF COMMON GRACKLES

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Colonial nesting in the Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) is well known (e.g., Peterson and Young 1950; Bent 1958), with birds sometimes occupying the same site year after year (Todd 1940). Monitoring of nesting colonies over several consecutive years, however, has apparently been reported only by Peterson and Young (1950), Willson et al. (1971), and Howe (1978). The present report is an account of a colony of breeding grackles from 1982 to 1984 in a dense upland grove (0.29 ha) of red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) 3 km south of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia.

Interspersed with the cedars were 12 Virginia pines (*Pinus virginiana*); both the cedars and pines were 4-5 m high. Grackle nests were located only in the cedars, a preferred nesting tree at other sites (Bent 1958; Jones 1969; Maxwell et al. 1976). Nest heights varied between 1.9 and 4.1 m and averaged 2.6, 3.0, and 2.9 m in the three years of this study (Table 1). Nests were significantly higher in 1983 and 1984 than in 1982 ($t = 6.71$, $df\ 45$, $P < 0.001$) but not between 1983 and 1984 ($t = 0.467$, $df\ 35$, NS). In Kentucky, Jones (1969) reported a mean nest height of 3.8 m, in New

TABLE 1. Results of Common Grackle nest censuses

Nests		15 May 1982	29 April 1983	13 May 1984
	Occupied	6	22	2
	Unoccupied	11	8	5
	Total	17	30	7
Height (m), $\bar{x} + SD$		2.6 + 0.24	3.0 + 0.55	2.9 + 0.27
Contents				
	Empty	11	8	5
	1 egg (s)	1	1	0
	2	0	0	1
	3	0	2	0
	4	0	5	0
	5	0	9	0
	1 young	1	0	0
	2	0	0	1
	3	3	0	0
	4	1	1	0
	5	0	2	0
	young & eggs	0	2	0

Jersey Burr and Stevens (1969) reported a mean of 5.2 m, and Maxwell et al. (1970) found nests higher, at a median height of 7 m. Clutch sizes in Common Grackles have been included in many previous reports (Erskine 1971; Willson et al. 1971) and vary between means of 4.3 and 5.4. Our data for 1983 ($\bar{x} = 4.3$) are within the expected range, but we did not find enough nests in 1982 and 1984 to reveal any annual variation at the Fairfax site (cf. Willson et al. 1971).

The most dramatic change in this colony over the three years was in nest numbers—17 to 30 to 7. Peterson and Young (1950) also reported density changes from 4.2 nests/acre in 1947 to 3.0 in 1948. The reasons for these annual changes are unexplained at the Fairfax site, where no alterations in habitat or in the surrounding areas were detected.

An interesting discovery was made in 1984, when we found fresh nests built upon the remains of nests found and marked in 1983. One of these new nests in 1984 was empty (young had probably already fledged), but in 1983 it contained three eggs. The other nest had five eggs in 1983, and two eggs in 1984. In the absence of marked birds, we do not know whether either or both parents were the same in the two consecutive years. Nest "re-use" has not been previously reported for Common Grackles. This observation also constitutes an exception to the general rule that open-nesting passerines do not usually re-use a previously occupied nest (Pettingill 1967; Dorst 1974).

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A SUMMARY OF THE 1989 SURVEY OF COLONIAL AND BEACH-NESTING WATERBIRDS OF THE VIRGINIA BARRIER ISLANDS

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For the fifteenth consecutive year, Bill Akers, Ruth Beck, Jerry Via, and I conducted a comprehensive survey of the beach-nesting and colonial waterbirds of the Virginia barrier islands from Assawoman Island in Accomack County on the north to Fisherman Island in Northampton County on the south. The survey covered the four-day period of 18-21 June 1989. (A complete discussion of field techniques, sampling anomalies, and cumulative results of the previous 14 years is in press.)

May and June of 1989 were wet months. Rain fell in Eastern Virginia a total of 20 days in June alone. Consequently, nesting delays for several species were evident. Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*) were particularly tardy, there being few eggs found at colony sites, though many nest scrapes were located. Common (*Sterna hirundo*) and Gull-billed (*S. nilotica*) terns were completing clutches at most colony locations and Least Terns (*S. antillarum*) were just hatching. On the other hand, Royal (*S. maxima*) and Sandwich (*S. sandvicensis*) terns had 7- to 10-day-old young at their Fishermans Island colony.

The herons, egrets and ibises nesting on Hog, Wreck, and Fishermans Islands were typically well along in their nesting efforts. Feathered young of all species were evident at each colony. Four White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) were seen in the Fishermans Island colony though no young were actually seen. Unusual were six pairs of Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) in the low shrubs on Chimney Pole Marsh immediately adjacent to a large Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) and Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*) colony and mixed with scattered Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*) nests.

The most exciting survey find was 37 Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) nests, 29 with eggs, on Fishermans Island. Since no nesting attempts for this species were found in 1988, the effort is significant after the limited nesting success on Metomkin Island in 1987 (Williams 1989).

Table 1 on pages 70-71 provides an island-by-island summary of the 1989 survey data. All numbers represent total adult counts. Comparative data are presented as 14-year means (Williams, in press); and, where significant, status of survey numbers relative to previous survey years is noted. All-time low counts were made on Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax violaceus*), and Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). Three species—Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Snowy Egret, and Black Skimmer—had the second-lowest counts since 1975. Third-lowest counts were recorded for Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*), and Gull-billed Tern. Also noteworthy were comparatively low counts for Least Tern, Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Royal Tern, Herring Gull,

TABLE 1. Total number of adult birds found on each island during 18-21 June 1989 Virginia barrier islands survey.

	Assawoman	Metomkin	Cedar Island	Dawson Shoal	Parramore	Sandy Island	Chimney Pole	Hog Island	Rogue Island	Cobb Island
Brown Pelican
Great Egret	11	...	...
Snowy Egret	...	12	...	...	...	...	12	81	...	...
Little Blue Heron	42	...	...
Tricolored Heron	61	...	...
Cattle Egret	32	...	...
Green-backed Heron	...	16	...	...	...	...	8	...	...	...
Blk.-crowned Night-Heron	...	24	...	...	...	...	...	126	...	...
Yell.-crowned Night-Heron	5	...	...
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis	12	...	...
Wilson's Plover ¹	6	35	6	...	...	...	...	2	...	2
Piping Plover ¹	9	85	11	...	...	...	...	12	...	4
American Oystercatcher ¹	12	284	97	6	...	28	39	80	21	59
Laughing Gull
Herring Gull	...	99	33	...	...	422	628	...	...	164
Great Black-backed Gull ²	4	...	...	11	48	...	...	12
Gull-billed Tern	...	14	80	4	...	...	40	22	...	...
Caspian Tern
Royal Tern
Sandwich Tern
Common Tern	...	84	671	21	...	2	72	250	...	2
Forster's Tern ³
Least Tern	6	259	171	...	...	...	...	33	...	34
Black Skimmer	...	102	540	324	...	...	52	334	...	8

Footnotes:

1. Data not gathered in 1976 and 1977.
2. Not recorded as nesting until 1976.
3. Has not bred in survey area since 1985.

Little Cobb Island	Wreck Island	Ship Shoal Island	Godwin Island	Mink Island	Myrtle Island	Smith Island	Fishermans Island	Totals	14-year mean	Comparison to previous survey totals
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	396	396	31	
...	10	...	...	...	...	...	218	239	382	Second lowest
...	79	...	...	...	...	...	68	252	759	Second lowest
...	6	...	...	...	...	...	29	77	168	Third lowest
...	146	...	...	...	...	...	41	248	606	All-time low
...	4	...	...	...	...	...	59	95	236	Fifth lowest
...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	36	
...	7	...	...	...	...	...	385	542	1120	Third lowest
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16	21	76	All-time low
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	4	2	
...	123	...	...	...	...	...	60	195	720	All-time low
...	...	9	...	...	7	...	...	67	45	All-time high
...	...	...	...	...	16	3	...	140	98	All-time high
14	92	116	...	...	38	79	60	1025	957	
...	7360	...	...	...	...	...	...	7360	14,517	Third lowest
...	828	...	...	...	...	...	410	2584	3089	Sixth lowest
...	67	...	...	...	...	...	13	155	131	
41	94	34	...	...	8	2	...	339	919	Third lowest
...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	6	4	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5000	5000	5819	Fifth lowest
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	32	38	
1092	63	745	...	...	52	6	...	3060	4299	Sixth lowest
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	158	
...	...	100	...	...	10	...	...	613	933	Fourth lowest

and Common Tern. In direct contrast to these low tallies, all-time high counts were made for Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and Wilson's Plover (*C. wilsonia*).

