

A Townsend's Warbler banded at Westby, MT 30 Aug provided only the 2nd local record (JM, TN). Furnishing the 6th record for South Dakota, a **Townsend's Warbler** was in *Pennington* 3-5 Sep (TJ, TBW+). If accepted, an imm. **Prairie Warbler** documented at Minot, ND 26 Sep would provide only the 2nd record for the state (REM+). A late Black-and-white Warbler was noted in *Hughes*, SD 10 Nov (KM). Increasingly reported from the Black Hills, but still casual in South Dakota, a Hooded Warbler was in *Pennington* 19 Aug-22 Sep (TJ, JLB+).

**TANAGERS THROUGH REDPOLLS**

A Western Tanager was well e. in *Hughes*, SD 20 Sep (RDO, EDS). A Clay-colored Sparrow 17 Nov in Hettinger provided the latest report for North Dakota, and only the 2nd for Nov (JPL, HCT, CDE). Rarely reported after Aug, a Baird's Sparrow was noted at Minot, ND 29 Sep (BD). Tying the latest report for North Dakota, a Le Conte's Sparrow was in Fargo 20 Oct (DPW). A

Lincoln's Sparrow was still present in *Yankton*, SD at the end of the period (SVS).

Two **Smith's Longspurs** were documented n. of Westby, MT 7 Oct (REM, TN+). If accepted, this would provide about the 4th record for the state. Northern Cardinals made a notable push into North Dakota, with six individuals noted away from the regular Fargo locations. Farthest nw. were singles at Upper Souris N.W.R. 16 Oct (REM) and at New Town 22 Nov (RS). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was tardy at Ft. Peck, MT 8-15 Nov (CC).

A large flock of 60 Great-tailed Grackles was still in *Douglas*, SD 3 Nov (SVS). White-winged Crossbills were widespread and in fair numbers across the Region. Many reports came from North Dakota, and the species was noted at three South Dakota locations. In Montana, a single was at Ft. Peck 19 Nov+ (CC). Common Redpolls also made a significant push into the Region, and an early Hoary Redpoll was tallied at Minot, ND 12 Nov (REM).

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# Southern Great Plains



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many species. Some observers wondered when the sparrows would be arriving; others lamented the absence or low densities of birds at feeding stations. Even juncos seemed uncommon. Some species, such as Carolina Wren, were clearly set back by the severity of last winter, and many wintering species may also have declined. The pattern

of below-average precipitation continued in many areas this fall. The fall season was also notable for the extremely mild weather pattern, which allowed many migrants to linger later than normal and delayed the arrival of many wintering species. Rarities were widely reported, nearly on par with the past several fall seasons.

**Abbreviations:** Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); L. Ogallala (L. Ogallala, Keith, NE); Oliver (Oliver Res., Kimball, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (pothole area in south-central Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK)

**LOONS THROUGH DUCKS**

A Red-throated Loon at *Noble/Pawnee*, OK 19 Oct (JAG) was quite early; another was in *Oklahoma* 3 Nov+ (JAG, SG, m. ob.). Still rare, but occurring more regularly, Pacific Loons were at Oliver 20 Oct (JF), *Sedgwick*, KS 29-30 Oct (1-2 birds; PJ, KK, B&NB), *Sequoyah/Cherokee*, OK Nov 5-15 (3; JWA, JS, SB), *Kingman*, KS 18 Nov (TH, LH), and *Cowley*, KS 21 Nov (TH, LH). Common Loons built up to an astounding 433 at L. Tenkiller, *Sequoyah/Cherokee*, OK 15 Nov (JWA, JS, SB).

