



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927 • Fairfax, VA 22035-1118
703-324-8700 • Fax: 703-324-3974 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

For Immediate Release

Judy Pedersen, PIO

March 12, 2014

E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

PSA-022

Press Inquiries: 703-324-8662

Birders Search for Imperiled Rusty Blackbird in County Parks

They're rare and they're here! Rusty blackbirds are migrating through Fairfax County this month, stopping to refuel in flooded forests and swampy wetlands such as Huntley Meadows Park in Alexandria, Va. The public is invited to participate in March's Rusty Blackbird Blitz.

To gather as much data as possible on this disappearing species, the international Rusty Blackbird Working Group is coordinating with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology on a spring migration blitz. Birders are encouraged to act as citizen scientists and log sightings of rusty blackbirds online at <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/collecting-and-reporting-data>. The log is easy to use and includes photos to help birders sharpen their identification skills.

According to Huntley Meadows Park Manager Kevin Munroe, rusty blackbirds are probably the most imperiled bird species regularly seen at the 1,500-acre park. "They aren't quite as flashy as king rails or American bitterns, but their populations are in much worse shape," he said. Rusty blackbird populations have decreased by as much as 90 percent in the last few decades, mainly because their traditional breeding ground in boreal forests of the north is shrinking due to logging.

Huntley Meadows Park is one of the best spots in the county to spot the visiting birds. Other great spots to see migrating rusty blackbirds are Dyke Marsh, Riverbend Park, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Old Colchester Park and Preserve, Eakin Park, Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Jackson Abbott, Fort Belvoir, Quantico Marine Corps Base, Bles Park, Algonkian Park, Banshee Reeks, the parks on Mason Neck, and the Occoquan River parks.

For more information on how to participate, contact Kevin Munroe at 703-768-2525.

###



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.