

Lewis' Woodpeckers were found in the area of the 1985 Flint Hills Wildfire in *Fall River*, SD (DW).

Passerines

Western Kingbird numbers have returned to normal after the 1993 decline. At least seven Cassin's Kingbirds were found in Montana's Bull Mts., June 22 (WR). Clark's Nutcrackers were present all season at Harney Peak and the Black Elk Wilderness in the Black Hills (DW); at least 50 were seen in *Custer* June 11 (R&JLP). Dependent young Black-capped Chickadees were very late in *Grand Forks*, ND Aug. 1 (DL). A singing Brown Creeper was at Sica Hollow S.P., SD June 3 (PS). The daily high count of 182 Sedge Wrens in *Grand Forks*, ND July 10 (EF) was indicative of what CRP and good precipitation has done for grassland birds of cover. A pair of N. Mockingbirds fledged three young near Richardson, ND (JH). At least four Bell's Vireos were at Bowman-Haley Res., ND June 24 (CT). A daily total of 35 Yellow-throated Vireos was found in 3 n.e. North Dakota counties June 13 (EF).

Tennessee Warbler spring migration in North Dakota extends through at least June 10, and apparent fall migrants begin to show up singing, but out of potential breeding habitat, about 2 weeks early, so the singing bird in *Grant*, SD June 15 (PS) may have been an exceptionally late spring migrant. An agitated ♂ Tennessee carrying insects in the aspen sandhills at Salyer July 26 (GB) provided the best evidence so far obtained of breeding in North Dakota. At least two singing Orange-crowned Warblers were present in oaks in the Salyer sandhills; this species has proven to be present in good numbers in both the Pembina Hills and Turtle Mts. A Cerulean Warbler sang for several days in mid-June in Fargo-Moorhead, with the territory spanning the states' boundary (RO).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was far west at a feeder near Custer, SD June 1 (JJ). Brewer's Sparrow was feeding young in *Bowman*, ND June 24. Lark Buntings have declined drastically in North Dakota the past 3 wet years, and cannot be found easily n. of Belfield. A **Henslow's Sparrow** on territory at Salyer July 5–18 was the first for North Dakota since 1981 (GB). Baird's Sparrows continued in good supply. A good number was present at the s. edge of the range in the Grand River N.G. in South Dakota (DG), and the species was much increased at the w. edge of the range at Chester, MT (HM). LeConte's Sparrow was even more numerous than last year; 59 were found July 10 in *Grand Forks*, ND (EF). At least three LeConte's were at Bitter L., *Day*, SD June 22–July 15 (JSP). At least two each of LeConte's and Sharp-tailed

sparrows were at Medicine Lake N.W.R., MT June 2 (MR). A McCown's Longspur nest with young was found in *Bowman*, ND June 24 (REM).

↘ A **Great-tailed Grackle** (ouch!) at L. Bertha in *Cass*, ND June 3 (GN) was North Dakota's first. An E. Meadowlark was again on territory near Hope, ND (DK) and a 2nd was at Brien in *Morton*, ND (CT).

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Southern Great Plains Region

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Overall, this was probably a wetter-than-average season—excessively so early, but waning as the season progressed, particularly in the southern portion of the Region. It also started out cooler than normal. This may have produced some records for lingering waterfowl. However, by the end of June (July in Nebraska), things eventually heated up to normal intensity.

Following in the wings of a series of more benign years, a number of waterbird populations are probably to the point of filling or near filling available habitats, and some may have moved into being controlled increasingly by density-dependent, rather than abiotic, factors. This is expressed in an increase of Pied-billed Grebes and several rail species. Least Bitterns and Virginia Rails are breeding more broadly in the Region, and one new location for Black Rails was discovered.





White-faced Ibis on nest in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma. Forty pairs were present there this season, marking their first known nesting in the state. Photograph/Ron Shepperd.

Nonetheless, these are potential patterns interpreted from a limited set of observations. The comment of note could as easily have been that no event clearly dominated, and no patterns were plainly evident across the Region during this season.

Abbreviations: Crescent Lake (*Crescent Lake N.W.R., Garden Co., NE*); McConaughy (*L. McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); North Platte (*North Platte N.W.R., Scotts Bluff Co., NE*); Optima (*Optima N.W.R., Texas Co., OK*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R., Stafford Co., KS*); Salt Plains (*Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa Co., OK*); Wichita Mts. (*Wichita Mts. Wildlife Refuge, Comanche Co., OK*).

