

Tennessee), Lenny Fennimore, Perk Floyd, Bill Fontenot, Robert P. Ford, Lawrence F. Gardella, Nancy Gobris, Stephanie Green, Mark A. Greene, Anne Gregory, Thomas M. Haggerty, Greg J. Harber, Dave Harder, Mac Hardy, Nona & J.C. Herbert, Gordon L. Hight, Geoff E. Hill, Marshall J. Iloff, **Greg D. Jackson** (Alabama), Kenneth Jackson, Pat & Ron Johnson, Jud Johnston, Beverly Kenney, Paul Kerlinger, Jon R. King, Helen H. Kittinger, Paul D. Kittle, Joe P. Kleiman, Gene C. & Shannon Knight, Richard L. Knight, Alan Knothe, Sterling S. & Emma L. Lacy, Guy Luneau, Charles Lyon, Kimberly Lyon, Portia Macmillan,

John Madden, Annabel Markel, John McBride (JMc), Steve W. McConnell, K. McQueen, Martha Milburn & Sally Moffet, Matthew Mullenix, David P. Muth, B. Mac Myers, Kenny Nichols, LaDonna Nichols, Glenn Ousset, Millie Page, Charley Parkel, **Max & Helen Parker** (Arkansas), Jim & Diane Patterson, Rob Peebles, Janet Peterson, Stacy J. Peterson, Wilma Pickett, G. Ned Piper, Melissa Powell (MeP), Tommy A. Pratt, R.D. Purrington, Shawn E. Reed, Richard A. & Linda B. Reynolds, JoAnne & Earl Rife, W. Douglas Robinson, Martha B. Sargent, Robert R. Sargent, Marion H. Schiefer, **Terence L. Schiefer**

(Mississippi), Michael A. Seymour, Jan K. Shaw, Damien J. Simbeck, Richard W. Simmers, Terry Singleterry, Chris A. Sloan, Carolyn T. Snow, Phil Snow, Curt Sorrells, Virginia Spizak, George Stebbing-Allen, **Stephen J. Stedman** (cen. Tennessee), Mary Stevens, Bill Summerour, Jeff Trahan, Kathryn Trahan, Bo Verser, **Martha G. Waldron** (w. Tennessee), Phillip Wallace, Leslie Wanamaker, Donald M. Ware, Shirley Wayland, Richard L. West, Jeff R. Wilson, Mark Woodrey, Alan Wormington (AWo), Alex Wyss, Peter H. Yaukey, Janie Zackin.



# prairie provinces

**RUDOLF F. KOES**

135 Rossmere Cres., Winnipeg, MB R2K 0G1

**PETER TAYLOR**

Box 597, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0

**T**he Region experienced seasonable conditions in August and September, but October and November were unusually mild and dry. Only northern regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan received normal precipitation; Alberta had to deal with forest and range fires in October! By the end of the period much open water remained in the south and the ground was essentially snow-free. Numerous waterfowl, raptors, and shorebirds lingered, while passerines departed generally on schedule. However, those that did remain often survived beyond expectation.

**Abbreviations:** B.N.H.S. (*Brandon Nat. Hist. Soc., Brandon, MB*); I.B.S. (*Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary, AB*); L.M.L. (*Last Mountain L., SK*); Mt. L. (*Mt. Lorette, AB*); O.H.M. (*Oak Hammock Marsh, Manitoba*); S.R.V. (*Sheep River Valley, AB*).

## LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Alberta reported four Red-throated Loons between 12 Sep and 10 Nov; more unexpected was one at Victoria Beach, MB, 9 Oct (RKO). Four Pacific Loons were on Barrier L., AB, 3 Oct (J&MM); singles were at Mt. L. 25 Oct (PSh) and at Seebe Dam, AB, 11 Nov (J&MM). Rarest of the loons was a Yellow-billed at Morley, AB, 11 Nov (J&MM). A Great Egret at Innisfail, AB, 1–21 Aug was undocumented (m.ob.). Four Great Egrets at Whitewater L., MB, 22 Aug (CCt, B.N.H.S.) increased to 11 by 30 Aug (AW et al.), with three lingering until 26 Sep

