

pairs of House Finches nested in one spruce tree in Winnipeg (E&NJ)—surely nesting habitat is not at a premium already? One nest was deserted when young fledged from the other. At least one pair of House Finches nested successfully in Regina (BL), and a pair summered at Whitewood, SK (JPo). There were several reports of Red Crossbills on the move in Saskatchewan in July, including 20 at Duck Mountain P.P., July 12 (RK); 24 brightened a lunch break near Pinawa, MB July 15 (PT).

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Northern Great Plains Region

GORDON BERKEY

The eastern and southern parts of the region had good precipitation, but eastern Montana and extreme northwest North Dakota were quite dry, and many potholes were dry by the end of the season. In contrast to the disastrous breeding season of last summer, reproduction was very good for most species. Wetland species greatly increased, and birds preferring wet meadow habitat also benefited from the vigorous vegetative growth. Passerines in general thrived on the increased insect populations.

The American Birding Association convention at Minot June 13–19 brought 600 birders and increased birding activity to North Dakota and the region.

Abbreviations: I.P.G. (*International Peace Gardens*); T.R.N.P. (*Theodore Roosevelt N.P.*).

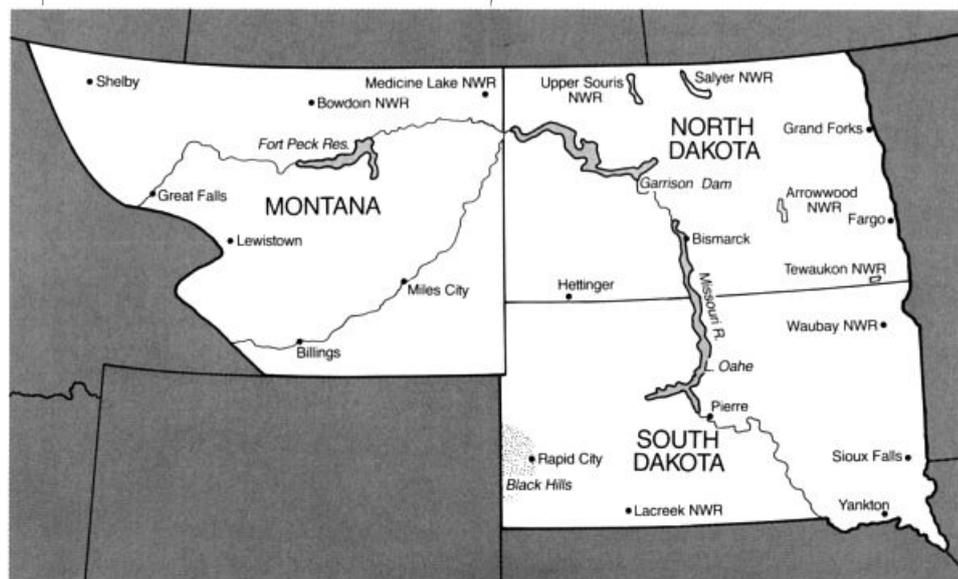
Loons to Rails

A pair of Com. Loons with young at Snake Cr., July 19 provided the first breeding record for *L. sakakawea* (GE). Pied-billed Grebes quickly returned to former abundance and a few Horned Grebes reoccupied their former breeding range in North Dakota. Western Grebes made a strong come-

back, although many nests were not initiated until July. A pair of Clark's Grebes with two young was at Minnewaukan, ND July 30 (EF), a nest was photographed at Wau-bay L., SD June 21 (JDW), and a mixed pair were feeding young s. of Malta, MT July 21 (CC). Clark's increased at Freezeout L., MT this summer (MS). American Bitterns thrived, with ≤ 15 calling birds per day reported by some observers. A Green Heron in *Sheridan*, ND June 4 provided a first county record (REM). A Snowy Egret, unusual in e. Montana, was at Bowdoin N.W.R., June 8 (TF). Little Blue Herons were in *Sanborn*, SD June 25 (JP) and *Cass*, ND July 9 (RO). A ♀ Cinnamon Teal with young in *Morton* July 9 supplied only the 2nd breeding confirmation for North Dakota (GB); it followed a spring with increased sightings of the species. Waterfowl nested in large numbers and were very successful. Summer non-breeding waterfowl in North Dakota included Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, and Greater Scaup.

Osprey returned to the breeding site at Pactola Res., SD, and a N. Goshawk nest with young was also found in *Pennington* July 21 (NW). An Osprey was seen at Heart Butte Res. in *Grant*, ND (CT), and they were again present at Icelandic S.P. Bald Eagles nested successfully in *Brown* and *Gregory*, SD (*vide DS*). A Bald Eagle was unexpected in *Cass*, ND July 14 (JOH). Northern Harrier populations increased; 12 nests were found at Lonetree W.M.A., ND. A June Merlin was surely on breeding territory in the Turtle Mts. (TB), where there are no definite breeding records.

It was great year for rails. Coots, Sora, and Virginia Rails were seemingly everywhere, but most amazing was the explosive increase in Yellow Rails in North Dakota. Some sam-



ples include 75 in 30 different sections in *Grand Forks* in July (DL), 17 along US 281 n. of Minnewaukan in mid-June (WB), 12 near L. Nettie N.W.R. in *McLean* (CC), and 15 at a previously dry hayfield in *McHenry* June 12 (DNS); one found in *Ward* June 19 (RR) was the first for the county. A **Yellow Rail** found in a duck trap at Bowdoin N.W.R., July 22 provided only the 4th Montana record (KE).