Loons to Waterfowl

Most unexpected were two Pacific Loons on McConaughy June 14 (BP, LP). This was only the 2nd summer record for this species in the Region. Several Com. Loons were present at North Platte June 5 (LK), and one was seen June 30 at McConaughy (RCR, DJR). A Horned Grebe June 3 at North Platte (LK) and an Eared Grebe June 1 & 9 at Optima (MD) may have been late migrants or summer vagrants.

↪ A Neotropic Cormorant July 19 at Cherry, NE (JG) provided only the 3rd record for Nebraska. Anhingas were present in Bryan, OK July 13–27 (JW).

↪ An Am. Bittern was flushed June 8 in Cleveland, OK (NK); this species only oc-

curs rarely in Oklahoma during the summer. Least Bitterns, nowhere common, appeared at scattered locations through e. portions of the Region. Great Egrets were reported as far afield as *Scotts Bluff* in w. Nebraska (AK). Only one Snowy Egret was reported from Nebraska, July 24 in *Garden* (LKM). Among vagrant *ciconiiforms* for the season were three Tricolored Herons observed at Quivira June 3 (KB, JH) and a White Ibis June 28 (MO) to July 5 (JGN) in *Oklahoma*. White-faced Ibises have been observed dur-

ing summer at the Salt Plains for several years, but no nesting activity was noted. This year visits were made to Ralston I.; over the course of the summer, 40 active ibis nests were located, providing the first observed cases of nesting in Oklahoma (RSp *et al.*). About 50 White-faced Ibises were counted at Quivira June 13 (JH, KB).

↪ A Trumpeter Swan was noted at Crescent L., June 17 (MF); five were counted in *Cherry*, NE June 15 (NR), and nesting birds were reported from *Grant*, NE (RCR, DJR). Four wayward Snow Geese were observed at *Platte*, NE June 3 (BP, LP), with singles June 5 at North Platte (LK) and June 12 in *Hall*, NE (BP, LP).

↪ Among lingering or summer vagrant waterfowl at Optima June 1 & 9 were ≤30 Green-winged Teal, one Cinnamon Teal, a pair of Gadwall, one ♂ Am. Wigeon, a pair of Ring-necked Ducks, and four Lesser Scaup (MD). A single Cinnamon Teal was also noted at Quivira July 4 (BT), and ≤eight were observed at Crescent Lake, June 7 (LKM). In *Comanche*, OK, single ♀ and ♂ N. Shovelers were noted separately June 5 & 28 (JAG); also observed were two Am. Wigeon June 28, and a ♀ Ruddy Duck July 15 (JAG). Three N. Shovelers June 8 in *Cleveland*, OK (VB, NK) were also unexpected. Two Ring-necked Ducks, rare during summer, were observed at Crescent Lake (MF, LKM) through the period, with another male in *Scotts Bluff*, NE July 21 (RCR, DJR). Up to four Bufflehead were present at Crescent Lake through the period (LKM, MF), with a female in *Dakota*, NE



This immature White Ibis in Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, July 3, 1995, was feasting on crayfish. Photograph/Nathan Kuhnert.

June 4 (BH).

Five young-of-the-year Hooded Mergansers June 19 in *Grant*, NE raised questions as to breeding status in w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR). Hooded Mergansers with at least two large young were observed at the Salt Plains June 12–16 (WH), and at least 22 imm. Hoodeds were noted in *Linn*, KS July 1 (MM). Three Hooded Mergansers June 3 in *Rogers*, OK (PS, JL) may also have bred. Interestingly, 169 Com. Mergansers were counted at North Platte July 17 (LK); from whence they came is open for speculation.

Raptors to Cranes

Unusual in summer were Ospreys June 13 (L&J D) in *Tulsa*, July 1 in *Keith*, NE (RCR, DJR), and July 2 in *Loup*, NE (LR, RH). Mississippi Kites appeared again at *Keith*, NE, with one–two seen June 11–12 (BP, LP, JG). A few Bald Eagle reports were received, including that of an adult tending a young near fledging in *Loup*, NE June 2 (LR, RH). Rare in the Region during summer, Sharpshinned Hawks were noted in *Saunders*, NE (*fide* WRS), *Scotts Bluff*, NE June 11 (LKM), and *Dixon*, NE July 29 (JJ). More than the average number of Cooper's Hawks were reported this season from all states, suggesting an increase in breeding numbers in the Region.