Although a certain degree of alarm is warranted, especially for the large waders, one must temper this with the realities of the data collection. Our figures represent annual snap-shot views of colonial and beach-nesting species. Indicators should be looked for. Rick Blom (pers. comm.) reported significant declines in recent years in numbers of nesting Laughing Gulls in Maryland, apparently a direct result of increasing encroachment by Herring Gulls. Although this year's low count may signal future events, it must be noted that Herring and Laughing gulls also nest on marshy tumps outside our survey area in Virginia. There is a large heron, ibis, and egret colony near Chincoteague, an area which is also beyond the survey limits. Each of these might contribute directly or indirectly to survey interpretations.

Changes in island physiography influence nesting distribution significantly. Colonial birds have returned to Little Cobb Island after a 5-year (1983-87) absence attributed directly to continuous tidal inundation. Once the scene of prolific nesting activity by virtually all species of Virginia colonial birds, the southern section of Metomkin Island had no colonies at all in 1989, a result of beach loss and subsequent dune advancement.

For at least the last three years fox tracks have been evident on Assawoman Island and vehicular beach traffic was again observed on Cedar Island. It should be noted that species listed under Cedar Island actually nest on two sizable sand shoals that have developed off the main island's north end.

Every survey period has its surprises, and this year was no exception. On 20 June off Cedar Island, we were thrilled by a Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*) which flew so close to the boat that binoculars were unnecessary to identify it.

Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) have been recorded on several islands during all survey years. A peak count of 15 occurred in 1980. In 1989, only two were found, one on Cedar Island, a first for the island as well as the northernmost survey record.

Plans are underway to continue the survey in June 1990 and to conduct follow-up visits to selected colony sites. Funding and logistical support for this project were provided by the Virginia Coast Reserve of the Nature Conservancy.

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TWENTY-FOUR THANKSGIVING WINDOW-WATCH BIRD COUNTS

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The Thanksgiving Window-watch Bird Count originated within the Lynchburg Bird Club in 1966. Since the first year, it has been continued annually by Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, ornithologist at Sweet Briar College. The activity attracted 700 participants on Thanksgiving Day 1989. Reports of observations were received from 39 states and the District of Columbia. Virginia led with 234 valid counts. Significant number of returns were received from Maryland, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Texas and California (listed in the order of number of reports received). Ten or fewer returns were received from each of the remaining states. Under Dr. Edwards's able leadership, interest in the counts has expanded year by year and now has a following of regular participants who enjoy including the count in their Thanksgiving plans. Newcomers outnumber the dropouts.

How did it all start? In 1966, as a recreation project, 27 members of the Lynchburg Bird Club vied to see whose feeder would attract the most birds of the most species in one hour of observation on Thanksgiving Day. To this day, it remains recreation for those participating. But when they send in their carefully recorded observations to Dr. Edwards, their reports become a contribution to serious research. He compiles and electronically processes the information, studying the long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance, and shorter term fluctuations in bird populations in areas in daily use by people, such as backyards.

Dr. Edwards says, "From the beginning some of us have thought that the Thanksgiving window-watch bird count was something unique and should be kept that way, rather than ending up as just a slight variation of the Christmas Count, Big Spring Day, Breeding Bird Census, or Winter Bird Census. This is one of the few bird-related activities that we know of—perhaps the only one—in which a person with only a limited amount of time, and without the physical stamina to range over fields and woodlands for hours at a time, can still make a very significant contribution to the science of ornithology in a very enjoyable way."

Through the years a few adjustments in the rules of the count have evolved, but basically the count remains the recording of the birds that visit a measured feeder area 15 feet in diameter, including the air space above it, during exactly one hour on Thanksgiving Day.

Each year, because the length of a count was longer or shorter than exactly one hour, or was taken on a day other than Thanksgiving, or otherwise deviated from the rules, there are a few individual returns that cannot be included in the analyses and tables that Dr. Edwards publishes in his *TBC News* and elsewhere. Such strict standardization (which sometimes baffles participants) is for the purpose of obtaining comparable counts year after year. Why the 15-foot circle? This size was

chosen because it was thought to be large enough for an adequate sample but not too large for accuracy and convenience.

For several years there was some confusion in the reporting of Black-capped (*Parus atricapillus*) and Carolina (*P. carolinensis*) chickadees because these species are difficult for feeder-watchers to separate, especially in borderline areas where their ranges might overlap. After some experimenting, Dr. Edwards at this time asks all watchers simply to report "chickadees" without differentiation. This is the way the category is reported on his tables of birds seen on the entire count. (For other purposes these species might be separated reasonably well by the location of the count and the assumption that chickadees counted were seen in their normal ranges as generally described in the literature.)

For analysis, dividing count results into groups according to the familiar zip code areas was begun in 1981. With some reservations about zips #80000 and #90000 perhaps not being sufficiently precise, Dr. Edwards has found these convenient divisions as biogeographically significant as other regional groupings such as southeast, north central, etc., might be. Virginia is in the center of zip code area #20000, along with the four other states and the District of Columbia lying immediately to our north and south.

Counters who would like to count for longer than one hour are encouraged to do another separate count during another hour of the same day, at the same or some other location. Also, counters who see few or no birds during their watch hour definitely should send in their reports, which are just as important to the study as the biggest list. There are no rules against photocopying the report form for personal or club use, or to distribute at seed sales or fair booths. The 15-foot measured circle may contain as many feeders, food items, or other attractants as desired.

One little-noticed aspect of the Thanksgiving count is its educational value to the casual feeder watcher or backyard birder. Dr. Edwards, a lifelong educator trained at Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, with long tenure as a distinguished professor of biology at Sweet Briar College, uses his annual newsletter to participants, *TBC News*, to give gentle hints on bird identification and interesting commentary that is well-received by his readers, sometimes turning counters' curiosity toward experiments of their own. In summarizing the first 10 years of counts, for instance, Dr. Edwards mentioned that the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) had not been listed on any previous count taken after 3 PM. The next (1976) count brought in many more than usual counts taken in late afternoon—about half of them listing House Sparrows in their count circles after 3 and even 4 PM.

When the first House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) appeared on a count return in 1969, it seemed likely there would be confusion among participants between House Finches and Purple Finches (*C. purpureus*) since many of them relied on a popular field guide to eastern birds that did not include the House Finch. Dr. Edwards anticipated this with cogent explanations of the differences in the two species in subsequent newsletters.

The story of the House Finch is that it is upward bound in its relatively new eastern environment and is classified by some as fast becoming a nuisance at the feeding station, but it has not yet reached higher than #6 on the lists of "top 15" birds listed on Thanksgiving counts. That was in 1985 when it tied with the Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) for the #6 spot. Since then it has remained at the #7 spot, except for 1988 when it dropped to the #8 position. Is the House Finch replacing the Purple Finch at feeders? True, it is ahead of the Purple Finch on the top-15 list (see Table 1 below), but the Purple Finch ranked #14 for the past four years and in recent years has never been higher than #13.

The ubiquitous European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) has remained #15 at the bottom of the top 15 list for three years now, nudged downward from #13 in 1985. Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) do not appear to be much interested in feeders at Thanksgiving time and Rock Dove (*Columba livia*) is an occasional visitor only.

