

southern great plains region

Spring Migration, March to May 1999

The following report covers the March–May 1999 spring migration, followed by the June–July 1999 summer season.

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This was truly a spring of rarities—ranging from new state records to the return of rarities rarely expected to reoccur. The Regional avifauna exemplified its location at the continental crossroads—from east, west, north, and south, and including . . . yes, even intercontinental interloping. Add a very warm beginning and a conclusion not oppressively hot, and it was more than just interesting: it was a lot of fun to be birding in the southern Great Plains this season!

As patterns go, the spring was still continentally—or is it atypically—typical. It was good for many water, shore, and marsh birds—although extralimital ducks and gulls seemed somewhat scarcer than usual. Doves maintained their upsurge. Kansas and Nebraska almost had decent warbler-watching. With expectations on the rise, it will be disappointing when a real drought cycle hits. If there was a downside . . . it was that Purple Finches were becoming scarcer.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (*Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton Co., KS*); Fontenelle Forest (*Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co., NE*); K.B.R.C. (*Kansas Bird Records Committee*); McConaughy (*L. McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); N.O.U.R.C. (*Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee*); Ogallala (*L. Ogallala, Keith Co., NE*); O.B.R.C. (*Oklahoma Bird Records Committee*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R., Stafford Co., KS*).

LOONS THROUGH GULLS

A Red-throated Loon molting into alternate plumage at McConaughy 16 May (SJD) is only the 3rd spring record documented for Nebraska. Now expected more frequently, Pacific Loons were in *Noble/Pawnee, OK, 7 May (JWA)* and at *Ogallala 12–16 May (SJD, LP, BP)*. The **Yellow-billed Loon** pre-

sent in *Oklahoma* last season was last noted in early April. The high count for W. Grebe at McConaughy was 5000+ on 12 May (SJD). Western Grebes are now appearing more frequently in other parts of the Region; the 12 at Cheyenne Bottoms 30 Apr (SS, MR) was the high count away from McConaughy. Clark's Grebes arrived at McConaughy 28 Mar (SJD), among the earliest recorded, with five there 12 May (SJD, JF); the two Clark's present at Cheyenne Bottoms 24 & 30 Apr were paired with W. Grebes (SS, MR).

Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, rare in Nebraska, were in *Lancaster 31 May (JS)*, with a pair nesting as far north as *Douglas, KS, 22 Apr (DT)*. Up to 20 White Ibises appeared in *McCurtain, OK, by 8 May, with 150 there by 31 May (BH, m.ob.)*. Among the surprises of the season was a small upsurge in **Glossy Ibis** sightings. An adult was with a flock of 28 White-faced Ibises in *Filmore, NE, 24 Apr (JGJ)*—a possible first state record if accepted by N.O.U.R.C. Documentation for another Glossy at *Douglas, KS, 7 Apr (GP, m.ob.)* was submitted to the K.B.R.C.; two others were reported from *Quivira and Sumner, KS (fide LM)*. Yet others photographed in *Tulsa 26–29 Apr (JWA et al.)* and observed in *Tillman, OK, 29 May (EW)* await evaluation by the O.B.R.C. Only a handful of previously acceptable records of Glossy Ibis exist for all 3 states.

The status of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck is clouded by aviculture, but it keeps appearing: four were noted in *Tulsa 24 Apr (JSh)* and two in *Osage, OK, 18 May (BGa)*. The best count of Ross's Goose this season was 60 at McConaughy 24 Apr (SJD). Tundra Swans were in *Lancaster, NE (JS)*, and in *Cowley, KS (MT)*, both 4 Apr. Three Trumpeters and a Tundra were present through March at *Quivira (fide LM)*. Two Mute Swans in *Shawnee, KS*, this winter were still present 8 Apr, and another was in *Jefferson, KS, until at least 11 Apr (fide LM)*—the vagaries of their presence suggest escape to the wild, or actual wild status. An



Am. Black Duck 27 Mar in *Scotts Bluff (SJD)* was only the 8th Nebraska Panhandle record. The only Surf Scoter reported came from *Quivira 24 Apr (SS, MR, LE)*. A Long-tailed Duck was reported at *Ogallala 8 Mar (SJD)*, two were in *Sarpy, NE, 2–5 Apr (BP, LP)*, two were at *Ogallala 24 Apr (SID, BP, LP)*, and one was in *Sedgwick, KS, 24 Apr (HG)*. A Com. Goldeneye at *Ogallala 19 May (BP, LP)* was very late.

