

in Turtle R. S.P. 15 May provided only the 3rd nesting record for the state (DOL).

Rare nesters in the Region, Cassin's Kingbirds were reported from traditional areas in *Bennett*, SD 19–20 May (DAT, RFS, JSP) and s of Birney, MT 25 May (CP). Casual in South Dakota, but seemingly on the increase, 3 White-eyed Vireos were reported in this spring. Singles were in *Union* 7 May (JC), *Bennett* 19 May (RFS, JSP), and *Clay* 21 May (JC). Local in the n. Black Hills, an American Dipper survey in Spearfish Canyon, SD turned up 28 ads. and 15 active nests (DB). Six Golden-crowned Kinglet reports from the Dakotas was an incredibly low number for an often common migrant. If accepted, a **Northern Wheatear** documented in *Stutsman*, ND 8 May would furnish only the 2nd record for the state (PRS).

WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in *Union*, SD 5 May would provide the 3rd record for the state if accepted (DS). Accidental in the Region, 2 **Townsend's Warblers** were documented. South Dakota's 5th was banded in *Hughes* 11 May (FLB), and a single in Ft. Peck, MT 15 May provided only the 2nd local record (CC). Furnishing the earliest record for the

state, and the first in Apr, 2 American Redstarts were noted at Arrowwood N.W.R. 30 Apr (SRW). Summer Tanager reports documented in North Dakota included a male at Minot 29 Apr (TL) and a female at Minot 15 May (REM). These would provide the 18th and 19th records for the state.

A Green-tailed Towhee at Malta, MT 4–6 May furnished a new record for Latilong 9 (TP, KTP, PP). Unusually far w. was an Eastern Towhee in *Hughes*, SD 6 May (RDO). Seldom reported in migration at the e. edge of the Dakotas, a Baird's Sparrow was in *Yankton*, SD 24 Apr (SVS). Unusually far w. was a Red Fox Sparrow in Custer, SD 11 Apr (CMW). A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** 14–15 May in *Burleigh*, ND would furnish the 5th record for the state if accepted (DA, HCT, CDE). Following a sighting last winter, another **Gray-headed Junco** was found in North Dakota: a single in *McKenzie* 2 May provided perhaps the 4th or 5th record for this race in the state (JAH).

Lazuli Bunting was noted in extreme e. North Dakota for the 2nd consecutive year, with a single 16–19 May in *Cass* (EP). A little n. of the species's usual haunts, an Eastern Meadowlark was noted in *Mellette*, SD 27 May (KH). At the extreme w. edge of typical range

in the Region, an Orchard Oriole was very early 10 May in Malta, MT (TP). A Bullock's Oriole at Arrowwood N.W.R., ND 27 May was well e. of their usual range (MLV).

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Southern Great Plains



Fall Migration: 1 August to 30 November 2000

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As fall seasons go, this one was more or less remarkable—it was just Great! Birds can fly, and there are many more that can fly around in the fall just after the breeding season than at most other times. Many birders in the Region focus on proven birding hot spots, particularly at the western periphery of the Region, improving the chances of finding western strays, as well as eastern species west. As is true every autumn, there was more to report than these pages can hold; what follows can only be the highlights.

This was perhaps a year to have a western focus, as more than the usual number of west-

ern species materialized in the Region. Almost every trochilid, corvid, parid, or emberizid likely to creep even occasionally onto the Plains did so. There was a very significant influx of western hummingbirds in western Kansas, and a banding station at Oliver Reservoir in southwestern Nebraska in particular added much to our knowledge of a number of western species in the Region.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); Hefner (L. Hefner, Oklahoma, OK); L. Ogallala (Keith, NE); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Oliver (Oliver Res., Kimball, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R. Stafford, KS); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Sooner (Sooner L., Pawnee/Noble, OK).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Red-throated Loons were reported from *Scotts Bluff*, NE 12 Nov (SJD), Tulsa 13–14 Nov (JWA et al.), and Sooner 27 Nov (JWA). Among a surprising collection of summer records was a Pacific Loon in first-alternate plumage at McConaughy 7 Aug–8 Sep (SJD). At least 6 additional birds were reported 12–26 Nov from *Scotts Bluff*, NE, L. Ogallala, and McConaughy (SJD).