You might be surprised to note, when you consult the Top-15 list in Table 1, the same 15 birds are listed as most frequently seen at all feeders for the past three years of Thanksgiving counts, and more surprised to know that exactly the same 15 have topped the list since the 1983 count! There have been important changes in rank, however, such as the Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) moving up from ninth place to fifth and the House Sparrow dropping from second to sixth place. In 1979 the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) dropped out of first place—that is, the species reported by the most observers—after having enjoyed top spot

TABLE 1. *The top fifteen species of birds reported during the Thanksgiving Window-watch Bird Counts in 1987, 1988, and 1989. (Percentage of observers reporting each species is in parentheses.)*

	1989 Count	1988 Count	1987 Count
1.	Chickadee (77)	Chickadee (76)	Chickadee (73)
2.	Dark-eyed Junco (69)	House Sparrow (54.4)	Northern Cardinal (53)
3.	Northern Cardinal (62)	Northern Cardinal (51.4)	Tufted Titmouse (51)
4.	Blue Jay (58)	Blue Jay (51.4)	House Sparrow (48.1)
5.	Mourning Dove (55.2)	Tufted Titmouse (51.1)	Blue Jay (47.2)
6.	House Sparrow (54.7)	Dark-eyed Junco (48)	Dark-eyed Junco (44.4)
7.	Tufted Titmouse (52)	White-br. Nuthatch (44.3)	House Finch (44.4)
8.	American Goldfinch (51)	House Finch (43.5)	American Goldfinch (36.7)
9.	House Finch (49)	Mourning Dove (42.5)	Mourning Dove (36.1)
10.	Downy Woodpecker (40)	Downy Woodpecker (41)	White-br. Nuthatch (35.6)
11.	White-br. Nuthatch (39)	American Goldfinch (37)	Downy Woodpecker (32)
12.	White-thr. Sparrow (33)	White-thr. Sparrow (23)	White-thr. Sparrow (24)
13.	Red-bell. Woodpecker (23)	Red-bell. Woodpecker (20)	Red-bell. Woodpecker (22)
14.	Purple Finch (22)	Purple Finch (18)	Purple Finch (19)
15.	European Starling (19)	European Starling (17)	European Starling (14)

for at least 12 years. Though it has rebounded several times to #2 ranking, it has not yet nudged the chickadee from the top spot.

Just three seasons back, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology established its *FeederWatch* project on a much larger nationwide scale in a greatly expanded time frame, lasting through late fall and winter, and charging a fee to participate. It is interesting, perhaps even astonishing, to compare the 1988 Thanksgiving one-hour count with *FeederWatch* for the period November 1988-January 1989 (Table 2). The top eleven species, reported by the most observers, are the *same* species on both counts! The rankings of species within both counts are not greatly different — the Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) ranks higher on the Thanksgiving count; Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) and Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) are higher on the *FeederWatch* list. House Sparrow, Blue Jay (Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal tied for third place on the window-watch count), House Finch, and Mourning Dove placed the *same* on both counts.

TABLE 2. Comparison of the top 11 species recorded on the 1988-89 Cornell FeederWatcher Project and the 1988 one-hour Thanksgiving Window-watch count.

	Top 11 species listed on the 1988-89 FeederWatchers Project	Top 11 species listed on the 1988 one-hour Thanksgiving count
1.	Dark-eyed Junco	Chickadee
2.	House Sparrow	House Sparrow
3.	Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
4.	Black-capped Chickadee	Blue Jay
5.	Downy Woodpecker	Tufted Titmouse
6.	American Goldfinch	Dark-eyed Junco
7.	Northern Cardinal	White-breasted Nuthatch
8.	House Finch	House Finch
9.	Mourning Dove	Mourning Dove
10.	White-breasted Nuthatch	Downy Woodpecker
11.	Tufted Titmouse	American Goldfinch

These rankings are based on Cornell's figures for the first 8 weeks of *FeederWatch* 1988-89, when they 7000 observers were registered, and on the Thanksgiving count of 24 November 1988, with 632 valid returns from 43 states and the District of Columbia reporting on one-hour watches.

Comparing the *FeederWatch* of 1989-90 (preliminary report of results) with our 23 November 1989 count again indicates closely similar results. "Nine of their top ten species were the same as ours," writes Dr. Edwards in *TBC News*, the only differences being the Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*) on their counts being replaced by the Tufted Titmouse on ours. Cornell reported more frequent occurrence this year of almost all common feeder species, as compared with last year. Our count

showed that 14 of our top 15 (and most other species) were more frequently seen this year. (More information about *FeederWatch* may be obtained by writing Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 169 Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca, NY 14850.)

Dr. Edwards tried an experimental New Year's Day Count on 1 January 1990, with about 100 volunteers from the Thanksgiving count taking part. The top 15 species were exactly the same as at Thanksgiving, but with some major changes in rank. For instance, the Downy Woodpecker came up from tenth to third place, and Mourning Dove moved down from fifth to ninth place. It has not been decided when or if Dr Edwards will repeat this count.

With the prestigious Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology investing so much time, effort, and resources in documenting birds that visit backyard feeders, the value of feeder-watching has been boosted to a new high position of respect in the gathering of ornithological information. And *we* have 24 years of counting recorded!

But now a shadow of uncertainty hangs over the future of the Thanksgiving Window-watch Bird Count. 30 June 1990 marked Dr. Edward's retirement. Sweet Briar College will no longer be funding the cost of printing and mailing the count tabulation forms, printing the *TBC News*, or paying student assistants for computer input. That means that a minimum of \$500 for rock-bottom costs will be needed—and to avoid overworking unpaid workers, another \$200 to \$300 to pay assistants. Nearly 100 respondents have expressed interest in joining a Thanksgiving count support group with modest annual dues (now under consideration), or otherwise contributing to the cost of conducting the count. It is most encouraging that a few contributions have already been received.

The group that initiated the first count, the Lynchburg Bird Club, has agreed to fund the major part of the 25th count on 22 November 1990, and will contribute \$500 to the cause. Club members hope that other friends of the count will add their contributions.

With retirement, Dr. Edwards will find more time available not so very far in the future for summing up the results of 25 Thanksgiving counts in a comprehensive report. Meanwhile, the count will continue. Previous participants will be receiving their tabulation forms (and other information) well before the count date. New participants are encouraged to use the tabulation form printed on page 78, or they can write Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, Box AQ, Sweet Briar, VA 24595 for more information. A self-addressed stamped envelope should be included. Encourage fellow birders to participate in the count, and ask your bird club newsletter editor to print the tabulation form in your November letter. Yes, Virginia, there will be a Thanksgiving Window-watch Bird Count on 22 November 1990!

FIGURE 1. *Thanksgiving Window-Watch Bird Count form.***Thanksgiving Window-Watch Bird Count**

Name, and address where count was made.

 _____ Zip _____

Date: Thanksgiving Day. What year? _____

Time: Begin: _____ end: _____ . Temperature _____

Weather: (a) Sunny. (b) Partly cloudy. (c) Cloudy.
(d) Rain. (e) Snowing, sleeting, or freezing rain.Wind: (a) None, or very gentle. (b) Gentle.
(c) Moderate. (d) Strong. (e) Very strong.Habitat: (a) Crowded residential. (b) Average
residential (c) Suburban. (d) Rural - mostly fields
and croplands nearby. (e) Rural - mostly woods.**Procedures for the Bird-Count**

Select a circular area on the ground, 15 feet in diameter, to include feeders, bird-baths, shrubs, etc., as you wish. Imagine the circle extending upward as a cylinder. Count the numbers of birds of each species which come into or through this circle (or cylinder) during exactly one hour. Try to judge the actual number of individuals, not the number of visits. Check the appropriate number column for each kind of bird you see. If you see a bird not named on the chart please enter it on a blank line at the bottom. To report birds seen outside the circle, use the O.C. column.