Quite early was a Horned Grebe in *Phelps*, NE 26 Aug (LR, RH). Red-necked Grebes, rare in the Region, were noted on the very early dates of 15

Aug-15 Sep in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (SJD, TEL, JF), with another ad. in *Phelps*, NE 26 Aug (LR, RH). The fall build-up of Western Grebes on McConaughy this season reached an "astonishing" 29,500 by 19 Sep (SJD), with hundreds in *Lincoln*, NE 31 Aug (TEL). The 15 Westerns at Cheyenne Bottoms 24 Aug (BP) made a good count for that locale, with 3 others reported from e. Nebraska (*fide* WRS), 4 from Kansas (*fide* LM), and 2 from Oklahoma (JWA, JAG) Up to 18 Clark's Grebes were with the Westerns at McConaughy 19 Sep (SJD), with singles reported from *Scotts Bluff*, NE 15 Aug (SJD), L. Ogallala 1 Oct (LR, RH), and Cheyenne Bottoms 24 Aug (BP).

Up to 5 Neotropic Cormorants were seen 7 Aug-29 Sep at Red Slough (DA, BH, m. ob.), the only ones reported this season. Up to 10 Anhingas could be found at Red Slough 12 Sep-25 Oct (DA, BH, m. ob.), also the only ones recorded for the Region.

Great Egrets appear to be expanding their range in the Region, with up to 400 noted at Quivira 18 Aug (SS, DB) and one nw. to *Kimball*, NE 1 Aug (RW) Among the rarest herons in the Region, Tricoloreds were found at Quivira 2 Aug (DK, GS), with up to 18 at Red Slough 6 Aug-10 Oct (DA, BH, m. ob.) Yellow-crowned Night-Herons wandered n. and w to *Clay*, NE 11 Aug (JGJ), with one to 2 juvs. photographed in *Phelps*, NE 19 Aug (MU, LR, RH).

Among the very rare summer vagrants were an imm White Ibis in *Phelps*, NE 9 Aug (JD, *fide* LB). Possibly the same bird appeared at another location in *Phelps* 12-19 Aug (JK, MU et al.), only the 3rd documented for Nebraska. Several White Ibis lingered to 4 Nov at Red Slough (DA, BH). An even tougher find was a Glossy Ibis documented 13 Sep at Cheyenne Bottoms (BF). The 2 Roseate Spoonbills in *Finney*, KS 12 Aug-21 Sep (MO, TS, SSh) attracted many admirers, as did up to 3 spoonbills at Red Slough 7-23 Sep (BH, DA). Wood Stork numbers at Red Slough built to 259 in Aug, with birds lingering until 23 Sep (DA, BH, m. ob.).

It seems as if each year a token Mottled Duck observation comes from cen. Kansas; this year one was noted at Quivira 29 Aug (MR). A Mottled was also observed at Red Slough 23 Aug-3 Sep (DA, BH et al.) A Canvasback in *Morton*, KS 28 Aug-2 Sep (BP, SP, m. ob.) was either summering or a very early migrant. A female Ring-necked Duck in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 24 Aug (SJD) was probably an early fall migrant. Clearly exceptional was an alternate-plumaged ad. male **Harlequin Duck** in *Pierce*, NE 21 Nov (SW, *fide* EB, MB), the 3rd documented for Nebraska (*fide* WRS).

Any scoter is a good find in the Region, and fall is the best time to search for them. Surf Scoters were noted in *Jefferson*, KS 27 Oct (AP), *Knox*, NE 6 Nov (MB), *Custer*, OK 9 Nov (JAG, JWA), and *Reno*, KS 11 Nov (PJ, CG). The only White-winged Scoter documented this season was in *Custer*, OK 20 Nov (JAG) Three Black Scoters were observed: at L.

Ogallala 9 Nov (JGJ), *Tulsa* 18 Nov (BC), and *Osage*, KS 25 Nov (DG, DL). Surprisingly, the only report for Long-tailed Duck this season was from *Osage*, KS 30 Nov (JN).

## HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Northern Goshawks were reported in *Keith*, NE 12 Oct (GJ), *Pawnee*, KS 25 Oct (SS, DSe), and *Douglas*, KS 27 Oct (MR). A Broad-winged Hawk in *Morton*, KS 22 Sep (MG, DW) was the most westerly. About 25 Merlins were reported from Nebraska (*fide* WRS), 10-11 from Kansas (*fide* LM), and 3 from Oklahoma (JWA, JAG). Peregrine Falcons were reported this season in numbers that have become the norm: about 7 from Nebraska (*fide* WRS) and 13-16 from Kansas (*fide* LM), but only 3-4 from Oklahoma (*fide* JWA).

