

Prairie Provinces Region

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In August, cool and wet conditions prevailed from southern Alberta to northern Manitoba, while southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba were generally hot. Weather was mainly mild and placid in September and October, but then winter arrived with a thud. Snowfall was above-average Regionwide in November, and the month was very cold in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Consequently, the tail of the fall migration was truncated abruptly.

Abbreviation: L.M.L. (*Last Mountain Lake, SK*).

Loons to Raptors

Single Red-throated Loons were noted at L.M.L., Oct. 21 (BL) and Carseland Dam, AB Oct. 28–29 (JMc, JeM), and two were in Banff N.P., Sept. 20 (DL). Eleven Pacific Loons were seen in or near the s.w. Alberta mountains between Oct. 6–Nov. 19 (m.ob.), and one was at L.M.L., Oct. 28 (BL, RKr *et al.*). The only reported **Yellow-billed Loon** was an immature, also at L.M.L., Nov. 18 (BL, RKr, JT). Unusual concentrations of W. Grebes occurred in the Alberta mountains and foothills: 150 at Waterton Lakes N.P., Sept. 28 (WS, RW) and 94 at Barrier L., Oct. 11 (RDU). A Clark's Grebe at Grand Beach, MB Oct. 9 (PT, RKO, RZ) was both late and locally rare.

The peak count of Great Egrets at Delta, MB was six Aug. 5 (DBg, PG, GG). A Green Heron was in Winnipeg Aug. 25 (CWh, MC). A White-faced Ibis wandered N to Frank L., AB Aug. 10 (RW). Also at Frank L. were 2500 Tundra Swans Nov. 1 (WS). A very heavy goose migration was noted in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and Alberta highlights included thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese near Hanna Sept. 17 (OD) and >35,000 Snow Geese near Medicine Hat Oct. 30–Nov. 5 (DBo). Ross' Geese were well represented in Snow Goose flocks in Manitoba, with a high count of 77 at Oak Hammock Marsh Sept. 17, including a dark-morph bird. A dark-

colored Brant was shot near Delta, MB about Oct. 18 (*fide* CCt). A mass exodus of 63,000 Mallards was noted in the Carman-Jordan area of Manitoba just ahead of a major snowstorm Oct. 31 (GHd, CCs); many other waterfowl departed on or about that date.

SA A disastrous outbreak of botulism occurred at Pakowki L., AB between mid-July and mid-October (DEi, MPy, RDj). Over 100,000 dead birds were retrieved in a cleanup campaign coordinated by Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Ducks Unlimited personnel; twice that number probably died. Based on an analysis of 8991 bodies, the hardest-hit species were Green-winged Teal (52%), N. Pintail (20%), N. Shoveler (10%), and Mallard (8%). The body count also included four White-faced Ibises.

Rarely reported in fall, two Eur. Wigeon were in Calgary Sept. 29 (SM *et al.*). One-thousand Redheads was a good count near Taber, AB Oct. 22 (LB), and a Greater Scaup was very late at Churchill Nov. 3 (BC). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was at Katepwa L., SK Aug. 26 (TR), and three Barrow's Goldeneyes were found on L.M.L., Oct. 15–Nov. 5 (TH, BL, RKr *et al.*). Single hybrid Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser males were reported at Calgary Nov. 14 (SM) and L.M.L., Nov. 18 (RKr, RL). High counts of Hooded Mergansers included 230 at Bow Valley P.P., AB Oct. 29 (MPn) and >250 at L.M.L., Oct. 30 (BL).

