

It was a very dry season over most of the Region, with average temperatures until unseasonably cold weather arrived in October. Many areas were nearly ten degrees Fahrenheit below average for the month, and it was the third coldest October on record at Glasgow, Montana. Small and medium-sized lakes were frozen by late October, only to open up again as temperatures warmed in November. Except for the Missouri River reservoirs, freeze-up came in earnest at the end of November.

Numbers of regular migrants were generally low, particularly warblers and other passerines. Perhaps the late, cold spring led to poor nesting success to the north. There were good numbers of late lingerers, and it was a good season for casual and accidental species. Larids made a particularly strong showing, with numerous reports of casual species.

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Casual in fall in Montana, an imm. Red-throated Loon was seen 17 Oct at Ft. Peck (CC, p. a.). Pacific Loons were noted in record numbers this fall. With only seven previous records, the 5 individuals tallied in South Dakota 18 Oct—9 Nov were unprecedented. A single Pacific Loon at Hettinger, ND 16-20 Oct provided the 7th report for the state (REM, DNS, DAG, p. a.). Now seemingly regular in fall in Montana, singles were at Tiber Res. 28 Nov (HM, p. a.) and at Great Falls 25 Nov (GS, p. a.).

Red-necked Grebes made a strong showing late in the season, with eight Oct—Nov reports across the Region. A single 30 Nov in Yankton provided the latest report for South Dakota (DS, JC). Furnishing a new fall high for North Dakota, 2000 Western Grebes were at Horsehead L., Kidder 30 Sep (REM).

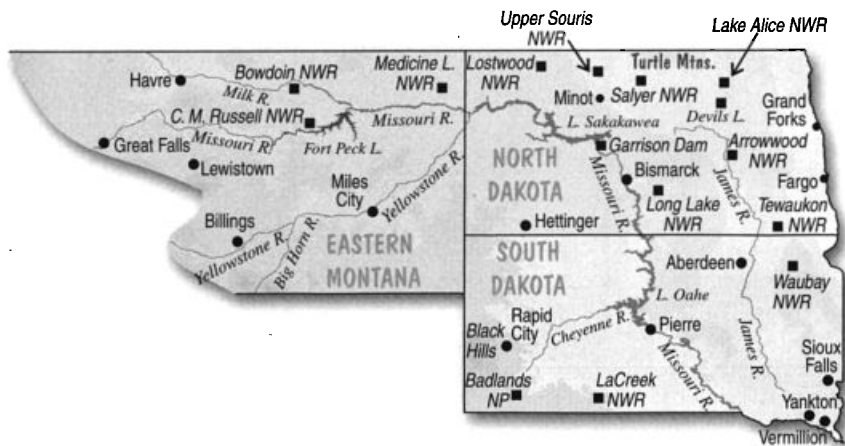
A Great Egret 9 Nov in Brookings, SD provided the latest report for the state (JSP). A new high count for South Dakota, 400-500 White-faced Ibis were noted in Day 15 Sep (W.N.W.R.S.). Nesting was confirmed for White-faced Ibis at L. Bertha, Cass, ND, adding to the growing number of nesting areas in the state (RHO, DOL). Turkey Vultures peaked at 52 in Oliver, ND 19 Sep, a new high for the state (HCT).

SWANS THROUGH FALCONS

Trumpeter Swan sightings in the e. Dakotas continue to increase, no doubt due to the growing populations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Casual in e. South Dakota, 6 Trumpeters were in Brown, SD 29 Sep (S.L.N.W.R.S.). A single Trumpeter was noted for several days beginning 7 Aug in Sargent, ND (DNS, BS, p. a.), and 2 were in Kidder, ND 29 Sep (SJD, p. a.).

Scoters staged the most impressive migration in years. Casual in e. South

Northern Great Plains



Dakota, 8 Surf Scoter reports spanned 6 Oct—2 Nov. Accidental in w. South Dakota, a single was in Meade 19 Oct (RFS, JSP, p. a.). Many Surf Scoter reports were received for North Dakota, with a peak of 9 on 21 Oct at Minot (REM). Four reports from e. Montana spanned 10 Oct—25 Nov, with a peak of 13 at Cooney Res. 25 Oct (BJ). Ten White-winged Scoter reports came from North Dakota 9 Oct—10 Nov. A single was at Cooney Res., MT 25 Nov (RV, AC). The rarest of the trio, one to 2 Black Scoters were at Minot, ND 16-28 Oct (REM). Casual in South Dakota, 4 Black Scoters were in Ziebach 9 Oct (DGP, p. a.) and 5 were tallied in Yankton 16-17 Nov (JC, RDO, KM, p. a.). Not to be left out, a single was noted at Great Falls, MT 25 Nov (AN, JN).

