

and July 26–29 in *Little River* (CM). A Black-billed Cuckoo in *Shelby*, TN June 2 (JRW) could have been a very late migrant, or, conceivably, nesting. Surprisingly far east were single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in *Drew* and *Lonoke*, AR June 14 & 19, respectively (WMS). Latest ever for s.e. Louisiana in spring—but only by 5 days—was a ♂ Am. Goldfinch in *Tangipahoa* June 19 (PL).

### Corrigenda

The following records by Gene and Sharon Knight reported in last year's summer season report (*NASFN* 49 (5): 937–941) are from n.c. Mississippi, and not from the Starkville area, as reported: Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck, Am. Coot, Lark Sparrow (all *Tallahatchie*), and Anhinga (three in *Grenada* and one in *Tallahatchie*).

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# Prairie Provinces Region

### RUDOLF F. KOES AND PETER TAYLOR

Southern Alberta was generally dry, but some severe thunderstorms in the south-east in July locally impacted ground-nesting birds. Rainfall was above average in Saskatchewan, where warm weather prevailed from mid-June to early July, but the remainder of the period was cool and wet. Conditions were more seasonal in southern Manitoba. Northern Manitoba was cool and wet in June, resulting in a poor shorebird nesting season. Frequent rainfall kept most prairie sloughs topped up, resulting in a good nesting season for many water birds. This situation was marred by a severe outbreak of botulism at Whitewater Lake, Manitoba, that killed more than 80,000 birds by mid-August.

Local concern was expressed about low numbers or poor breeding success of several species: Pied-billed Grebe and Black-crowned Night-Heron in Saskatchewan; American Avocet and Wilson's Phalarope in southeast Manitoba; both Eastern and Western kingbirds in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and Least Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole in southeast Alberta.

### Grebes to Hawks

At least seven Clark's Grebes accompanied 50 W. Grebes at the e. end of Cypress L., SK June 13 (RKR); two Clark's Grebe chicks and three adults were found at Valeport, SK July 5 (BL). Great Egrets visited 4 Alberta localities: two at Rochon Sands P.P., June 1 (MAI, IS) and singles s. of Calgary May 30–June 2 (m.ob.), near Big Hill Springs P.P., June 12–14 (CG, m.ob.) and s. of Rocky Mt. House June 25 (JM, ABr). A Snowy Egret was seen at Nicolle Flats, SK June 18 (KS). Cattle Egrets made a fair showing, with two at Oak Hammock Marsh June 1 (DFA, GG, RKO, PT), four e. of Craven, SK July 1 (SB), and singles at Reed L., SK July 15 (MP) and e. of Katepwa, SK in late July (*vide* RH). A Green Heron visited Fish Creek P.P. near Calgary May 30–June 5 (AS, ph. TK, m.ob.). Three pairs of White-faced Ibises nested at Pakowki L., AB in late July (MAn), and one was among the botulism victims at Whitewater L., MB (*vide* CCT).

Three swans, possibly Trumpeters, were at Oak Hammock Marsh June 29–30 (GG, RZ). A Greater White-fronted Goose lingered at Pelican L., MB June 14 (RKO), and a probable escapee of the "Greenland" race, *A. a. flavirostris*, was identified at Ryley, AB July 4 (BH). The cold spring apparently triggered a lot of egg-dumping by Wood Ducks in Winnipeg: One nestbox custodian found a phenomenal 234 unhatched eggs in 20 of 26 boxes (*vide* PW). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was e. of the breeding range at Beaverhill L., AB June 13 (TT), and a Barrow's Goldeneye visited Turtle L., SK June 4 (MC). Flocks of 200 Buffleheads were





**Green Heron at Fish Creek Park, near Calgary, Alberta, June 3, 1996. Photograph/Terry Korolyk.**

noted in Saskatchewan at Cypress L., June 13 and Pelican L., June 16 (both RKR);  $\leq$ three Buffleheads were seen at Churchill in early July (m.ob.). Over 60 Swainson's Hawks were soaring near Del Bonita, AB July 5 (TD), an unusual date for such a concentration. A 46% nest-failure rate and productivity of only 1.48 fledged young per successful nest were the 2nd-worst figures in a 30-year study of Swainson's Hawks in Saskatchewan (SHs). Ferruginous Hawks also fared poorly, with 30% failure and 2.24 young per successful nest in Saskatchewan (SHs), and fewer than 50 young fledged by 58 pairs in s.w. Manitoba (KD). Red-tailed Hawks seemed to take over vacated Swainson's and Ferruginous hawk territories, but did not appear to fare any more successfully. A Rough-legged Hawk summered at Oak Hammock Marsh (RZ, RKO), and another was at Pierson, MB July 10 (AW, KD).

