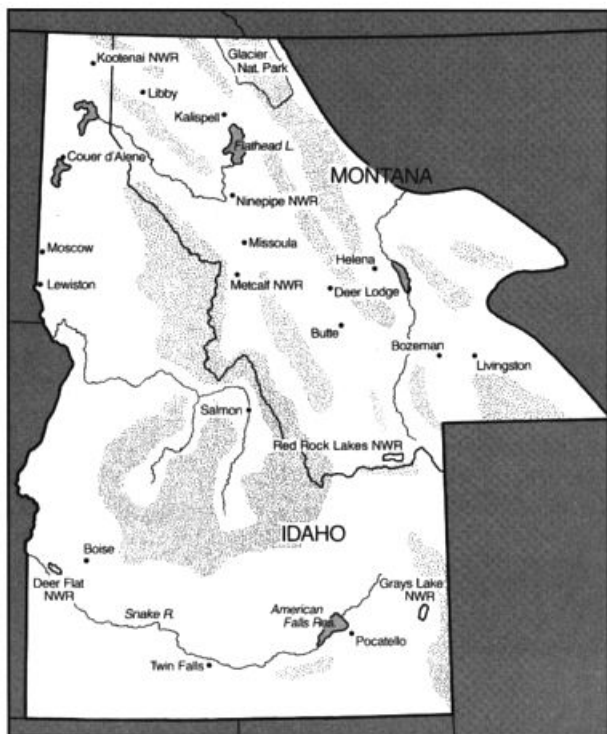


idaho-western montana



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The summer of 2000 was unusually hot and dry. Although June's weather was variable across the Region, most locations were very dry and much warmer than usual by late July. Late summer's extreme heat and drought conditions caused the rapid draw-down of lakes and reservoirs, and also initiated the worst wildfire season in 50 years. There were no specific data that indicated how these conditions affected nesting birds, but a few observers thought that nesting success seemed fairly normal. Receding water created vast mudflats at American Falls Reservoir and attracted truly amazing numbers of waders, shorebirds, and gulls, making this summer one of the most memorable birdwatching seasons there.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., by American Falls, Idaho); Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); I.B.O. (Idaho Bird Observatory at Lucky Peak, near Boise, ID); Latilong (area encompassed by one° latitude and one° longitude, used in mapping bird distribution in both Idaho and Montana); Lee Metcalf (Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Ravalli, MT).

LOONS THROUGH GULLS

Two Common Loons that summered at Minidoka N.W.R., *Blaine & Cassia* (SB), were especially unusual in s. Idaho. An estimated 650 American White Pelicans staged at A.F.R. 16 Jul (MCr), possibly Idaho's largest concentration ever. Great Egrets made news in both states. Singles strayed n. to Mann L., *Nez Perce*, ID, 5 Jun (KC) and the Deer Lodge, MT, area, 5 Jun (WH), where they are seldom seen, and 43 tallied at A.F.R. 15 Jul (MCr) was a local record. White-faced Ibises also flew astray: 4–13 were at Mann L. 3–7 Jun (BJ), 2 stopped in *Custer*, ID, 9 Jun (D&EF), and one visited Lee Metcalf 9–13 Jun (WT). Record numbers of White-faced Ibises staged at A.F.R. in mid- to late July, with at least 20,000 there 30–31 Jul+ (MCr). Harlequin Ducks have been increasingly reported in the Missoula, MT, area in recent years, but a female with a fledgling there 27 Jul (WK, JM) represented the first verified breeding in 30 years.

A pair of Black-necked Stilts that wandered to Lee Metcalf 5 Jun (WT) was noteworthy because there is no confirmed breeding for this increasingly reported species in w. Montana. Rare shorebirds of the season included a Whimbrel at Missoula, MT, 1 Jun (LW), a Ruddy

Turnstone at A.F.R. 23 Jul (DB), a Red Knot at A.F.R. 30 Jul (MCr), and Short-billed Dowitchers at Dry L., *Ada*, ID, 7 Jul (JA) and Mann L., ID, 19 Jul (BJ). *Calidrids* at A.F.R. swelled to unusually high numbers in early to mid-July; at least 6000 peeps staged there 16 Jul (MCr). Franklin's Gulls usually wander n. in small numbers, but this year up to 39 were at Mann L. 5–9 Jun (m.ob.), two were in *Idaho*, ID, 9 Jun (MK), and two visited Lee Metcalf 13 Jun (WT). Best gull of the season was a **Black-legged Kittiwake** in *Bonner* 8 Jun (ph. RB), providing Idaho's 6th record and was a first for Latilong 1.

