

idaho-western montana region



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Summer 1997 was cooler and wetter than "normal," seeming to delay nesting by up to three weeks. An American Birding Association conference in Boise was responsible for several interesting finds. The conference, along with recent American Ornithologists' Union meetings in Boise and Missoula—and publication of bird-finding guides for both Montana and Idaho—are spreading the word of our area's potential. It is hoped that this trend will continue, as increased birding will result in an increased understanding of the Region's avifauna.

This understanding will be chronicled by a new regional editor, with the transition beginning next season. My sincere thanks to contributors and sub-regional editors for making my five-year term so interesting and educational. Kas Dumroese was especially helpful by reviewing draft reports. One of the most knowledgeable contributors was long-time sub-regional editor and University of Montana ornithologist, Philip Wright, who died this season. I add this column to the long list of Phil's richly deserved dedications.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (*American Falls Res. by American Falls, ID*); Latilong (*area encompassed by one degree longitude and one degree lati-*

tude, used in mapping bird distribution in both Montana and Idaho).

LOONS TO SHOREBIRDS

Following the pattern of recent years, several Com. Loons summered in Idaho, raising hope that breeding will eventually occur. Sightings included an adult and immature on Payette L., *Valley*, June 2–13 (DNS, CT, m.ob.); one on Island Park Res., *Fremont*, June 7 (CT et al.); a pair at McArthur Lake W.M.A., *Bonner*, June 11 (PC); a pair and an immature on Pend O'reille L., *Bonner*, June 25 (JS); up to six immatures on A.F.R. July 16–31 (RC, CT); and one at Upper Priest L., *Bonner*, July 30 (SHS). For the 2nd consecutive summer, Red-necked Grebes successfully hatched young at the Helena Valley Reregulating Res., *Lewis and Clark*, MT (EA).

Great Egrets nested on islands in the Snake R. near Marsing, ID (*vide* MC), likely a first for Latilong 17.

Three Barrow's Goldeneye broods were on Sagehen Res., *Gem*, ID, July 16 (FZ), providing a first breeding record for Latilong 11. A Hooded Merganser hen and brood on A.F.R. July 4 (RC, CT) represented the 2nd record for Latilong 21.

Wild Turkeys were confirmed as breeding in Latilong 11 when a hen with seven poults wandered into Zeillemaker's yard near Ola, ID, June 30, returning frequently thereafter to use the feeder. A **Common Moorhen** at Market Lake W.M.A., *Jefferson*, July 4 (†BD) will provide one of Idaho's very few records, if accepted.

Upland Sandpipers are rare and extremely local throughout the Inland Northwest. Relict populations persisting in e. Washington and n. Idaho 5 years ago are no longer present. Idaho's only known extant population is in Round Valley (*Valley*), which is being rapidly developed for housing. Birds reported farther east in 1990 (*American Birds* 44 (5):1160) have not been relocated. A pair or two was reported from Round Valley until 1993, with at least some of the sightings w. of Hwy 55. Searches in 1995 and 1996 failed to locate any birds. This year, two birds were at the junction of

Bacon Creek Rd. and Gatfield Rd. June 3–July 31 (DNS, m.ob.), in one of the valley's few ungrazed pastures. Observers are encouraged to conduct a thorough survey of Round Valley in future years, keeping in mind that all land there is private.

Up to four Long-billed Curlews were near Tolo L., Idaho, ID, throughout June (DNS, IS), where nesting has yet to be confirmed. A surprising fallout occurred at Tolo L. June 29, when 13 Greater Yellowlegs, one Lesser Yellowlegs, nine Marbled Godwits, 14 Am. Avocets, 16 Wilson's Phalaropes, and 11 Red-necked Phalaropes were found (J&MH). The Marbled Godwits provided only a Latilong 2nd, while the single Marbled at Mann L., Nez Perce, ID, July 18 (DNS, IS) was more expected. Shorebirds at Blacks Creek Res., Ada, ID, peaked at 1500 July 11, which included 1200 W. Sandpipers (MC, FK). Other sightings included one to two Marbled Godwits July 2 & 11 and a Sanderling and Semipalmated Sandpiper July 29 (MC, FK).

