

Manitoba's 2nd **White-winged Dove** was a well-described one-day visitor to a Stonewall yard (D&LO, K&BG). A Mourning Dove at Ft. Chipewyan 9–10 Jun was n. of its known range (RT, DV). A Black-billed Cuckoo at Chain Lakes P.P., AB 19 Jun was rare (TK); the only Saskatchewan record was at Tyvan 30 Jul (BL), but above-average numbers were present in extreme se. Manitoba (PT). Manitoba had only one known pair of Burrowing Owls, near Oak L (KDS, m. ob.). Rare in Alberta's mountains was a Long-eared Owl at Canmore 23 Jun (KB). Saskatchewan observers shared Manitobans' concern about the precipitous decline of Common Nighthawks (RKr et al.). A Whip-poor-will at Regina, SK 7 Jun was the city's first (CP, RKr et al.). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest at Earl Grey, SK 8 Jun was one of few ever found in the area (S&RE, CB, RKr). Lone Rufous Hummingbirds wandered e to near Taber, AB 23 Jul (M&RB) and Medicine Hat 27 Jul (DB). A female **Red-bellied Woodpecker** at Earl Grey 6–7 Jun was Saskatchewan's 7th and first since 1991 (CB). For the 2nd summer in a row, a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers summered well s. of the usual range at Balgonie, SK (RL).

PASSERINES

There were four Olive-sided Flycatcher reports at Churchill 7–13 Jun (m. ob.). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at S.R.V. 13 Jun was rare (WS). Three Eastern Kingbird sightings at Churchill 3–6 Jun possibly involved the same bird (DBg, C N.S.C. I, BC, m. ob.). A Loggerhead Shrike near Camper 20 Jun was unexpected so far n. (KG). Singing male Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireos held territories less than one mi apart in Calgary in late Jun (ASl). Although still abundant along the U.S. border, there was concern about the continued decline of Horned Larks elsewhere in s. Saskatchewan (RKr). An undocumented Rock Wren at Churchill 4 Jul represented the 3rd local report in five years (RJ et al.). Poor Mountain Bluebird productivity resulted in the lowest number of young banded in Saskatchewan since 1983 (SH et al.). A Wood Thrush was rare near Winnipeg 12 Jun (DBy), as was a Varied Thrush near Lac la Biche, AB 2–3 Jun (FM, RT). Northern Mockingbirds were at Churchill 5 Jun (m. ob.), at Chaplin, SK for most of the period (JB et al.), and near Saskatoon, SK 7–10 Jun (D&CM, *vide* SH).

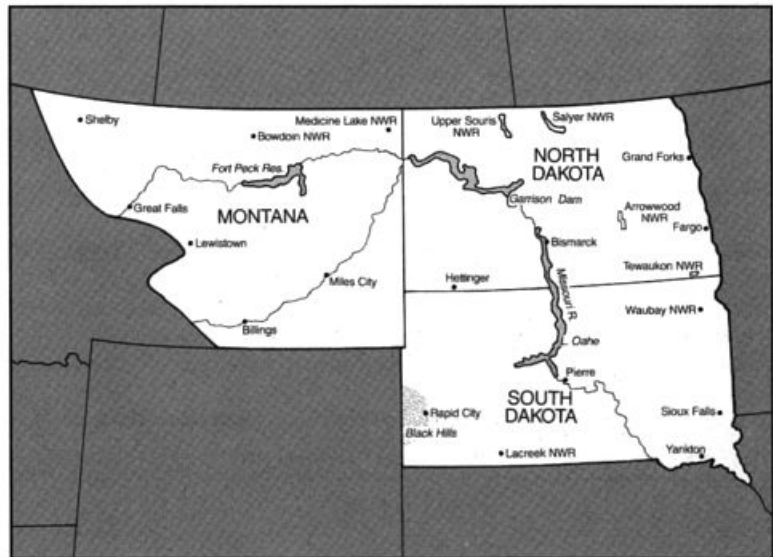
Single Cape May Warblers at S.R.V. 6 & 27 Jun were the first observed there in summer (WS). A Black-throated Green Warbler at Churchill 8 Jun was locally very rare (JC et al.). A Black-and-white Warbler at S.R.V. 6 Jun was new for the valley (WS). Yellow-breasted Chat