Please send in your count, even if you see no birds,
to: Dr. Ernest P. EdwardsThanksgiving Bird Count, P.O. Box AQ
Sweet Briar, VA 24595Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if
you would like to receive a TBC News next spring.**Birds seen:****Number in the circle** O.C.

1 2-3 4-6 7-11 12 or +

Rock Dove
 Mourning Dove
 Northern Flicker
 Red-bellied Woodp.
 Downy Woodpecker
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Blue Jay
 American Crow
 Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse
 Wh.-breast. Nuthatch
 Carolina Wren
 Northern Mockingbird
 European Starling
 House Sparrow
 Common Grackle
 Northern Cardinal
 Evening Grosbeak
 Purple Finch
 House Finch
 Pine Siskin
 American Goldfinch
 Rufous-sided Towhee
 Dark-eyed Junco
 Chipping Sparrow
 White-crowned Sparrow
 White-throated Sparrow
 Fox Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Others:

1990 REPORT OF THE VSO RECORDS COMMITTEE

JOHN H. DALMAS

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This is the third report of the VSO Records Committee, including committee actions from 1 October 1989 through 31 July 1990. Since the last report, the committee has accepted a report of one species new to the Virginia state list, which now number 418 species. There were six unresolved records from the last report plus 17 new records submitted to the committee. Of these, 11 were accepted, 5 were not accepted, and 7 are unresolved pending further rounds of voting. The 1990 committee members are as follows:

Non-voting Secretary-compiler: Teta Kain

Voting members:

Three-year term: David F. Abbott, Kenneth H. Bass, Thomas W. Simpson
Two-year term: Barry L. Kinzie, H. Fenton Day III, Roger B. Clapp
One-year term: John H. Dalmas (chairman), Brian Taber, Claudia P. Wilds

ACCEPTED RECORDS

(Documentation was submitted by the person(s) whose name(s) appears in brackets.)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). A single bird was found by Craig Tumer and Brian Patteson on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on 29 October 1988 [Bill Williams]. This is the first known occurrence in Virginia of this bird, which becomes the state's 418th species. This record was also documented by photographs, giving this species "accidental" status.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*). A bird was seen on the Alcock farm, Fauquier County, on 17 December 1984 [John P. Alcock]. This is the third record for Virginia. Chronologically, this is the second state record, occurring a year before the bird in Highland County.

FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata*, sp.). A bird was seen flying over the Potomac River at the Alexandria dock area on 3 October 1988 [Rodney A. Coggin, John P. Williams]. This bird was apparently one of the many frigatebirds displaced all over North America by Hurricane Gilbert, one of the most powerful storms ever recorded.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (*Anthus spragueii*). A single bird was found at Curles Neck Farm, Henrico County, by John Dillard on 20 February 1989 [Fenton Day]. This is the third state record for this species.

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). (Breeding Record). Two juvenile birds wearing skullcaps of natal down and incapable of flight were observed by Ken Howard at Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax County, on 3 July 1989 [Edwin P. Weigel]. This species was once a regular breeder in Virginia, but the only recent breeding record was at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in 1968.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*). A single bird was observed on a sandbar of a small pond near the Danville airport, Pittsylvania County, on 12 September 1989 [Jeff Blalock]. This is the second Piedmont record.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). A pair was seen feeding on mixed seed in Waynesboro on 8 May 1987 by Walter Plank, who obtained an excellent photograph of the male. This is the first record of this species for Augusta County, and the third for the Mountains and Valleys Region [YuLee Lerner].

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). A juvenile was seen flying alongside the boat during a pelagic trip on 2 September 1989; the site was approximately 65 miles offshore in extreme southeast Virginia waters [David F. Abbott]. This is the sixth record for Virginia, moving this species from the accidental to the regular list.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*). A single bird was observed and photographed at the north toll plaza of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on 30 September 1989 [Charles R. Vaughn/Bill Williams]. This is the fourth state record.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). A bird was present on a small farm pond in Rockbridge County 5-25 November 1989. This is the second record for the Mountains and Valleys Region [YuLee Lerner].

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*). This bird was found by Bill Hunley and Mike Donohue in Bedford County on the Peaks of Otter Christmas Count 30 December 1989 [Barry Kinzie]. This is the third documented record in the Mountains and Valleys Region and the seventh state record.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS, identification questionable:

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*). An immature bird was seen in flight on 27 September 1987 at the sewage treatment plant in the City of Roanoke. Although well-described by an experienced observer, several committee members felt that this brief sighting was simply not sufficient to warrant acceptance. This would have been the third record for the Mountains and Valleys region.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). An adult male was seen at a feeder in Smyth County on 13 March 1988. The committee agreed that this sighting was most probably this species, but several members felt that there were simply too many details missing to accept this record.

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*). A bird in first-winter-plumage was seen 14-17 February 1989 on the large pond at the entrance to Dulles airport, Loudoun County. Although documented by a very detailed description and numerous photographs, most of the committee felt that this bird was more likely to be a Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) in second-winter plumage.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*). A bird was found on 6 September 1987 near Stuarts Draft, Augusta County. Although plumage is not optimal at this time of year, several committee members felt that the close view should have revealed at least some white in the outer tail feathers, and that Cassin's Kingbird (*T. vociferans*) could not be ruled out.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*). An immature bird seen from late October through 12 December 1988 at feeders in the city of Salem. As usual for sightings of this bird, the committee agreed on the generic identification but would not accept identification to species, despite the fact that *S. rufus* is far more likely than *S. sasin* on geographic grounds. An earlier record of *S. rufus* from this area (29 October 1987, Roanoke) is also unlikely to be accepted unless the specimen can be found.

UNRESOLVED, further committee action required.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*). Occurrence at Roanoke, 29 October 1987.

BLACK GUILLEMOT (*Cepphus grylle*). Occurrence at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 23 February 1986.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*). Occurrence in Wythe County, 13 October 1988.

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*). Occurrence at Ft. Story, Virginia Beach, 28 January 1989.

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*). Occurrence on Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel islands, 26 February 1989.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*). Occurrence at Hunting Creek, Alexandria, 16 September 1989.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). Occurrence at Cheatham Annex, Williamsburg, 17 December 1989.

LITERATURE CITED

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DOCUMENTATION OF RARE SPECIES IN VIRGINIA

TETA KAIN

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There is confusion among many VSO members concerning documentation requirements for rare species; consequently many rare sightings are not included in our publications because no write-up of the occurrence has ever been received by the records committee. These guidelines, along with the status of rare species in each of the state's three regions, should help determine whether documentation should be submitted for review. Further understanding of a species' status in the state may be obtained by studying *Virginia's Birdlife: an Annotated Checklist*, Virginia Society of Ornithology's Avifauna No. 3, published in 1987. This book is often referred to as the "Bluebook."

Documentation is required under the following circumstances:

1. The first, second, third, fourth, or fifth sighting of the species in the entire state.
2. The first, second, third, fourth, or fifth sighting in any of the three geographic regions of the state—Coastal Plains, Piedmont, or Mountains and Valleys. (See the map in the front of the "Bluebook" to determine the boundaries of each region.)
3. The first breeding record for the state or any of the three regions.
4. The sighting of a species that has not been authenticated in the state or a region for a very long time (e.g., Kirtland's Warbler anywhere in the state, or Common Raven on the Coastal Plain).
5. A species occurring far out of its normal range (e.g., Red-cockaded Woodpecker in King and Queen County).
6. A species occurring in an unusual season (e.g., Wood Thrush in Augusta County in January).

Table 1 on pages 83-84 lists all birds on the Virginia checklist which require documentation in one or more regions of the state. The list is current through August 1990. Three dots (...) indicate that more five or more records exist and documentation is not required for that region. For example, more than five records of the Eared Grebe exist on the Coastal Plain, but there is only one record for the Piedmont and four for the Mountains and Valleys; therefore, documentation is required for Eared Grebe sightings only in the latter two regions.