Shorebirds to Woodpeckers

A pair of distracting Mt. Plovers was found n. of Two Dot, MT June 27 (KA). An Am. Avocet nest with eggs in *Sanborn*, SD May 16 was the earliest on record (JP). A rare and late Whimbrel was at the Grand Forks lagoons June 2 (EF). A **Ruff** at L. Ardoch, ND July 7 (MJ) provided the state's 7th report. July shorebird migration at the Fargo lagoons was very good, with the best find being the state's 8th report of **Red Phalarope** July 23–26 (MO). The 4th state record of **Little Gull** was at Lord's Lake N.W.R., ND June 17 & 18 (†BP). The Franklin's Gull colonies at Benton L., MT had an estimated 12,000 nests (SM), but they did not nest at Bowdoin. The Region's 3rd report of **Arctic Tern** in 2 years and Montana's first ever was at Lebo L. near Two Dot, MT June 28 (WP). Burrowing Owls are becoming increasingly difficult to find in the Region. A Long-eared Owl on a nest conveniently located behind Lostwood N.W.R. headquarters delighted A.B.A. convention participants. Short-eared Owl was numerous in North Dakota, with several broods reported; 13 nests were located during waterfowl nest dragging at Lonetree W.M.A. (JR). Nests of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were found at Sodak Park, SD June 25 (MP) and at Des Lacs N.W.R. in June (RKM). A vagrant Lewis' Woodpecker e. of Hettinger July 5–14 (D&CG) was the first reported for North Dakota since 1972. The first South Dakota breeding record for Pileated Woodpecker was obtained when a nest with calling young was located at Big Stone L., May 26 (BKH). A Pileated



Lewis' Woodpecker in flight east of Hettinger, North Dakota, July 14, 1994. First record for the state in over two decades. Photograph/Gordon Berkey.

Woodpecker was calling in *Bottineau*, ND June 5; there are no breeding records for the Turtle Mts.

Passerines

A W. Wood-Pewee nest was found in the campground at the S. Unit of T.R.N.P., July 13. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was a record-late spring migrant near Fargo June 7 (CS). Western Kingbirds were down in numbers, but reproduction improved greatly over last year. A total of 142 singing Sedge Wrens in *Grand Forks* July 19 (EF) is indicative of the fine year experienced by wet meadow species. Breeding swallows, especially Banks, were down. A pair of **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** whose territory spanned the border at the I.P.G. nearly provided North Dakota's first breeding record, but they were found constructing a nest less than a hundred paces into Canada July 1! This and another apparent territory at the entrance to L. Metigoshe S.P. were found in early June (BG) during scouting for an A.B.A. convention tour. The **Sage Thrasher** nest in *Fall River*, SD June 17 (JP) was the state's first. The center of Sprague's Pipit populations may have moved somewhat farther west in response to increased precipitation. Loggerhead Shrikes were easy to find in the Minot area but were reported down farther west at Grassy Butte. Philadelphia Vireo is a difficult bird to find in its restricted breeding range in North Dakota, so one at the I.P.G., June 10 (RNR) and two in the Turtle Mt. State Forest in *Bottineau* June 18 (WR) were of interest.

An exceptionally early N. Parula at Fargo July 9 was thought to be an immature (D&DW). The first state breeding record for **Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler** was obtained when a pair was seen carrying food to a nest at the I.P.G., July 1. The **Prairie Warbler** in *Burleigh* remained through at least July 1 (SG), allowing several A.B.A. convention attendees to add an unusual tick to their North Dakota lists. A singing **Cerulean Warbler** in Monteith Woods in *Richland*, ND June 29 (DK) is indicative of possible breeding in the state. Baird's Sparrows were numerous this year. LeConte's Sparrows increased unbelievably as they made use of many previously unoccupied areas made lush with the rains. A LeConte's was singing in *Sanborn*, SD June 25. Where did they all come from? A singing **June Sharp-tailed Sparrow** just w. of the border near Westby, MT (PL) was one of few observations for that state. A Blue Grosbeak was in *Emmons*, ND June 12 less than 2 mi n. of the border (BP). An **Eastern Meadowlark** remained on territory near Hope, ND June 5–July 24 (DK), while another was much farther west in *Grant* June 12 (CT). In contrast to last year, reproduction of Orchard and N. orioles was good, with several observers re-



Prairie Warbler in Burleigh County, North Dakota, June 1, 1994. This out-of-range bird, a first for the state, remained on territory for at least a month. Photograph/Gordon Berkey.

porting broods. A ♂ "Bullock's" near New Town June 19 (BCH) was somewhat e. of the normal range. Begging young Purple Finches were seen in *Bottineau* June 5 for a rare North Dakota breeding confirmation. A single White-winged Crossbill was found in *Bottineau* June 29 (MD), and six Reds were in the S. Unit of T.R.N.P. July 13.

Pending acceptance

South Dakota records that require records committee acceptance: first confirmed breeding of Black-necked Stilt in *Brown*; nest June 11 and young July 9 (DT, JDW); Pileated Woodpecker at Sica Hollow S.P., June 22 (JK); W. Wood-Pewee at Newton Hills S.P., June 4; Henslow's Sparrow singing in *Sanborn* June 25 (JP); Lesser Goldfinch in *Fall River* June 23 (PL).

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