At least 6 Red-necked Grebes were found at L. Ogallala and McConaughy, including a molting ad. 7 Sep–11 Oct, very early (SJD, BP, LP), with up to 5 ads. 26 Nov (SJD, LR, RH). Even rarer farther s. were 3 in *Riley*, KS 21 Nov (DB). An incredible count of 44,000 Western Grebes was made at McConaughy 27 Sep (SJD). Clark's Grebes included 14 at McConaughy 7 Aug (SJD), one at Cheyenne Bottoms 5 Sep (RK), 7 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 2 Nov (SJD), one in *Russell*, KS 18–21 Nov (MR), and one to 2 additional birds on L. Ogallala 2 Nov (SJD).

The list of Gulf Coast vagrants was impressive this season. An imm. Brown Pelican was noted 18 Oct in *Pawnee*, OK (JHo, SM), while 2 Neotropic Cormorants were found n. to *Coffey*, KS 7 Aug–1 Sep (AS), with a single at Quivira 19 Aug (RK).

Nebraska's first **Reddish Egret** was at McConaughy 27 Sep–15 Oct, a white morph (SJD, WRS, MB, JF). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron wandered far n. and w. to *Dawes*, NE 20 Sep (SJD), with another imm. at L. Ogallala 21–22 Aug (SJD).

The Oklahoma vagrants at Red Slough included up to 3 Tricolored Herons 9 Aug–16 Sep (DA, m. ob.), up to 250 White Ibis 30 Aug (latest, a single 24 Oct; DA, m. ob.), up to 3 Roseate Spoonbills 2 Aug–5 Sep (DA, BH et



These Sabine's Gulls 3 October 2000 at Keystone Lake, Osage County, Oklahoma, were part of a wide-spread flight of the species noted in the Region during the autumn. Photograph by Steve Metz.

al.), and up to 250 Wood Storks 2 Aug–27 Sep (DA, BH et al.). An imm. White Ibis wandered n. to *Pawnee*, OK 13 Sep (JWA), with Wood Storks in *Washington*, OK 4 Sep (BG) and *Sequoyah*, OK 6–7 Sep (JH, JM, D&JV).

The crop of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks observed at Red Slough was impressive, with a high count of 8 ad. and 45 imm. birds noted 12 Sep (DA, BH). Up to 8 ads. were noted in *Major*, OK 3 & 6 Aug (JAG, JWA, TP).

As many as 28 Trumpeter Swans frequented the L. Ogallala area 14 Nov+ (SJD, JF, RS). Two Trumpeters were in *Johnson*, KS 18 Nov (ML), with 6 collared birds present in *Chase*, KS 24 Nov (DG, DL). One or 2 Tundra Swans visited Quivira 16 Nov (W&NB), with 2 seen 21–28 Nov at Red Slough (DA, BH, RB).

Not as frequently observed were American Black Ducks, with singles in *Douglas*, KS 5 Nov (AP), *Nemaha*, KS 21 Nov (MG), and *Jefferson*, KS 27 Nov (RR). The Gulf Coast counterpart, a Mottled Duck, was noted at Red Slough 20 Aug & 5 Sep (BH, DA).

A **Tufted Duck**, possibly the same bird present the previous spring, appeared at L. Ogallala 26 Nov (SJD). Greater Scaup made appearances at preferred sites L. Ogallala and Sooner, with 77 the maximum count at Ogallala 14–19 Nov (SJD, JF).