Bald Eagle good news continues, with perhaps 30 pairs now attempting to breed in Oklahoma (*fide GMSARC*). Northern Goshawks were reported in Kansas from *Pawnee 14 Mar (SS)*, *Jefferson 2 Apr (RR)*, *Morton 6 Apr (BP, TD)*, and *Douglas 10 Apr (AP)*. Merlins continue on an upswing, with ten reported from Nebraska (*fide WRS, JGJ*) and seven from Kansas (*fide LM*). Peregrine Falcons can now almost be expected on a field day from late April to early May in the Region; a whopping 25 were reported from Nebraska between 17 Apr and 16 May (*fide WRS, JGJ*), and there were 13 from Kansas (*fide LM*). The only Yellow Rail reported this season was in *Douglas, KS, 23 Apr (DW)*. Black Rails were found in *Stafford 8 May (MR et al.)* and *Comanche, KS, 30 May (PJ)*. Eight Whooping Cranes were noted in *Rush, KS, 20 Apr (LH)*. For the first time this century, Sandhill Cranes were found breeding in Nebraska, with two adults and two chicks present 29 May in *Clay (JGJ)*. An ad. **Common Crane** seen in Kearney during March (TVC, m.ob.) surprisingly provided both a 5th Nebraska and 5th Regional record. This bird shared the pale plumage worn by a bird found last fall in Delta Jct., Alaska (*fide WRS, JGJ*).

A Snowy Plover at *Quivira 16 Mar (RB)* was early. A pair of Piping Plovers was

courting and digging nest scrapes in *Hitchcock*, NE, 13 May (SJD), a possible new breeding location. Eleven migrating Pippings were reported from Kansas 24 Apr–8 May (*vide* LM). The Black-necked Stilt continues to increase in the Region, with likely breeders in *Sheridan*, NE, 1 May (SJD), *Alfalfa*, OK, 16 May (JM et al.), and *Tillman*, OK, 29 May (EW), and up to eight migrants found in *Sequoyah*, OK, 9 Apr (*vide* JM). Whimbrel reports from Quivira on 7 & 23 May (MR) furnished the bounds of the species' window of passage through the Region this spring; a high count of 11 occurred in *Clay*, NE, 15 May (JGJ). A fine count of 400–500 Hudsonian Godwits was noted at Cheyenne Bottoms 31 Apr (GP et al.); one lingered in *York*, NE, 30 May (JGJ). Where singles are exceptional in spring, the 27 Red Knots documented in *Adams*, NE, 20 May (JGJ) were beyond amazing; a single was found in *Noble/Pawnee*, OK, 15 May (JM et al.). Probably a remnant from winter was a Dunlin in *York*, NE, 3 Apr (JGJ). A female **Ruff** photographed 8 May in *Kingfisher*, OK (JWA), was a long-awaited first for Oklahoma. Totals of 366 Buff-breasted Sandpipers and 57 Short-billed Dowitchers were located during May in s.e. Nebraska, a better-than-average tally for both (*vide* WRS, JGJ). Although individual records for Short-billeds may always be clouded by identification issues, they appear to be rare but regular migrants in the e. portions of the Region. About 65 Buff-breasteds were reported from Kansas (*vide* LM). Southeast of their main migration route were two Red-necked Phalaropes in the Rainwater Basin, NE, 6 May (JGJ), one in Tulsa 5–7 May (JWA et al.), one 8 May in *Sedgwick*, KS (PJ), three 8 May in *Stafford*, KS (MR et al.), and nine at Ogallala 12 May (SJD).