(B.N.H.S.). At Langruth, MB, another 12 were found 2 Sep (L&RJ). Cattle Egrets also congregated at Whitewater L., peaking 6 Sep at 47 (G&SG et al.); about 40 “small egrets” near Langruth 1 Sep were likely the same species (*fide* HdH). A late Cattle Egret was at O.H.M. 18 Oct (PG). Rounding out the wader bonanza at Whitewater L., up to five White-faced Ibises were seen 22–30 Aug (CCt, B.N.H.S., m. obs.). Botulism claimed a sixth bird 23 Aug (*fide* CCt).

About 60 Gr. White-fronted Geese at O.H.M. 11 Nov were late (RKO), as was one at Calgary 18 Nov (MH). Concentrations of 100,000 to 200,000 Snow Geese at various locations in sw. MB and s. SK between late Sep and early Nov reflect how successful the species is (CCt, T&RWi, WH, PSa, DV). The best count of Ross’s Geese was 3,200 at L.M.L. 7 Oct (WH) and rare blue-morph birds were noted 10 Oct at Radisson L., SK (BK) and 14 Oct at Buck L., SK (FL). A juv. **Mute Swan** at Stony Mountain 23 Oct was about the fifth for Manitoba (GH, CCs). Trumpeter Swans peaked at 300+ at Taylorville, AB, 25 Oct–7 Nov (T&DD).

Concentrations of ducks included 10,000 Gadwall and 10,000 Green-winged Teal at Whitewater L. 20 Sep (AW) and 900 juv. Ring-necked Ducks near Irricana, AB, in August (TK). In contrast, observers in Saskatchewan (BL) and sw. Manitoba (CCt) commented on the steady decline in numbers of staging L. Scaup. A Harlequin Duck was a good find at Pine Falls, MB, 7 Nov (RZ). From 26 Sep–30 Oct at least 45 Surf Scoters were noted in Alberta, including 26 at Chain Lakes 2 Oct (TK). Eight were found in Saskatchewan (BL et al.) and two in Manitoba (GH, CCs et al.). Only two Black Scoters were reported, at Cold L., AB,



10 Nov (FW) and L.M.L. 11 Nov (BL). November Long-tailed Duck sightings came from Calgary and Taber, AB (LB), and Pine Falls (ACs et al.) and St. Ambrose, MB (AW). At least two Barrow’s Goldeneyes were at L.M.L. 31 Oct–6 Nov (BL, DV).

An Osprey near Minnedosa, MB, 18 Nov was spectacularly late (CCt). There were numerous November reports of N. Harriers in Alberta and at O.H.M.; a female at the latter was captured by a Bald Eagle 19 Nov (BCa). Migrating Sharp-shinned Hawks peaked at 107 at S.R.V. 9 Oct (RD, WS) and at 120 at Whytewold, MB, 10 Oct (MQ). A Broad-winged Hawk at Mt. L. 7 Nov was very late (*fide* PSh), as were Ferruginous Hawks at Govenlock, SK, 7 Nov and between Swift Current and Rosetown, SK, 22 Nov (WH). The latter were attracted by late above-ground Richardson’s Ground Squirrel activity. Early single Rough-legged Hawks arrived at Shepard, AB, 29 Aug (MH) and Calgary 8 Sep (MBr); 146 passed S.R.V. 12 Oct (WS) and dozens stayed into Dec at O.H.M. (m.ob.). The Sep–Nov Golden Eagle tally at Mt. L. was 3,466, the second-lowest fall count there since detailed surveys began in 1992 (PSh et al.).

## COOTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Three thousand Am. Coots crowded a slough near Chestermere L., AB, 20 Sep (TK). Most noteworthy of a stunning number of lingering shorebirds were an Am.