Up to 5 Yellow Rails were flushed at Red Slough 10-25 Oct (DA, BH et al.). Black Rails were heard calling at their Quivira outpost 2 Aug along with 2 King Rails (DK, GS). A notable local breeding record of Virginia Rail was that of an ad. with 3 downy young 10 Aug at Quivira (DW). A single Purple Gallinule graced Red Slough 15 Aug (DA). Whooping Cranes were noted at several locations 22 Oct-2 Nov, mostly in their narrow window of fall passage, with one lingering at Cheyenne Bottoms until at least 22 Nov (M&EC).

The 16 Black-bellied Plovers at McConaughy 20 Aug (SJD, JJD) made a good count for fall, and the 120+ at Quivira 29 Aug (MR) quite exceptional. A Snowy Plover with 3 young at McConaughy 10 Aug (SJD) provided only the 3rd breeding record for Nebraska. Piping Plovers may have fared better this summer, as a group of 13 was at McConaughy 20 Aug (SJD, JJD), with 2 juvs. lingering until 19 Sep (SJD). The 15 Pippings in *Dixon*, NE 19 Aug (BFH) were also encouraging.

Black-necked Stilts are doing much better in the Region. Even considering the 100 estimated at Cheyenne Bottoms 10 Sep (GY, MRa, KB), the count of 16 in *Finney*, KS 23 Aug (TS, SSh) was exceptional. Exceptionally late were the 2-3 Willets in *Sumner*, KS 21 Oct (B&NB), 3 in *Tulsa* 23 Oct (PM et al.), and one 12 Nov in *Reno*, KS (TH, LH). Also lingering were Long-billed Curlews at McConaughy 15-19 Sep (SJD, JF) and *Texas*, OK 22 Sep (JAG, DWg). A tardy Marbled Godwit was in *Phelps*, NE 20 Sep (SJD) to 17 Oct (LR, RH).

Small numbers of Red Knots passed during their normal fall window of occurrence 20 Aug-19 Sep; later individuals included 2 w. to *Beaver*, OK 23 Sep (MK, GK, C&SR) and 4 noted as late as 6 Oct in *Sumner*, KS (KOS). A record fall count of 222 Sanderlings was made at McConaughy 15 Sep (SJD, JF). Among a collection of tardy shorebirds were single Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers at Quivira 18 Nov (CG, TH, LH) and a remarkable 65 Stilt Sandpipers 2 Nov at Cheyenne Bottoms (SS).

Reports of fall Western Sandpipers have steadily

declined in the Region in recent years. Only 20-24 birds were reported by reliable observers in Nebraska; a few years ago this might have represented a daily total in late Aug in Oklahoma. Is this species declining? Almost unheard of during fall in the Region were the 5 White-rumped Sandpipers documented in *Platte*, NE 9 Sep (DP, JP). A number as noteworthy as the careful counting process itself were the 3976 Baird's Sandpiper at McConaughy 9 Aug (SJD). Also worthy of mention were the 740 Stilt Sandpipers at McConaughy 15 Sep (SJD, JF), with 632 in the e. Rainwater Basin 11 Aug (JGJ).

Buff-breasted Sandpipers appeared in fair numbers this fall, with the high count of 115 on 11 Aug in *Tulsa* (BC). Eight Short-billed Dowitchers, all juvs., were reported 15 Aug-20 Sep in Nebraska (JG, SJD), with additional birds reported from *McCurtain*, OK (DA) and Cheyenne Bottoms (BP, SP, CG). A nice 21 Red-necked Phalaropes were in *Sheridan*, NE 14 Sep (SJD, JF), with another good count of 16 at Quivira 3 Sep (EW, BD, JLe). None were reported from Oklahoma.