This spring's relatively poor showing of gulls included Laughing in *Riley*, KS, 24 Apr (GS) and Tulsa 1 May (BGa, P&JM) and California Gulls e. of McConaughy in *Dawson/Gosper*, NE, 9 Mar (SJD) and Sarpy, NE, 18 Apr (WRS). Up to five Thayer's Gulls were at Ogallala 8 Mar (SJD), with single first-year birds at *Miami*, KS, 6 Mar (AS) and McConaughy 27 Mar (SJD). Lesser Black-backed Gulls, a recent phenomenon in the Region, included a single 4th-year bird at Ogallala 8 Mar (SJD) and an adult in *Douglas*, KS, 11 Mar (MRb). A small ad. Glaucous Gull remaining at McConaughy until at least 28 Mar (SJD) generated subspecies speculation. An imm. Sabine's Gull in *Miami*, KS, 24 Mar (ML, AM) was a real surprise; few are ever seen in spring.

DOVES THROUGH THRASHERS

The dove story is one of expansions. Eurasian Collared-Doves were found in *Crawford* 7 Mar (RM) and *Pratt* 30 Apr (SS, MR) and were nesting in *Harvey* 31 Mar (GF), all in Kansas. A small group has apparently established itself in *Alfalfa*, OK (m.ob.). A White-winged Dove found in *Knox* 22–27 Apr (MB) was only the 4th documented for Nebraska; the White-winged at Kearney since July 1998 was still present this season (*vide* LR, RH). Other White-wingeds were in Oklahoma in Tulsa 21 Apr (JB) and 9 May (BC), *Comanche* 21–23 Apr (JMc), *Oklahoma* 24 Apr (NV), and *Cherokee* 27 Apr (SC), and in *Pawnee*, KS, 4 & 31 May (JSt, DB, SS) and *Morton*, KS, 4 May (DM, JH). Inca Doves were reported in *Oklahoma* 6 Apr (KL) and *Comanche*, OK, 18 Apr–29 May (JMc).

A N. Saw-whet Owl singing on 21 May in *Dawes* (WM) suggested the possibility of a yet-to-be established breeding record for Nebraska. A **Lesser Nighthawk** documented in *Morton*, KS, 30 Apr (GP, MM, SP, CH) will likely provide the first state record for Kansas. Far out-of-range was a Lewis's Woodpecker 19 Mar–29 Apr in *Rogers*, OK (BL, SM, m.ob.). This season continued a disconcerting streak of more than a few years since Red-headed Woodpeckers have had an outbreak (*vide* WRS, JGJ). Nebraska's first Pileated Woodpecker nest was the scene of a colorful battle when the Pileated pair defended it from Wood Ducks on 25 Apr (CNK, RBa, m.ob.).

Olive-sided Flycatchers in Tulsa 22 Apr (MK, JL) and Omaha 1 May (CEJ) were early. A Hammond's Flycatcher at *Scotts Bluff* 11–12 May (SJD) was only the 2nd documented spring record for Nebraska. Awaiting N.O.U.R.C. review, another possible first for Nebraska was a **Gray Flycatcher** recorded from *Kimball* 17 May (SJD, BP, LP). Participating in recently noted incursions were up to six Ash-throated Flycatchers in *Morton*, KS, 27 Apr and 1 May (BPe, KH, GP et al.) and one in *Harper*, OK, 30 May (PJ). How about **Great Kiskadee** for a yard bird? One was observed 19–22 May in *Tulsa* (Jsn, m.ob.)—a 3rd for Oklahoma and the Region.

An estimated *half-million* Am. Crows in *Sedgwick*, KS, 14 Mar (HG) was impressive. At least 15 Fish Crows made it N to *Montgomery*, *Chautauqua*, and *Cherokee*, KS, 2 May (GP et al.). White-eyed Vireo, a rare bird in Nebraska, was reported in *Sarpy* 5 & 8 May (BP, LP; CEJ). Three migrant Plumbeous Vireos were in *Kimball*, NE, 17 May (SJD, BP, LP). A male Bewick's Wren