Perhaps surprising, Surf Scoter, the most commonly reported scoter in the recent decade, went unreported this season. However, up to 3 imm. or female White-

winged Scoters were reported from L. Ogallala 14–26 Nov (SJD, JF, RS). Three were found in *Riley*, KS 20 Nov (DB), with ad males in *Sedgwick* 20–22 Nov (PJ, m. ob.), and *Cedar/Knox*, NE 25 Nov (BFH). Black Scoters, normally the rarest scoter, was the most commonly reported this season. An ad. male was present at L. Ogallala 12–14 Oct (SJD, JF) with up to 4 imms. there 25 Oct–21 Nov (SJD, RS). Others were noted in Tulsa 9 Nov (JWA, JS), (3 birds) in *Russell*, KS 18 Nov (MR), a female/imm. at McConaughy 26 Nov (SJD), and three imms. in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 2 Nov (SJD).

Reports of Long-tailed Duck were about normal, with the first appearing 16 Nov in Nebraska. Once thought exceptional—now just rare—up to 2 Barrow's Goldeneyes were found at L. Ogallala 14–26 Nov (SJD, JF). Ad male Barrow's Goldeneyes were also located in *Sedgwick*, KS 19–30 Nov (W & NB, m. ob.) and *Johnson*, KS 30 Nov (ML). A female Red-breasted Merganser was located at L. Ogallala 7 & 22 Aug (SJD), the first ever for Aug.

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Mississippi Kites appear to be extending their range in Nebraska, with one in *Sarpy* 19 Sep (BP, LP) and a juv. in *Knox* 25 Sep (MB), the latter the northernmost sighting for the state. Northern Goshawks were noted in *Knox*, NE 14 Oct (an early date; MB), *Rush*, KS 17 Nov (SS), and *Johnson*, KS 18 Nov (ML).



A first for Kansas was this Williamson's Sapsucker in Elkhart, Morton County, Kansas on 22 September 2000. Photograph by Eric Preston.

Perhaps peculiar this season was an early sprinkling of raptors on the Plains. These included a Ferruginous Hawk 24 Sep at Sooner L. (SM), Merlins in *Alfalfa*, OK 6 Aug (AVK, JGv) and *Sequoyah*, OK 16 Aug (SB), Peregrine Falcons in *Alfalfa*, OK 3 Aug (JWA, JAG, TP) and at McConaughy (2) 6 & 7 Aug (SJD), and Prairie Falcons at Quivira 8 Aug (CG), *Rush*, KS 9 Aug (SS), and *Alfalfa*, OK 28 Aug (JM, LH). No small surprise was a Harris's Hawk in *Cowley*, KS 14–30 Nov (ES, m. ob.). Two ad. Golden Eagles moved e. to *Washington*, NE by 10 Nov (JGr).

Merlin numbers have improved in the Plains: 49 were reported for Nebraska alone (*fide* WRS). Peregrines have also seen an upsurge in numbers, with 14 reported from Nebraska, 8 from Oklahoma, and a few from Kansas. The best of the best, an imm. gray-morph Gyrfalcon was reported from Wichita, KS 20 Nov (L&TH, m. ob.); 2 other possible Gyrs were reported from far w. Nebraska, although the identifications were not entirely certain (*fide* WRS).

A Black Rail in the hand in *Meade*, KS 2 Sep (TF): what was it worth relative to the 2 seen at Quivira 12 Aug (MG, ML)? Reports of Common Moorhen breeding came from Red Slough (DA), with 20 ads. and 7 imms. noted in *Kingfisher*, OK 12 Sep (JWA).

Only 2 Mountain Plovers were reported, those in *Morton*, KS 1 Sep (m. ob.). Black-necked Stilt reports from the e. edge of the

Region came from *Linn*, KS (one) 10 Sep (MM), and 3 at Red Slough 2–20 Aug (DA et al.).

Quite tardy was a Long-billed Curlew 3 Oct in *Osage*, OK (SM). Hudsonian Godwits, a hard find in fall, were noted at McConaughy 22 Aug (SJD), and in *Coffey*, KS 1 Sep (AS). Ruddy Turnstone reports 16 Aug–10 Sep were about normal, with one at Cheyenne Bottoms 1 Oct (TW). Also, the normal scattering of juv. Red Knots in the Region was noted 22 Aug–10 Sep.

