

Meadows, was found June 24 (FR, VE). A Rufous-sided Towhee of the eastern ssp. was found singing June 14 near Tyler (CSh); subsequent visits did not locate the bird. There is a single 1914 nesting record for Texas of this subspecies. White-collared Seedeaters continue to be found in San Ygnacio and surrounding areas of *Zapata*. Grasshopper Sparrows were reported to have good nesting success near Hagerman (KH). A 2nd nesting site of Yellow-headed Blackbirds was discovered near Hart, *Castro*, June 28 (KS). To the south, an ad. ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was in e. *Starr* July 30 (GL), a very early date for the L.R.G.V. Large numbers of Orchard Orioles were reported from Santa Ana July 7 (*fide* TP), these birds probably represent very early migrants. Some observers have commented on an apparent decline of Altamira Orioles in the L.R.G.V. Brush found 22 complete nests along the Rio Grande, *Starr*, June 10, and 5 active nests at Santa Ana; however, these data do not confirm or deny any changes in the population. A singing Lesser Goldfinch was in *Starr*, where this sp. is considered rare, June 10 (TB). American Goldfinches, a rare and local nester in Texas, were discovered in *Hemphill* June 7 (KS) and *Fannin* June 18 & July 4 (MWh).

### Undocumented Rarities

Two reports of rare or very rare species were received with insufficient or no documentation. Omitted from this column were reports of: Broad-billed & White-eared hummingbird (Davis Mtns).

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# Idaho-Western Montana Region

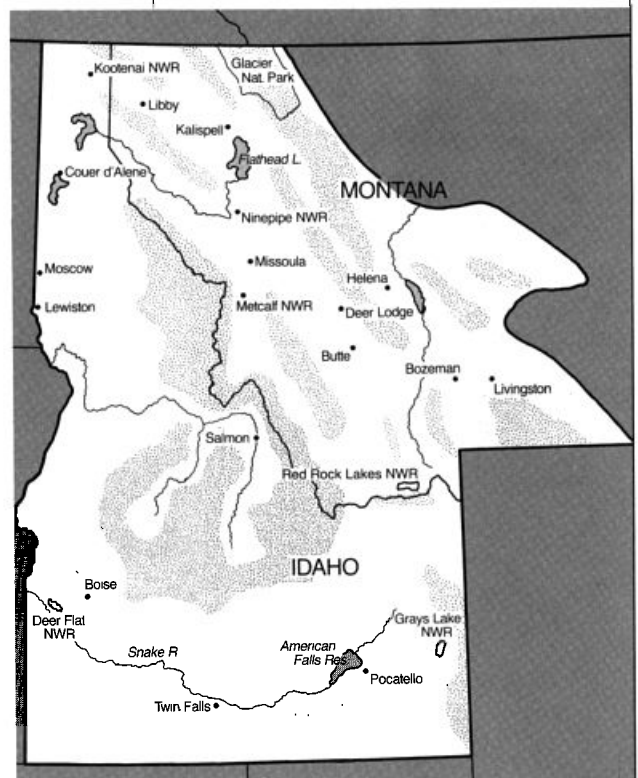
## DAN SVINGEN

Summer 1995 was wet and cool Region-wide, with scattered snow storms continuing into early June. Several observers expressed concern over the fate of this year's delayed nesting efforts, but little specific data were available.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (*American Falls Reservoir, by American Falls, ID*).

## Loons to Gulls

An out-of-season, imm. **Pacific Loon** was on Flathead L., *Lake*, MT July 17 (+D&LH), providing Montana's 6th record. An imm. Com. Loon was at Winchester Lake S.P., *Lewis*, ID June 23 (DNS), where an adult



summered last year.

Red-necked Grebes nested for the first time at Lee Metcalf N.W.R., *Ravalli*, MT (SB), but were unsuccessful. This species continues to struggle to become established at Kootenai N.W.R., *Boundary*, ID. Two pairs returned there this spring, but neither successfully nested (JRe). Four locally rare and unseasonal Eared Grebes were at McArthur Lake W.M.A., *Bonner*, ID July 31 (PC). A single Clark's Grebe was with six Westerns on Mann L., *Nez Perce*, ID July 16 (DNS), well n. of its typical Idaho range.