While possibly more numerous than records indicate, Black Rails were reported from Crescent Lake May 31 & June 19 (BB), a new location. Black Rails were also noted at Quivira June 24 (JH, KB), the only consistent locality known for the species in the Region.

Seven–eight pairs of Snowy Plovers raised at least six young in *McClain*, OK (NK, VB). Piping Plovers produced at least one brood at McConaughy, though under stress from proximity to human activity (WRS, SJD). Migrant Piping Plovers included three in *Linn*, KS July 15 (MM), and one in *Oklahoma* July 29 (NK). An Am. Golden-Plover June 24 at Quivira (MM, GP) was tardy or vagrant. Two Black-necked Stilts were present at Optima June 9 (MD). Black-necked Stilts maintained several breeding outposts in w. Nebraska during June (JG *et al.*, NR).

Two Solitary Sandpipers June 5 at North Platte (LK) and a Stilt Sandpiper June 7 at Crescent Lake (LKM) were tardy. Among the early returning sandpipers were a Solitary June 30 in *Keith*, NE (RCR, DJR) and five July 1 in *Sioux*, NE (LKM, AK); also, a Semipalmated July 1 in *Lancaster*, NE (LE). Spotted Sandpipers were observed on the Canadian R., *Cleveland-McClain*, OK June 12 and July 8, but not in between (NK), indicating potential breeding or possible late spring and early fall migrants. Upland Sandpipers noted at several localities in Okla-



homa during late June were likely early migrants; the earliest reported were three observed moving S June 22 in *Washita*, OK (JAG, NK).

A very early migrant Marbled Godwit was noted in *McClain*, OK June 29 (VB, NK). Other Marbled Godwits were reported July 12 at Crescent Lake (LKM) and July 21 in *Dawes*, NE (RCR, DJR). The first Buff-breasted Sandpipers of the season were noted in *Linn*, KS July 30 (BF).

The only Laughing Gull reported was an adult in *Riley*, KS July 9 (TC).

At least 120 ad. Least Terns that nested along the Canadian R., *Cleveland-McClain*, OK (NK) continued the recent increase of this species' numbers in central Oklahoma. The 36 adults in *Tulsa* produced at least 22 young (JL).

Doves to Shrikes

A White-winged Dove June 20 in *Cloud*, KS (BB) was quite a surprise, as was one June 22 in *Washita*, OK (JAG, NK). Long-eared Owls produced five young in *Russell*, KS by June 3 (MR), among few nesting records for the Region.

For the 2nd summer, up to three Acadian Flycatchers were noted at a n.e. outpost in *Nemaha/Richardson*, NE through June 28 (BH). Least Flycatchers were noted June 9 in the Wichita Mts. (JAG), and June 13 in *Tulsa* (L&JD *et al.*). An Ash-throated Flycatcher in *Morton*, KS June 3 and one in *Cotton*, OK June 30 (JDT) were slightly out

Surprisingly far north was this apparent juvenile Cave Swallow captured at Keystone Reservoir, Keith County, Nebraska, June 26, 1995. Photograph/Mary Brown.

of range.

On June 25, a juv. Cave Swallow was netted at a Cliff Swallow colony in *Keith*, NE, at the same site where one was captured in 1991 (C&MB). It is suggested that this juvenile fledged on the Texas coast and migrated with Cliff Swallows to the Nebraska site. By July 27, 35,000 Purple Martins had congregated in downtown *Tulsa* (RS *et al.*).

One lone Blue-gray Gnatcatcher maintained an outpost in *Kimball*, NE June 2 (WRS). Townsend's Solitaires, rare in w. Nebraska during mid-summer, were present in *Dawes* June 3 (RCR, DJR) and in *Sioux* July 1 (LKM). A late migrant Swainson's Thrush was noted June 3 in *Tulsa* (BC). Wood Thrushes were found w. to 2 localities in *Cleveland*, OK June 1 (NK, VB) and July 8 & 9 (VB). A group of about ten Cedar Waxwings were observed in *Cleveland*, OK June 15 & 17 (JAG); few summer records exist for Oklahoma.