numbers were higher than usual near Medicine Hat, AB (PH). Unidentified tanagers, thought not to be Western, were noted near Claresholm, AB 19 Jun and at Calgary 28 Jun (TK). Lark Bunting numbers were low, even in the arid southwest of Saskatchewan (RKr, CP, m. ob.). The reported scarcity of Le Conte's Sparrows across the Region contrasted with higher-than-usual numbers of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. The latter species appears to have extended its range in s. Alberta in recent years (MH). Another species in well-above-average numbers at Medicine Hat was the Lazuli Bunting (PH). A Common Grackle was a rare visitor to Churchill 12 Jun (C.N.S.C. II). Locally rare in summer was a Cassin's Finch at S.R.V. 16 Jul (WS, RW).

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Northern Great Plains



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As has become the pattern in recent years, it was a fairly wet season. July was particularly wet, with above-average precipitation in most areas. However, with the preceding five months very dry, many areas were still below

average for the year. Water levels in the eastern Dakotas remain very high. A severe storm hit the Fort Peck, Montana area 24 July, and many injured birds were noted.

Among the numerous significant breeding records noted this season were first nestings for Golden-winged Warbler and Henslow's Sparrow in South Dakota, Black-throated Gray Warbler in Montana, and Henslow's Sparrow in North Dakota.

BITTERNS THROUGH HAWKS

As noted in previous columns, the expansion in range, and the increase in numbers, of long-legged waders continues unabated. A Least Bittern 16 Jun in *McKenzie*, ND was well w. of the species's range in the state (JPL). Three Great Blue Heron rookeries in *Grand Forks*, ND included at least 30 nests (EEF, DOL). It was only a few years ago that the first nesting for the county was recorded. Casual in Montana, single Great Egrets were seen at Freezeout L., MT 30 Jun and the last two weeks of Jul (MS, TB, JS).

Now seemingly regular in North Dakota, a Little Blue Heron was two mi from the Canadian border 9 Jun for a first county record in *Rolette* (REM). Fourteen Little Blue Heron nests were noted in the *Brown*, SD rookery 3 Jul (DAT). The 3rd nesting for the state, a **Tricolored Heron** nest was also noted in that rookery the same day (DAT). Until recently considered rare on the e. edge of North Dakota, 15 Green Herons were tallied in *Richland* 4 Jul (CDE, JPL). A flock of 160 White-faced Ibis near Freezeout L., MT 23 Jul was of notable size (MS).

With the population of Snow Geese ballooning ever larger, summer reports of the species continue to proliferate. At least 13 reports came for North Dakota and two from South Dakota. Only the 2nd confirmed nesting for South Dakota, young **Buffleheads** were noted 9 Jul in *Roberts* (BH). A brood at Medicine L. N.W.R., MT 23 Jul furnished the first confirmed breeding there (RS). In North Dakota, nearly 1000 Buffleheads were counted in 18 road-mi in *Kidder* 1 Jul (LI). A rare breeder at the extreme n. edge of the Region, a Common Goldeneye brood was seen at *Bowdoin* N.W.R., MT 13 Jun (DF), and two broods found at Ft. Peck in mid-Jun were the first recorded in that area (CC). The first breeding record in decades for North Dakota, a brood of **Common Mergansers** was found at *Devil's L.* in early Jun (BB).

Summer sightings of **Ospreys** in the Dakotas continue to increase. In South Dakota, the only known nest in recent years has been at *Pactola Res.* in the Black Hills. This year, new nests in the hills were discovered in *Custer* 23 Jul and *Lawrence* 29 Jul (JLB). The Regionwide expansion of Bald Eagle nesting was particularly evident this year in North Dakota. New nests were discovered in *Walsh*, *Rolette*, and *Ramsey*, and ads were seen in five other counties where nesting is not confirmed. A flock of 200 Swainson's Hawks in *Stanley*, SD 30 Jun contained mostly one-year-old birds (DB, RDO).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH VIREOS

Recorded for only the 2nd time as a south-bound migrant in the state, a Whimbrel was at *Lostwood* N.W.R., ND 17 Jul (TG). Casual in summer in Montana, Whimbrels were noted at *Bowdoin* N.W.R. 3 Jul (DP) and at *Freezeout L.* 22 Jul (TB). Very unusual in Jul in South Dakota, a White-rumped Sandpiper was in *Brown* 14 Jul (JSP, RFS).