TABLE 1. Number of accepted records, as of August 1990, for rare species in Virginia. Each is listed by the three geographic regions of Virginia—Coastal Plain (CP); Piedmont (PD); and Mountains and Valleys (MV). “...” denotes more than five records in that region.

	CP	PD	MV		CP	PD	MV
Pacific Loon	1	0	0	Black Scoter	...	3	1
Eared Grebe	...	1	4	Surf Scoter	...	3	...
Western Grebe	...	2	1	Barrow's Goldeneye	1	0	0
Yellow-nosed Albatross	2	0	0	A. Swallow-tailed Kite	...	0	2
Northern Fulmar	...	0	0	Black-shouldered Kite	1	0	0
Black-capped Petrel	4	0	1	Mississippi Kite	3	2	3
Cory's Shearwater	...	0	0	Swainson's Hawk	2	0	0
Greater Shearwater	...	0	0	Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	1
Sooty Shearwater	...	0	0	Gyr Falcon	0	0	1
Manx Shearwater	...	0	0	Yellow Rail	...	2	...
Audubon's Shearwater	...	0	0	Black Rail	...	1	...
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	...	0	0	Clapper Rail	...	4	1
Wh.-faced Storm-Petrel	1	0	0	Paint-billed Crake	0	1	0
Leach's Storm-Petrel	...	0	0	Limpkin	0	1	0
White-tailed Tropicbird	1	0	1	Sandhill Crane	...	1	3
Brown Booby	4	0	0	Wilson's Plover	...	2	2
Northern Gannet	...	0	0	Piping Plover	...	2	3
American White Pelican	...	0	2	Mountain Plover	1	0	0
Brown Pelican	...	3	0	American Oystercatcher	...	1	0
Great Cormorant	...	0	0	Black-necked Stilt	...	1	0
Anhinga	...	2	1	Willet	...	4	...
Magnificent Frigatebird	...	0	0	Whimbrel	...	1	3
Reddish Egret	3	0	0	Long-billed Curlew	...	0	0
White-faced Ibis	1	0	0	Hudsonian Godwit	...	0	2
Wood Stork	...	4	...	Bar-tailed Godwit	1	0	0
Greater Flamingo	...	0	1	Marbled Godwit	...	0	1
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	...	1	...	Ruddy Turnstone	...	2	...
Mute Swan	...	...	2	Red Knot	...	0	...
G. White-fronted Goose	...	...	2	Temminck's Stint	1	0	0
Ross' Goose	2	0	0	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	2	0	0
Brant	...	2	2	Purple Sandpiper	...	0	0
Barnacle Goose	1	0	0	Curlew Sandpiper	...	0	0
White-cheeked Pintail	2	0	0	Stilt Sandpiper	...	4	...
Eurasian Wigeon	...	1	...	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	...	3	...
Common Eider	...	0	0	Ruff	...	1	1
King Eider	...	0	0	Long-billed Dowitcher	...	3	4
Harlequin Duck	...	0	1	Eurasian Woodcock	0	1	0

TABLE 1. Continued

	CP	PD	MV		CP	PD	MV
Wilson's Phalarope	...	4	...	Rufous Hummingbird	...	0	0
Red-necked Phalarope	...	4	...	Lewis' Woodpecker	0	1	0
Red Phalarope	...	1	...	Red-cock. Woodpecker	...	...	1
Pomarine Jaeger	...	0	1	Alder Flycatcher	...	1	...
Parasitic Jaeger	...	0	0	Say's Phoebe	2	1	1
Long-tailed Jaeger	...	0	0	Ash-throated Flycatcher	...	1	0
Great Skua	...	0	0	Cassin's Kingbird	0	1	0
South Polar Skua	1	0	0	Western Kingbird	...	2	3
Franklin's Gull	...	0	1	Gray Kingbird	3	0	0
Little Gull	...	0	0	Scissor-tail. Flycatcher	...	1	2
C. Black-headed Gull	...	0	1	Fork-tailed Flycatcher	1	0	0
Mew Gull	2	0	0	Black-billed Magpie	1	2	1
California Gull	1	0	0	Common Raven	1	...	...
Thayer's Gull	2	0	0	Boreal Chickadee	1	2	0
Iceland Gull	...	4	0	Rock Wren	1	0	0
Lesser Blk.-backed Gull	...	3	1	Northern Wheatear	3	1	0
Glaucous Gull	...	1	2	Varied Thrush	0	4	3
Great Blk.-backed Gull	...	...	0	Sage Thrasher	1	1	0
Black-legged Kittiwake	...	0	0	Sprague's Pipit	2	0	1
Sabine's Gull	...	0	0	Bohemian Waxwing	1	0	1
Ivory Gull	0	1	0	Northern Shrike	3	2	2
Gull-billed Tern	...	1	1	Bell's Vireo	0	1	0
Royal Tern	...	2	1	Bachman's Warbler	3	0	1
Elegant Tern	1	0	0	Blk.-Thr.-Gray Warbler	...	0	0
Sandwich Tern	...	0	0	Kirtland's Warbler	2	1	0
Roseate Tern	...	0	0	Western Tanager	...	1	3
Arctic Tern	...	0	0	Black-head. Grosbeak	...	...	3
Least Tern	...	3	3	Lazuli Bunting	2	0	0
Bridled Tern	...	1	0	Painted Bunting	...	1	4
Sooty Tern	...	...	0	Green-tailed Towhee	2	1	0
White-winged Tern	4	0	0	Clay-colored Sparrow	...	0	...
Black Skimmer	...	2	0	Black-throated Sparrow	1	2	0
Dovekie	...	0	0	Lark Bunting	4	0	1
Thick-billed Murre	...	0	0	LeConte's Sparrow	...	1	...
Razorbill	...	0	0	Seaside Sparrow	...	0	0
Atlantic Puffin	4	0	0	Harris' Sparrow	0	3	...
White-winged Dove	2	0	0	Chest.-coll. Longspur	1	0	1
Common Ground-Dove	...	1	2	Brewers Blackbird	...	4	...
Groove-billed Ani	0	0	2	Boat-tailed Grackle	...	0	0
Burrowing Owl	1	1	0	Pine Grosbeak	1
Boreal Owl	0	0	1				

FIRST RECORD OF A ROCK WREN IN VIRGINIA

BILL WILLIAMS

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At approximately 1:30 PM on Saturday, 29 October 1988, Craig Tumer and Brian Patteson observed a wren associating with several Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) on the second island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. They realized quickly that, by its size (similar to that of the juncos) and its light grayish-brown color, this was not a House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) or a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). After observing the bird at close range on the ground and on the tunnel buildings, they determined it was a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*).

I observed the wren approximately three hours later. The following description is based on notes taken during the observation. The bird was seen in flight, perched, feeding along the ground and rocks, and moving across open areas. It was also heard. Lighting was excellent, with a partly cloudy sky, temperature in the mid-50's, and a moderate north to northeast wind. At times the wren was as close as 10 feet. Other observers included Helen Irving, George Harris, Fenton Day, David Shoch, and Brian Taber. Photographs were taken by Patteson and Day.

The bill, eye, and legs were black. The proximal two-thirds of the lower mandible appeared somewhat lighter than the rest of the bill, which was as long as the head was wide and noticeably decurved. A narrow buffy ring could be seen around the eye, and a faint blackish line appeared slightly above and behind the eye, giving a "eye-striped" appearance. The feather coloring was light brown with grayish white on the throat. From the head over the entire back, the bird appeared light brown, with salt-and-pepper flecks of white and black scattered finely throughout. A series of small white circles ran along the back giving a subtle inverted "V" pattern when viewed from above.

The breast and belly were grayish white with fine streaks of darker gray towards the gray-white belly. The color of the body below the wings was pale rusty to rufous and the flanks were buffy. The wings, like the back, were light brown with finely diffused flecks of black and white.