Even a single jaeger is an event in the Region, and some autumns pass with no reports of any species. This season, however, Nebraska was graced with all three species. A juv. **Pomarine Jaeger** was observed chasing a Franklin's Gull in *Cedar*, NE 21 Oct (MB); possibly the same bird was in *Knox*, NE the same day (MB, PW) and back in *Cedar*, NE a few days later (DSt, *fide* MB). Two **Parasitic Jaegers** were at McConaughy 15 Sep: a light-morph subad. and an intermediate-morph juv (SJD, JF), the 4th and 5th documented for Nebraska. And the *crème de la crème* was an ad light-morph **Long-tailed Jaeger** at McConaughy 19 Sep (SJD), the 4th documented record for the species in Nebraska. Finally, a dark juv. jaeger left unidentified to species was also noted at McConaughy 19 Sep (SJD). Regular checks of L. McConaughy in fall have now demonstrated that jaegers are annual visitors there, and this pattern may emerge at other large water bodies in the Region.

Franklin's Gulls can occur in large numbers during fall: the 100,000-150,000 estimated in *Butler*, KS testify to that (B&NB). Among the more unusual gulls were Laughing Gulls in *Sequoyah*, OK 30 Aug (MK, m. ob.), at Cheyenne Bottoms 2 Sep (AS, RP), and in *Tulsa* 28 Nov (JWA) Ad Little Gulls were documented at Cheyenne Bottoms 13 Sep (BF) and in *Kingman*, KS 11 Nov (TH, LH). Quite early was a Bonaparte's Gull 18 Aug in *Knox*, NE (MB) and 3 first-winter Herring Gulls at McConaughy 9 Aug (SJD, JJD); 8 Herring Gulls were present by 20 Aug (SJD, JJD).

An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was documented at McConaughy 15 Sep (SJD, JF). Much more exceptional was an ad. **Great Black-backed Gull** photographed there 15-28 Sep (SJD, JF, JGJ),

unusual for date as well. A decade ago, data on each Sabine's Gull would be listed out; this season, we note that about 17 Sabine's Gulls were reported from Nebraska (*fide* WRS), with 5-8 at McConaughy 15-19 Sep (SJD, JF); there were 12-20 reported from Kansas (*fide* LM), including up to 5 at a time in *Jefferson*, KS (DK); and 2 were noted in Oklahoma (JWA, DWg). The season's Where's Waldo Black-legged Kittiwake was in *Linn*, KS 5 Oct (RM). An ad. Common Tern was at McConaughy 9 Aug (SJD); up to 11 were in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 14 Sep (SJD, JF).

## DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Eurasian Collared-Doves are still a story because of their rapidly increasing numbers. Reports of as many as 40 birds are now coming from Kansas (*fide* LM). The distributions of sightings are not uniform across the Region, with largest numbers in sw Nebraska, w. Kansas, and nw. Oklahoma (including the panhandle), but with a sprinkling of birds in e. areas. Not as abundant, White-winged Doves were noted in *Lane*, KS (SS), *Reno*, KS (LS), and Oklahoma City (PV). Up to 21 Inca Doves were counted in *Pratt*, KS 25 Aug (LL), with singles in *Stevens*, KS 14 Sep (BF), *Morton*, KS 22 Sep (DV, WAS), *McCurtain*, OK 29 Sep-1 Oct (BH, PH), and *Finney*, KS 1 Oct (LRI).

Toward the end of Nov, Snowy Owl reports suggested a possible influx. One found dead in *Dawson*, NE 16 Nov was very thin (BT, *fide* CH). Others were from *Custer*, OK 19-30 Nov (J&DR), *Dakota*, NE 21 Nov (*fide* KP), *Kearney*, KS 23 Nov (BPr, TS, SSh, MO), and *Johnson*, KS 29 Nov (MD).

Late summer and fall brings out the best array of hummingbirds. This season, an imm. male **Costa's Hummingbird**, present in *Dawson*, NE from some time in Oct to 15 Nov (LR, RH, m. ob.), provided a first state record. A possible female Anna's Hummingbird noted in *Pawnee*, KS 5 Sep was undocumented. There was an array of Calliope Hummingbirds, including several in *Finney* and *Pawnee*, KS from 10-24 Aug. Documented reports of Calliopes came from *Kimball*, NE 9 Aug (SJD), *Sedgwick*, KS 30 Aug (B&NB, N&KC), and *Sioux*, NE 9-10 Aug (HKH).