far out of range was singing in *Antelope*, NE, 15 May (LB, m.ob.). Early House Wrens appeared in *Pawnee*, KS, 9 Apr (SS) and *Otoe*, NE, 12 Apr (LF, CF). Also early, or perhaps wintering, were six Ruby-crowned Kinglets in *Kearney*, NE, 9 Mar (LR, RH). Thirteen Sage Thrashers in the Nebraska Panhandle made for a better-than-normal appearance; they are probably regular spring migrants there (*vide* WRS, JGJ).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Blue-winged Warblers were reported from *Rogers*, OK (BC), *Johnson*, KS, 2 May (MG), and *Wyandotte*, KS, 11 May (CH). Among rarities becoming not-so-rare were nine Golden-winged Warblers from e. Nebraska, the most westerly from *Filmore* 14 May (SJD, JGJ); five were reported from Kansas (*vide* LM). A Tennessee Warbler displaced unexpectedly westward was in *Kimball*, NE, 17 May (SJD), as were four N. Parulas making it to *Garden*, *Kimball*, and *Hitchcock*, NE, 1–13 May (SJD). An unexpected array of Cape May Warblers showed a Kansas–Nebraska progression. These included Kansas birds in *Sedgwick* 2 May (JN), *Harvey* 2 May (CS), *Chautauqua* 2 May (GP et al.), *Leavenworth* 13 May (CH et al.), and *Shawnee* 16 May (CS); Nebraska sightings were in *Filmore* 16 May (JGJ) and two in *Lancaster* 17–18 May (MUs, JS, LE). Also very fine finds were the Black-throated Blue Warblers in *Fontenelle Forest* 7 May (BP, LP) and *Harvey*, KS, 8 May (JN). The first documented **Black-throated Gray Warbler** for Nebraska was a male found in *Kimball* 1 May (SJD); previous reports for Nebraska were lamentably undocumented. Representing some level of range extension were the 11 Yellow-throated Warblers in *Leavenworth*, KS, 11 Apr (JSt); another was farther west in *Filmore*, NE, 4 May (JGJ, SJD). A Pine Warbler was also in *Leavenworth*, KS, 12 May (MR). Prairie Warbler wandered W to *Shawnee*, KS, 21 Apr (DG) and *Kearney*, NE, 7 May (JT). Also westerly was a Prothonotary Warbler in *Lancaster*, NE, 22 May (JS) and another in *Hall*, NE, 5 May (JT). Among other wandering southeastern warblers were Worm-eatings seen W to *Sedgwick* 2–3 May (PJ, m.ob) and *Morton*, KS, 16 May (AS). More than the normal array of extralimital Hooded Warblers appeared W to *Morton* 26 Apr (BPe, KH), *Sedgwick*, KS, 2 May (PJ, m.ob.), and *Phelps*, NE, 16 May (*vide* MU). A Connecticut Warbler in *Wyandotte*, KS, 26 May (CH, MR) represented one of the tougher finds. A MacGillivray's Warbler in *Filmore*, NE, 15 May (JGJ) was one of only 4 spring reports from e. Nebraska

A female Scarlet Tanager wandered far west to *Cherry*, NE, 16 May (SW). Probably encouraged by the early warm spring weather was a male Grasshopper Sparrow singing about a month ahead of schedule in *Coffey*, KS, 6 Mar (MM). A migrant Savannah Sparrow made it to *Dixon*, NE, on the record early date of 10 Mar (†JJ). A Baird's Sparrow in *Clay* 24 Apr (ph. JGJ) provided the earliest spring migration date of 7 Nebraska records. Henslow's Sparrows found in *Lancaster*, NE, 10 May (JG) and 16 & 21 May (KE, JS, BPe) may be remnants of or new immigrants to a small population there. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was reported in *Lancaster*, NE, 16 May (LE) and *Jefferson*, KS, 22 May (DLS). Clearly not influenced by the early spring heat were a Harris's Sparrow in *Crawford*, KS, 28 May (RM)—exceptionally late—and a Dark-eyed Junco in *Leavenworth*, KS, 23 May (CO). Encouraging in the face of generally declining prairie bird populations was the count of 1893 McCown's Longspurs in *Kimball*, NE, 17 Apr (SJD).