PIGEONS THROUGH VIREOS

This was *the* year to see Band-tailed Pigeons, with 7 reports from n. and w. Idaho and 4 from w. Montana. The Region's Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoo populations have dramatically declined from historic numbers, so any sightings are now considered noteworthy. The season's reports included a Black-billed in *Madison*, MT, 20–21 Jun (MB) and Yellow-billed in *Custer*, ID, 24 Jun–2 Jul (D&EF, F&MZ), *Fremont*, ID, (*vide* CW), *Bingham*, ID, 25–26 Jun (MCr), and at *Camas* 9–10 Jul (GD). Best of all, a pair of Yellow-billed with a fledgling reported in *Boise* 15–16 Jul (CS) provided a first confirmed breeding record for Latilong 17 and sw. Idaho. Like last year, swifts were reported at unusual locations. Two Black Swifts in *Valley*, ID, 12 Jun (BC) provided a first for Latilong 11, and Vaux's Swifts in *Boise*, ID, 20 Jun & 15 Jul (MC, FK, DT) were well s. of range. Especially unusual in summer was an Anna's Hummingbird in *Boise*, ID, 1–31 Jul (MC, FK). Another northbound wanderer was the White-headed Woodpecker in *Bonner* 19 Jul (EC); they are seldom reported in extreme n. Idaho.

As in recent years, there were scattered reports of Least Flycatchers in *Bonner*, *Custer*, and *Jefferson*, ID, where the *Empid* is rare and very local. More significantly, a female **Least Flycatcher** observed feeding nestlings at Kootenai N.W.R., *Bonner* 24 Jun (SR) provided the first verified breeding in Idaho. A brood-patched female **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** captured at I.B.O. 25 Jul (JC) was very interesting. Besides 5 caught at I.B.O. within the past year, there are no other verified reports of

this enigmatic species in Idaho. Idaho's 3rd **Cassin's Kingbird** in *Adams* 18–24 Jul (†BC) represented the first report of this species in eight years. Two reports of Plumbeous Vireos in the Boise area 1 Jun & 19 Jul (JC) were far w. of their known breeding range in se. Idaho.

WRENS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Four Bewick's Wrens observed 4 Jul and another captured 14 Jul in *Oneida* were firsts for Latilong 26 (MCR, CT) and se. Idaho. Reports of Northern Mockingbirds in Idaho were about average, with a pair in *Bingham* 1–22 Jun (DB) and another in *Blaine* 4 Jul (WW). Idaho's 10th **Brown Thrasher** was at *Camas* 3 Jun (DB, MCR); they are now annual in e. Idaho. Bushtits observed near Boise, ID, 30 Jun & 9 Jul (CS, FV) were far n. of their usual range.

The rarest warblers of the season included a Tennessee Warbler in *Boise*, ID, 4 Jun (BK), a Chestnut-sided Warbler in *Jefferson*, ID, 8–10 Jun (BD, GR, CW), and an Ovenbird in *Lolo*, MT, 6 Jun (EG). Noteworthy Idaho Fringillids included a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Kootenai* 8 Jul (*fide* SS) and a pair of Blue Grosbeaks in *Twin Falls* 16 Jun (*fide* KF); both are now annual. Reports of Lark Buntings continued from e. Idaho, but one in *Elmore* 21 Jun (JB) was far west. The headline sparrow of the period was a well-described **Cassin's Sparrow** in sw. *Ada* 12–13 Jun (†JD) that furnished Idaho's 1st record. Brewer's Sparrows reported at *Paradise Ridge*, *Latah*, 24 Jul (KD) were interesting since there is no verified breeding for this species in n. Idaho. Single Black-throated Sparrows that visited n. *Ada*, ID, on 3, 7, & 13 Jun (JC, MC, FK) were unexpected, but the **Black-throated Sparrow** that wandered to the Helena Valley 17 Jun (GH, DSu, m.ob.) was Montana's 3rd. Because there is no Regional breeding record for White-throated Sparrow, a singing bird in Glacier N.P., MT, 20 Jun (SG) was noteworthy. In Idaho's Great-tailed Grackle news, a flock of 8 included 4 recently fledged young 7 Jul (GS) at their only consistent location, *Marsing*, *Owyhee*.

