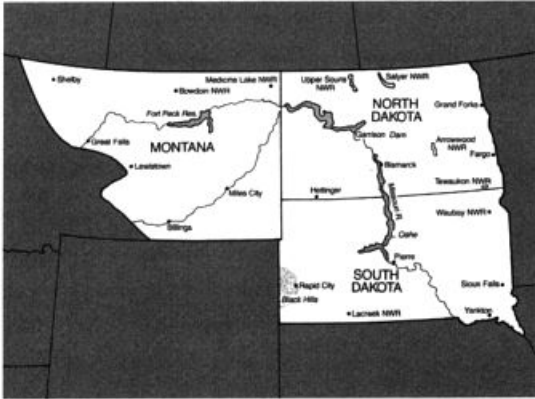


northern great plains region



RON E. MARTIN

It was a warm season with above-average precipitation: the first storm came the 2nd week of Nov. and much of the water froze, only to reopen by the end of the period as unseasonably warm weather covered the Region. The storm precipitated a major movement of waterfowl. Overall, the migration was protracted, and many species lingered into Nov. Several observers commented that it was a good warbler season. At Fort Peck, Montana, Carlson noted 17 species of warblers in his yard Sep. 5–8, a stellar number for e. Montana. Very few n. species were noted. Italicized dates indicate record-late or record-early birds.

LOONS THROUGH HAWKS

Pacific Loons made their best-ever showing. South Dakota's 3rd and 4th records were provided by singles Nov. 7 in *Fall River* (TJ) and Nov. 23–30 in *Stanley* (TJ, RDO, MMM, RFS). Furnishing North Dakota's 7th record was an individual at Garrison Dam Nov. 21–30 (REM, CDE, HCT, BD). In Montana, one was at Ft. Peck Oct. 30–Nov. 15 (CC), and a single was at Great Falls Nov. 6 (MBRC). There are now about 19 records for Montana.

Providing South Dakota's latest records were Great Egret in *Kingsbury* Nov. 7 (JSP), Cattle Egret in *Buffalo* Nov. 8 (RDO), and Green Heron Nov. 16 in *Day* (LH). In North Dakota, a Little Blue Heron at Devil's Lake Oct. 9 furnished the 3rd Oct. record for that state (HCT). Two Black-crowned Night-

Herons Nov. 14 at Devil's Lake, ND, were only one day from the latest on record (EEF).

Trumpeter Swans were noted in North Dakota, with one Oct. 7 in *Grand Forks* and five in *Hettinger* Nov. 11 (DAG, CG, JS). There are now about 17 records for that state. Providing North Dakota's 10th record, and 2nd for the fall season, were two **Eurasian Wigeons** Oct. 2 in *Richland* (BSM). Also in North Dakota, a flock of four Black Scoters Oct. 25 was unusual in *Grand Forks* (DOL).

Casual away from Rapid City, a Barrow's Goldeneye was noted Nov. 17 in *Harding* (RAS).

A good concentration of 66 N. Harriers was in *Grand Forks*, ND, Oct. 3 (EEF). N. Goshawks made a good early showing, with three mid-Sep. observations in North Dakota and Montana. However, the species was not noted again until mid-Nov. A new peak of 36 Rough-legged Hawks was recorded Nov. 4 in CRP fields in *Grand Forks*, ND (EEF).

RAILS THROUGH CUCKOOS

Late Soras were in *Yankton*, SD, Oct. 18 (SVS) and in *Stark*, ND, Nov. 4 (JH). Both provided the 2nd latest records in those states. Whooping Cranes peaked at 17 in *Divide*, ND, Oct. 20 (TK, ME).

South Dakota's latest record for Black-bellied Plover was furnished by a single in *Charles Mix* Nov. 15 (RM). An impressive flock of 90 Mountain Plovers was recorded Sep. 30 in *Phillips*, MT (JG). Very late for Montana, an Am. Avocet was at Bowdoin N.W.R. Nov. 4 (DP). Providing only the 2nd fall record for North Dakota, a Whimbrel was noted Sep. 24 in *Grand Forks* (EEF). A Stilt Sandpiper Oct. 28 in *Ward*, ND, furnished the latest record for that state (REM). Am. Woodcock observations w. of their usual haunts seem to be on the increase. In North Dakota a single was at Sully's Hill NGP Sep. 30 (SW), and the state's latest was noted far west at Lostwood N.W.R. Nov. 7 (BM). In South Dakota, an individual was unusually far west Oct. 13 in

Stanley (RDO). Furnishing North Dakota's 11th record, a Red Phalarope was in *Grand Forks* Oct. 9 (EEF).

