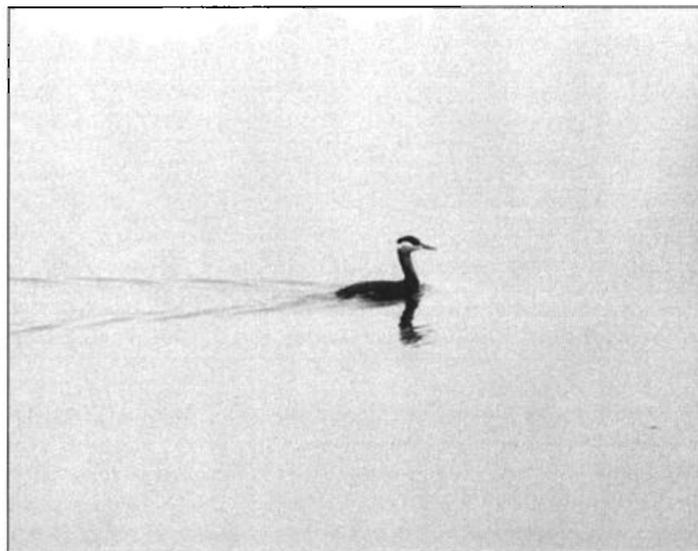


southern great plains region



Red-necked Grebe is rare any time in Kansas, especially so late in the spring that it shows the red neck of breeding plumage, like this one at Cheyenne Bottoms May 19, 1998. Photograph/Mike Rader

JOSEPH A. GRZYBOWSKI

What the platysmic Plains lack in elevational grandeur, they frequently make up for in their heterogeneity and extremes of weather. This was probably another such year in the southern Great Plains. There was extreme drought in southwestern and south-central Oklahoma, which saw no rain from April 1 to June 1, its characteristic "rainy season." Yet, western Kansas and Nebraska was wetter than normal, and northeastern Oklahoma received average rainfall. We had a mild winter, but a few spring cold spells, and "that" smoke from Mexican fires to make life short of ideal for birds and birders.

What can be said about the poor and tardy migration of neotropical migrants, particularly warblers, the generally "slow" land-birding, the decent showing of ciconiids, rails, and shorebirds, and the scatter of surprises among all the misses? Some boreal nesting warblers were hard to find, but a small number were observed moving through in late May. Did the smoke from extensive fires in Mexico cause more hard breathing and shortfalls for migrants cross-

ing the Gulf; did it slow down the migration, or slow those surviving? Was it drought or milder winter conditions that caused some ciconiids to nest and leave their Gulf breeding grounds earlier. While Regional data might reflect these cause-effect relations, the analysis, if possible, will have to be made above the Regional level, and over a longer temporal scale.

Gulls, shorebirds, and surprises made the news this season. Among the sprinkling of unexpected finds were three species of kites, a longer list of uncertain-origin species from waterfowl to doves, and some interesting subspecific identifications. Spring probably has fewer identification issues than normal, but there was a wane in documentation of those seasonal and casual rarities that will have its consequences in interpreting the data bases created from these accounts

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (*Cheyenne Bottoms, Barton Co., KS*); Clear Creek (*Clear Cr. Marshes, Garden/Keith Cos., NE*); Crescent Lake (*Crescent Lake N.W.R., Garden Co., NE*); Fontenelle Forest (*Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co.,*

NE); McConaughy (*L. McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R. Stafford Co., KS*); Rainwater Basin (*wetlands in south-central Nebraska*).

LOONS TO WATERFOWL

Red-throated Loons were in *Marion, KS*, Apr. 18 (TH), and at McConaughy May 8 (SJD). A Pacific Loon Apr. 25 at Cheyenne Bottoms (AS) was the only report. A Com. Loon lingered to at least May 23 in *Noble, OK* (JWA). The count of 236 Horned Grebes at McConaughy Apr. 5 (SJD) indicated a peak migration time for Nebraska; one May 1 in *Alfalfa, OK*, was tardy (BHo). Certainly surprising was a **Red-necked Grebe** at Cheyenne Bottoms May 19 (MT, GY, MR). Western Grebe numbers built up to 3500 at McConaughy May 2 (SJD), slightly lower than in recent years. The 14 Westerns at Cheyenne Bottoms May 19 (MT, GY, MR) provided a good count away from McConaughy. Clark's Grebes appeared e. to *Lancaster, NE*, Mar. 27 (JS), an early arrival date; the high count was a record 39 at McConaughy May 15 (SJD).