Two **Pyrrhuloxias** in *Oklahoma* 17–22 Mar (KL, m.ob.) were a big surprise. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were far west in *Scotts Bluff*, NE, 10 May (AK), *Cimarron*, OK, 16 May (JM et al.), and *Kimball*, NE, 17 May (SJD). Painted Buntings wandered N to *Riley*, KS, 7 May (TC) and *Johnson*, KS, 13 May (DS). Rather far west were one–two Rusty Blackbirds at *Keith/Garden*, NE, 27–28 Mar (SJD). A flock of 41 Great-tailed Grackles in *Knox*, NE, 6 Mar (JGJ) and the 25–130 Great-taileds that appeared in *Phelps*, NE, by 10 Mar (GH, WH) may be advancing a spring migration window for this species that is well underway in c. Oklahoma by 1 Feb. It seems that it won't be long before the entire state of Nebraska will be colonized.

Could there be a better way to end this account than with yet another Nebraska first—a big “score,” perhaps the “Bird of the Season,” and, yes, one of those promised “intercontinental interlopers?” A female **Brambling** put in a brief stint at the Dean and Phyllis Drawbaugh feeder in *Scotts Bluff*, NE, 14–19 Apr (*vide* AK, SJD). A female or imm. male that appeared at a Sturgis, SD, feeder 4–5 Apr may have been this same bird—but then again....

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The Nesting Season: June to July 1999

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The summer of 1999 may have ended the century underscoring the patterns of the past decade. It wasn't so much the totally unexpected as much as the continuing patterns that depicted the decade's flavor. Broadly, water conditions were good in the Region—and so it was good for the water, shore, and marsh birds needing the special niches water maintains. Vagrant southern herons and ibises were on their highs—especially, this season, White Ibises. Western and Eared grebes, Least Bitterns, King Rails, and Black-necked Stilts also showed signs of currently improving populations. Water also creates sites for migrant and vagrant shorebirds—thus, more observations of more shorebirds this season.

There was a general thrust of breeding directed northward—as exemplified by Mississippi Kites, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Lesser Goldfinches, and Great-tailed Grackles. However, the blast of House Finches seen in the early years of the decade has faded. While good water conditions can also benefit landbirds, the broad patterns of the decade were more mixed for this group. Like those of the recent past, this season revealed no major expansions of Neotropical migrants, and few worth even a minor note. Range contractions are more difficult to document, and drawing attention to appearances can produce either insightful or illusory patterns difficult to assess without reliable comparative background. In much of the Region, species that have been generally expected—such as Swainson's Hawk, Bell's Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, and Orchard Oriole—are clearly declining and have even been extirpated in some broad areas. Heron colonies in urban/suburban settings con-

tinue to take a beating. We thus move into the next century with a mix of excitement and trepidation. Human population expansion, habitat degradation, and cowbirds are likely to continue to be the main culprits.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (*Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton Co., KS*); Fontenelle Forest (*Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co., NE*); Funk Lagoon (*Funk Lagoon, Phelps, NE*); McConaughy (*L. McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); Ogallala (*L. Ogallala, Keith Co., NE*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R., Stafford Co., KS*).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

In a recent general trend of increasing summer reports, Com. Loons were noted at scattered locations throughout the Region. Western Grebes with young were again at Cheyenne Bottoms 18 Jul (SP, CH) as in the past several years. Several Clark's Grebes were reported at McConaughy through the period (JS, BP, LP), with others in *Sheridan*, NE, in late June (BA), *Garden*, NE, 5 Jun (AK), and Cheyenne Bottoms 29 Jul (TC, MR). At least 92 pairs of Eared Grebes nested in *Kearny*, KS, 14 Jul (AN)—a fluff of the current wet conditions. Six Anhinga nests contained nine young 2–5 Jun in *McCur-tain*, OK (BH).

