

Southern Great Plains Region

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The summer was generally uneventful, though waterbirds in most of the Region appeared to be benefiting from rains of this and previous years. The metapopulation dynamics for marsh-nesting birds, with a mosaic of alternating colonizations and extinctions, favored colonizations this season. Least Bitterns and several species of rails appeared breeding in scattered locations across the Region. New sites are also blinking on for Western Grebes, Trumpeter Swans, Black-necked Stilts, Snowy Plovers, and Bachman's Sparrows.

However, just as a climbing Dow-Jones index spells out only the fact that there are more winners than losers, a few species should also be taking some hits. The only obvious one was the Lark Bunting, whose numbers were down in western Nebraska.

Weather can still play a dramatic and stochastic role. A heat wave in late June had drastic effects on nesting of Wilson's Phalaropes in western Nebraska, and Black-capped Vireos in the Wichita Mountains seemed to have timed the termination of their nesting season on this event as well.

Abbreviations: McConaughy (*Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R., Stafford County, KS*); Wichita Mts. (*Wichita Mts. Wildlife Refuge, Comanche County, OK*).

Loons to Waterfowl

Common Loons July 16–30 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (LKM) and July 23 in *Phelps*, NE (RH, LR) likely summered. Two Horned Grebes in *Garden*, NE July 28 (LKM) were unusual. Western Grebes were found nesting for the 2nd consecutive year at Cheyenne Bottoms, *Barton*, KS, with at least five adults and five chicks present in mid-July (*vide LM*). A colony of W. Grebes in *Sheridan*, NE continued to grow, with 12–15 broods present July 8 (RCR, DJR). About 450 non-breeding ad. W. Grebes and two Clark's Grebes were observed on McConaughy July 16 (RCR, DJR). A suspected Clark's and W. grebe pair was noted in *Sheridan*, NE June 17 (B&LP).

An ad. Brown Pelican was observed at Quivira June 1 (MR, JN). Neotropic Cor-

morants made appearances in *Stephens*, OK July 9 (FN *et al.*), and *Douglas*, KS July 18–30 (m.ob.).

One Great Egret, first observed June 8, and two Snowy Egrets July 13–28 wandered N and W to *Garden*, NE (LKM). A Tricolored Heron made casual appearances in *Oklahoma* (*vide JGN*). Two White Ibises were found in *Sequoyah*, OK July 16 (KM).

Trumpeter Swans observed on nests in *Cherry*, NE May 13 and at 2 locations in *Grant*, NE May 17 (RCR, DJR) were observed with cygnets in June (B&LP). A few Cinnamon Teals summered in *Garden*, NE (LKM). Extralimital summer waterfowl included ♂ Ring-necked Duck and Lesser Scaup May 30 at Quivira (HG), two Ring-necked Ducks June 14 in *Scotts Bluff* (*vide AK*), four Canvasback in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (LKM), and an injured Com. Merganser July 10 in *Tulsa* (PS, JL).

Raptors to Terns

An Osprey in *Scotts Bluff*, NE June 24 (LKM) was the only one reported for the Region. Mississippi Kites have taken up residence in *Keith*, NE, with five adults present July 15; two nests were observed—the first documented for Nebraska (*vide RCR*). AN Harrier noted June 14 in *Tulsa* (AR) and another July 10 in *Wagoner*, OK (AR, FR) were along the s. border of their species' breeding range. Sharp-shinned Hawks observed in *Norton*, KS June 17 (SS) and *Butler*, KS July 10 (PJ) were among very few summer reports for the Region. Swainson's and Red-tailed hawks had a successful nesting season in w. Nebraska; only two of six Ferruginous Hawk nests under observation fledged young (RCR).

A single Peregrine was noted in *Tulsa* July 1 (JA). Peregrine Falcons successfully fledged two young in Topeka, KS; this is the first recorded nesting for Peregrines in Kansas this century.

King Rails were noted in *Comanche*, KS June 11 (DV), and three downy young were observed in *Stafford*, KS June 28 (DV). Virginia Rails were found in *Garden*, NE (LKM), w. of many occurrences. Common Moorhens, casual in Nebraska, were found in Fontenelle Forest, *Sarpy*, NE June 15 & 19 (JAL).

Two Am. Golden-Plovers July 3 in *Paw-*

nee, OK (JA) were exceptional for that date and were likely tardy spring migrants, or simply vagrants. Migrant Piping Plovers were observed in *Cleveland*, OK July 19 (NK) and in *Pawnee*, OK July 31 (JA). Snowy Plovers nested again in *Cleveland*, OK, with chicks observed July 22 (VB).

Black-necked Stilts likely have a successful metapopulation structure in the Region at present. Sub-populations this year were those recently established in *Sheridan*, NE, where 27 adults were observed; only one pair was successful (RCR, DJR). Four adults were present through the summer at the Salt Plains, *Alfalfa*, OK; two fledglings were observed there Aug. 3 (MK). An additional pair nested in *Dawes*, NE, the first nesting record for that county (RCR, DJR).

Perhaps part of a stable or unstable range boundary—or simply early migrants—were Upland Sandpipers observed south in *Cotton*, OK June 18 and in *Greer*, OK June 25 (JDT). A Whimbrel July 16 in *Pawnee*, OK (JL, PS), provided one of very few summer records. A late migrant Hudsonian Godwit was present at Quivira June 1 (MR). The latest north-bound White-rumped Sandpipers were observed June 11 in *Cleveland*, OK (NK).