The tail pattern was ladder-like, with 12-15 thin black bars cutting across a light brown-rust ground-color. The tail did not appear noticeably long or short, being about one half the length of the body. Its tip was marked by a wider black bar and an orange-brown terminal band.

The bird was heard several times as it hunted for insects among the tunnel-island rocks. A buzzy "peeet, peeet" was repeated often. Also given was a buzzy "de dee da dat."

Feeding along the ground the wren hopped, staying low. It was not seen walking. It fed on insects — mainly moths — that it caught among the rocks. The

bird had a distinctly low profile relative to the ground. When sitting, it bobbed quickly up and down, looking around. The bobbing appeared to be from the legs, very reminiscent of a Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). The wren flew only short distances, lighting quickly, flaring its tail as it landed, and continuing to maintain a low profile.

We observed the bird for at least 45 minutes before departing. It was last seen by Mike Boatwright about 7:15 AM the following day.

(Editor's note: This is the first record for Virginia and is placed on the accidental list. The American Ornithologists' Union (1983) lists the species as casual or accidental east of the Mississippi River, with easternmost occurrences at Seal Island, Nova Scotia; Rockport, Massachusetts; and Dauphin Island, Alabama.)

LITERATURE CITED

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NEWS AND NOTES

YULEE LARNER and TETA KAIN

EARLY NESTING DATE FOR AMERICAN ROBIN: An American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) was found sitting on a nest in Danville on 2 March 1990. The previous early nesting record for the Piedmont is "eggs, 7 April."

SHORT-EARED OWLS WINTER IN THE MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS REGION: Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) have been present at the Roudabush ponds in Pulaski County, beginning with one bird in the winter of 1984-85, with no sightings reported the following year. However, in 1987, six Short-eared Owls were seen on 6 January, and 17 (a peak count for the Mountains and Valleys region) from 1 March through 10 April. One to four birds were present at this location during the winter of 1988 and from one to six were seen between 25 November 1989 and mid-January 1990.

Two Short-eared Owls were reported by Richard Peake and John Rockett on 18 December 1989, at the Wise County airport, the first record for the Wise County Christmas Bird Count and the second record for Wise County. One to two birds were seen at this location through 22 February 1990.

Ten Short-eared Owls were reported by Martha Laub on the Augusta County Christmas Bird Count, 23 December 1989, near Fishersville and up to six were still present at this location and seen by many observers through 11 March 1990. Six were located in early January near Weyers Cave by Mae Houff and observed on 4 March by Si and YuLee Lerner. Six remained through at least 18 March and one was last seen on 23 March. Short-eared Owls have been recorded irregularly at these locations for at least five years.

NEW PEAK COUNT FOR LESSER GOLDEN-PLOVER: Stan Bentley reports a peak count of 162 Lesser Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica*) at the Roudabush ponds in Pulaski County on 8 April 1987. The previous peak count for the state was 150 at Chincoteague on 26 September 1977. The previous peak count for the Mountains and Valleys region was 37 at the Roanoke Airport on 8 Oct 1984.

LATE CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER IN THE PIEDMONT: Mrs. Danny Crookston observed a lingering Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) at her home in McLean on 25 October 1989. The previous late record for the Piedmont is 16 October.

MOURNING DOVE NESTS EARLY IN THE PIEDMONT: On 2 March 1990, Melva Hansrote observed an American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) with a live, fully-feathered young Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) in its claws. This extends, by at least three weeks, the early nest record for the Piedmont, the previous record being "eggs, 3 March."

EARLY SIGHTINGS OF AMERICAN WOODCOCK: At least two reports indicate earlier than usual arrival of American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) in the Mountains and Valleys region. Two were reported by Mike Donahue on 23 January 1990 at Blue Ridge, the earliest recorded date for Botetourt County. Two were reported by James Fretwell at the Pioneer Farm visitors' center on the Blue Ridge Parkway on 1 February and at least five were seen and/or heard at that location by Si and YuLee Lerner and Lisa Hamilton on 2 February 1990, earliest records for Augusta County.

NORTHERN HARRIER NESTS IN MATHEWS COUNTY: John Bazuin, Jr. found a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) nesting at Bethel Beach in Mathews County on 26 May 1990. On 2 July three downy young were seen in the nest and by 21 July they could be seen near the nesting area exercising their wings and making short flights. This is only the second nesting record for the Northern Harrier in Mathews County. The previous record occurred 45 years ago.

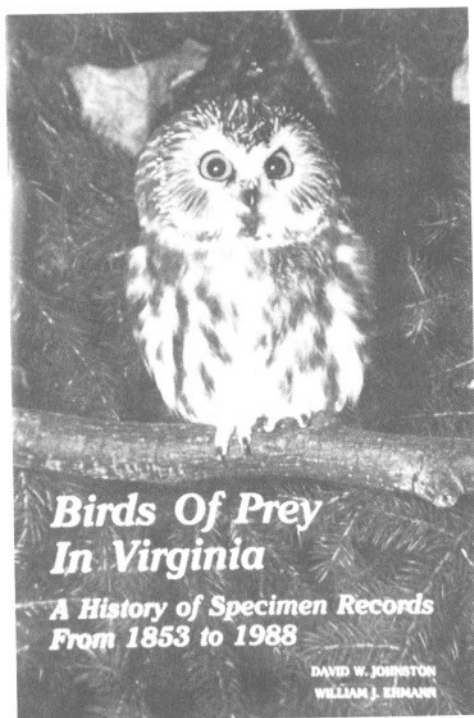
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THE 1990 ANNUAL MEETING

JOHN DILLARD

*7803 Brentford Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23225*

At 7:45 PM on Friday, 4 May 1990, Mary Arginteanu, president of Richmond Audubon Society, welcomed the group and talked about some of the changes that have taken place in conservation since the last meeting was co-hosted by Richmond. In turn, she introduced Wendy Ealding who discussed the six field trips offered. Sue Ridd described the many activities offered for non-birders during the meeting, as well as a Saturday morning program on optics which Peter Dunne would present if field trips were canceled because of rain.

John Bazuin welcomed the group on behalf of the VSO and commended Richmond Audubon on three well-planned days. He summarized the Society's financial situation for the past year, pointing out that the balance had dropped only \$800 to \$13,088 despite spending \$7000 to bring *The Raven* completely up-to-date. However, the Society did have to borrow from one of the funds, so dues were raised to get back on track.

In the absences of a member of the nominating committee, John Bazuin presented the following slate of officers and directors:

Officers:

<i>President</i>	John Bazuin	Annandale
<i>Vice President</i>	Clair Mellinger	Harrisonburg
<i>Secretary</i>	John Dillard	Richmond
<i>Treasurer</i>	Thelma Dalmas	Lynchburg
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Bettye Fields	Newport News
<i>Raven Editor</i>	Teta Kain	Gloucester

Directors:

<i>One year</i>	Isabel Obenschain	Mt. Sidney
<i>Three years</i>	Jeffrey Blalock	South Boston
	David Johnston	Fairfax
	Julie Simpson	Winchester

There being no nominations from the floor, a motion was made and passed to elect the slate as presented.

Clair Mellinger introduced the Friday night speaker, Rick Blom, who coordinated the Maryland Atlas, was a consultant for the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, and is now working on a book about warblers which will be published by Houghton Mifflin. His topic was "Rare Breeding Birds." His theme was that about 25 species will probably become endangered within the next 10 years and that work needs to be started now to address the problem. What we cannot afford is to continue to bemoan poor birding years but do nothing about them. He also expressed concern that we are spending

much money on saving the birds that have media appeal, but provide little help for less popular species. The meeting was adjourned after completion of Mr. Blom's talk.