A Double-crested Cormorant was intermittently seen throughout summer on the Salmon R. near Salmon, ID (HR), while three were at McArthur W.M.A., July 31 (PC). The species is now annual in both localities. Great Egrets are rare and local breeders in s. Idaho. This year, one-six pairs nested at Market Lake W.M.A., *Jefferson*, Duck Valley Indian Reservation, *Owyhee*, and A.F.R., but were absent from their traditional colony at Mud Lake W.M.A. *Jefferson* (CT). Montana's 4th and the Region's 2nd Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was seen near Ninepipe N.W.R., *Lake*, June 28 (†JGr, *vide* DC).

Three Com. Goldeneye broods and a Com. Merganser brood on Goose L. by McCall, ID July 29–30 provided the first confirmed breeding for both species in latilong 8 (MC, FK).

A well-described, light-morph Broad-winged Hawk was seen in Glacier N.P., July 23 (†JE), where most of the very rare w. Montana sightings have occurred. A dark-morph Swainson's Hawk, very unusual in n.w. Montana, was in the Flathead Valley area July 6 (*vide* DC).

Two Sandhill Cranes at McArthur Lake W.M.A., June 2 (PC) were likely late migrants. An early southbound Semipalmated Plover was at Benton Lake N.W.R., *Cascade*, MT June 28 (M&MLD), while a more seasonal bird was in Lewiston, ID July 13 (KD). Benton Lake N.W.R. also hosted record-early Solitary Sandpipers June 28–29 (M&MLD). Above-normal precipitation was blamed for flooding out Upland Sandpipers from traditional nesting areas near Cascade, ID (MC, FK). A Marbled Godwit provided a rare n. Idaho sighting July 13 at Mann L. (KD). Although Semipalmated Sandpipers are now known to be regular fall migrants through Idaho, sightings in extreme n. Idaho are still rare, making the single adult seen in upper *Boundary*, ID July 23 of interest (EC, KD, JG, DNS). A single Short-billed Dowitcher was with 16 Long-billeds at Mann L., July 21 (DS). This small reservoir has produced several of Idaho's 20 or so Short-billed records.

Three out-of-season Bonaparte's Gulls at Cascade Res., *Valley*, ID June 25, were out-classed by their companion, a very worn,

first-winter Little Gull (†SWo). If accepted, this will furnish Idaho's 3rd record. At least one of the imm. Herring Gulls mentioned in last season's report did indeed overwinter on the n. end of Flathead L. (DC). This bird, which was seen at the Flathead County Landfill, apparently provided the first summer record for w. Montana (DC).

### Terns to Pipits

A Com. Tern was at A.F.R., July 10 (CT), and several were nearby on the Snake R., July 30 (CT). Black Terns successfully nested for the 2nd consecutive year at Kootenai N.W.R., *Boundary*, ID after being absent for several years (JRe). Improved water conditions there may be responsible for the species' return.

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was near Tilden Bridge, *Bingham*, ID July 22 (WH, JP, MS, CV), the state's most dependable location for this rare species. Montana's 2nd Barn Owl breeding record was provided by five nestlings photographed in *Ravalli* (CB, JH). As noted in last summer's report, Flammulated Owls are much more widespread and common in w. Montana than previously thought. Systematic surveys this year found at least 90 calling birds in the Bitterroot N.F. and 23 more in the Lolo N.F. (VW)—an incredible find if you consider that the species wasn't even recorded in Montana until 15 years ago. Territorial Flammulateds were also found 20 mi. e. of Grangeville, ID, for a local first (DNS).

White-throated Swifts seen along the cliffs near Manning Bridge, *Idaho*, ID June 12 (SR), provided latilong 8's first report. A single Williamson's Sapsucker, and several Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, were in the burned area above Upper Payette L. in w. *Valley*, ID (KD).