### Rails to Woodpeckers

At least 10 Yellow Rails were calling in the Qu'Appelle Valley n. of Regina June 14 (BL) and another  $>$ six were near Semans, SK June 20 (CP);  $\geq$ two were also reported near Raven, AB June 7–18 (JRo), and three were near Irricana, AB July 4 (JS, SHo, JC). Rare in s. Alberta was a Virginia Rail near Brooks June 11 (WS). Two unbanded Whooping Cranes summered at Provost, AB (ES, *vide* RD). Preliminary census figures totaled 1338 Piping Plovers in Saskatchewan, 276 in Alberta, and 58 in Manitoba (PG). Twenty ad. and two imm. Black-necked Stilts were found at Antelope Cr., near Brooks, AB July 17 (WS); this species appears to be slowly expanding its range in Alberta (PS). Among the few large shorebird concentrations reported were 500 Am. Avocets, 250 Marbled Godwits, and 10,000 "peeps" at Pakowki L., July 27 (WS); 800 Long-billed Dowitchers at Wolf L., e. of Calgary, July 22 (BG); and  $\leq$ 7000 Red-necked Phalaropes near Innisfree, AB July 13–25 (RD).

A Parasitic Jaeger was both rare and early at Turtle L., SK July 28–30 (MC, AC). Gull highlights were largely limited

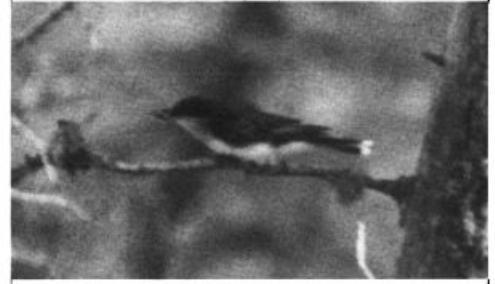
to Churchill: a Franklin's Gull June 20 (*vide* BC), a maximum of seven Little Gulls June 7 (WINGS tour, *vide* BC), a Lesser Black-backed Gull June 1, and a Great Black-backed Gull May 19 (both BC). Spectacular indicators of a late spring were 15 Sabine's Gulls at Turtle L., SK June 20, following one June 12 (MC). Exceptional anywhere but Churchill was a Ross' Gull at Oak Hammock Marsh June 3 (CCs, RKO). A Caspian Tern was unexpected at Saskatoon July 16 (MC). An excellent concentration of 400 Black Terns occurred near Irricana, AB July 28 (TK). A Black Guillemot visited Churchill July 10 & 12 (DFa).

~ A Band-tailed Pigeon was seen at Breton, AB June 12–19 (NF), another was photographed at Tofield, AB June 25–July 1 (RP), and a 3rd wandered E to Delisle, SK July 25–Aug. 1 (TLA, SS *et al.*). Few observers reported more than one–two Black-billed Cuckoos all season. Alberta's 3rd Yellow-billed Cuckoo was found at Dinosaur P.P., July 9 (GD, DH). Reduced to about 4 pairs near Melita, Burrowing Owls are now on the brink of extirpation in Manitoba (KD). A Com. Poorwill was calling n.e. of Taber, AB June 9 (LB). Vaux's Swifts returned to the Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Lakes N.P., with a maximum of nine, June 29 (RT). Single  $\delta$  Rufous Hummingbirds graced Saskatchewan feeders at Turtle L. in June (DBe) and near Hodgeville July 16–18 (MP). Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were confirmed June 30 at Medicine Hat, AB (BV, BS), where one had been reported sporadically since February, and one appeared at White Bear L., SK June 22 (DS). Up to four Black-backed Woodpeckers near Churchill in mid-July included at least one nesting pair (DFa, JJ).

### Passerines

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was unusual at Jasper townsite, AB June 19 (AJ), as was a nesting pair of Great Crested Flycatchers near Innisfree, AB (LR). Eastern Kingbird sightings at Churchill May 31 (AM), June 6 (ph. MS), and June 24 (*vide* BC) perhaps involved only one bird. Out-of-range was a summering Red-breasted Nuthatch at Taber, AB (LB) and another at Churchill July 14 (DFa). Up to four  $\delta$  Marsh Wrens summered at the n. entrance to Waterton Lakes N.P., where the species was previously considered accidental (WS, CW, PS). A family of five Ruby-crowned Kinglets furnished an unusual breeding record at Wasicana Park, Regina, July 18 & 20 (ABe).

Nearly 800 Mt. Bluebirds fledged from 205 boxes in the Medicine Hat area (*vide* DBa); in Saskatchewan, most early nests



**North of usual limits was this Eastern Kingbird at Churchill, Manitoba, June 6, 1996. Photograph/Mark Stevenson.**

of this species failed, but there was good re-nesting success (SHs). Thirteen Gray-cheeked and 11 Swainson's thrushes were unusually late migrants at Winnipeg June 1 (GH). A Wood Thrush was noted at Delta in mid-June (SSE, GM). The most northerly of four N. Mockingbirds in Manitoba was at Long Point L., Winnipeg, June 1 (TLi, DFi). Unusual at Churchill were a Brown Thrasher July 9 (DFa) and a Magnolia Warbler June 2 (AM *et al.*). A Black-throated Gray Warbler wandered to Dinosaur P.P., July 2 (RT). Extralimital single Yellow-breasted Chats were found at McGrath, AB June 9 (WS), Elva, MB June 13 (KD, GB), and Taber, AB June 25 (LB).