Dr. Charles Blem, who chaired the papers session committee, presided over the papers program on Saturday afternoon. Topics presented were:

1. *Conservation and ecology of birdlife on Christmas Island*, David W. Johnston and Roger B. Clapp. The island's fabulous and abundant birdlife was portrayed and pressures to which it is being exposed were described.

2. *The physiographic provinces of Virginia: are they relevant to birders?*, Donald R. Wiesnet. The six physiographic provinces of Virginia were defined and their significance to the occurrence of birds was explained.

3. *Aggressive behavior among feeder birds*, Mary Frances Hanover and Carolyn Wells. Videotapes of aggressive behavior of the species studied were shown and the aggressive behavior was discussed.

4. *How to find barn owls and suggestions for nest-box projects*, Chuck Rosenburg. Advice for locating Common Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) nest- and roost-sites was given and the importance of nest-box projects were explained.

5. *The concern of national park managers for the decline of breeding populations of Neotropical migrants*, Rick Potts. The extent and magnitude of the decline of North American songbird populations within recent times was summarized. The threats to their existence were discussed, along with ways that birders can help reverse current trends.

6. *Kleptoparasitism among Ring-billed Gulls*, David T. Shoch and John W. Bishop. Susceptibility of various ages of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) to food-stealing at landfills was measured. It was found that the time that elapsed before gulls were attacked, or needed to swallow the food before being attacked, was unrelated to age. A hierarchy of kleptoparasitism among age classes was found.

7. *Nest -box selection by Prothonotary Warblers*, Charles R. and Leann B. Blem. The most important determinants of the attractiveness of the nests to Prothonotary Warblers (*Protonotaria citrea*) seem to be (1) proximity to open water, (2) average basal area of the nearest four trees, and (3) percent of the day during which the nest box is exposed to direct sunlight.

8. *Composition of Prothonotary Warbler nests*, Leanna B. and Charles R. Blem. The study examined the species composition of the green mosses and the effect of them on the temperature and humidity within nest boxes placed in a tidal swamp. Nest box temperatures tend to be relatively cool on hot days because of the mosses.

The Saturday night program was initiated by Jeanne Menuet and Karen Willis, who distributed door prizes. Jeanne introduced Wendy Ealding who reported that Saturday field trips yielded 132 species. Allen Cumbia welcomed Tim Timberlake

who was commended and presented with a gift for his and Alden Aaroe's radio quizzes using bird calls.

YuLee Lerner recognized the following past James W. Eike Service Award recipients:

Thelma Dalmas	Dorothy Mitchell	Myriam Moore
Fred Scott	Bob Watson	Ruth Beck
Enoch Johnson	YuLee Lerner	Bill Opengari
Teta Kain	Mitchell Byrd	Bill Williams
Jackson Abbott	John Dalmas	Charles Hacker
Grace Wiltshire	John Mehner	Walter Smith
Jerry Via	Dick Peake	Dorothy Silsby
	John Dillard	

The Eike awards for 1990 were presented to Jo Wood, Bob Ake, and Sue Ridd for their many years of active service to the VSO.

Jim Strawn recognized Sue Ridd, Karen Willis, Jeanne Menuet, Judy Strawn, Clair Hayes, Wendy Ealding, Robin Ruth, and Larry Robinson, who were all leaders of the meeting activities.

Jim Strawn, as VSO conservation committee chairman, presented the Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award to Gary Fraser and Karen Mayne of the USFWS for their efforts to protect Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) habitat along the James River.

John Bazuin reported on activities of the VSO during the past year:

1. Peggy Spiegel has used ideas submitted in the membership questionnaire to improve field trips and increase participation.

2. Bettye Fields has accepted responsibility for editing the newsletter and is doing a fine job.

3. Teta Kain was commended for bringing *The Raven* up to date. With the catch-up now complete, members are urged to submit more articles for inclusion in the journal.

4. Approximately 30 percent of the Kiptopeke banding station land has been bulldozed but there are enough of the best lanes left so that the banders are planning to return there this year. Alternate sites have been inspected in case of further development.

5. Field work for the atlas project was completed last year. Eight hundred thirty-four priority blocks have been covered. Approximately 90 thousand observations were made by 560 observers. Planning for publication of the atlas results is now under way.

6. Another book, *Birds of Prey of Virginia*, is now being prepared by David Johnston. It is a directory of specimen records of birds of prey in Virginia from 1953 to 1988.

7. A subcommittee has been formed to plan the publication of a book on the birds of Virginia. The University Press of Virginia is interested in participating in this project.

8. Forays are being resumed this year at Mount Rogers/Whitetop with Fred Scott as the leader. It will be held June 12-17.

9. To attract more interest, the Murray Award has been restructured to be given every two years in the amount of one thousand dollars.

10. The records rarities committee has been improved over the last few years under the leadership of John Dalmás as chairman who was assisted by Teta Kain as secretary-compiler. The committee is considering reviewing old records to determine if they should be retained.

11. The birding hotline has been operated very effectively by Mike Boatwright during the year, despite his move from Fredericksburg to Amherst County.

12. Conservation activities included support for the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island in their efforts to have Assawoman and northern Metomkin Islands added to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the addition of Taylor Seay to the Citizens Task Force for overseeing the Caledon Natural Area. Also, the Natural Heritage Program is trying to initiate a study of the migration corridor from the Chesapeake Bay to the New Jersey coast and has asked for our fieldwork help if it is funded. Further, the VSO is offering local chapters our help if they have conservation problems requiring assistance.

13. The VSO is trying to locate a place to store ornithological records of significance. A possible site is the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution). Also being considered is a VSO headquarters which would be available for storage.

14. Procedures are being devised to enable acceptance of gifts willed to VSO.

John Bazuin presented a resolution of thanks to the Richmond Audubon Society, Mary Arginteanu (president), and Jim Strawn (general meeting chairman) for their contribution to the success of the meeting. Thanks was also extended to Rick Blom, Pete Dunne, and the Holiday Inn for their contributions to the success of the meeting.

Peter Dunne, former director of the Cape May Bird Observatory, now an author, was introduced. He talked about the great places in the United States he visited during the past year gathering material for his second book. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THE VSO

This list of local chapters, compiled by the VSO Membership Committee (Jim Nix, Chairman) has been revised to May 1990. The number in parentheses after the chapter name is the approximate total number of members in that chapter.

1. Augusta Bird Club (110), Staunton-Waynesboro
2. Bristol Bird Club (40), Bristol
3. Cape Henry Audubon Society (450), Norfolk
4. Charlottesville-Albemarle Bird Club (21), Charlottesville
5. Clinch Mountain Bird Club (12), Nickelsville
6. Clinch Valley Bird Club (20), Tazewell
7. Cumberland Nature Club (8), Wise
8. Eastern Shore Bird Club (37), Accomac
9. Fairfax Audubon Society (1800), Vienna
10. Foothills Bird Club (25) (Martinsville)
11. Hampton Roads Bird Club (150), Newport News-Hampton
12. Lynchburg Bird Club (200), Lynchburg
13. Marion Bird Club ((15), Marion
14. Monticello Bird Club (170), Charlottesville
15. Montpelier Naturalists (25), Gordonsville-Orange County
16. New River Valley Bird Club (80), Blacksburg
17. Northern Neck of Virginia Audubon Society (350)
Kilmarnock-White Stone
18. Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society (500)
Winchester-Strausburg-Front Royal
19. Northern Virginia Chapter (650), Arlington-Fairfax
20. Richmond Audubon Society (1350), Richmond
21. Roanoke Valley Bird Club (140), Roanoke-Salem
22. Rockbridge Bird Club (10), Lexington
23. Rockingham Bird Club (100), Harrisonburg
24. Virginia Beach Audubon Society (300), Virginia Beach
25. Margaret H. Watson Bird Club (12), Darlington Heights
26. Westmoreland Bird Club (65), Montross
27. Williamsburg Bird Club (120), Williamsburg

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HAWKWATCH - 1989

DAVID HOLT

3094 Forest Acre Trail
Salem, Virginia 24153

If the fall 1989 season has any value beyond the mere collection of numbers it is that it demonstrated how utterly dependent hawkwatching is on the weather. Coverage was down everywhere except at Short Hill Mountain. As a result, the counts were down everywhere except at Short Hill. It was a fall wherein an abnormal number of windless, overcast, and rainy days occurred, and those of us who subscribe to the theory that "no wind or no sun equals no hawks" simply stayed home.