In Nebraska, single Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were observed in *Scotts Bluff* 8 Aug (KL) and *Keith* 20 Aug (an ad.; SJD, JJD). There were 14 undocumented reports of Broad-taileds from w. Kansas or perhaps 13-18 individuals, mostly of females or birds of unspecified sex, 9 Aug-22 Sep (*fide* LM); the only documented report from Kansas was a female in *Sedgwick* 28 Aug (N&KC, PJ, B&NB). More expected but still noteworthy were Rufous Hummingbirds. There were 9+ in *Kimball*, NE 9 Aug (SJD); including these, 25-30 were reported through 25 Aug for Nebraska, the easternmost being one at McConaughy 10 Aug (SJD). About 21 Rufous were reported from Kansas (*fide* LM), the

eastermost and latest being singles in *Sedgwick* 15 Sep (PJ) and *Saline* 14-30 Nov (NH). Surprisingly, only one observation of a Rufous was submitted for Oklahoma, that in *Mayes* 9-10 Aug (GW).

Red-naped Sapsuckers appear to migrate earlier than do Yellow-bellieds in this Region. This season, one was noted in *Sioux*, NE 19 & 29 Sep (HKH), up to 2 were in *Cimarron*, OK 20-24 Sep (MK, GK, JWA et al.), and 2 were in *Oliver* 26 Sep (JAS).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher in *Sarpy*, NE 1 Oct was very late (BP, LP). Given vexing identification issues and differing levels of confidence between observers, reports of fall *Empidonax* flycatchers can raise difficulties. Among the interesting data this season for this group, in part obtained from mist-netting, were the 16 individuals in *Sioux*, NE 25 Aug that included 4 Willows, 3 Least, one each of Dusky and Hammond's, and 7 unidentified to species (SJD, HKH, AK). Hammond's, among the easiest to identify, appear to be regular but rare migrants during fall in the very w. reaches of the Region, with singles observed in *Kimball*, NE 1 Sep (TJ), *Morton*, KS 2 (BP, m. ob.) & 15 Sep (BF), and L. Ogallala 15 Sep (SJD), with 2 in *Cimarron*, OK 22 Sep (MK, GK, C&SR). Banders in *Kimball*, NE are documenting the regular appearance of Dusky Flycatchers there. Singles were netted at *Oliver* 24 Aug (SJD, JAS) and *Sioux*, NE 25 Aug (SJD, HKH, AK) with others observed there 7 (SJD) & 14 Sep (SJD, JF), and one reported from *Clark*, KS 31 Aug (GP, MM, DS).

Although rarely reporting Least Flycatchers, observers in *Morton*, KS reported 3 Gray Flycatchers, one 15 Sep being documented (BF), and one undocumented Cordilleran Flycatcher 22 Sep. An exceptionally late Acadian Flycatcher was noted in *Linn*, KS 29 Sep (BF). Other extralimital flycatchers were Say's Phoebes in *Sedgwick*, KS 12 Aug (PJ) and *Knox*, NE 22 Sep (MB) and an Ash-throated Flycatcher in *Morton*, KS 15 Sep (BF).

Reports of Plumbeous Vireos at *Oliver* 20 Aug (SJD, JJD) & 1 Sep (JGJ), *Morton*, KS 30 Aug (BP, SP) & 22 Sep (SS et al.) indicate that observers are making progress in documenting this species in the Region; easterly (although undocumented) was a Plumbeous reported from *Sedgwick*, KS 25 Sep (B&NB, PJ). Surprisingly, 12 Cassin's Vireos were reported from the Nebraska Panhandle 20 Aug-7 Sep, including one netted at *Oliver* 24 Aug (SJD, JAS). Two were reported from *Morton*, KS 27 Aug (BP, SP, m. ob.) & 2 Sep (BP, LH, m. ob.). Blue-headed Vireos at L. Ogallala 19 Sep (SJD) and *Hall*, NE 16 Sep (LR, RH) were only the 5th and 6th documented records away from e. Nebraska. One Blue-headed in *Dixon*, NE 21-22 Aug (JJ) was the 2nd earliest for Nebraska; early and westerly was another in *Morton*, KS 1 Sep (BP, m. ob.). A Warbling Vireo banded in *Washington*, NE 17 Nov (BG, CHe *fide* DM) was the latest ever for