Two Neotropical Cormorants were



Perhaps a dividend of the recent series of wet years was this King Rail at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Kansas, May 8, 1998. Photograph/Mike Rader

reported from Nebraska, one at *Lancaster*, NE, Mar. 26 (JS), and a yearling at *Lincoln*, NE, May 2 (SJD) for the 5th and 6th Nebraska records (*vide* WRS, JGJ). Seven Anhingas were present by Apr. 2 in *McCurtain*, OK (BH).

American Bitterns included 20 from Nebraska (*vide* WRS, JGJ). A Great Egret appeared at Clear Creek May 9 (SJD). Record-early arrival dates for Nebraska were established by a Snowy Egret at *Lancaster* Apr. 10 (LE, BPr), and a Cattle Egret

SA The National Audubon Society has had a century-long struggle to help colonial water birds such as herons and egrets. However, the success of conservation efforts has had its backlashes. Where birds and people come together, the conflicts are not always happily resolved. One unfortunate incident occurred in Bethany, OK, where a landowner and city officials, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, were permitted to shoot birds at a heronry. Although the permits were written to destroy Cattle Egrets, most hadn't even arrived when the shooting began. Hundreds of Great and Snowy egrets, Little Blue Herons, and Black-crowned Herons, among others, were killed or injured. The irate voices of local birders were raised, but not with any likely change in the fundamental intent of terminating a heronry that has existed for at least 50 years, or the overwhelming support from the USFWS.

in *Dodge* Mar. 29 (DP). Among an unexpected array of spring sightings for Tricolored Herons were singles Apr. 17 (DW, DKo; record early); May 1–2 (BHo) in *Alfalfa*, OK; May 14 in *Canadian*, OK (EW); May 16 in *Sequoyah*, OK (JM); and May 23 (GS) at Quivira. A sub-ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, rare in spring in Nebraska, was at *Filmore* May 16 (JGJ). Two White Ibises appeared May 6–19 at Quivira (DK, m.ob.); single immatures were in *Canadian*, OK, May 6–30 (PT, EE, m.ob.) and *Muskogee*, OK, May 18 (ES). White-faced Ibises were nest-building at Crescent Lake May 15 (SJD). A Black Vulture wandered N to *Cherokee*, KS, Apr. 25 (SP et al.).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were observed in *Saline*, KS, Mar. 28–May 10 (DWI, m.ob.) and Apr. 28 in *Washington*, OK (DR et al.), with seven in *McClain*, OK, Mar. 30 (JSt). It seems as likely that they were vagrants than not. A **Bean Goose**, believed to be of the e. Siberian race *mid-dendorfi*, at *Phelps*, NE, Apr. 4 (SJD) provided the 2nd Nebraska record. This race is rarely kept in captivity (*vide* WRS, JGJ). About 300,000 Snow Geese were at *Harlan*, NE, Mar. 13 (LR, RH), with 250,000 at *Phelps*, NE, Mar. 22 (LR, RH). As many as 178 were still in the Rainwater Basin May 31 (JS, WRS). The best count for Ross's Geese was 93 at Clear Creek Apr. 18 (SJD, JS). Two lingered to May 15 in *Clay*, NE (JGJ). On another origin issue, one or two Barnacle Geese were reported from Nebraska: an adult in *Massie Lagoon*, *Clay*, Mar. 28–Apr. 4 (JS), and a 2nd (or the same bird) at *Harvard Lagoon*, *Clay*, May 9 (JGJ), a late date

for a truly wild bird (*vide* WRS, JGJ). Also of debatable origin was a Mute Swan in *Alfalfa*, OK, May 1 (BHo).

Two Trumpeter Swans wintering below Keystone Dam, *Keith*, NE, were still present Mar 4 (*vide* WRS, JGJ). Unmarked immatures were noted in *Douglas*, NE, until Mar. 21 and Apr. 2 (NR); Trumpeters were noted at nesting areas in *Cherry*, NE, Apr. 25 (*vide* WRS, JGJ), and Apr. 28 in *Grant*, NE (RG). A Tundra Swan, now the rarer of the swan species in the Region, was noted Mar. 2 in *Cowley*, KS (GY, m.ob.).