Among early migrants were a Solitary Sandpiper in *Oroo*, NE June 16 (LF), three Solitary Sandpipers July 3 and a Stilt Sandpiper July 4 in *McClain*, OK (NK), and Sanderlings in *Oklahoma* July 21 & 26 (JGN). Most Buff-breasted Sandpipers are immatures noted in mid-August to mid-September. No specimens of adults in the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History collection have been collected after August 8. Thus, the 15



Buff-breasted in *Tulsa* July 26 (PS, JL), and the two in *Oklahoma* July 27 (JGN) were likely adults. Only one Short-billed Dowitcher was reported July 23 in *Tulsa* (JL, PS).

The June heat wave in w. Nebraska may have terminated much of the nesting activity of Wilson's Phalaropes, which had a dismal year. Where flocks in the hundreds are normally observed, the high count amounted to only 65–70 individuals (RCR, DJR). A tidy 95 Red-necked Phalaropes appeared July 13 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (LKM).

A Franklin's Gull was early July 16 in *Pawnee*, OK (PS, JL). An ad. Roseate Tern directly compared with Forster's Terns July 22 in *Oklahoma* (JGN, DN) was briefly but enticingly described. This record requires review by the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee. Least Terns appear to be recovering; 20 adults, 21 fledglings, and 20 chicks were counted July 12 in *Tulsa* (PS), and 60–70 young fledged in *Cleveland*, OK (NK). Other informal reporting indicates maintenance and expansion of known breeding locations in the Region.

Doves to Crows

Ringed Turtle-Doves were reported in *Tulsa* (CR, N&RL). Black-billed Cuckoos, a low density breeder in the Region, were reported from *Garden* (LKM) and *Otoe*, NE (LF). A Black-chinned Hummingbird in *Finney*, KS (L&BR) is among a growing number for Kansas recently. Certainly a "scoop" was a **Calliope Hummingbird** (probable female) coming to a feeder in *Finney*, KS July 20 along with a Rufous Hummingbird (T&SS). The Calliope record will undergo scrutiny by the Kansas Bird Records Committee.

An Acadian Flycatcher was heard singing in the Wichita Mts., June 8 (VF), only the 2nd ever noted for s.w. Oklahoma. Another Acadian earlier reported in *Sarpy*, NE was last observed June 3 (JG). Although designated as breeding in extreme s.w. Nebraska, a Cassin's Kingbird with fledged

young in *Kimball*, NE July 21 (RCR, DJR) may document the first observed breeding for Nebraska.

Tree Swallows nesting in *Delaware*, OK (RB) provided the first record for that county. Purple Martins which nested successfully in *Keith*, NE (RCR, DJR) were among the westernmost known in the state. Fish Crows were observed along the Red R. west to *Bryan*, OK (WM). Three Pygmy Nuthatches in *Scotts Bluff*, NE June 26 (LKM) may be a satellite group of the established population in Sowbelly Canyon.

Vireos to Finches

The small group of Black-capped Vireos discovered in *Cleveland*, OK last season was assessed at five males and two females this year. Cowbird parasitism, however, took its toll and no young were observed (VB). In the Wichita Mts., 175 male territories were mapped, the highest ever counted, following an exceptional reproductive season in 1993 (JAG). The *Blaine* population is holding steady from last season, with nine females noted (JSh, MN).

Bell's Vireos were found n. and w. to *Loup*, NE June 28 (RH, LR). Red-eyed Vireos were observed w. to *Dundy*, NE June 22–July 24 (LKM) and *Keith*, NE July 16 (RCR, DJR). Adult Prothonotary Warblers in *Oklahoma* had to dupe inspecting Great-tailed Grackles to allow their young to survive fledging (JGN). Hard to find late in the season, a Cerulean Warbler was observed June 27 in *Leavenworth*, KS (JS). Worm-eating Warblers were noted in *Sarpy*, NE until June 10 (JG), and in *Linn*, KS July 9 (LM). A singing ♂ MacGillivray's Warbler July 17 in *Cheyenne*, KS (SP) is the only summer record for Kansas. A Hooded Warbler June 11 in the Wichita Mts. (VF, JAG) is the first reported for s.w. Oklahoma.

A W. Tanager in *Chase*, KS (MM) June 24 was unusual. A Black-headed Grosbeak was noted in *Loup*, NE (RH, LR), e. of most oc-

currences. A summer 1993 burn on Fort Sill, *Comanche*, OK caused a substantial turnover in territory occupancies from Painted to Indigo buntings (JAG). Two ♂ Lazuli Buntings were found on this recovering burn June 6 (JAG, VF); Lazulis have been known only as migrants for the Wichita Mts. Apparent hybrid Indigo x Lazuli buntings were more widespread in the Wichita Mts. this season, and were as likely to sing permuted Painted Bunting songs as they were those of their suspected parents (JAG).

Six Dickcissels in *Sheridan*, NE and two in *Grant*, NE July 16 were outside normal breeding range limits (RCR, DJR). A Bachman's Sparrow was found in *Creek*, OK June 26 (PS, JL) at the same locality where it or others were observed last year. Common in winter, but unheard of in summer was a White-crowned Sparrow July 18 at *Russell*, KS (SH). Two ♂ Song Sparrows in *Kimball*, NE July 21 were maintaining the isolated group's status (RCR, DJR). Swamp Sparrows were noted in *Phelps*, NE June 26 & July 23 (RH, LR).

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