Nebraska by about a month. Two Warblers netted (of 8 observed) at *Oliver* 21 Aug were both of the Rocky Mountains subspecies *brewsteri* (SJD). Westerly were Philadelphia Vireos at *Oliver* 7 Sep (SJD), with one banded in *Meade*, KS 3 Sep (TF).

A straggler Clark's Nutcracker appeared at the top of *Scotts Bluff* N.M. 25 Aug (GH, WH). Steller's Jays appeared to have an invasion year in the far w. Oklahoma panhandle, with 2 in *Cimarron* 20 Sep (MK, GK, C&SR) and 17 on 30 Nov (JAG, JWA). Among few records of Violet-green Swallows were one in *Sumner*, KS 22 Aug (TH, LH) and up to 2 in *Cimarron*, OK 6 Sep (JAG). Very surprising were 2 **Cave Swallows** documented in *Finney*, KS 27 Sep (TS, MO).

A Rock Wren in *Tulsa* 3 Nov (JL et al.) was off course. Suggestive of breeding or early migration was a Mountain Bluebird in sw. *Kimball*, NE 15 Aug (SJD). Among few records for Veeries of the w. subspecies for the Region were singles netted and photographed in *Sioux*, NE 30 Aug (SJD, HKH, JAS) and *Morton*, KS 28 Aug (BP, m. ob.) A hatch-year Swainson's Thrush banded in *Sarpy*, NE 30 Oct (RG) was quite tardy. Two Gray-cheeked Thrushes banded in *Meade*, KS 3 Sep (TF) were westerly. Lingered quite late was a Gray Catbird in *Buffalo*, NE 23 Nov (LR, RH). An unlikely duo were a Sage Thrasher (WAS, MG, DW) and Curve-billed Thrasher (SS, MRa) in *Morton*, KS 22 Sep

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The fall period usually brings out an array of extralimital warblers. Among the "zooties" were Golden-winged Warblers in *Douglas*, KS 1 Sep (BA), *Otoe*, NE 2 Sep (LF, CF), and *Tulsa* 9 Sep (BC). Black-throated Blue Warblers were observed in *Morton*, KS 31 Aug (BP) and *Sumner*, KS 11 Oct (TH, LH). Envious was a Connecticut Warbler documented in *Sedgwick* 24 Sep (B&NB).

Among e. warblers west in *Morton*, KS were a Chestnut-sided 1 Sep (BP, m. ob.), a Pine Warbler 1-2 Sep (BP, m. ob.), a Prairie Warbler 1-2 Sep (TH, LH, MM), a Blackpoll Warbler 1 Sep (CG, MG, m. ob.), and Canada Warblers (at two locations) 1 (GP, MM, DS) & 2 Sep (BP, m. ob.) Other more exceptional "westerlies" were a Chestnut-sided Warbler in *Garden*, NE 2 Sep (JGJ), a Magnolia Warbler netted in *Sioux*, NE 30 Aug (SJD, m. ob.), a Blackburnian Warbler in *Garden*, NE 2 Sep (JGJ), a Bay-breasted Warbler at McConaughy 15 Sep (SJD, JF), and a Hooded Warbler in *Sioux*, NE 29 Sep (HKH).