Least Bittern reports have seen their ups and downs in the Region—mostly downs—in spite of a decade of generally improved water conditions. This year, however, offered an improvement, with 15 at Quivira 24 Jun (BG) and others at various locations in Kansas (*vide* LM), s.e. and s.c. Nebraska (*vide* WRS), and s.e. Oklahoma (*vide* BH, DA). Little Blue Herons in a small gathering in s.e. Nebraska during July (*vide* WRS) were wanderers. A Tricolored Heron noted

at Quivira 24 Jun (BG) is becoming an annual but still noteworthy occurrence. A Green Heron, very rare in s.w. Nebraska, was at *Dundy* 12 Jun (MB, DH). An ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron wandered to Funk Lagoon 13 Jul (GH, WH); an immature was at *Lancaster*, NE, 19 Jul (JS); and eight Yellow-crowneds were at Quivira 29 Jun (MR). White Ibis, generally an exceptional (Nebraska) to rare (s.e. Oklahoma) vagrant, made a much better than average showing this season. An immature in *Clay* 4–25 Jul (JGJ, m.ob.) was only the 3rd for Nebraska. Immatures were also found at Quivira 18 Jul (SP, CH) and Cheyenne Bottoms 29 Jul (TC, MR). More than 150 White Ibises were counted in *McCurtain*, OK (BH, DA, m.ob.); among them in early July were up to five Roseate Spoonbills (DA, m.ob.).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were observed with young in *Osage*, OK, 7–16 Jul (MK, JL). While a first breeding record for Oklahoma, the origins of the adults are confused by local captivity and aviculture of this species. Trumpeter Swans breed in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska; an unbanded single in *Clay*, NE, 13 Jun (JGJ) was the only summer record away from the Sandhills. Becoming more commonly reported during summer is the Arctic-nesting Greater White-fronted Goose, with records of one–four birds from 4 locations in Nebraska (*vide* WRS). Now rare, but more commonly summering, are Snow Geese, with 22 in s.e. Nebraska 13 Jun (JGJ). Green-winged Teal away from the Sandhills included one in *Kearney*, NE, 6 Jun (LR, RH) and seven at Funk Lagoon 18 Jul (LR, RH). Though on a trend toward becoming regular in recent summers, the only report for Ring-necked Duck came from *Noble/Pawnee*, OK, 10 Jul (JWA). Generally occurring much farther north, a male Com. Goldeneye was in *Sheridan* in late June (BA)—only the 10th summer record for Nebraska (*vide* WRS)—and another was at Cheyenne Bottoms 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC). A male Bufflehead in *Kearney*, NE, 6 Jun (LR, RH) and a female in *Sheridan*, NE, in late June (BA) were also extralimital (*vide* WRS). Also surprising was a female Red-breasted Merganser at Quivira 14 Jul (SP, CH). Three Hooded Mergansers 4 Jun in *McCurtain* (BH) were among the very few summer records for Oklahoma.

RAPTORS

THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Inching northward were an ad. Mississippi Kite in *Lancaster*, NE, 22 Jul (CL *vide* TEL) and a pair in *Douglas*, KS, 19 Jul (PW). They

were present again at their Ogallala breeding location (JS). An ad. Golden Eagle in *Brown*, NE, 25 Jul (BP, LP) was notable. An Osprey in *Geary*, KS, 7 Jun (JK) was unexpected. An imm. Merlin in *Sioux*, NE, 28 Jun (JS) may have been associated with a very small breeding population in the Pine Ridge. King Rails nested at Quivira, where five young were observed 29 Jun (MR), and others were noted in *McCurtain*, OK (BH, DA).

Shorebirds were a ticket this summer, with species details creating some novel and emerging patterns. For example, normally Arctic-breeding Am. Golden-Plovers were in *Clay*, NE, mid-July (JGJ, GH, WH), and five tardy birds were present in *Tillman*, OK, 3 Jun (JAG, JWA). Three Semipalmated Plovers at Funk Lagoon 13 Jul (GH, WH) were somewhat early. Up to 12 nesting Piping Plovers were noted at McConaughy 20 Jun (BP, LP, JS). Migrant Pippings were present in *Wagoner*, OK, 17 Jul (JWA), Funk Lagoon 18 Jul (LR, RH), *Geary*, KS, 23 Jul (C&JO), and *Jefferson*, KS, 31 Jul (AS). Encouraging was a report of 58 Mt. Plovers with some young in *Morton*, KS, 1 Jul (JC). Black-necked Stilts continued to persist and even expanded their breeding in the Region. Several were present in *Sheridan*, NE, during June (AK, BA), and several pairs were in *Tillman*, OK, through the period (m.ob.).