When it comes to “peep,” there are always the issues of identification that make it difficult to ascertain some patterns. However, several experienced observers in Nebraska and Oklahoma note what has been a real drop in numbers of Western Sandpipers. Normally a common fall migrant, only 8 were identified among thousands of shorebirds inspected in Nebraska (*fide* WRS), and very few were found in Oklahoma (JAG). Then we have Baird's Sandpipers, among the commonest peep during fall, with just over 4,000 noted 22 Aug at McConaughy (SJD).

Kansans enjoyed what may have been the “Great Buff-breasted Count” from Aug to mid-Sep, when groups of dozens to hundreds were noted in at least 10 Kansas counties. Three-digit (or near) counts also occurred in Nebraska and Oklahoma as well, most in the e. and cen. portions of the states. Adding interest to the entourage of charadriids are

the phalaropes. As usual, a smattering of Red-necked Phalaropes was observed in the Region, this season between 9 Sep–12 Oct. Much more exceptional was a Red Phalarope in *Russell*, KS 8 Oct (MR).

No jaeger is an annual find in the Southern Plains: as land-locked as the Region may appear, trips on Lake McConaughy are dubbed “pelagic,” and appropriately 2 juv. Pomarine Jaegers were located there 8 & 10 Sep (SJD et al.). A juv. Parasitic Jaeger was seen closely in *Harlan*, NE 16 Sep (JGJ). Completing the sweep for Nebraska was an intermediate-morph Long-tailed Jaeger photographed in *Scotts Bluff* 11 Sep (SJD). Kansans came up with an imm. Long-tailed Jaeger in agricultural fields in *Washington* 7–10 Sep (DT, m. ob.).

Laughing Gulls wandered as far n. as *Reno*, KS 4 Sep (PJ). The only Little Gull reported was an imm. photographed 23 Sep in *Rogers*, OK (DH, SM et al.). California Gulls have become more commonplace in recent years, particularly in Nebraska. On 13 Oct, 103 were noted at McConaughy (SJD). California Gulls were also noted in *Sedgwick*, KS 24–25 Sep (CG, PJ) and *Riley*, KS 22 Oct (TC), with others found 1–2 Aug in *Wagoner*, OK (JWA) and 10 Oct in *Oklahoma* (JWA). Four Herring Gulls at McConaughy 7 Aug (SJD) were exceptional: the species is almost unheard of in mid-summer in the Region.

Thayer's Gulls were reported as early as 19 Oct in *Pawnee*, OK (JWA), with ads. 1 Nov in *Lincoln*, NE and L. Ogallala (SJD, JF). Lesser Black-backed Gulls this fall included: an ad. at McConaughy 10 Sep (SJD) and 15 Oct (WRS) to 2 Nov (SJD); a third-year bird in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 11 & 27 Sep and 11 Oct (SJD); an ad 6–10 Oct at Hefner (MOI, JAG, JWA), a first-basic individual in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 14 Nov (SJD); and an ad. in *Lincoln*, NE 19 Nov (SJD, JF). Glaucous Gulls first appeared 14 Nov, when a first-year bird was observed in *Lincoln*, NE (SJD). It was yet another hot fall for Sabine's Gulls, with at least 37 imms. reported Regionwide 10 Sep–5 Nov, exceptionally 29 Nov in *Sedgwick*, KS (PJ). And our “Where's Waldo” Black-legged Kittiwake appeared in Omaha 14–21 Nov (NR, m. ob.).

Common Terns seemed “unusually abundant” this fall, with a record count of 23 at McConaughy 8 Sep (SJD). Far exceeding any previous Nov count for Forster's Terns was the flock of 341 tallied 7 Nov in *Wagoner*, OK (JWA). And then, the Region was graced with not one but 3 Arctic Terns: a molting ad photographed 20 Sep in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (SJD, the first for Nebraska); an imm. distantly photographed 25 Sep in *Rogers*, OK (JWA),

and an imm. noted at close range at Hefner 10 Oct (JAG, JWA, SM). The latter are now the 2nd and 3rd acceptably documented for Oklahoma, the first having been this past spring.