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** in molt Apr. 10 was at *Clay*, NE (JS, WRS). Incredibly, two other males included singles at Clear Creek May 2 (SJD) and in *Stanton*, NE, Mar. 28 (DH). An "obvious" hybrid American × Eurasian Wigeon was in *Clay*, NE, Apr. 15 (JGJ). Someone always finds a Mottled Duck at Quivira—this year May 25 (MR, SP, AS). Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teals were in *Hall*, NE, Apr. 6 (JS) and at *Platte*, NE, Apr. 21 (BP, LP). Cinnamon Teals were well reported. The 30,000 N. Pintail on the ice at *Kearney*, NE, Mar. 16 (LR, RH) furnished an excellent count. A male **Garganey** in *Hall*, NE, Mar. 29–Apr. 5 (GL, m.ob.) provided the 2nd Nebraska record (*vide* WRS, JGJ).

A good count for Canvasback was 167 at *Filmore*, NE, Apr. 4 (JGJ), and singles lingered in *Blaine*, OK, May 23 (JSt) and *Comanche*, OK, May 31 (JAG). Late were four Ring-necked Ducks in *Blaine*, OK, May 23 (JSt); two in *Comanche*, OK, May 30 (JAG); and two in *Clay*, NE, May 31 (JS, WRS). Greater Scaup were last noted at Crescent Lake Apr. 18 (SJD, JS). A yearling male Surf Scoter was documented in *Keith*, NE, May 8–15 (SJD et al.). A female White-winged Scoter was at *Douglas*, NE, Apr. 15 (JGJ), and one wintering in *Canadian*, OK, was observed sporadically until Mar. 15 (m.ob.). Oldsquaws were in *Tulsa* Mar. 21–22 (JL, PS) and Apr. 2 (JL), and in *Keith*, NE, until Apr. 15 (SJD). Tardy were a Bufflehead pair in *Noble*, OK, May 23 (JWA), a female Hooded Merganser in *Tulsa* May 25 (JWA), a male Com. Merganser in *Douglas*, NE, May 24 (BP, LP), and 19 Commons in *Keith*, NE, at the end of the period (SJD, WRS, JS).

Hooded Mergansers with chicks were observed in *Leavenworth*, KS, May 22 (BB, JS). This was a good spring for Red-breasted Mergansers, with 103 at *L. Ogallala*, *Keith*, NE, Apr. 18 (SJD).

RAPTORS TO TERMS

Surprising was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** Apr. 26 in *Leflore*, OK (BG, DR, JDu). A White-



Part of an astounding concentration of 119 Whimbrels observed at Lake Keystone, Osage County, Oklahoma, May 16, 1998. Photograph/James W. Arterburn

tailed Kite in *Woodward*, OK, Apr. 3 (JBi) was unexpected. Also surprising was a Mississippi Kite in *Scotts Bluff*, NE, May 30–31 (SK, *fide* AK). Four returned to Ogallala, *Keith*, the only known Nebraska breeding location, by May 14 (SJD). An excellent count of 275 Bald Eagles was made in *Douglas*, NE, Mar. 22 (*fide* WRS, JGJ). More breeding is occurring in the Region, with up to 24 pairs in Oklahoma (*fide* AJ). A pair of Cooper's Hawks fledged two young from a nest with 4 eggs in *Oklahoma* (NG).

Somewhat late for Oklahoma was a N. Goshawk Apr. 13 in *Beaver* (DW, DKo). Surprising was a female Merlin of the dark Pacific Coast race *suckleyi* in *Kimball*, NE, Apr. 5 (SJD).

Sharp-tailed Grouse is now well established in areas of *Kimball*, NE; 17 were there Mar. 8 (SJD). A single male continues to try to introduce his genes into the prairie-chicken pool in *Hall*, NE, displaying there Mar. 14–Apr. 4 (JS, *fide* WRS, JGJ).