Speculation about Herring Gulls nesting in North Dakota has gone on for years, but no confirmation has been documented. This year 3 agitated ads. were found on a probable nesting island at *Audubon* N.W.R. (CH, REM).

Three Burrowing Owl reports were received from e. of the Missouri R. in the Dakotas. They were noted in *McPherson*, SD 24 Jun (JDW). In North Dakota, a single was near *Parshall* in Jun (BM), and a family group was found in *Logan* 16 Jul (RHO). At least 50 pairs of Short-eared Owls were in *Grand Forks*, ND grasslands during the season (DOL, EEF).

Several North Dakota observers commented on the low numbers of Common Nighthawks. Regular migrants in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Rufous Hummingbirds peaked at 5 on 11 & 31 Jul in *Custer* (KH). A Red-bellied Woodpecker carrying food for young in *Richland*, ND 17 Jun provided the 3rd nesting record for the state (REM).

Still not confirmed nesting in South Dakota, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was singing in *Lawrence* 1 Jul (MMM). Southwest of usual range, an Alder Flycatcher was singing in riverside willows on the Lower Missouri R. at the N. Unit of T. Roosevelt N.P., ND 24 Jun (REM).

After three records this spring in South Dakota, another White-eyed Vireo sang for most of the period in *Union* (DS). Probably a very early migrant, a Blue-headed Vireo was in *Moody*, SD 7 Jul (JSP). A rare breeder in the Turtle Mts. of North Dakota, 2 Philadelphia Vireos were in *Bottineau* 16 Jun (REM).

RAVEN THROUGH WARBLERS

Two Common Ravens were well s. of known breeding areas in *Ransom*, ND 27 Jun (KLP). Very rare breeders in the Black Hills, broods of Pygmy Nuthatches were noted in *Pennington*, SD 1 & 9 Jul (TBW). Two Brown Creeper reports from North Dakota included a single 26 Jun at *Lostwood* N.W.R. (KS) and one at *Sully's Hill* N.G.P. 28–29 Jul (JPL). There are no nesting confirmations for the state. A Rock Wren carrying food for young in *Stutsman*, ND in late Jun provided the first nesting for

the county and the easternmost record in the state (KE, MI).

In 1996, a small population of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was found in Bear Canyon of the Pryor Mts., MT. An expanded search this year in canyons w. of the original area found one to two family groups in each canyon. Three nests were found (JM, PH). Brown Thrashers at the w. edge of their range included one near *Choteau*, MT 4 Jun (DC, JM) and another near *Freezeout L.* 29 Jun (MS, JS).

A **Golden-winged Warbler** with 2 young in *Meade*, SD 26 Jul furnished the first nesting record for the state (JLB). Not confirmed nesting in *McHenry*, six Orange-crowned Warbler territories were found at *Denbigh Exp. Forest*, ND during the season (REM). First confirmed breeding in South Dakota in 1997 in *Meade*, **Chestnut-sided Warblers** again nested in the county, with a young bird seen 29 Jul (JLB). A very early Magnolia Warbler was in *Medicine L.*, MT 8 Jul (TB). Marking the first nesting for *McHenry*, and the southernmost for the state, Myrtle Warblers were feeding a young bird at *Denbigh Exp. Forest*, ND 8 Jul (REM).

A pair of **Black-throated Gray Warblers** was found in Bear Canyon, Pryor Mts., MT 3 Jun. Subsequently seen by many, a nest was found 16 Jun. This provided the first nesting for the state and the 6th state record for the species (PH, LH). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found singing in the Ponderosa Pine Area of *Slope*, ND 7 Jun. The bird was taped and photographed the next day, a 2nd documented record for North Dakota (DNS). A pair of Hooded Warblers was defending a territory 10 Jun in *Lawrence*, SD (MR). The one nesting record for South Dakota is from the Black Hills area.

TANAGERS THROUGH CARDINAL

A Scarlet Tanager nest in *Pennington*, SD 15 Jul furnished the first nesting record for w. South Dakota (TBW). A Spotted Towhee was singing 16 Jun in the Turtle Mts. of *Bottineau*, ND (REM). Previously, only Eastern Towhees have been found in this area.