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

It is safe to say that Eurasian Collared-Doves are now established in the Region. The count of records for Nebraska, where they may be least common, is nevertheless in the teens. There was also a continuation of reports of Inca Doves in Oklahoma and Kansas. Among dove species, the most exceptional was probably the White-winged Dove in *Shawnee*, KS 24–25 Aug (JB).

Kansas birders went into orbit this season with hummingbirds, and the Kansas Bird Records Committee will surely have its hands full sorting through all of the difficult-to-identify vagrants. First were the **Anna's Hummingbirds**: an ad. male 19 Aug in *Johnson*, KS (MC), one in *Pawnee*, KS 6 Sep (DK, SS), and up to 2 in *Rush*, KS 8–10 Sep (DS, SS). One ad. male and up to 18 female and imm. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported in *Finney*, w. Kansas 27 Aug–26 Sep, along with up to 9 Black-chinneds (MO, B&LR, T&SS).

A true slew of **Calliope Hummingbirds** was reported all through Kansas this season, presaging a winter in which the species continued to stray far, far out of typical range: single Calliopes, mostly female and imm., were noted from *Finney* 5–12 Aug (M&PR), *Seward* 12 Aug (LE), *Haskell* 22 Aug (MR), *Grant* 23 Aug (MR), *Douglas* 24 Aug (PW), *Russell* (possibly 2 there) 3–8 Sep (MR), and *Rush* 8 & 16 Sep (DS, SS). Multiple Calliopes were noted from *Mitchell* (2 males) 7–11 Sep (HA), *Pawnee* (up to 3!) 9 Aug–13 Sep (DS, SS, DK, m. ob.), with the motherlode of 13 (not a typo) studied 17–29 Aug in *Finney*, KS (MO, B&LR, T&SS). There were three reports of “probable” Costa's Hummingbirds as well, all imms. or females, from *Pawnee*, *Morton*, and *Douglas*, also all in Kansas (*vide* LM).

Collectively, “The Mecca”—Garden City yards in *Finney*, KS—harbored at least 24 Rufous Hummingbirds 7 Aug–26 Sep (MO, B&LR, ES, T&SS). At least 16 others were reported from Kansas alone (*vide* LM). Then, there were Broad-tailed Hummingbirds: one male, 19 females and/or imms. in Garden City yards 6 Aug–30 Sep (BC, MO, B&LR, T&SS, ES) Other Kansas reports were of single females or imms. 17 Aug–26 Sep from *Finney* (MO), *Morton* (CG, BPC), *Pawnee* (SS, KB, DK), *Haskell* (MR), *Rush* (SS, PW), and *Pratt* (KB)

Red-naped Sapsuckers came from as far e. as L. Ogallala 26 Oct–2 Nov (ad. male; SJD). A first confirmed state record of **Williamson's Sapsucker** for Kansas was in *Morton*, KS 23 Sep (SP, EP, m. ob.).

Fall brings out the best of the identification issues. The Region can host almost all of the U.S. *Empidonax* flycatchers in fall, and among them, Hammond's Flycatcher may be an easier call in fall. This season, one to 3 were found at Oliver 31 Aug–2 Sep (SJD, WRS, JG), with singles from *Morton*, KS 1 Sep (CG, BPC, m. ob.), *Scotts Bluff*, NE 3 Sep (SJD, JF), and *Garden*, NE 11 Sep (SJD). Mist-netting confirmed 3 Dusky Flycatchers at Oliver, including the first for Nebraska 31 Aug (SJD, WRS). Others were netted there 7 (SJD, BP, LP) & 20 Sep (SJD). A possible Cordilleran Flycatcher was found in *Morton*, KS 3 Sep (CG, BPC), with a possible Gray Flycatcher in *Morton*, KS 30 Sep (SS, m. ob.). Wandering n. was a Vermilion Flycatcher 1 Nov in *Pratt*, KS (KB, CG).