Yellow Rails were noted in *Linn*, KS, Apr. 25 (DG) and *Quivira* May 8 (WC, DKi, DV). Black Rails continue to be found at *Quivira* and *Cheyenne Bottoms*, with up to 10 counted (*fide* LM). There were several reports of King Rails from Kansas (*fide* LM) and Oklahoma. Four Virginia Rails at *Clear Creek* Mar. 21 (SJD, JS) apparently wintered there. Breeding Soras are rare s. of the *Platte Valley*, NE, so one at *York*, NE, May 31 (JS, WRS) was of interest. A pair of Sandhill Cranes (possibly Greater's) at *Clay*, NE, Apr. 25–May 16 were likely vagrants (JGJ). The only reports of Whooping Cranes were

of an adult in *Hall*, NE, Feb. 15–Apr. 28 (*fide* WRS, JGJ), two in *Sedgwick*, KS, Apr. 9–10 (DZ), and a juvenile in *Hall*, NE, Mar. 28–Apr. 28 (JS, m.ob.).

A high count of 73 Black-bellied Plovers in the *Rainwater Basin* May 15–16 (JGJ), with a smaller flush of 21 in *Blaine*, OK, May 18–19 (JAG), represented the apparent prime window of migration (*fide* WRS, JGJ). Also indicating a pulse period for Am. Golden-Plovers were 439 in *Tulsa* Apr. 4 (JWA). Snowy Plovers were a little out of range in *Clay*, NE, Apr. 25 (JGJ, JS). Early were a Semipalmated Plover Apr. 1 in *Tulsa* (JL), and two in the *Rainwater Basin* Apr. 11 (JGJ). At least seven Piping Plovers arrived at the *Keith*, NE, breeding site by Apr. 18 (SJD). Eight migrants were noted in the *Rainwater Basin* between May 1–10 (JGJ). Mountain Plovers were observed from Apr. 17 in *Kimball*, NE (SJD et al.); two were in *Cheyenne*, NE, Apr. 17 (SJD).

Black-necked Stilts continue to increase. Away from the regular breeding locations at *Quivira* and *Sheridan*, NE, were one in *Canadian*, OK, Apr. 23 (MO); two at *Crescent Lake* May 6 (H&UK); a single at *Filmore*, NE, May 9 (JGJ); two at *Scotts Bluff*, NE, May 13 (AK); 5 and 11 at *Hackberry Flats* in *Tillman*, OK, Apr. 25 and May 16 (DM); two in *Blaine*, OK, May 23 (JSt), and two in *Texas*, OK, May 24 (JSt). A count of 812 Lesser Yellowlegs was made in the *Rainwater Basin* Apr. 24–25 (JGJ). Flocks of Willets appeared to be larger than normal. One was rather late at *Lancaster*, NE, May 30 (LE).

Normally a trickle, Whimbrel numbers

have improved in recent years, with five–six birds reported from Nebraska May 2–14 (*fide* WRS, JGJ); five in *Alfalfa*, OK, May 9 (JAG, SG), five in *Pawnee*, OK, May 23 (JWA); and astounding counts of 119 May 16 in *Osage*, OK (JWA), and 86 at *Quivira* May 13 (VL). For an early migrant, the 26 Long-billed Curlews in *Keith*, NE, May 2 (SJD) were unexpected; more normal were hundreds Apr. 6 in *Finney*, KS (L&SB). A Marbled Godwit, rare in e. Nebraska, was in *Dakota* Apr. 23 (BFH). Two Marbleds were at *Dodge*, NE, May 16 (DP); two May 21 in *Pawnee*, OK (JL) were late.

Five Red Knots at *Quivira* May 9 (MR) were quite unexpected. Best counts of Semipalmated Sandpipers were 1354 in *Rainwater Basin* May 1–2 (JGJ). Rather early were six White-rumped Sandpipers in *Rainwater Basin* Apr. 24 (JGJ). Dunlin is an uncommon migrant in Nebraska; 67 were reported, including 46 May 9 in the *Rainwater Basin* (JGJ). Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Nebraska were restricted to their narrow e. *Rainwater Basin* spring route; Jorgensen reported 166, most between May 9–16. A Ruff, Nebraska's 4th record, 3rd for spring, was a female in *Antelope* Apr. 9 (MB).