GULLS TO WOODPECKERS

The single Franklin's Gull at Little Payette L., Valley, and six at nearby Payette L. June 10 were highly unusual (DNS, CT, m.ob.). Idaho's 13th **Mew Gull**, a first-summer bird at the Sandpoint city beach throughout June and July (*vide* EC, DF, EF), provided the state's first over-summering record.

Last spring produced a number of Band-tailed Pigeons, but this summer was even better! A bird again appeared in Moscow, ID, July 4 (TB), and another visited Killarney L., Kootenai, ID, July 10 (ES). The two Band-tailed Pigeons visiting a feeder near Ola, ID, continued to July 11 (DD, FZ). Incredibly, three birds were there June 30–July 3. Dates and bird behavior qualify this record as Idaho's 2nd "circumstantial evidence of breeding." This same feeder hosted single Band-taileds May 23, 1993, May 30–June 8, 1994, and June 19, 1995 (FZ).

Rare and very local in Idaho, Yellow-billed Cuckoos are always noteworthy. A single was again at Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, this year's bird present June 2–15 (MCa, GD). Another Yellow-billed was at Hayspur Fish Hatchery, Blaine, ID, July 7 (BS).

Two of the Com. Poorwills reported earlier from Twin Lakes, Kootenai, ID, summered (C&RL, SHS), a first for Latilong 2. Black Swift reports included two near Cinnamon Cr., Shoshone, ID, June 1 (GC, PC), and three at Wilderness Gateway Campground, Idaho, ID, July 27 (WWa), the former being a new location for the species.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was report-

ed in Boise, ID, the first week of July, but no written details were provided (RP, *vide* MC, *vide* JG). There are only about 3 accepted records for Idaho. White-headed Woodpecker reports included a food-carrying pair along Alison Creek Rd., Idaho, ID, July 3 (DNS, IS), and a pair with two nestlings near Idaho City, ID, July 3–4 (MC, FK). This species has been increasingly reported in recent years, and observers are encouraged to keep searching for new breeding localities. The winter status of White-headed, however, is still largely unknown.

FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

Idaho's 9th–12th **Least Flycatcher** records were furnished by two birds at Penal Gulch near Challis June 17–July 2 (AD, DF, EF), one near Rose L. June 28 (†KD), one at Camas N.W.R. June 7–mid-July (CT, m.ob.), and two at Tendoy Rest Area, Lemhi, June 28 (DF, EF). Cordilleran Flycatchers were at last confirmed breeding in Latilong 28, when a nest was found near Clancy, MT, July 10 (LMc).

A Blue Jay pair with four fledglings near Montana City, MT, July 26 (JB, J&DG) provided a first breeding record for Latilong 28.

A White-breasted Nuthatch nest near Idaho City July 3–4 (MC, FK) was the first documented in Latilong 18. Pygmy Nuthatches fed dependent fledglings June 15–28 on Paradise Ridge, Latah, ID (KD), for a 2nd Latilong breeding record. In June, two Bewick's Wrens were seen carrying nesting material 3 mi n.e. of Viola, ID (J&MH); even with annual sightings at a number of n.c. Idaho localities, only one nest has been documented in the state. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest observed July 2–12 in e. Boise fledged three young July 11 and two young July 12 (MC, FK).

Gray Catbirds appeared in unprecedented numbers in s.w. Idaho this summer (MC, FK), and were more numerous than usual in n. Idaho (DNS). A N. Mockingbird persisted in Burley into early summer (JL).

A **Brown Thrasher** at the n.e. corner of A.F.R. July 3 (MCa, *vide* CT) will be Idaho's 8th, if accepted.

A singing male Black-and-white Warbler was at Camas N.W.R. June 28–late July (m.ob., *vide* CT); there are about 20 state records. The Black-and-white Warbler that has summered along McDevitt Cr., Lemhi, ID, since 1994 was again on territory, being present throughout June (MCa, DF, EF, HU). Like last summer, N. Waterthrushes were found in non-traditional Idaho locations, including singles along the n. shore of Little Payette L. June 2–5 (DNS), along the

Lemhi R. about 30 mi s.e. of Salmon June 12 (HR), near Challis in June (EF), along Hwy 55 in s.e. Valley, and two near Henrys L. Outlet, Fremont, June 7–21 (CT *et al.*) The Henrys L./Island Park area deserves more investigation for this species, as waterthrushes have been noted there several times (CT).