Golden-Plover at Namaka L., AB, 13 Nov (MH), two Am. Avocets at Whitewater L. 31 Oct (T&RWi) and three at Reed L., SK, 18 Nov (WH), a Marbled Godwit at Chaplin L., SK, 17 Oct (WH), a Least Sandpiper at Chaplin L. 18 Nov (WH), a Long-billed Dowitcher at Reed L. 18 Nov (WH), and two Com. Snipes near Cedoux, SK, 24 Nov (CB). Notable gatherings included 600 Am. Avocets at Whitewater L. 20 Sep (AW), 31 Long-billed Curlews at Bindloss, AB, 1 Aug (PH), a peak of 14 Western Sandpipers at High River, AB, 1 Sep (MH), 10,000 Long-billed Dowitchers at Whitewater L. 20 Sep (AW), and 800 Wilson's Phalaropes with 1,300 Red-necked Phalaropes at High River 1 Aug (MH). The only rarity was a Purple Sandpiper at Button Bay, near Churchill, MB, 17 Oct (DF).

A Parasitic Jaeger at Grand Beach, MB, 6 Nov was the latest of six reported across the Region (MW, Manitoba Naturalists Society party). All three provinces had late-Nov Bonaparte's Gulls. A California Gull 10 Aug was the fourth or fifth for Churchill (BCh) and two at Calgary 26 Nov were late (MH). The first **Black-legged Kittiwake** in the Calgary area since 1982 was found on a roadside at Shepard after a violent storm 11 Aug (ACe); it died the next day. Another bird, at Elk Island N.P., AB, 23 Oct was not documented (Edmonton Bird Club).

**Eurasian Collared-Doves** reached the Region: two frequented a Regina, SK, feeder late Sep+ (IT et al.). Two in Weyburn, SK, since Apr were not identified until 18 Nov (JW, CB, MBa). How hardy will they prove to be? A Barn Owl at Weyburn 20 Oct was the thirteenth for Saskatchewan (DG). The only N. Hawk Owl sighting in Manitoba was near Brandon 16 Nov (JD, KM); there were eight in Alberta 26 Sep+ (BP et al.). Great Gray Owls were locally prominent in Alber-

ta, particularly at S.R.V. (WS, RWe, RD). The only bright spot in a dismal Com. Nighthawk flight was a total of 72 at Dinosaur P.P., AB, 17 Aug (RD). A Vaux's Swift provided the first fall record at Mt. L. 6 Sep (PSh); nine passed S.R.V. 9 Sep (WS). If accepted, a **White-throated Swift** at Stevesville 5-6 Sep, presumed to be the same bird seen at Dinosaur P.P. 22 June, would be only the second for Alberta (PM, m.ob.). A Hairy Woodpecker at Dymond L. 27 Oct was the third of the year for the Churchill area (DF), where the only previous report was prior to 1845!

#### PASSERINES

A late *Myiarchus* flycatcher in Winnipeg 17 Oct was reported as a Great Crested (RF). N. Shrikes were prominent: Alberta had 23 birds, Saskatchewan six, and Manitoba 18+, the earliest being near Patricia Beach, MB, 25 Sep (RS). A late Warbling Vireo was at S.R.V. 2 Oct (WS, RWe). A minor incursion of Gray Jays was noted in se. Manitoba, with reports from Beausejour, Kleefeld, La Barriere Park and Winnipeg (m.ob.). Ten thousand Horned Larks along trails in pasture land near Consul, SK, 7 Nov left the observer wondering how many went unseen on the snow-free ground (WH). A good flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches was noted in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; e.g., 52 were seen on 27 dates 2 Aug-11 Oct at Stonewall, MB (KG).

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** in Calgary 13 Sep would be Alberta's fourth, if accepted (B&TG). Up to two Townsend's Solitaires were at L.M.L. (AS), plus singles at Hadashville (ACr) and Winnipeg, MB (L&RJ), all in Oct. One Varied Thrush was in Regina 14 Oct (TR), another at Beaconsia, MB, 23 Oct (RKO). A Gray Catbird at Dymond L. 19 Oct was both far north and late (DF). Also late

were lone Am. Pipits at S.R.V. 5 Nov (RWe) and Thompson, MB, 8 Nov (BZ). Bohemian Waxwings arrived early: one was banded in Calgary 10 Aug (*vide* LV) and 15 were at Mt. L. 2 Sep (JS). On 27-28 Oct, 2,090 including a flock of 1,200 passed S.R.V. (WS, RWe).