A basic-plumaged Short-billed Dowitcher was heard record-early in *Filmore*, NE, Apr. 25 (JGJ). A first Nebraska record of the eastern subspecies *griseus* was in *York* May 2 (JGJ). The 2300 Wilson's Phalaropes in *Tillman*, OK, Apr. 23 (MH) were impressive. The 54 Red-necked Phalaropes n. of *Sheridan*, NE, May 15 (SJD) was good, but not unexpected. More unusual was one at

Quivira May 25 (JB). Almost unheard of in the spring was a female Red Phalarope May 9 at Quivira (BF, m.ob.).

Laughing Gulls were at Cheyenne Bottoms May 13 (DK, WH) and Johnson, KS, May 25 (ML, M&MG). An imm. Bonaparte's Gull May 21 in Comanche, OK (JAG), was tardy. **Mew Gulls** are rapidly becoming a regular species at McConaughy; the 10th and 11th records for Nebraska were provided by a basic-plumaged adult Mar. 21 (SJD) and an adult Apr. 18–19 (SJD, JS). California Gulls away from McConaughy included a first-year bird Mar. 1 in Sedgwick, KS (PJ); an adult at Lancaster, NE, Apr. 30 Apr (JS); one in Sheridan, NE, May 9 (B&DW); and an adult in Lincoln, NE, May 14 (SJD). A Herring Gull remained at McConaughy until May 15 (SJD), with others in Lincoln (SJD) and Hitchcock (SJD), both May 14. An amazing 15 Thayer's Gulls were reported at McConaughy Mar. 4 (SJD), with two first-winter birds still present Apr. 18 (JS). A first-year Thayer's was noted Mar. 1 in Sedgwick, KS (PJ), as was an adult and first-year in Douglas, KS, Mar. 15 (AP), and a first-year in Canadian, OK, Apr. 4 (JAG, SG).

Two ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls remained at McConaughy until Apr. 5 (SJD), with others observed Mar. 1 in Sedgwick, KS (PJ), and an adult Apr. 4 in Canadian, OK (JAG, SG). Pushing the season were three ad. Glaucous Gull at McConaughy Mar. 21 (SJD), and a record-late bird in worn first-alternate plumage in Lincoln, NE, May 2 (SJD). A first-winter **Great Black-backed Gull** was at Kay, OK, Mar. 16 (†TH); 2 other March reports were without details. Certainly a scoop was the first **Gull-billed Tern** for the Region, an adult documented at Quivira May 19–24 (MT, GY, MR). An ad. Com. Tern was reported in Platte, NE, May 25 (WRS, JS).

DOVES TO WAXWINGS

Eurasian Collared-Doves appear to have begun an expansion into Nebraska, but still from uncertain origin. The bird which wintered at Buffalo, the state's first, was last reported Apr. 7 (MMA, *fide* LR, RH). A pair carrying nesting material Apr. 22 at Kearney, NE, fledged two young by May 19, and began a 2nd nesting (R&MN). Four were noted in Oklahoma Mar. 4 (MO, NK) into May (m.ob.) and others were in Pratt, KS, Apr. 23 (KB) and Sedgwick, KS, Apr. 28–30 (*fide* LM), with two in Alfalfa, OK, May 1 (BHo). Continuing a recent surge in observations for White-winged Doves were

sightings in Texas, OK, Apr. 16 (DW, DKO); Cowley, KS, Apr. 24–26 (MT); and Morton, KS, May 7 (RS). Inca Doves appeared at 4 locations in Kansas. Two were in Oklahoma at Tulsa Mar. 26 (ST) and Muskogee Mar. 27–Apr. 16 (VJ).

Another species of uncertain origin was Monk Parakeet, with 2 nests under construction in Omaha early this spring (JP, *fide* WRS, JGJ). This is the first report for Nebraska since the 1970s.

Not often present, and less often nesting, was a Long-eared Owl in Morton, KS, May 3 (CH et al.). A Com. Poorwill was flushed from a nest in Comanche, KS, May 2 (m.ob.). An migrant Com. Poorwill with a broken wing was found in Lancaster, NE, on the record-early date of Apr. 14 (*fide* JS). Tying the record-early date was a single White-throated Swift at Scotts Bluff, NE, Apr. 19 (SJD, JS). A **Green Violet-ear** that appeared in Comanche, OK, May 31 (K&SM) furnished only the 2nd Regional record. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was early Mar. 28 in McCurtain, OK (BH).