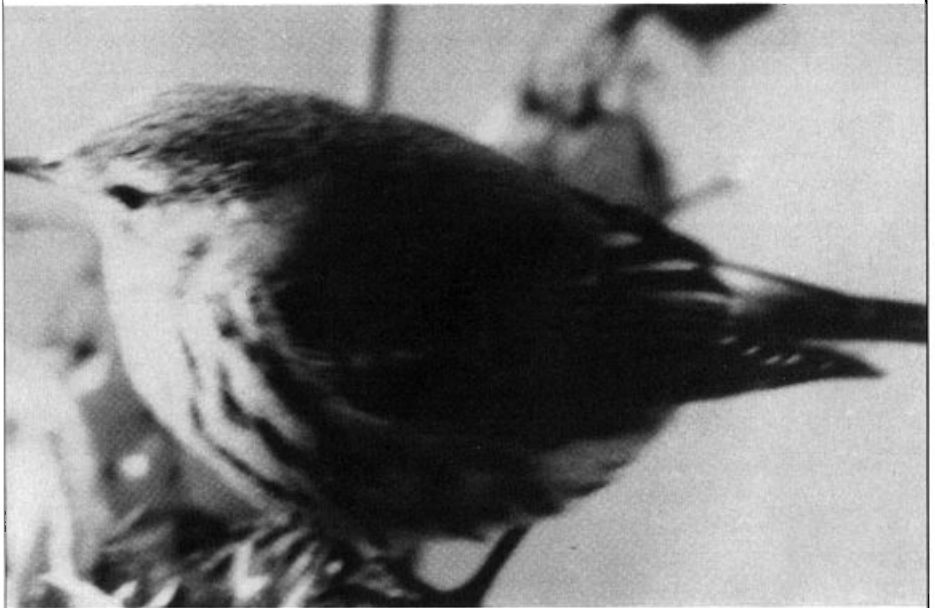
In last fall's report, it was noted that the

explosive wildfires of 1994 created favored woodpecker habitat. Three-toeds are apparently one species which is benefiting—they were the most numerous woodpecker n. of McCall, ID this summer, where about 300,000 acres were burned (MC, FK).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher June 16 seemed out-of-place amidst the cattail marshes and sagebrush desert of Camas N.W.R., *Jefferson*, ID (EH, CT). Two Least Flycatchers, which acted like a pair, were tape recorded near Rose L., ID June 11, providing Idaho's 5th record (†DNS, m.ob.). Gray Flycatchers again nested in w. *Owyhee*, ID for the 2nd latilong record (JG, KD). A pair of Ash-throated Flycatchers was observed carrying food to a nest along the N. Fork Owyhee River, *Owyhee*, providing latilong 23's first confirmed breeding (JG, KD).

For the 4th consecutive season, there was Blue Jay news to report. A pair successfully fledged three young in July in Kalispell, MT (*vide* JRo, ph.), furnishing the Region's first confirmed breeding. The Blue Jay pair persisting through spring in Somers, MT stayed all summer, while a single Blue Jay was still present in Aberdeen, ID June 11 (DB). Rock Wrens were noted as being oddly absent from some traditional nesting areas in both n. and s.e. Idaho (EC, CT). For example, Trost typically finds 8–15 wrens at 7–12 stops along his Blackfoot Res., *Caribou*, Breeding Bird Survey. This year, only three birds at 3 stops were present.

**A recent discovery of an old record: This Cape May Warbler was visiting a feeder at Dover, Idaho, in January 1980. The photo was discovered and identified by Dan Svingen in Earl Chapin's photo album in 1995, to establish the first photo-documented record for the state. Photograph/Berry Kendall.**



The Bewick's Wren reported last spring from the Kamiah, ID area was seen throughout summer, and may have nested (DNS). Three fledgling **American Pipits** tended by two adults at Chimney Rock in w. *Boundary*, ID July 22 (DNS, JG) provided the first confirmed breeding record for n. Idaho.

### Warblers to Grackles

A surprising diversity of "good" warbler records was obtained this summer. Three territorial **Tennessee Warblers** were found near Clark Mt., *Lincoln*, MT (SK) during June. Northwest Montana is the only place where this rare and local nester is known to breed in the region.

A well-described singing N. Parula, Montana's 5th, was seen July 4 in Glacier N.P. (†PR, †AD). Idaho's 7th **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was tape recorded and photographed on Fisher Cr., s. of Stanley, ID in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area June 11 (†LB, m.ob.). Incredibly, another male showed up at City of Rocks National Preserve by Burley, ID July 1 (†WK, DSp). A singing male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** near Lincoln, MT was seen June 15 (RF). This represents Montana's first summer sighting, and 5th record overall. A Black-and-white Warbler summered by McDevitt Creek, 20 mi s.e. of Salmon, ID (HU) in the same spot where one was found last year—3 of Idaho's 14 records have come from this latilong. American Redstart is an uncommon and local breeder in s. Idaho, so a report that the species has been extirpated from a former foothold on the w. shore of Cascade Res., *Valley*, due to increased cabin developments, is doubly disturbing (MC, FK). A Yellow-breasted Chat, rare n. of the Clearwater R. drainage, was at the base of Moscow Mt., *Latab*, ID June 3 (DHk).