GROSBEAKS TO GOLDFINCHES

A male Blue Grosbeak was by Elkhorn Cr., n.e. Oneida, ID, June 6 (DB, JP), near where one had been seen in 1993. A male Indigo Bunting was near Picabo, ID, July 9–31 (BS, †PW, m.ob.); there are less than 20 accepted records for the state. **Lark Buntings** again nested at Minidoka N.W.R., Cassia, ID (SB, MCa, MJ), for the state's 2nd record.

A Grasshopper Sparrow was found near Keuterville, ID, June 29 (J&MH), and another was in Round Valley in early July along Spur Rd. (WW). An early migrant juv. Lincoln's Sparrow was on Paradise Ridge, Latah, ID, July 28 (KD).

Common Grackles were absent from their Soda Springs and Ashton sites, but were present near St. Anthony June 7 (CT *et al.*). A male Com. Grackle in e. Boise June 16–July 16 was joined by a female for the late June period (MC, JG, FK, DT). This was another banner year for Idaho Great-tailed Grackles. Single males were near Kuna June 12 (WC, JG, m.ob.), and in e. Boise June 13–July 16 (MC, JG, FK, m.ob.). A female Great-tailed was at Minidoka N.W.R. June 19 (SB, MCa, CT). The male and two females at Marsing, ID, throughout June and July (JG, LS) were seen courting in June (JG). Scott's Orioles were again present near Stone Res., Oneida, ID, where seen July 6–14 (DB, MCa, DF, EF, JG). Several Black Rosy-Finches were on the ridge of Mt. Church, 1.5 mi s.w. of Leatherman Peak, n.e. Custer, ID, June 28 (ST).

A female **White-winged Crossbill** feeding a fledgling at Upper Payette L., Valley, ID, July 19 provided Idaho's first confirmed breeding (CS, *vide* MC). Lesser Goldfinches, present since spring, persisted in e. Boise until at least July 16 (MC, FK, JG, DT, m.ob.), and were seen gathering nesting material (JG).

ADDENDA

A Barred Owl near Hailey, ID, Apr. 29 (DBe, PP, PW, WWa) furnished a first for Latilong 19. A male **Bay-breasted Warbler** was reported at Camas N.W.R. May 23 (†KB). If accepted, it would represent Idaho's 2nd or 3rd record