Arguably the best bird of the period was an imm. male **Hooded Oriole** in *Meridian* 1 Jun–31 Jul+ (RG, ph. ZN, †DT, m.ob.), which was a 1st for Idaho and the Region. An ad. male **Baltimore Oriole** that graced *Bonner*, ID, 3–11 Jun (RB) was the state's 3rd, as well as a 1st for Latilong 1. Following last year's major White-winged Crossbill irruption, one bird in *Fremont*, ID, 6–7 Jun (CW) was the only report. Two

Lesser Goldfinches in *Caldwell*, ID, 6 Jun (TE) were very unexpected, but the **Lesser Goldfinch** in *Dillon* 11–13 Jun (ph. SSh) provided Montana's 4th record.

CORRIGENDUM

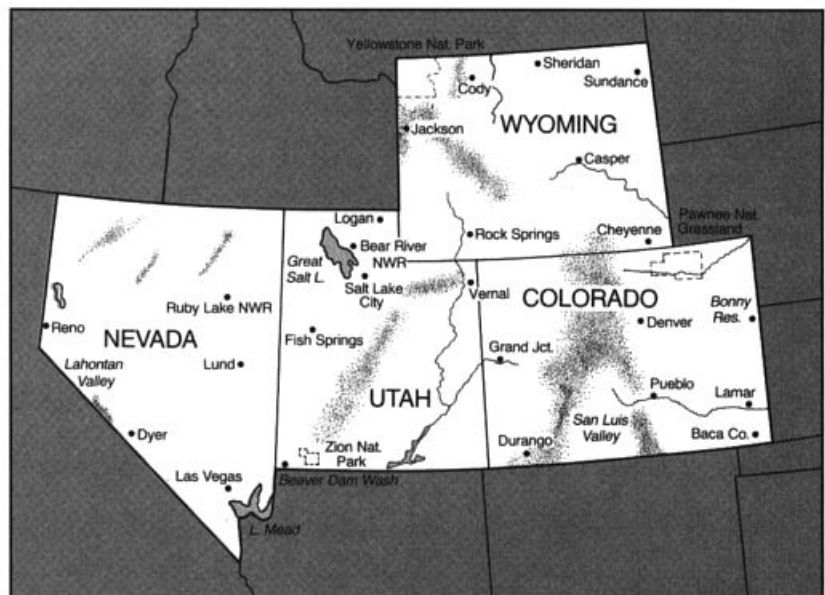
The Red-shouldered Hawk reported in *N. Am. Birds* 54:77 was Idaho's 7th.

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mountain west



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This is the last report for the four-state Mountain West Region; Utah and Nevada will become the Great Basin Region. We would like to thank the birders from Nevada and Utah who sent reports to us for this column.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

An alternate-plumaged Red-throated Loon was found in *El Paso*, CO, 5–8 Jun (AV), and a bird in basic plumage was in *Bent*, CO, 13 Jul (BKP, SC); these were the 2nd and 3rd summer sightings for Colorado. A Common Loon that summered at *Dotsero*, *Eagle* (JM), was the only one from w. Colorado; others appeared in e. Colorado as well. A Least Bittern was found in *Bent*, CO, 27 Jun (PEL); this species must be breeding in this area. An ad. Little Blue Heron was found in *Larimer*, CO, 8 Jun (SJD), and two adults and one calico bird were in *Adams*, CO, 22