Yet, while the total hours of coverage at each site were well within expectations, the counts were far below the potential for those sites. I might add that historically the decrease in coverage has not coincided with the magnitude of the decrease in numbers. Apparently the watchers were on watch even when they had no reason to believe they would be successful. A most gratifying deduction, but we must consequently charge the poor counts of the fall 1989 season to poor weather.

The question that remains is this: Was the weather too poor for the hawks to migrate or was it too poor for them to be seen? Obviously, the migrants carried on as usual. Nowhere has the adage "Hawks migrate at their convenience, not that of the hawkwatchers," been more in evidence than in the fall of 1989.

For whatever reasons, hawks abandoned their usual migratory routes southward along the ridges at Rockfish Gap. Observers found so few raptors crossing there that they made efforts to monitor lowland areas. That brings us to the highlight of the season insofar as this report is concerned. Two hawkwatchers inconvenienced themselves enough to provide a report of a massive migration of Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) in rain with little or no wind!

June Crutchfield and Alice Davis ventured forth to the Rockfish Gap site on 19 September only to find it completely obscured by a heavy cloud cover. Possessed with a dedication to find migrating hawks and confronted with an impossible situation they repaired to a location some 12 (road) miles east to a site where they had scored a good count the day before. In doing so, they gave us some hard evidence that rainy and overcast skies do not thwart the migrational urge.

June and Alice descended to a level below the heavy cloud cover where their visibility wasn't obscured. There at the intersection of US 250 and rt. 689 in Albemarle County, between the hours of 10 AM and noon, they counted 335 Broadwings and one Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)!

They decided that this location was less than optimal because trees obscured their view of low-flying hawks, so they moved one quarter mile further east. At this time a steady drizzle began to fall, but they still scored 560 Broad-wings and another Bald Eagle between noon and 1 PM.

Not satisfied with making the most significant discovery in the history of the Virginia hawkwatch, they decided to track these hawks to see if they were converging on the Rockfish Gap site. At about 500 yards west of their first location, they stopped to telephone their colleagues of their findings when the intensity of rainfall increased. From telephone booths somewhere on U.S. 250 some 12 miles east of Rockfish Gap, they counted 3188 Broad-wings, one Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) and one Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) between the hours of 1 and 3 PM. This brought the day's total to 4083 Broad-wings, two Bald Eagles, one Northern Harrier, and one Cooper's Hawk.

In my personal records and those of the Hawk Migration Association of North America there are sporadic reports indicating the possibility of massive migratory movements in rain, but none of these counts were carried out with the thoroughness of the one cited above. Four thousand hawks on a good viewing day at any location in Virginia is a noteworthy event.

It should also be mentioned that the first location that June and Alice tried on 19 September was one that had been discovered by them on the previous day under good weather conditions and quite by accident. The total number of hawks reported on that day was 1528.

Thus, the lesson of the fall 1989 season is that no matter where you are and no matter what the weather, LOOK UP. You just may witness a marvel no one has seen before.

Table 1 on pages 98-99 is a recap of hawkwatching activities in Virginia from September through December 1989. The first five sites in the table are registered as official observation stations by the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). The remaining 12 locations are considered incidental or experimental sites with less than 50 hours observation time recorded at each during the reporting period. New Hope and Big Levels observations were the results of one-time visits to those areas, made during field trips by the Augusta Bird Club.

This report was compiled under the auspices of HMANA and is published by the Raptorians, an independent group interested in raptor migration. Anyone wishing to join the Raptorians should contact Myriam Moore, 32 Columbia Ave., Lynchburg, VA 24503. For information about HMANA, write Joyce Holt, 3094 Forest Acre Trail, Salem, VA 24153.



TABLE 1. Virginia hawk lookout totals—1989.

	Black Vulture	Turkey Vulture	Osprey	Bald Eagle	Northern Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Northern	Red-shouldered Hawk
1. Kiptopeke Beach	8	253	864	38	254	4512	262	2	25
2. Rockfish Gap	41	315	111	6	44	1479	86	2	35
3. Short Hill Mt.	...	...	50	19	209	1136	135	...	83
4. Harvey's Knob	26	78	76	7	33	479	51	2	21
5. Mendota	...	...	21	2	1	41	21	...	...
6. Rockfish Valley	...	...	3	3	2	21	2	...	1
7. Beetlebung Corner	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
8. Ivy	...	...	4	...	1	...	...	...	2
9. Jack Mt.	...	...	1	...	1	4	...	...	...
10. Humpback Rocks	...	...	5	...	3	5	...	...	...
11. Boblette's Gap	...	...	1	...	...	1	1	...	...
12. New Hope	...	...	4	1	1	62	...	...	...
13. Staunton	...	7	1	...	...	2	...	...	...
14. Waynesboro	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
15. Big Levels	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...
16. Lynchburg	...	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...
17. Charlottesville	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	75	653	1142	77	550	7746	559	6	167

1989 VIRGINIA HAWK LOOKOUT SITES

1. *Kiptopeke Beach*: At the southern tip of the Eastern Shore peninsula.
2. *Rockfish Gap*: Crest of the Blue Ridge on Afton Mountain, adjacent to Interstate Hwy. 64.
3. *Short Hill Mountain*: Across the Potomac River from Harper's Ferry in Loudoun County.
4. *Harvey's Knob*: Crest of the Blue Ridge at milepost 95 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.
5. *Mendota Fire Tower*: Crest of Clinch Mountain near rt. 802 in Washington County.
6. *Rockfish Valley*: Twelve miles east of Rockfish Gap on U. S. 250 in Albemarle County.
7. *Beetlebung Corner*: Two miles northwest of Forest in Bedford County.
8. *Ivy*: Four miles southwest of Ivy, east of the Blue Ridge in Albemarle County.
9. *Jack Mountain*: Six miles southeast of Monterey in Highland County.

Broad-winged Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Golden Eagle	American Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Unidentified	Total Individuals	Total Hours Station Manned	Total Days Station Manned
173	319	1	2874	516	218	97	10,416	407	52
3089	686	6	85	...	8	89	6082	371	68
1320	1944	13	85	5	4	37	5040	327	59
3498	192	3	48	2	9	79	4604	268	48
1780	6	...	28	1	2	5	1908	48	9
5971	...	...	...	...	...	4	6007	13	4
1065	3	...	2	...	...	4	1075	10	3
673	2	...	2	...	...	1	685	10	3
149	1	...	1	...	...	1	158	6	1
120	2	...	8	...	...	6	149	5	1
...	2	...	...	...	...	...	5	3	1
3441	...	...	1	...	...	...	3510	2	2
600	...	...	1	...	...	...	611	2	1
169	...	...	...	...	...	...	170	2	1
51	...	...	...	...	...	...	54	1	1
44	...	...	...	...	...	...	47	1	2
75	...	...	...	...	...	...	75	< 1	1
22,218	3157	23	3135	524	241	323	40,596	1476+	257

1989 VIRGINIA HAWK LOOKOUT SITES (con't)

10. *Humpback Rocks*: Five miles south of Rockfish Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway.
11. *Boblette's Gap*: Near milepost 96 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.
12. *New Hope*: Five miles southeast of Mt. Sidney in Augusta County.
13. *Staunton*: In the residential area of the city.
14. *Waynesboro*: In the residential area of the city.
15. *Big Levels*: Approximately three miles southwest of Sherando in Augusta County.
16. *Lynchburg*: In the residential area of the city.
17. *Charlottesville*: In the residential area of the city.

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