A Barrow's Goldeneye documented at Audubon N.W.R., ND 10 Nov furnished the 15th report for the state (REM, DNS, PS, p.a.). Impressive numbers of Swainson's Hawks were noted in ne. Montana, with 240 near Reserve and 200 near Homestead 28 Sep (EM, MR). A Gyrfalcon in Sully, SD 14 Sep provided the 2nd earliest report for the state (DB).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

A Piping Plover at Bowdoin N.W.R., MT 25 Sep was late (DP). Casual in e. North Dakota, a Long-billed Curlew was in Barnes 27 Aug (DB). Tying the high fall count for North Dakota, 50 Hudsonian

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Godwits were in Pierre 13 Aug (DNS). Only the 5th fall report for South Dakota, a Red Knot was in Hughes 8 Aug (RDO). The 2nd record for North Dakota, a Curlew Sandpiper was photographed at Minot 2-3 Aug (BD, REM, DNS, DOL). A notable peak of 50 Buff-breasted Sandpipers was in Sargent, ND 7 Aug (DNS, BS), and a single 28 Sep in Kingsbury provided the latest report for South Dakota (JSP). An American Woodcock found dead in New Town, ND 10 Nov furnished the latest record for the state (RS). A Red Phalarope 5 Aug in Mountrail provided the 14th report for North Dakota (JPL, DNS, REM, p. a.), and a single 14-15 Oct in Sully, SD furnished the 6th report for the state (KM, RDO, p. a.).

The 9th and 10th reports for North Dakota, Parasitic Jaegers were documented at Long Lake N.W.R. 24-25 Sep (PCV, DNS, p. a.) and at Garrison Dam 28 Sep—6 Oct (SJD, DNS, REM, p. a.). Only the 3rd report for South Dakota, a Long-tailed Jaeger was documented in Clay 13

Sep (JC, p. a.). Rare gull reports were rampant in the Dakotas. A Little Gull in Hughes, SD 12 Nov furnished the 6th report for the state (RDO, p. a.). In North Dakota the 7th and 8th reports were documented 6 Sep at Minot (REM, p. a.) and 7-9 Nov at Devil's L. (EEF, DOL, REM, p. a.). The 5th report for South Dakota, a Mew Gull was documented in Stanley 22 Oct—1 Nov (RDO, KM, p. a.). Two Mew Gulls were documented in North Dakota, the 9th and 10th reports. A juv. was at Garrison Dam 29 Sep (SJD, REM, DNS, p. a.), and an ad. was seen at Audubon N.W.R. and Garrison Dam 10-16 Nov (DNS, PS, REM, p. a.). Lesser-black-backed Gulls got into the act with South Dakota's 5th report 7 Aug—18 Oct in Stanley (RDO, p. a.). In North Dakota, single Lesser Black-backed were at Garrison Dam 13 Oct and 30 Nov (REM, DNS, p. a.). These provided the 9th and 10th reports for the state. A Glaucous Gull at Fort Peck, MT 15 Oct was very early (CC).

PIGEONS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A Band-tailed Pigeon at Westby, MT 9 Aug furnished the 3rd record for e. Montana (TN). The 2nd record for Montana, a White-winged Dove was videotaped near Saco and remained 4-23 Aug (HMi). The 5th report for Montana, 3-6 Eurasian Collared-Doves were at Fairfield 9-15 Nov (MS, CP, SF, p. a.). The species also continued at three locations in North Dakota. A Snowy Owl 2 Oct in Brown, SD provided the earliest date for the state (S.L.N.W.R.S). The number of Snowy Owls was low, with only 9 birds reported from Montana and North Dakota.

The 3rd report for North Dakota, a Plumbeous Vireo was photographed at Minot 25-31 Aug (BD, REM, DNS, p. a.). Providing the 2nd local record, a Mountain Chickadee was at Ft. Peck, MT 25 Nov+

(CC). Furnishing the latest reports for South Dakota, a Rock Wren was in Meade 20 Oct (REP), and a Sedge Wren was noted in Yankton 11 Nov (DS). A Carolina Wren



The second documented record for North Dakota, this Carolina Wren appeared at a Bismarck feeder in early November 2002 (here 11 November) and was still present at the end of the period. Photograph by Peder Svingen.

frequenting a feeder in Bismarck, ND 2 Nov+ provided the 4th report for the state, and the 2nd documented (DNS, p. a.). Winter Wrens made a stellar showing in North Dakota, with 12 reports 28 Sep—12 Nov. Very few Bohemian Waxwings were reported.

WARBLERS THROUGH REDPOLLS

Furnishing the latest report for North Dakota, an Orange-crowned Warbler was in Grand Forks 8 Nov (EEF). The latest ever for their respective states, Black-throated Blue Warblers were in Grand Forks, ND 4 Nov (BL) and in Brookings, SD 9 Nov (JSP). A Blackburnian Warbler at Westby, MT 20 Aug provided the first local record at this e. Montana warbler hotspot (TN, MN). The 5th report for South Dakota, a Yellow-throated Warbler was documented in Meade 21 Sep (DGP, p. a.). The Hooded Warbler photographed in Brown, SD 3-6 Oct provided the 4th fall record for the state (DAT).

Noteworthy were five reports of Spotted

Towhee at Fargo, including the last on 16 Nov (DPW). A Clay-colored Sparrow 4-9 Nov in Grand Forks, ND provided the 3rd Nov report for the state (EEF). Rarely

reported after Aug in North Dakota, Baird's Sparrows were noted 28 Sep in McLean (DNS) and 5 Oct in McHenry (DNS, REM). The latest reports for North Dakota, a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was in Grand Forks 25 Oct and a Lincoln's Sparrow was in the same county 27 Nov (EEF). Also in Grand Forks, ND, White-throated Sparrows peaked at 600 on 4 Oct for a new state high (EEF). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a Valley City, ND feeder 3 Nov furnished the 3rd Nov report for the state (AI, KM). Orchard Orioles feeding young in Ward, ND 25 Aug were very late (REM), and 5 in Steele, ND 14 Sep tied the latest report for the state (DLK).

Only 2 Common Redpoll reports were received, totaling 3 individuals.

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