~ Three N. Cardinals, including a female, frequented White Bear L., SK, and a probable abandoned nest was found (*vide* BL). A Black-headed Grosbeak was rare at Banff N.P., AB May 28–June 1 (M&JM). Three Lazuli Buntings were found well n.e. of their breeding range in Alberta, at Wabamun June 1 (MV), Wainwright June 5 (*vide* PM), and Redwater June 5 (ph. MF), and one was at Good Spirit Lake P.P., SK June 1 (JA). Extralimital  $\delta$  Indigo Buntings were observed at Birch R., MB May 29–June 1 (IH), Raven, AB May 30 (R&JD), and Windy Pt., AB June 16 (JRi), while four were found at the fringe of this species' range in and near the



**Le Conte's Sparrow at Churchill, Manitoba, June 25, 1996. Photograph/Michael McEvoy.**

Qu'Appelle Valley, SK (v.ob.). A territorial Field Sparrow frequented a meadow near Traverse Bay, MB June 9–23 (PT, m.ob.), and two returned to Roche Percee, SK (BL). Also well out-of-range was a Lark Sparrow near Raven July 1 (JRo).

Only two Lark Buntings were seen all summer in s.w. Manitoba (KD). Twenty-five Grasshopper Sparrows were found on a 3-mi transect near Brooks, AB July 18 (WS). A Le Conte's Sparrow was a good find at Churchill June 25 (ph. MM). A Snow Bunting was extremely late at St. Ambroise, MB June 1 (CCt *et al.*). Unfortunately, details are lacking on two **Scott's Orioles** reported at Medicine Hat (BV *et al.*). White-winged Crossbills invaded parts of s.e. Manitoba in June; 71 were tallied at 24 stops on the Springer L. BBS June 23 (PT, DR). Several Com. Redpolls apparently summered near Tantallon, SK (*vide* TH).

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# Northern Great Plains

## GORDON BERKEY

Precipitation was variable and somewhat spotty, with the western portion of the Region quite dry. Overall rainfall was about average in contrast to the previous three wet years. Wetlands in the Dakotas remain in good condition and waterbirds had another banner reproductive season. The recent pattern of cold springs, however, was repeated, and the breeding season was again very late. Additions to state lists included Hooded Warbler and Great-tailed Grackle in Montana and possible Glossy Ibis in North Dakota.

## Loon to Rails

Common Loons are now absent from Pickerel and Enemy Swim Lakes, SD, since jet skis have become popular (DS). Breeding grebes continued to rebound from the drought year lows. Pied-billed, Eared, and Western have recovered; Horned is still below its former abundance but is increasing. Among the less common species, Red-necked Grebes nested in *Roberts* and *McPherson*, SD (BKH, JDW) and  $\leq 25$  Clark's Grebes were in the *aechmophorus* colony at Alkaline L. in s. *Kidder*, ND (KR). Up to six Clark's were present at Bowdoin N.W.R., and they were called "abundant" at Medicine Lake N.W.R., MT (LK). Waders were undoubtedly even more numerous than last sum-

mer. New county confirmations for South Dakota included Great Egret in *McPherson* and *Codington*, Snowy Egret in *Codington*, and Cattle Egret in *McPherson* and *Butte* (JDW, BKH, SW). In addition to the 3 North Dakota Great Egret breeding locations reported in the spring Northern Great Plains report 25 nests were at Grass L., *Richland*, July 7 (RO, RM). Green Heron was confirmed in *Codington* June 1 (JCS), while one s. of Bismarck June 22 (CE) was well w. of the known North Dakota breeding range. A yearling **White Ibis** at Long Lake N.W.R., ND June 14 (PVN, BS, ph.) was the 2nd for the state. A possible **Glossy Ibis** at DeWald Slough in *Kidder*, ND June 15 was observed in difficult light conditions (PS+); there are no previous records in the state. **Trumpeter Swan** (origin?) was confirmed breeding in *Meade*, SD June 13 (EEM). Breeding ducks had another good year in the prairie pothole region. A **White-winged Scoter** at the Grand Forks, ND, lagoons June 15–July 12 (EF) was highly unusual for the season.

A total 22 Cooper's Hawk nests were located at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., ND, with densities at about one pair per square mi in aspen parkland (MN). Cooper's continue to increase and spread to new habitats in North Dakota, and it is no longer a surprise to see them in farming country, where they appear to be adapting to nesting in shelterbelts. A sub-ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** in Montana's Little Rockies June 16 would be only the 3rd for the state (SD,†). A very early fall migrant Merlin was at Salyer July 9 (EMM). While Gray Partridge are still scarce, there are signs that the population has bottomed out and a slight increase was noted in the Richardton, ND, area (JWH). **Yellow Rail**