An imm. Red-shouldered Hawk at Weyburn Aug. 23–24 was the 6th reported in Saskatchewan (NP). The Windy Pt., AB raptor watch yielded 206 Broad-winged Hawks in 12 days, Aug. 25–Sept. 30 (WS *et al.*). Rough-legged Hawks were generally scarce, except at Windy Pt., where 210 were counted Oct. 16 (WS). At Mt. Lorette, AB, 3703 Golden Eagles were recorded this year, with a peak of 1626 birds Oct. 17–24 (PSn *et al.*). Additional impressive counts of Golden Eagles in the Rockies were 1248 in 30 days at Barrier L. (RDU *et al.*), 563 at Plateau Mt., Oct. 22–24 (GHa), and peaks of 235 Oct. 22 and 317 Nov. 3 at Windy Pt. (WS). Gyrfalcon reports totalled 17 in Alberta Oct. 5–Nov. 27, three in Saskatchewan, and only one in s. Manitoba. At Churchill, a white Gyrfalcon was very early Sept. 5 (BC), and ≤three birds were seen daily in October and November.

Rails to Woodpeckers

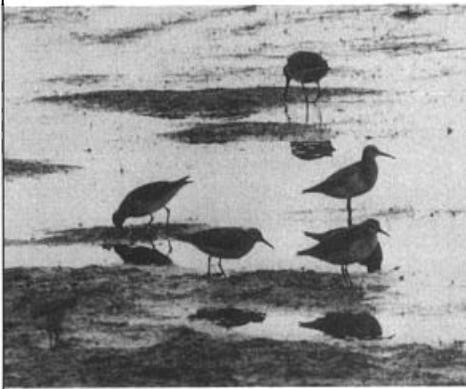
A Virginia Rail at Frank L., Sept. 11 (JC) was locally rare, a Sora near Sundre, AB

Nov. 6 (DS) was late, and a Sandhill Crane near Turner Valley, AB Nov. 11 (WS) was both. Low numbers of Black-bellied Plovers in both Saskatchewan and s. Manitoba contrasted with excellent counts of Am. Golden-Plovers: 1225 near Jordan, MB Oct. 11 (GHd, CCs) and 312 at Buck L., SK Oct. 4 (BL). A pair of Black-necked Stilts with two young at Unity, SK Aug. 17 furnished a 2nd provincial breeding record (GW, LW, SS).

Given the early snow and cold, three Sanderlings near Regina Nov. 4 were extremely late (*fide* RKr). Alberta's 2nd sighting of a Rufous-necked Stint occurred at Frank L., Sept. 19–23 († RW *et al.*) Baird's Sandpipers were well represented 291 at Frank L., Aug. 18 (WS) and >100 near Lac du Bonnet (RZ, PT) and Carman, MB (GHd) in early August; one at Weyburn Oct. 29 was very late (GB). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper visited Namaka L., AB Sept. 25–Oct. 11 (OD, JR, MPn, TK*) Twenty-five Buff-breasted Sandpipers provided a locally high count near River Hills, MB (PT, RZ). Six-hundred Red-necked Phalaropes gathered near Churchill Aug. 17 (BC), and a Red Phalarope appeared near Taber Sept. 30 (LB).

A Parasitic Jaeger visited Echo L., SK Sept. 30 (RH, MB). Single Mew Gulls were noted at Wascana L., SK Oct. 5 & 20 (RKr), and Thayer's Gull sightings totaled 11 in the Calgary area Oct. 10–Nov. 12 (TK *et al.*) and two at L.M.L. in October (BL). Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported: a 2nd-year bird at Wascana L., Oct. 19 (RKr) and a possible first-year at Calgary Oct. 19 (TK). Only five Glaucous Gulls were noted Regionwide. An exhausted first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake was captured at Stony Mt., Nov. 25, furnishing s. Manitoba's first record (JMy). An ad Sabine's Gull passed Winnipeg Beach, MB Sept. 10 (GG *et al.*), and a juvenile was at St. Ambroise, MB Sept. 21 (CK, JL) Ivory Gulls highlighted the season at Churchill: one Oct. 18 & 28, and two Oct. 23 (BC). Twelve late Com. Terns at Grand Beach, MB Oct. 9 included a begging juvenile (RKO, PT, RZ).