Perhaps as interesting as flycatchers in the Southern Plains are the vireos. A White-eyed Vireo wandered n. to *Keith*, NE 25 Oct (SJD). With observers giving the former Solitary Vireo forms a closer look, more are reported. Plumbeous Vireos were found in w. Nebraska 26 Aug–12 Sep e. to *Garden* (SJD, NR, JF) and 1 & 20–21 Sep in *Morton*, KS (m. ob.). Cassin's Vireo, a little tougher call, may be much more numerous than previously suspected, although identification difficulties involving imm. female Blue-headed Vireos may not yet be fully sorted out. Nonetheless, Cassin's (up to 8 in a day), several of those mist-netted, were identified 26 Aug–7 Sep at Oliver (SJD et al.), with one in *Garden*, NE 11 Sep (SJD). In *Morton*, KS perhaps 7 were found 1–4 Sep (DG, m. ob.), with one possible Cassin's there 30 Sep (MR, m. ob.). One Blue-headed Vireo in *Sioux*, NE 20 Sep (SJD, HKH) was fairly far west. Five of 7 Warbling Vireos netted at Oliver 31 Aug were of the w. subspecies group *swainsonii* (SJD, WRS). In *Garden*, NE 10 Sep, one of 3 Warbling Vireos seen was a *gilvus*, the others *swainsonii*, apparently, *brewsteri*. (JF).

Western Scrub-Jays wandered out to four separate locations in *Morton*, KS 30 Sep (TC, MR, SS). Among few leaving the Rockies was a Steller's Jay 1 Oct in *Morton*, KS (TC, MR). More corvids included an exceptional 100+ Pinyon Jays 22–23 Sep in *Morton*, KS (m. ob.), with one in *Finney*, KS 27 Oct (PR). A Clark's Nutcracker was seen 7 Sep in *Ellis*, KS (GF, m. ob.), quite a drift from the Rockies.

Near doubling the number of previous Kansas records for Violet-green Swallows were three singles: 2–3 Sep in *Morton*, KS (m. ob.),

6 Sep at Cheyenne Bottoms (RK), and 9 Oct at Quivira (CG).

Pushing the season was a Mountain Chickadee 14 Sep in *Cimarron*, OK (BCa). Mountain Chickadees began appearing in *Morton*, KS 1 Oct (TC, MR). Much less expected was a Juniper Titmouse 30 Sep (TC et al.) and 7 Oct (SP) in *Morton*, KS (SP) And 30 Bushtits in *Morton*, KS 9–12 Oct (MT, m. ob.) added to the unusual collection of wandering parid associates. Unexpected was a small outbreak of Pygmy Nuthatches, with singles in *Garden*, NE 25 Oct (SJD), and e in *Rush*, KS 10 Sep (SS), *Morton*, KS 23 Sep (m. ob.), *Lancaster*, NE 19–21 Sep (JD), and *Dodge*, NE 22 Sep (DP, JP).

A Carolina Wren pushing its species's range limits was singing at McConaughy 6 Aug (SJD). Other strays included a Sage Thrasher 30 Sep in *Morton*, KS (TC), one to 2 Curve-billed Thrashers in *Morton*, KS 11–12 Nov (CG, m. ob.), and a Bohemian Waxwing in *Finney*, KS 18 Nov (T&SS).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

There were increasing complaints of fewer warblers than normal, but they can be difficult to locate in the many hot dog-days of Aug and Sep on the Plains. The n. forest species (Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, and Mourning Warblers) certainly appeared to be more difficult to find this season. Among the rarities was a Blue-winged Warbler 1 Oct in *Douglas*, KS (DM). Virginia's Warblers, also tough finds, were documented in *Morton*, KS 1–2 Sep (m. ob.) and Oliver 3 Sep & 26–27 Oct (SJD, JF). A “zootie,” Black-throated Blue Warbler, made an outstanding showing, with 6 reported from Nebraska 10–20 Oct (*vide* WRS), 2 from *Morton*, far sw. KS 22 & 30 Sep (TC, m. ob.), and one from *McCurtain*, OK 13 Oct (BH).