Empidonax flycatchers seemed less conspicuous. The Acadian Flycatcher in Douglas, NE, May 19–31 (JS) was somewhat northerly. East of most was a Say's Phoebe flying between Lancaster and Saunders, NE, Apr. 18 (NR). Pushing range limits was an Ash-throated Flycatcher May 4 in Morton, KS (CH et al.). Also northerly was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Sioux, NE, May 17–19 (NP, *fide* AK, HH, m.ob.).

Two N. Shrikes at Lancaster, NE, Mar. 23 (JS) were tardy. A nesting Black-billed Magpie in Madison, NE, Mar. 29 was east; three–five adults were in the area (DH). Very cold weather March 6–13 in Tulsa apparently caused major mortality among Purple Martins (CB). A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches excavated a hole in Cleveland, OK, Mar. 23, but abandoned it (JAG). Tardy was a Red-breasted May 3 in Tulsa (PS). More Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are being discovered in w. Nebraska, with no fewer than 13 reported.

Mountain Bluebirds were carrying nesting material into a hole Apr. 15 in Cimarron, OK (DW, DKO). Only one Veery was detected in Nebraska—a single bird at Cass May 24 (JS); two in Kansas (*fide* LM) and three in Tulsa May 2–20 (*fide* JL) were fewer than normal. Two Gray-cheeked Thrushes were observed in w. Nebraska at Garden May 8 (SJD) and in Keith May 9 (SJD). One early Swainson's Thrush was documented at Douglas, NE, Apr. 13 (JS). A sign of the mild winter were Gray Catbirds at a feeder in Sarpy, NE (*fide* WRS, JGJ), and Tulsa

(ER), both to at least Mar. 9. An amazing 60 Brown Thrashers were near Adams, NE, Apr. 26. (LR, RH). Surprising was an Am Pipit atop Elk Mt. in the Wichita Mts., OK, May 12 (JAG); another was noted in Douglas, KS, May 17 (MM, GP).

An early White-eyed Vireo was in Cleveland, OK, Mar. 30 (JAG). The five singing males in Alfalfa, OK, May 1–2 (BHo), and another five from Comanche, OK, during May (JAG, Rwo) were at the edges of its breeding range. Unexpected was a Yellow-throated Vireo at Thomas, NE, May 15 (RG). No Philadelphia Vireos were reported from Nebraska (*fide* WRS, JGJ), while only four were reported from Tulsa (*fide* JL).

WARBLERS TO FINCHES

The only Blue-winged Warblers reported were from Tulsa May 2 (BC); Sedgwick, KS, May 3 (m.ob.); Cherokee, OK, May 9 (DVR), and Sequoyah, OK, May 16 (MW et al). Golden-winged Warblers were reported from Tulsa May 2 (PS); Riley, KS, May 9 (LJ); Sedgwick, KS, May 10 (DV, m.ob.), Muskogee, OK, May 11 (TA); Fontenelle Forest May 11 (NR); Linn, KS, May 13 (RA, JH); and Johnson, KS, May 19 (DS, MS). Only the 2nd documented Nebraska **Virginia's Warbler** was a male in Kimball, NE, May 17 (JGJ).

A number of warblers were much more difficult to find in Nebraska. These included Magnolia (eight), Black-throated Green (two), Blackburnian (seven), Black-and-white (eight), Wilson's (eight), and Mourning (three; *fide* WRS, JGJ). The only report of Canada Warbler for Nebraska was in Douglas May 24 (BP, LP). Palm Warblers were also less numerous, but Blackpolls, the most northerly breeder, fared much better in Nebraska and the Region.

The only Cape May Warbler was found May 12 in Douglas, KS (BB, m.ob.). Black-throated Blue Warbler, a casual migrant, was at Crescent Lake May 15 (SJD, JS), only the 2nd record for the Panhandle; another was seen May 5 in Johnson, KS (MC) A **Townsend's Warbler** in Scotts Bluff, NE, May 17 (B&DW) was only the 3rd documented for the state; another was noted in Morton, KS, May 4 (CH, m.ob.). Birds from the small Yellow-throated Warbler group at Fontenelle Forest were noted beginning Apr. 11 (BP, LP); as many as five were in Douglas, NE, Apr. 17–May 24 (*fide* WRS).