The Rock Dove rarely graces these pages, but a pair that fledged two young near Taber Nov. 9 on their 7th attempt (starting in March) deserves an honorable mention (LB). The Region's first White-winged Dove was an extraordinary visitor to Thompson, MB Aug. 13–Sept. 5 (Z&RI, RKO); it now resides in Winnipeg Zoo. Snowy Owls were scattered across the Region, with no significant concentrations. A N. Hawk Owl was early at Windy Pt., Sept. 3 (WS), and both this species and



Juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [right front bird] with Pectoral Sandpipers at Namaka Lake, Alberta, October 11, 1995. Photograph/Terry Korolyk.

Great Gray Owl commenced significant incursions in s.e. Manitoba in November. Most unseasonal was unprompted singing by a Boreal Owl near Sunwapta Pass, AB Sept. 12 (BW).

Flocks of >600 Com. Nighthawks were reported at both Stonewall and Gimli, MB Aug. 18 (KG, JW), and a late flock of >20 flew over Medicine Hat, AB Sept. 30 (BV). Vaux's Swift was finally confirmed as an Alberta breeder, at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Lakes N.P., in August (KvT, CWt); a single Vaux's Swift visited Calgary July 28–Aug. 1 (JD). An **Anna's Hummingbird** was seen in Calgary Sept. 14 (JR), and a ♀ Rufous Hummingbird was near Herbert, SK Aug. 18 (MPe). Four Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported in Manitoba (m.ob.), the most northerly being at Lundar in early November (DEy). An extremely late Yellow-bel-

lied Sapsucker fed on crabapples at Regina Nov. 15–30+ (TR). Saskatchewan's 3rd **Williamson's Sapsucker** was found dead and was photographed at Moose Jaw Nov. 17 (P&BK, SW). Over 150 N. Flickers adorned utility poles in the Lethbridge, AB area Sept. 20 (JMc). A melanistic N. Flicker was an oddity near Winnipeg Sept. 10 (GHd *et al.*).

Passerines

Songbird migration was described as very poor in Saskatchewan, and banding results indicated poor nesting success for many species (*vide* RKR, AS). A Great Crested Flycatcher was rare at Calgary Sept. 19 (WC), and another was very late at Saskatoon Oct. 21 (ED). Such birds raise thoughts of vagrant *Myiarchus* flycatchers, but late Great Cresteds are not unprecedented. Seventy-eight Marsh Wrens were counted at Frank L., Oct. 11 (WS). Townsend's Solitaires and Varied Thrushes strayed E in normal, very low numbers. Some high counts of Am. Pipits were reported, including 620 near Jordan Oct. 11 (GH, CC) and hundreds in the Medicine Hat area around the end of September (PH).

At least five Nashville Warblers and nine Cape May Warblers were reported in s. Alberta (v.ob.), and a N. Parula strayed to Calgary Aug. 24 (MH). Errant Black-throated Blue Warblers were reported at Calgary Aug. 29 (TK), Val Marie, SK Oct. 15 (LP), and Brandon, MB Sept. 9 (PSe). A Townsend's Warbler was an odd sight on a fence line, over 2 mi from the nearest trees near Frank L., Sept. 1 (WS, RW). A Pine Warbler strayed to Edmonton Aug.



A first for the Prairie Provinces was this White-winged Dove at Thompson, Manitoba, in August 1995. Photograph/Zoe and Ray Irving.

27 (EML). Unusually late were an Am. Redstart in Regina Oct. 24 (FL, DBt) and a Com. Yellowthroat at Calgary Nov. 4 (HT).

A **Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco** in Whitewood, SK Nov. 17 (JP) provided about the 4th record in Canada. A W. Meadowlark at Flatbush, AB Nov. 19 (JoM) was both late and far north. The House Finch wave is rolling through Saskatchewan, n. to Canora and Preeceville; >70 were banded in one Regina yard (P&DH) and 40 were in a Moose Jaw yard (P&BK). Red Crossbills occurred in fair numbers, and White-winged Crossbills were abundant, in the mountains of s.w. Alberta (WS *et al.*). White-winged Crossbills also appeared in s. Saskatchewan and s. Manitoba. Common Redpolls staged a strong migration in the Alberta mountains from late October to mid-November, but few were in the adjoining lowlands (PSn, WS).