A male Indigo Bunting, rare throughout s. Idaho, was at Siphon Pond, n.w. of Pocatello, ID July 20–30 (BC, CT). A hybrid Indigo x Lazuli Bunting was discovered in July near Stevensville, MT (JH).

A singing Sage Sparrow was 18 mi n. of White Sulphur Springs, MT June 30 (M&MLD), the first for latilong 29. At least two Grasshopper Sparrows were on territory throughout summer at the Whitebird Battlefield by Grangeville, ID (KD, DNS). Another Grasshopper Sparrow was singing at Swan River N.W.R., *Lake*, MT July 22, suggesting new breeding in latilong 15 (JE). In summer 1994, an alarmed female White-throated Sparrow was found near Polebridge, MT, while a singing male was present in the Yaak Valley, *Lincoln*, MT (*vide* DC). This year, a singing male was found near Polebridge, along the "Inside North Fork Road" (DP). These observations suggest that the species may nest in the Region.

Idaho Bobolinks were seen in s.w. *Bonner* (LC), near St. Maries (DNS, m.ob.), and near Roseberry, ID (KD). This species' Idaho range is very disjunct. Two nesting records for Com. Grackle were obtained in Missoula (WD, T&CT), continuing the pattern of gradual expansion throughout w. Montana. The species was confirmed nesting in Idaho latilong 16 for the first time when well-developed nestlings were seen being fed near Ashton June 15 (EH, CT).

**Observers cited (Subregional editors in boldface):** IDAHO: Larry Barnes, Dave Burrup, Bea Calger, Earl Chapin, Luke Cole (LC), Pat Cole, Mark Collie, Gorden Comrie, **Kas Dumroese**, John Gatchet (JG), Dale Goble, Ed Harper, Winnie Hepburn, Dave Holick (DHk), **Dean Jones**, Wallace Keck, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Louise La Voie, Jeff Palmer, Jimmy Reynolds (JRe), Sharon Ritter, **Hadley Roberts**, Dan Simpkins (DS), Marilyn Smith, **Shirley Sturts** (SHS), DeeAnn Spencer (DSp), Dan Svingen (DNS), Dan Taylor, **Charles Trost**, Helen Ulmschneider, Carol Vande Voorde, Steve Woltmann (SWo). MONTANA: Clif Barry, Sharon Browder, **Dan Casey**, Lynn Clark (LCI), William Diebert, Mike and Merry Lynn Denny (M&MLD), Amanda Dumlin, Joseph Engler, Rob Fergus, John Grant (JGr), Dev and Liz Hill (D&LH), George Holton, Judy Hoy, Shelly Kremer, **Doug Powless**, Paul Rodewald, Jean Robocker (JRo), Terry and Chris Toppins (T&CT), **Philip Wright**, **Vita Wright**. Special thanks to Kas Dumroese and Peder Svingen for consistently providing comments on drafts of this Region's reports.

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# Mountain West Region

## HUGH E. KINGERY

Birds found the going tough in the mountains of the West this summer. Heavy spring precipitation left the high country covered with snow into July; snow-covered habitats delayed or prevented nesting of alpine species and subalpine ground nesters and breeders. Insect cycles ran three weeks or more behind. Consequently many migrants lingered on the plains and delayed mountain nesting. Bird watchers suffered, too, constrained by mud on plains' roads and snow on mountain roads. Observers scrapped probably a third of the Breeding Bird Survey routes in Colorado and delayed another third into July when roads opened.

Through mid-June flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers, and tanagers thronged migrant traps such as Fontanelle, Wyoming; Corn Creek near Las Vegas; Fort Collins, Colorado; Crow Valley (Pawnee National Grassland, Colorado); and the Arkansas Valley around Ordway and Rocky Ford, Colorado. Birds delayed nesting. Above 8000 feet in northern Utah most birds building open nests and some cavity nesters post-

