

Reporting Guidelines

The Voice of the Naturalist is written and recorded on Tuesday mornings. If you email your reports, please email voice@anshome.org, by Monday midnight to make sure they are received in time.

Reports prior to the preceding Tuesday will not be considered.

The area covered is (with rare exceptions) DC, MD, VA, and southern DE; all other reports should be sent to the appropriate rare-bird alert for the area in which the birds were observed.

Be sure to report only those birds that you actually saw, not ones that someone else told you about.

And please remember to include a phone number where you can be reached on Tuesday morning; if you can't be reached to verify a rare bird, your report will almost certainly not be used.

There are two main circumstances in which a bird sighting will not be reported on the Voice as a matter of policy. The first is if the report would jeopardize the bird's welfare:

Reports of species that are threatened or endangered at the state or federal level are generally not used, especially during nesting season--local Loggerhead Shrikes are an example; similarly, owls are not listed, with two exceptions--Snowy Owl and Short-eared Owl; and rails are also generally not mentioned; the rails at Huntley Meadows Park, VA, are an exception because birders stay on the boardwalk.

The second circumstance concerns private property: If the property owner does not want birders, the sighting will not be reported--at least in a way that identifies the location.

Please keep your reports concise (no lengthy trip reports, please), and provide the following information:

Full SPECIES NAME.

NUMBER of individuals of each species (estimates for big flocks are fine).

Age and sex, if relevant (important for gull observations, for example).

Location, including COUNTY and STATE (there are four Middletowns in MD).

DATE of observation ("today", "yesterday", "Saturday", etc., are not as helpful).

TELEPHONE NUMBER where you can be reached on Tuesday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

DIRECTIONS to little known places (your favorite local hot spot may not be familiar to the Voice compiler or to other nonlocal people); page numbers and map coordinates from the DeLorme atlas/gazetteer are extremely helpful.

Access limitations, if any; and, for birds that are on private property, whether the owner does not want birders, if you know.

Unusual behavior seen.

For RARITIES, a description of features YOU ACTUALLY SAW (not what is in the field guides).

Thanks in advance for your reports. You can be sure that they will be read. Don't be disappointed if your sighting isn't mentioned; when there are a lot of reports, summary comments sometimes have to be made. There are times, however, when every report is used in writing the Voice, for example, during the hot days of summer. -- Voice of the Naturalist