Addenda

We received a report of a real avian pioneer: a N. Mockingbird that spent summer 1995 at Ft. Simpson, N.W.T. (K. Davidge *et al.*). The following extremely late birds were omitted from our Fall 1994 report: Forster's Tern, Grand Beach, MB Nov. 12 (PT, RZ); Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sherwood Park, AB Oct. 21–Nov. 30 (S. Braggs-Marshall, T. LaPlante); House Wren, Medicine Hat, AB Nov. 26–27 (DBo); Orange-crowned Warbler, Medicine Hat, Nov. 28 (B. Frew).

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Northern Great Plains

GORDON BERKEY

The first half of the period was warmer than normal, but October was cool. A major storm at the end of the month froze most water in eastern Montana and North Dakota during the first few days of November, and that month remained very cold. Waterfowl were widespread and abundant, and a good number and variety of waders were seen in North Dakota, but shorebird and passerine numbers seemed very low. A large number of late-lingering species were recorded; this was probably tied to the lateness of this year's breeding season. There was one bird added to the state list of each of the Dakotas and several new birds for Montana.

Abbreviations: p.a. (pending acceptance by state records committee).

Loon to Rails

Loons made a big splash this fall. Two **Pacific Loons** at Hettinger, ND Oct. 30 (D&CG, p.a.) would provide the 5th state record, a **Red-throated Loon** found frozen into the ice in Hamlin, SD Nov. 2 (WM *et al.*, p.a.) recovered and was released, and the 12 Com. Loons on L. Sakakawea Oct. 29 was a record daily count (REM). Single Red-necked Grebes were seen in November in all 3 states, including at Billings, MT Nov. 1 (WR), another on L.

Sakakawea Nov. 4 (GB), and an extremely late one Gavin's Pt., Nov. 25 (BFH). An Am. White Pelican remained at Arrowwood N.W.R., ND through Nov. 30 (PS) and two stayed at Bowdoin until Nov. 6, several days after the lake froze.

Two "Bewick's" were noted among several thousand Tundra Swans at Freezout L., MT Oct. 29, while Ross' Geese peaked there at >20,000 (MS). An Am. Black Duck was far w. at Benton Lake N.W.R., Aug. 15 (SM). Cinnamon Teal are rarely reported from the Dakotas in fall, thus one in *Harding*, SD Sept. 3 (EM) and another shot in *Towner*, ND Sept. 30 were noteworthy. Waterfowl numbers were the highest since the 1970s, but widespread, abundant water dispersed birds, so most daily peak migration counts were unimpressive. A few exceptions were the 3000 Blue-winged Teal at Minot Sept. 2, 70 Hooded Mergansers at Fort Peck Nov. 30 (CC), 1000 Com. Mergansers in *Charles Mix* Nov. 10 and >1000 at Yankton, SD Nov. 28 (DRS, RM). The most unusual duck was South Dakota's first **Harlequin Duck** on L. Thompson, *Kingsbury*, Sept. 16–Oct. 4 (JP *et al.*).

Bald Eagles were early in *Charles Mix*, SD Aug. 16 (RM) and at Grand Forks Aug. 21 (EF). The 46 Bald Eagles, half immatures, at Upper Souris N.W.R., Nov. 5 provided a new high, as did the 70/hr N. Harriers observed from an office window in Fargo Oct. 13 (GN). A kettle of 150–200 Swainson's Hawks were near Fort Peck Sept. 16 (CC). Two Peregrine Falcons were very early in *Trip*, SD Sept. 1 (DGS). Partridge numbers may be rebounding slightly in North Dakota, but they and other gallinids are still greatly reduced. An ad. Com. Moorhen was in *Jerauld*, SD Aug. 23 (S&BS). At least 30