A Summer Tanager was photographed at St. Pierre, MB, 10-11 Nov (RL, RT). A Spotted Towhee in Winnipeg 18 Sep was reported without details (HT). A Golden-crowned Sparrow at I.B.S. 18 and 21 Sep was the third for the site (JR, LV, RWe). Under review by the Alberta Bird Records Committee is a probable Dark-eyed Junco x White-throated Sparrow hybrid in Calgary 8-20 Oct (RB et al.). A **Gray-headed Junco** at a Winnipeg feeder since 9 Nov was Manitoba's third (AHu et al.). Tardy were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Victoria Beach 21 Nov (RKO, GG) and a Bobolink at O.H.M. 10 Oct (RKO). Com. Redpolls made a good showing across the region from early October on; an estimated 75,000 passed S.R.V. before a blizzard 31 Oct (WS, RWe).

**Observers (subregional compilers in bold-face):** C. Anderson, M. Bailey (MBa), R. Barclay, L. Bennett, C. Bjorklund, M. Breiteneder (MBR), B. Carey (BCa), A. Chartier (ACr), B. Chartier (BCh), R. Clarke, A. Cole (ACe), A. Courcelles (ACs), C. Curtis (CCs), C. Cuthbert (Cct), H. den Haan, R. Dickson, T. & D. Dolman, J. Dubois, D. Fast, K. Gardner, W. Gierulski, B. & T. Goulet, G. Grief, P. Grief, S. Grief, D. Gutfriend, L. Hancock, W. Harris, **M. Harrison**, A. Hill (AHi), G. Holland, P. Horch, A. Huebert (AHu), L. & R. Jansson, R. Koes (RKO), B. Korol, T. Korolyk, F. Lahrman, R. Letourneau, **B. Luterbach**, P. Marklevitz, J. & L. Marshall, J. & M. McDonald, K. Monson, B. Parsons, A. Pelzer, J. Pilny, M. Quigley, J. Riddell, T. Riffel, P. Sargent (PSa), P. Sherrington (PSH), A. Smith, W. Smith, R. Staniforth, J. Steeves, R. Tone, H. Toom, I. Traquair, D. Vetter, **L. Vogt**, M. Waldron, A. Walley, R. Wershler (RWe), J. Whittell, F. Wiley, T. & R. Will (T&RWi), B. Wilson, G. Yaki, R. Zach, B. Zimmer.



**Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T" or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 20.**

**SA** There were a lot of unusual warbler reports, both rarities (especially in w. Alberta) and late individuals. Numerous Nashville Warblers were reported in Calgary, where they are usually rare. Hawkwatchers turned up the second Magnolia Warbler for Mt. L. 26 Aug (PSh) and first for S.R.V. 29 Aug (WS, RWe, RD), the first Cape May Warbler for S.R.V. 18 Sep (RD), and the first Black-throated Green Warbler for Mt. L. 4 Sep (PSh). Rare anywhere in the Region, Black-throated Blue Warblers were photographed 13 Oct at Tilley, AB (CA) and 14 Nov-1 Dec+ at Medicine Hat, AB (J&LM), plus a third bird in Calgary from 21 Nov+ (LH, AHi). Also noteworthy were a Blackburnian Warbler at I.B.S. 1 Sep (JR, LV) and four Bay-breasted Warblers in s. Alberta 28 Aug-17 Sep.

Latest of the late were: a N. Parula at Saskatoon, SK 14 Nov (WG); a Chestnut-sided Warbler at Calgary 16 Nov (JP, AP, GY); a Magnolia Warbler also at Calgary 26 Nov (RC); single Cape May Warblers at Tyvan, SK, 5 Nov (BL) and St. Adolphe, MB, 9 Nov (ACs); a Yellow-rumped Warbler at Victoria Beach 21 Nov (RKO); a Bay-breasted Warbler at Saskatoon 30 Oct (WG); an Ovenbird at Winnipeg 10 Oct (GH); and Wilson's Warblers at Richmond, SK, 15 Oct (BK) and Calgary 17 Oct (BW).