Then there were the late spring and early fall migrants—or first-detected summer vagrants—you call them. A Greater Yellowlegs was at Quivira 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC), with 40 counted there 24 Jun (BG) and 125 on 29 Jun (MR); others appeared at Funk Lagoon 25 & 27 Jun (LR, RH). A Lesser Yellowlegs in *Grant*, NE, 6 Jun, five at Cheyenne Bottoms 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC), and ten at Quivira 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC) could have been late spring migrants, while 17 at Funk Lagoon 27 Jun (LR, RH) were likely early fall migrants. Early reproductive losers were the three Marbled Godwits in *Reno*, KS, 13 Jun (PJ, JB) and the singleton at Quivira 29 Jun (MR). Among exceptional late spring departures were a Hudsonian Godwit in *Tillman*, OK, 3 Jun (JAG, JWA) and two in *Hamilton*, NE, 6 Jun (JGJ). Two Semipalmated Sandpipers in *Hamilton*, NE, 6 Jun (JGJ) were rather late, while the first southbound bird to arrive was in *Clay*, NE, on the record early date of 4 Jul (JGJ). White-rumped Sandpipers dallied in good numbers with 200 still at Quivira 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC), 52 at Funk Lagoon 12 Jun (LR, RH), and 37 at Harvard Marsh 13 Jun (JGJ). A Baird's Sandpiper lingered to 12 Jun at Funk Lagoon (LR, RH). The latest spring Pectoral

Sandpipers included three at Funk Lagoon 12 Jun (LR, RH). More surprising were five Stilt Sandpipers at Cheyenne Bottoms and ten at Quivira 10 Jun (SS, MR, TC). Expected, but worth noting, were the 24 Buff-breasted Sandpipers in *Douglas*, KS, 29–30 Jul (GP, DW)—undoubtedly adults. Unidentified dowitcher reports included one as early as 27 Jun at Funk Lagoon (LR, RH). While Short-billeds are expected earlier than Long-billeds, late June specimens of dowitchers in Oklahoma have been Long-billeds. Short-billed Dowitchers identified by calls and plumage included one in *Clay*, NE, 7 Jul (GH, WH), 35 on 13 Jul at Funk Lagoon (GH, WH), one 18 Jul in Tulsa (JWA), and 24 in *Hamilton*, NE, 17 Jul (JGJ). Two Laughing Gulls were reported from *Riley*, KS, 6 Jun (TC), with others in *Reno*, KS, 18 Jul (PJ, CG) and *Cherokee*, OK, 31 Jul (JM, JH). Adult California Gulls at Quivira 17–29 Jul (SP, CH, TC, MR) and *Pawnee*, OK, 27 Jul (JWA) were the only birds reported away from McConaughy.

Eurasian Collared-Doves established a new breeding location this season in *Pierce*, NE, where two young were observed 23 Jul (*vide* MB). Up to five adults were present at the Kearney breeding location (*vide* WRS). The growing numbers from Kansas included birds at 2 locations in *Sedgwick* (TH, CM) and up to eight in *Stevens* (SP, CH). Other relatively interesting doves included Incas in *Texas*, OK, 8 Jun (JSt) and *Sedgwick*, KS, 23 Jul (PJ) and a White-winged Dove in *Ford*, KS, 3 Jun (MR). A likely spring overshoot, a male Broad-tailed Hummingbird spent a few days at *Scotts Bluff*, NE, in early June (*vide* AK). A small *Selasphorus* hummer visited a feeder in *Morton*, KS, 16 Jul (SP, CH). A Com. Poorwill with a nestling was discovered in *Russell*, KS, 12–14 Jul (DK, MR). After a period of absence, a few Lewis's Woodpeckers were again noted in the Pine Ridge this season (*vide* WRS). Red-headed Woodpecker numbers were low through the period in *Lancaster*, NE (LE), where starlings may be interrupting breeding. The Pileated Woodpeckers reported nesting at Fontenelle Forest in the spring report fledged at least two young (BP, LP).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

The best count of Cordilleran Flycatchers was five in *Sioux*, NE, 27 Jun (JS). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher wandered N to Dawson, NE, 5 Jun (TEL). Following up reports from last year, observers found Ash-throated Flycatchers nesting in *Morton*, KS, 4 Jun (MR) and 17 Jul (SP, CH), a clear range

extension. A daunting spectacle of nature, Purple Martins in *Muskogee*, OK, 29 Jul formed clouds of several hundreds of thousands (JN, DG).