Vireos to Finches

An isolated group of four ♂ and three ♀ Black-capped Vireos in *Cleveland*, OK produced at least 2 broods (VB). A pair of N. Parulas nested w. to *Cleveland*, OK (NK). Extralimital was a Chestnut-sided Warbler May 29 in *Sheridan*, NE (IC). A Prairie War-

bler was noted in *Russel*, KS June 2 (MR). Prothonotary Warblers were found at the Salt Plains June 12–16 (WH). A Worm-eating Warbler June 12 at *Leavenworth*, KS (DW, DO) probably sets a point on the w. boundary of the species range in Kansas.

Encouraging was a report of 200 Ovenbirds in *Brown*, NE June 17 (LR, RH). A Louisiana Waterthrush was observed carrying food in *Nemaha/Richardson*, NE June 26 (BH), a northeasterly report in the Region. A Louisiana Waterthrush June 24 in *Washita*, OK (JAG) provided a first record for this w. Oklahoma county. Testing the limits of its species' range was a Kentucky Warbler in *Nemaha/Richardson*, NE through the end of June (JG, BP, LP); a Mourning Warbler at this location June 11 (JG) was considered a migrant. The Hooded Warbler in *Leavenworth*, KS June 10 (DW, DO) may have been an extralimital vagrant.

A Scarlet Tanager was present in *Cherry*, NE July 19 (JG), a w. outpost for this species. A W. Tanager noted in *Kimball*, NE June 11 (JG) was probably a late migrant. Black-headed Grosbeaks were still migrating in good numbers June 4 in *Morton*, KS (MT, SP). Painted Buntings reached *Riley*, KS July 20 (TC) and *Geary*, KS June 11 (CH, LM). Single Lazuli Buntings June 5 in *Grant*, KS (MT, SP) and June 27 in *Cowley*, KS (JN) suggest breeding. Outstanding were 25 territorial ♂ Lazulis located on burn sites of recent years in the Wichita Mts. and adjacent Fort Sill military reservation (JAG); only two birds were observed during summer in the 10 years of work in this area, both in 1994, though apparent Indigo x Lazuli hybrids raise suspicions as to local status of the Lazulis. This summer, two nests were located, one with young near fledging, and an additional fledged brood was also observed (JAG).

A Clay-colored Sparrow June 10 in *Trego*, KS (SS) was likely a tardy spring migrant. A Field Sparrow in *Kimball*, NE June 24 (WRS) was west of its normal haunts. A real surprise was a Black-throated Sparrow July 22 in *Hodgeman*, KS (SS). John Zimmerman felt that numbers of Henslow's Sparrows in the Flint Hills were up this year (*fide* LM). Two ♂ Henslow's in *Elsworth*, KS May 29 (SP, BB) and *Cloud*, KS June 20 (BB) may represent satellite groups from populations in the Flint Hills. Even farther afield were six ♂ Henslow's Sparrows observed in *Pawnee*, NE June 26 (BP, LP). Swamp Sparrows at the s. edge of their breeding range were noted in *Phelps*, NE (LR, RH) and *McConeaughy* June 13 (BP, LP). Late sparrow migrants included a White-throated Sparrow (LF) and a White-crowned Sparrow (LKM), both June 2 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE. Six "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Juncos July 28 in

n.w. Nebraska (LKM) were a curious surprise as it is the "White-winged" race that breeds in this area. Orchard Orioles were hardly worth mentioning in the 1970s, but hardly findable now in c. and w. Oklahoma; 4 pairs were discovered in *Cleveland*, OK in late June (NK).

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Texas Region

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With local exceptions, this was often referred to as a rather "normal" Texas summer. For the most part, June temperatures were nothing special (Hint: It is an annual ritual for Texans to complain about how hot June is after our pleasant May weather). July was substantially hotter, although there was much bemoaning a July perhaps hotter than average in most areas. Rainfall was highly variable even within local areas. In fact, the "local exceptions" compiled from our observers suggested that "spotty" was also an operative term for the season. In late May, the summer was ushered in at mid-Texas latitudes (*e.g.* Concho Valley and Austin) with heavy rains, hail, and tornadoes. At least in Austin, we know that the hail destroyed some nests of small passerines, yet the rains kept many small intermittent streams flowing for the next month and a half. At the north end of the state, Seyffert described a cool, wet June during which he had to "dodge wild weather" to complete his breeding bird surveys. Thunderstorms were in the