Western warblers east included a Black-throated Gray Warbler 2 Sep in *Morton*, KS (m. ob.). The show of Townsend's Warblers included an incredible 53 reported for w. Nebraska 22 Aug–21 Sep (*vide* WRS) and 22 for w. Kansas 3–23 Sep (*vide* LM). Westerly were Bay-breasted Warblers 21 Sep in *Morton*, KS (CG, m. ob.) and 8 Oct in *Meade*, KS (RK) Also exceptionally far w. were a Pine Warbler noted 1 Sep (CG, BPC), a Prairie Warbler 2 Sep (m. ob.), and a Kentucky Warbler 4 Sep (LE, DW), all in *Morton*, KS. A Worm-eating Warbler in *Lancaster*, NE 5 Oct (LRB) was only the 5th fall record for Nebraska (*vide* WRS)

A Henslow's Sparrow in *Sedgwick*, KS 17 Sep (CG, PJ) was hopefully a continued indication of a recent westward drift of this species

Southern Great Plains

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows made a fair showing in Kansas, with at least 14 reported 14 Oct–11 Nov (*fide* LM); 4 were located in e. Nebraska and 2 in Oklahoma. The westernmost was one at Quivira 11 Nov (SS). Westerly was a Swamp Sparrow at L. Ogallala 25 Oct (SJD). Quite early was a White-crowned Sparrow 1 Sep in Coffey, KS (AS). The 2 Snow Buntings in Tulsa 9 Nov (G&MK) were among fewer than 10 for Oklahoma. Far afield were a Pyrrhuloxia 25 Oct in Kearney, KS (BPe, PG) and a Dickcissel 4 Aug in Sioux, NE (JWH).

A Cassin's Finch was collected on the early date of 22 Sep in Morton, KS (MT, m. ob.), with others found there 7 Oct (CG, m. ob.) and 10 Nov (PJ, MG, m. ob.). Rosy-finches attracted attention. Two flocks of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (216 and 105) were located in Sioux, NE 12 (SJD) & 14 Nov (SJD, HKH). A male **Black Rosy-Finch** was present with the Gray-crowns on 12 Nov (SJD)—a first Regional record. Red Crossbills made a modest showing in w. Kansas, with up to 10 noted in Harvey, KS 13 Nov (CG). The only report for Common Redpoll was one in Halsey, NE 25 Nov (TEL).

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Winter Season:

1 December 2000 to 28 February 2001

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Unlike some recent winters, this one was more like a winter, with some real cold fronts passing through by mid-December, even freezing over some Oklahoma reservoirs. This clearly cut back on the half-hardy species, particularly those species needing some shallow water. Thus, the more typical highlights included bigger birds, gulls in particular, and a few fringillids. The Region typically showcases a rich mix of both eastern-western and northern-southern avifaunas, owing to its mid-continental location, and for this winter season, the mix was especially memorable.

Abbreviations: L. Ogallala (*Keith*, NE), McConaughy (L. McConaughy, *Keith*, NE), Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., *McCurtain*, OK).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Red-throated Loons were located 5 & 19 Dec in *Noble*, OK (JWA), and 16 Jan & 24 Feb in *Sequoyah*, OK (JWA). A juv. Pacific Loon was found at McConaughy 3 Dec (SJD), a rather late date for Nebraska, with another in *Trego*, KS 19 Dec (SS), and 2 in *Sequoyah*, OK 16 Jan & 24 Feb (JWA).

Three Red-necked Grebes, rare vagrants, lingered at McConaughy until 3 Dec (SJD) Quite tardy were Eared Grebes last noted at McConaughy and L. Ogallala 13 Dec (SJD, JF). A count of 483 Western Grebes at McConaughy quickly dwindled to one by 30