There was good news for a cowbird-rid-dled species, the Black-capped Vireo. About 380 territorial males were mapped in *Comanche*, OK (JAG, BHy, RW), quadrupling numbers from the late 1980s. A cowbird trapping program creating near-zero parasitism resulted in one of the highest levels of vireo reproductive success ever recorded: almost three young per female. At least five of the eight vireo pairs in *Blaine*, OK, fledged young (JAG), hopefully enhancing the numbers of that precarious population.

A Red-eyed Vireo in *Sheridan*, KS, 19 Jun (SS) was somewhat far afield. A rare sighting of a Clark's Nutcracker in *Sioux* 24 Jun (LE) was one of only about 5 summer reports ever for Nebraska. Among recurring surprises has been the very light scatter of summering Red-breasted Nuthatches reported in the Region, including a pair this year in *Geary*, KS, 10 Jun and 29 Jul (SS, MR, TC). Among late migrants was a Gray-cheeked Thrush in *Cass*, NE, 3 Jun (GW). A Swainson's Thrush visiting *Dawes*, NE, 11-13 Jun (WM) was clearly forfeiting a reproductive advantage.

Although the Region embraces both the e. and w. edges of the breeding ranges of many warbler species, there is little news to report—perhaps a sobering note of the times. Male Blue-winged Warblers were found at Fontenelle Forest 11 Jun (JG), in *Knox*, NE, 18 Jun (*vide* WRS), and in *Wyan-dotte*, KS, through 7 Jul (*vide* LM). Prairie Warblers have essentially withdrawn from their former range in c. Oklahoma where they were routinely present in the late 1970s. However, male Prairies were noted in *Elsworth*, KS, 5 Jun (CS) and *Douglas*, KS, through 7 Jul (*vide* LM). Two MacGillivray's Warblers were reported in *Sioux*, NE, 25 Jul (EB)—about a month early for fall migrants and, therefore, raising the possibility of nesting. There is currently no evidence of MacGillivray's breeding in Nebraska. A still-hopeful male Hooded Warbler was singing in *Douglas*, NE, 20 Jun (JT), and a very late Wilson's Warbler was present in *Chase*, NE, 13 Jun (MB). Three Yellow-breasted Chats seen in *Harlan*, NE, 20 Jun (LR, RH) provided what appears to be the only local report of this species for many years. It has been essentially extirpated from e. Nebraska and only occurs in numbers in the north and west.

Two Bachman's Sparrows recorded in

Atoka, OK, 19 Jun (WAC et al.) established another data point for this very local species. A Henslow's Sparrow singing in *Lancaster* on 2 Jun (JS) fits the pattern of recent prairie-remnant related sightings in s.e. Nebraska, but a male in *Osborne*, KS, 16 Jun (M&ER) and one singing 25 Jul in *Clay*, NE (JGJ), were unexpected. As many as 30 Song Sparrows were present at Funk Lagoon 12 Jun (LR, RH); this species is slowly establishing itself in this area. Exceptionally, an ad. Song Sparrow was noted feeding two young in *Sedgwick*, KS, 13 Jul (TH). Swamp Sparrows are also developing a growing but isolated population at Funk Lagoon, where the best count was 20 on 5 Jul (LR, RH, LB), a new high for the location. Great-tailed Grackle, expanding in recent years, continued at its far western outpost in *Scotts Bluff*, NE, where four were seen 22 Jun (AK). Red Crossbills were common on the Pine Ridge this season (LE). A female Lesser Goldfinch in *Morton*, KS, 17 Jul (SP, CH) may be a bird on the fringe.

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