Pushing the n. edge of their range in e. North Dakota, 3 Field Sparrows spent the season on the *Walsh/Grand Forks* border (EEF). A **Henslow's Sparrow** nest with young was found 15 Jun in *McPherson*, SD. This provided the first nesting for the state (LI). The first state nestings for North Dakota were also recorded this season. A nest with young was recorded in *Richland* 24 Jun (FV, AB, GK, LF), and a 2nd nest was found in *Kidder* 8 Jul (LI). Another singing Henslow's was noted in *Kidder* in late Jun (KE, MI).

It was a very good year for Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Fifteen to 25 per day were tallied in late Jun in *Eddy*, ND (LI, DH). The species was also reported from *Brown* (JSP, RFS) and *McPherson*, SD, and 3 males were noted in the Medicine L., MT area (EM).

Casual in w. South Dakota, a Northern Cardinal was in Rapid City 4 Jul (JLB). A pair was feeding young in Fargo, ND in Jun, providing the first nest record for the state since 1986 (CC).

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Southern Great Plains



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As is typical of summer seasons on the Plains, this one was chiefly interesting for records of waterbirds, at least before many marshes and waterholes dried up. Vagrants from the Gulf coast wandered northward in limited numbers across the Region, with the exception of southeastern Oklahoma, which once again was inundated with southern waders. Although some species—such as White-faced Ibis, American Avocet, and Black-necked Stilt—appear to be doing well as

nesters, Western and Eared Grebes have not fared as well. Other marsh and freshwater species, although present in variety, were quite localized at widespread locations.

Whether from absence, heat, bugs, lack of pursuit, or otherwise, it was a less eventful season for landbirds, though these are difficult data to interpret. Cave Swallows were much in the news: sightings this season suggest as yet undiscovered breeding within the Region.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., *Barton*, KS); Hackberry (Hackberry Flats W.M.A., *Tillman*, OK); L. McConaughy (*Keith*, NE); L. Ogallala (*Keith*, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., *Stafford*, KS); Rainwater Basin (pothole area in s.-cen. NE); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., *McCurtain*, OK).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Among the stranger summer finds, but one occurring more frequently in recent years, is the 7th summer record of Pacific Loon for Nebraska, this one at L. Ogallala 3–23 Jun (SJD, TJ, BP, LP). Clark's Grebe appears to be more frequent as well: as many as 36 at L. McConaughy and L. Ogallala 29 Jun, with 16 others reported in w. Nebraska, 6 of them in *Lincoln*, NE 21 Jul (SJD). Two Clark's were located in *Cimarron*, OK 26–29 Jun (JWA, JS), with one at Cheyenne Bottoms 21 Jul (MG).

Neotropical Cormorants from Oklahoma included one to 5 at Red Slough (DA, m. ob.), with singles w. to *Cimarron*, OK 28 Jun (JWA, JS), and Hackberry 19 (JAG, VF) & 27 Jul (KM, LT, JDT). Nesting was noted among the 23 Anhingas at Ward L., *McCurtain*, OK 12 Jun (DA, JWA).

A few Least Bitterns were found this season at locations scattered from *Cedar*, NE 29 Jun (SVS) and *Lancaster*, NE 2–23 Jun (LE) to Red Slough, where up to 15 individuals and nesting activity were observed 5 Jun–25 Jul (DA, m. ob.). Rare in the Region, Tricolored Herons were located at Cheyenne Bottoms 8 Jun (GP), Quivira 13 Jun (SP, CH), *Alfalfa*, OK 17 Jul (JWA), and, of course, Red Slough (2 birds, DA, m. ob.). A juv. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was in *Clay*, NE 1 Jul (JGJ). The explosion of Glossy Ibis observations of recent years continues: one was documented in *Clay*, NE 14 Jul (JGJ), only the 2nd for Nebraska, with one or 2 there 20 Jul (WRS, SJD). Other Glossy Ibis were noted in *Major*, OK 8 Jun and 6 Jul (JWA), Hackberry 19 Jul (JAG, VF), and Cheyenne Bottoms 21 (MG) & 27 Jul (B&NB). The increase in Glossy Ibis records (and numbers) has accompanied a similar increase in White-faced Ibis, which were found at a new nesting location—Hackberry—confirmed 19 Jul (JAG, VF). A minimum of 25 pairs and six