Pushing the edge of their normal migration ranges were a Chestnut-sided Warbler at McConaughy May 11 (RCR, DJR), a Prairie Warbler May 19–21 in Johnson, KS (CH, m.ob.), and a Bay-breasted Warbler

May 17 in *Sedgwick*, KS (JN). Among western reports of Am. Redstart were singles in *Keith* and *Kimball*, NE, May 9 (SJD). A Prothonotary Warbler Apr. 1 in *McCurtain*, OK (BH), was early. Most unusual was a Prothonotary in *Scotts Bluff*, NE, May 16 (WRS), only the 2nd spring Panhandle record. Connecticut Warblers were reported at *Douglas*, KS, May 9 (RA); *Sarpy*, NE, May 23 (JG); and at *Thurston*, NE, May 25 (WRS, JS). Regular only in s.e. Oklahoma, male Hooded Warblers were found n. to *Lancaster*, NE, May 9 (KP) and *Douglas*, NE, May 23 (JS); w. to *Cimarron*, OK, Apr. 14 (DW, DKo) and *Sedgwick*, KS, May 22 (DV); and on the early dates of Apr. 2–8 in Tulsa (RW, MK, JL).

Summer Tanagers away from s.e. Nebraska were an imm. male in *Dakota*, NE, May 9 (BFH), and a sub-ad. male banded at *Thomas*, NE, May 10 (RG). Tardy were a Green-tailed Towhee May 31 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (AK), and a Spotted Towhee in *Blaine*, OK, May 18 (JAG). Working out some details of the Eastern/Spotted Towhee distributions: the last Spotted noted where Easterns breed was at *Dodge/Saunders*, NE, May 10 (THo). Certainly migrants were the 45 Spotted at *Buffalo*, NE, May 9 (LR, RH), and 35 in *Adams*, NE, Apr. 26 (LR, RH). A Canyon Towhee wandered to *Morton*, KS, May 3 (CH et al.).

The patchy distribution of *Aimophila* sparrows exemplified itself with the apparent outpost of Bachman's Sparrows in *Creek*, OK (JWA), and the Rufous-crowned Sparrows found in *Comanche*, KS, May 2 (m.ob). An Am. Tree Sparrow lingered to Apr. 11 at *Dixon*, NE (BFH). Probably part of an increase in wintering birds were 50–60 Chipping Sparrows found in *Mc-*

Clain, OK, Mar. 1 (NK, LMa). The Black-throated Sparrow wintering in Omaha stayed until Apr. 12 (MJ, *fide* WRS), and one in *Sedgwick*, KS, was present until Apr. 1 (PG). The 800+ Lark Sparrows May 11 at McConaughy (RCR, DJR) were certainly part of a spring rush. A Vesper Sparrow May 19 in *Blaine*, OK (JAG), was tardy.

A Baird's Sparrow surprised observers at Clear Creek May 9 (SJD), and was almost unbelievable in *York*, NE, Apr. 26–May 10 (JGJ, JS, ph.). At least two Henslow's Sparrow were singing at a new location in *Seward*, NE, May 30–31 (JG, WRS, JS), and two–three were found May 2–3 at a w. location in *Alfalfa*, OK (BHo). A Lincoln's Sparrow at *Buffalo*, NE, Mar. 7 (LR, RH) probably wintered. A White-throated Sparrow lingered to May 25 in *Cuming*, NE (LE).

The count of 1732 McCown's Longspurs in *Kimball*, NE, Apr. 19 (SJD, JS) indicated a peak movement. Early was a male in *Kimball* Mar. 21 (SJD). Far west was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at *Scotts Bluff* May 16 (AK). Among the most easterly Lazuli Buntings were one in Tulsa Apr. 28 (GM) and two there May 2 (ER et al.). Probably overwintering was a Dickcissel Mar. 3 in *Johnson*, KS (MC).