A dark-morph **Parasitic Jaeger** was studied Oct. 2 at Gascoyne Res., ND, an 8th record for the state (DG,CG). South Dakota's 3rd **Little Gull** was at Fort Randall Dam Nov. 20 (DS), and a good peak of four Sabine's Gulls was in *Grand Forks*, ND, Sep. 21–25 (EEF). Probably the earliest on record for the Region, a single Sabine's was in *Kingsbury*, SD, Sep. 5 (RFS, JSP). In Montana, singles were at Benton Lake NWR in Sep. (HM), and at Nelson Res. Sep. 21 (DP). Three Black-legged Kittiwakes were noted Nov. 14 at Oahe Dam, SD (RFS, JSP), and a single was at Garrison Dam, ND, Nov. 21 (REM, HCT, CDE). Providing the latest record for South Dakota were two Caspian Terns in *Lyman*, Sep. 30 (JSP).

The **Eurasian Collared-Dove** in *Minnehaha*, SD, Sep. 2 furnished about the 5th record for that state (RFS). A **Common Ground-Dove** Oct. 31 in *Jones*, SD, would constitute the first state record if accepted by the records committee (TBW). The latest on record for South Dakota, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was found Oct. 26 in *Stanley* (RDO).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Rarely reported, a Barn Owl was noted Oct. 3–4 in *Stanley*, SD (DAT, RFS). Snowy Owls were very scarce, and the species was not recorded during the season in *Grand Forks*, ND, for the first time in 11 years (EEF). A Burrowing Owl survey in *Phillips*, MT, in late summer and early fall produced 481 birds, an amazing number for a species generally considered to be decreasing regionally (JG).

North Dakota's latest Ruby-throated Hummingbird was photographed Nov. 9 in Minot sitting on a frozen feeder during the first snow storm of the fall (TL). A first for the Fort Peck area, a Rufous Hummingbird was present there for 2 weeks beginning Aug. 15 (CC).

Providing the first Nov. records for North Dakota, E. Phoebees were present Nov. 7 in *Hettinger* (DAG), and Nov. 14 at E. Devil's Lake (EEF). North Dakota's 6th

I.B.S., Calgary Nov. 11–12 (J&MMa, B&NR, RT, MV), which was also a first for the site. Chaplin Creek, a Ducks Unlimited marsh in Saskatchewan, held a spectacular 10,000+ ad. Long-billed Dowitchers Aug. 8 (RKr, CP, KB). Langdon Res. hosted 1500 Oct. 5 (WW); 200 were still there Nov. 5 (RW).

Jaeger reports involved a single Pomarine at Calgary Sep. 9 (RKr) and a possible bird at Langdon Res. Oct. 20 (TK et al.); a Parasitic near Moose Jaw, SK, July 31 (GG); a Long-tailed at S.R.V. Sep. 8 and an unidentified jaeger at Calgary Sep. 12 (PR,RT). A Franklin's Gull at Taber L., AB, Oct. 31 was late (LBe), and Little Gulls at Lindbrook, AB, Sep. 13 (BR) and at Victoria Beach Oct. 21 (GH,CC) were rarities. Mew Gull reports totalled a much-higher-than-usual 17 in the Calgary-Taber area, while Edmonton, AB, hosted at least two Iceland Gulls Nov. 8–14 (BR, RKL, PM, CF et al.). A juv. Lesser Black-backed Gull near St. Ambrose Nov. 2, was about the 5th for s. Manitoba (RKO). Other noteworthy gulls were a Glaucous-winged at Regina, SK, Oct. 16–18 (RKr, CP) and another at Edmonton, Nov. 13 (RKL); a Great Black-backed in the same city Nov. 12–14 (RKL, BR, BCl et al.); a very cooperative Sabine's at Lac du Bonnet, MB, Oct. 3–18 (RZ, RPa, LVe et al.); and an Ivory at Churchill Nov. 4 (CS). A well-observed **Ancient Murrelet** at Little Arm Bay Nov. 13 provided Saskatchewan's first sight record (RKr,CP).

Snowy Owls arrived late: Nov. 24 in s. Manitoba and Nov. 29 in the Calgary area. Short-eared Owls went virtually unreported. Two Com. Nighthawks at Hubbard Point, MB, about 80 km from the Northwest Territories border, were far north Aug. 15 (DF). Rarely reported in fall were a Com. Poorwill at Taber Sep. 9–10 (LBe) and two Whip-poor-wills at Stonewall, MB, Sep. 4 (KG). Alberta's 2nd **Costa's Hummingbird**, found in early Aug., was reported without details (*vide* PW).