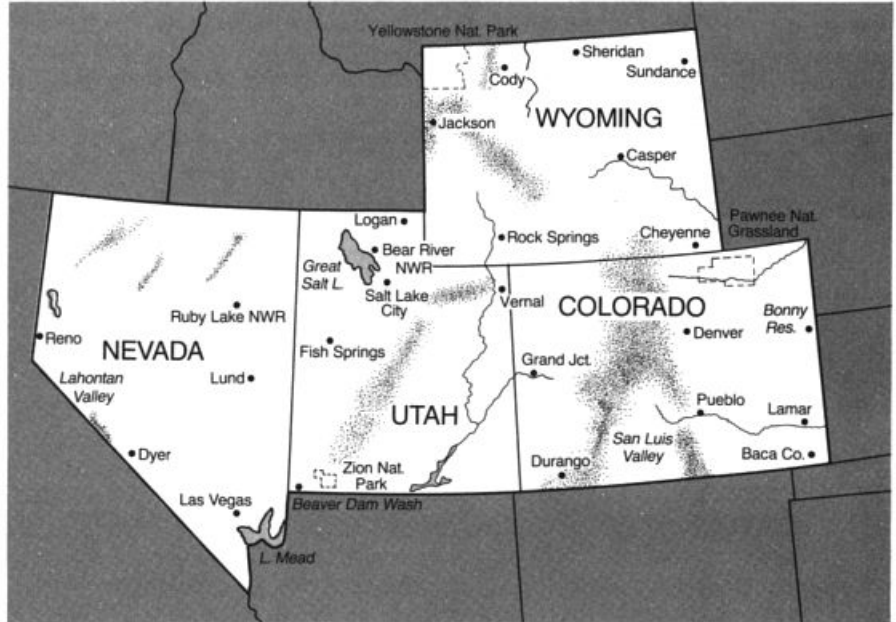
Observers cited (subregional editors in boldface): IDAHO: Dusti Bell (DBe), Tom Besser, Steve Bouffard, Ken Brock, Dave Burrup (DB), Earl Chapin, Ray Clark, William Clark, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society (C.A.S.), Marty Collar, Mark Collie, Gordon Comrie, Pat Comrie, Art Dahl, Bob Davis, Dan Davis (DDa), Gerald Deutcher, David Dudley (DD), **Kas Dumroese**, Dave Faike, Elise Faike, John Gatchet, Ed Harper, John and Marty Hirth (J&MH), Mike Johnson, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Cindy and Rick Langlitz (C&RL), Jason Lynch, Jim Paruk, Susan Patla, Ralph Pose-ly, Patty Provonsha, **Hadley Roberts**, Susan Scott (SSc), Ellen Scriven, John Shipley, Brian Sturges, **Shirley Sturts** (SHS), Dan Svingen (DNS), Ila Svingen, Colleen Sweeney, Lowell Sykes, Dave Trochlell, **Chuck Trost**, Scott Trost, Helen Ulmschneider, Wendy Warren (WWa), Wayne Weeber (WW), Mindy Wiebush, Poo Wright-Pulliam (PW), Fred Zeillemaker. MONTANA: Ed Argenbright, Jane Beasley, Jim and Donna Grace (J&DG), Lawrence McEvoy (LMc), **Don Skaar**.

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *Field Notes* are keyed on page 965.

mountain west region



VAN A. TRUAN and BRANDON K. PERCIVAL

This summer began dry but cool in most areas. Many late migrants were reported into mid-June. Snow flurries continued in higher elevations into the first week of June in the Rockies and northern mountains of Nevada. In July, the monsoons hit the Region and continued beyond the summer reporting period. With higher than usual moisture reported throughout the Region, there were several reports of flooded nesting and hail losses. The high winter snow pack had streams and lakes running full throughout the Region into mid-July. This high moisture content helped provide good cover vegetation for food and nesting birds, and there appears to be plenty of food for wintering birds (e.g. sunflowers are everywhere). With the predicted El Niño coming, a good winter crop may be necessary to help birds, if heavy snows arrive in both the Rockies and Sierras as predicted.

Abbreviations: C.V.C.G. (Crow Valley Camp Ground, CO); P.N.G. (Pawnee Nat'l Grassland, CO); R.M.N.P. (Rocky Mountain Nat'l Park, CO); S.W.A. (State Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The highest counts of over-summering Com. Loons were noted in Colorado this year. It began with two at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, June 6 (BKP); one at Rifle Gap, *Garfield*, June 24 (KMP); three at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, July 25 (one in breeding plumage and two in winter plumage; BKP, BD); a peak of seven birds (all gray-brown plumaged) at Big Johnson Res. June 27 (RB); another on North Catamount Res. (Pikes Peak Highway), *Teller*, July 14–20 (RB), and a summer-plumaged bird at Big Johnson Res. July 24 (RB). Rarely seen in summer, a Horned Grebe was at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, CO, July 21–29 (BB). Eared Grebes were reported as having "an average hatch" in North Park, CO; interestingly, some birds were still incubating July 23 (RAR). Also, nesting counts were made at Stillwater N.W.R., *Churchill*, NV, June 18 (273 nests), July 1 (592 nests), and July 15 (430 nests) (BH). On June 12, 3 pairs of W. Grebes were discovered nesting for the first time at Walker L., NV (GC), and one was at Las Vegas, NV, July 5 (RPS). Another was reported from Antelope Res., P.N.G., *Weld*, CO, June 1–7 (BBa, DW, IG). A pair of Clark's Grebes also nested for the first time