Western warblers encroaching onto the Plains included single Virginia's Warblers 1-2 Sep in *Morton*, KS (PJ, BP) and 22 Sep in *Cimarron*, OK (2 birds, JWA). Black-throated Gray Warblers were found at two locations in *Morton*, KS 31 Aug (BP, SP, m. ob.) & 1 Sep (TH, LH) and at *Oliver* 7 Sep (SJD); 3rd documented for Nebraska). While not as healthy a set as last year, Nebraska tallied about 25

Townsend's Warblers this season, all but one from its Panhandle, the last in *Grant* 2 Sep (MB). Only one Townsend's was reported from Kansas, that in *Scott* 9 Sep (TS, SSh), with one 6 Sep in *Cimarron*, OK (JAG), and 2 there 20 Sep (MK, GK, C&SR). Among early arrivals were an Orange-crowned Warbler at *Oliver* 15 Aug (SJD) and a Canada Warbler 11 Aug in *Douglas*, KS (MM, GP). Lingering was a Northern Parula 14 Oct in *McCurtain*, OK (DA, DR, BH).

Few Brewer's Sparrows are noted during fall; this year's lot included singles in *Cimarron*, OK 21 Aug (JWA, JL, JS) and *Morton*, KS 2 Sep (SS, TC et al). Quite tardy was a Vesper Sparrow in *Knox*, NE 28 Nov-3 Dec (MB). More frequently observed in recent years are Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows. About 8 were reported from e. Nebraska, all from 30 Sep-14 Oct (*fide* WRS), with two reports of 3 birds from Kansas 13-14 Oct (*fide* LM). Nine Sharp-taileds were flushed at Red Slough 10 Oct (DA).

An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Finney*, KS 23-25 Nov (ES), was geographically and temporally out of place. Perhaps making a pattern of sorts were 4 late-ish Lazuli Buntings in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 22 Sep (AK), *Morton*, KS 22 Sep (SS, MRa), *Cimarron*, OK 24 Sep (JAG, JWA, DWg), and *Tulsa* 29 Sep (BC, TM). Also tardy was an Indigo Bunting in *Dixon*, NE 30 Oct (JJ), the 2nd latest ever for the state. A Lesser Goldfinch in *Morton*, KS 2 Sep (SS et al.) was a little n. of most. The only Common Redpoll noted was in *Nebraska City* 23 Nov (LF, CF).

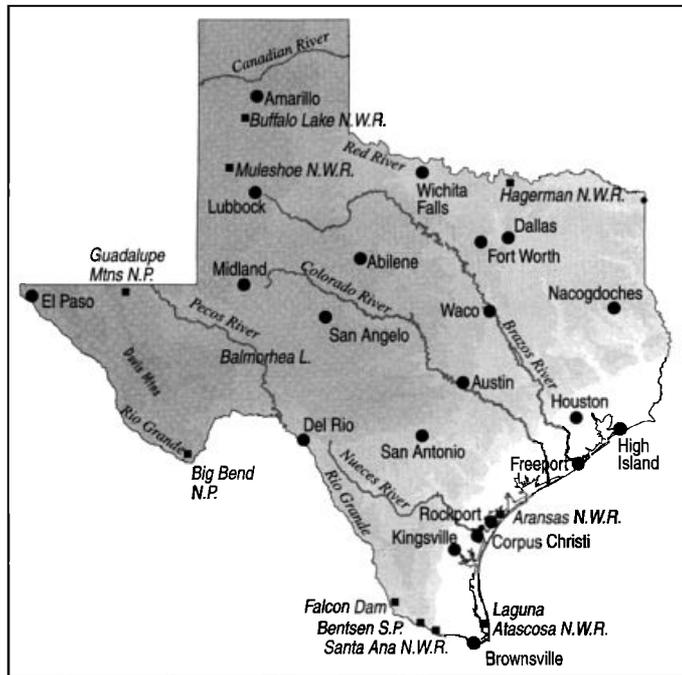
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This fall was characterized by above-average rainfall in the eastern half of the state while the drought remained unabated in the west. Pacific fronts repeatedly crossed the state, producing heavy rainfall when they interacted with moisture from the Gulf. At Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport, the rainfall total for the fall alone was over 63 cm. This was more than 25 cm above average. As a result, temperatures in the east were moderate, while in the west they were above normal. Hardest hit by the drought was El Paso, where the annual rainfall barely exceeded 10 cm, less than half the average.

In general, most observers described the fall migration as lackluster. In many areas of the state, the lack of summer rains left poor food crops and while many wintering species arrived on time, they seemed to disappear by