PASSERINES

A W. Kingbird was almost two months late at Victoria Beach, MB, Nov. 1 (G&SG,RA, RPo et al.). A Black-billed Magpie at Thompson, MB, from Aug. to Nov. 11+ was unusually far north (WJ). A Tree Swallow at Willow Creek P.P., AB, Oct. 17, may have been record late (ph. TK). Carolina Wrens were reported, but not documented, at Delta Aug. 19 and Victoria Beach Oct. 24 (AH, LBa; RPa, LVe).

Eastern Bluebirds continue to expand into Alberta, judging by family groups in the Turner Valley area Sep. 13–15 and near

Claresholm Sep. 27 (JCo, LVo, TK, ph.). Two Townsend's Solitaires visited Riding Mountain N.P., MB, Oct. 10 (HT, LE) and one, possibly two, were at St. Ambrose Oct. 31–Nov. 2 (RPa et al.). A Swainson's Thrush at Grand Beach, MB, Nov. 15, was record late; nearly so was a Hermit Thrush in Winnipeg, MB, Nov. 22 (both LVe). At Stonewall, MB, a count/estimate of migrating Am. Robins reached 2840+ in four-and-a-half hours Sep. 24 (KG). Winnipeg had Varied Thrushes Oct. 18 & 25 (E&FZ; *vide* RS). Late Gray Catbirds were at High River, AB, Nov. 1 and Grand Beach Nov. 15 (JMo, G&SG). Locally rare were a N. Mockingbird at Lethbridge Oct. 19 (M&GWr) and a Brown Thrasher at Thompson Oct. 17 to Nov. 12+ (WJ).

High numbers of "eastern" warblers were reported, particularly in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Highlights included a **Blue-winged Warbler** in Regina Sep. 14 (FLn); several Nashville Warblers at I.B.S. Aug. 28 to Sep. 7 (RD, JCo, LVo); a N. Parula banded at Delta Aug. 23 (HH), with singles at Lethbridge Aug. 25–26 (T&DD); Black-throated Blue Warblers at Calgary Aug. 27 (HG) and at Delta Sep. 9 & 17 (HH, RD; banded), plus seven birds in Saskatchewan between Sep. 15 and Oct. 26 (m. ob.); and a Blackburnian Warbler at I.B.S. Sep. 14 (PR). Saskatchewan's 13th Townsend's Warbler was in Regina Sep. 14 (FLe). There were high numbers of Bay-breasted Warblers in s. Alberta, in Winnipeg (RKO), and at Delta, where 17 were banded vs. a previous high of 9 (HH). At I.B.S. 21 Am. Redstarts were banded, compared to 4–6 normally (*vide* GB); a late redstart was in Winnipeg Oct. 27 (LM). An obliging Prothonotary Warbler, Regina's 4th, lingered Sep. 28–Oct. 13 (DH, FLn, m. ob.). A Com. Yellowthroat at I.B.S. Nov. 19 was tardy (TK). A **Hooded Warbler** in Saskatoon, SK, Sep. 20–25 was number four for the province (MWi, MR, m. ob.).

SA A feeder owner, who could not identify a bird that had been visiting his yard since early fall, eventually persuaded a local newspaper to print a photograph of the bird. Birders rushed to Barrhead, AB, and found a **Curve-billed Thrasher** Dec. 9 (JU, PM, TT, KH, BD, BR; ph.). Although there is a hypothetical record from Saskatchewan in the 1970s, this appears to be Canada's first substantiated report (see Outstanding Rarities section).

Finally, a Wilson's Warbler was late at Lethbridge Oct. 18 (WG).

Female Summer Tanagers at Grosse Isle Oct. 21–Nov. 6 (DB et al; ph.) and at Victoria Beach Oct. 24 (RPa, LVe) were about the 18th and 19th for Manitoba. A Le Conte's Sparrow at Elk Island, AB, Nov. 11 (BCl) was late, while a Fox Sparrow at Taber Aug. 28 (LBe) and five White-throated Sparrows at Stonewall Aug. 2 (KG) were very early. A Golden-crowned Sparrow Sep. 26 was Mt. Lorette's first (PS); there were 3 reports of this species in Regina Sep. 15–26 (FLe, RKr). Churchill was visited by two Yellow-headed Blackbirds Aug. 12 (BCh), and a Rusty Blackbird was still at a feeder there at the end of Nov. (*vide* BCh). Taber's first Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch in years was early on Sep. 23 (LBe). An unusually high percentage of redpolls in Manitoba in Nov. were Hoaries (m. ob.).

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