Bobolinks were widely reported in Oklahoma and Kansas May 9–10. Four Yellow-headed Blackbirds Mar. 8 in *Scotts Bluff* (SJD) may have overwintered, but possibly were early migrants; the 10,000 at *Phelps*, NE, Apr. 19 (LR, RH) indicated a peak migration period. At least 15 pairs of Brewer's Blackbird were found breeding in *Morrill*, NE (WM). Colonization of n.e. Nebraska by Great-tailed Grackles continues, with a male in *Dakota* Mar. 27 (BFH) and four birds nearby along the Missouri R.

May 9 (BFH). Expansion to the west included four males and three females nest-building in *Scotts Bluff* May 17 (SJD), with a single at Clear Creek May 9 (B&DW). An apparent Baltimore Oriole was noted below Keystone Dam, *Keith*, NE, May 14 (SJD).

The only report of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was of a flock of 21 in *Scotts Bluff* Mar. 8 (SJD). A group of House Finches reappeared at a *Dodge*, NE, feeder Mar. 10 after a winter absence (DP). Perhaps the last area to be occupied by this species in Nebraska is the c. and n.w. Sandhills; nine were at *Sheridan* May 9 (B&DW), and one at *Thomas*, NE, May 15 (RG).

Of interest was 30–40 Red Crossbills at feeders in *Scotts Bluff* through the period, with many juveniles (SJD, m.ob.). Wintering White-winged Crossbills in *Madison*, NE, remained until at least Mar. 5, when 11 were present (DH). Common Redpolls, present statewide in Nebraska, departed by Mar. 16 when one was at *Sioux* (SL).

Cited observers (area editors boldfaced):

KANSAS: Robert Antonio, James Barnes, Larry & Sandy Bradstreet, Bill Busby, Wally Champeny, Jeff Chynoweth, Mark Corder, Bob Fisher, Mike & Matt Garrett, Don George, Paul Griffin, Joe Harrington, Tyler Hicks, Chris Hobbs, Wayne Hockstetler, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Dan Kilby (DKi), Dan Kluza, Mark Land, Vern Laux, Tom Mason, Mick McHugh, **Lloyd Moore**, Jim Nickel, Sebastian Patti, Galen Pittman, Alexis Powell, Mike Rader, John Schukman (JSc), Dave Seibel, Art Smallwell, Guy Smith, Ruth Smith, Mike Stoakes, Max Thompson, Beverly VanDyke, Don Vannoy, Dave Williams (DWI), Gene Young, Dennis Zehr. NEBRASKA: Mark Brogie, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Larry Einemann, Ruth Green, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, David Heidt, Thomas Hoffman (THo), Helen Hughson, Bill F. Huser, Marilyn Jensen, **Joel G. Jorgensen**, Alice Kenitz, Steve Kerr, Hugh & Urling Kingery, Sandy Lemmon, Gary Lingle, Marty Matheison (MMa), Wayne Mollhoff, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Bill Parker (BPr), Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Kevin Poague, Neva Pruess, Larry Randolph, Neal Ratzlaff, Dorothy J. Rosche, Richard C. Rosche, **W. Ross Silcock**, John Sullivan, Bruce & Donna Walgren. OKLAHOMA: Tom Alford, James W. Arterburn, Jeanette Bider (JBi), Peter Boesman, Charles Brown, Bill Carrell, John Dole, Janet Duerr (JDu), Eric Edgar, Bonnie Gall, Neil Garrison, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Stephen Grzybowski, Berlin Heck, Melinda Hickman, Bill Howe (BHo), Alan Jenkins, Vera Jennings, Marty Kamp, Dan Kozlovic (DKo), Nathan Kuhnert, Jo Loyd, Larry Mayes (LMa), **Louis McGee** (LMc), Debra McKee, **Jeri McMahon**, Kurt and Sharon Meisenzahl, G. Moreton, Mitchell Oliphant, Dan Reinking, Elaine Renning, Pat Seibert, John Sterling (JSt), Elsie Stubbs, Paul Tinnery, S. Tramel, Don Varner (DVR), Marguerite Waldroop, David Wiggins, Ernie Wilson, R. Wiman, Rob Wood (RWo).

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Lazuli Buntings are regular in the western parts of the Southern Great Plains region, and rare in the eastern parts. Near the halfway point was this male at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May 7, 1998. Photograph/ Dora Webb

