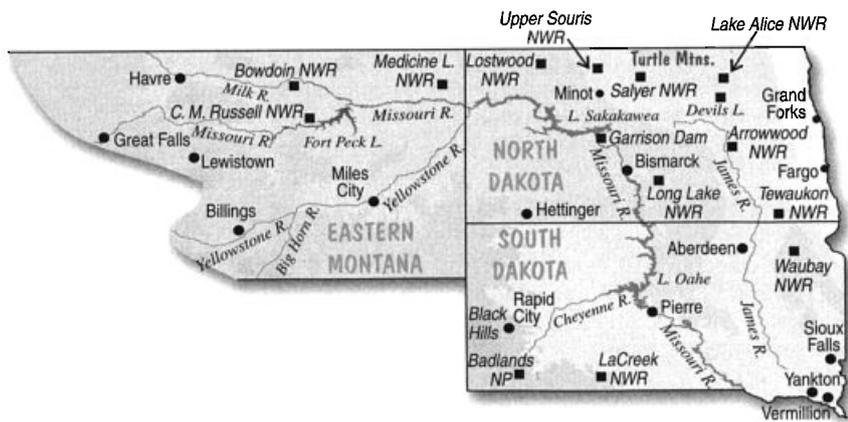


# Northern Great Plains



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The season began with dry conditions, and modest winter snows melted early. Rains began in May, and precipitation totals for the month were above average. Temperatures were well below average in March and April but average for May. All three months started with very cold conditions but warmed as the month progressed; migration stopped and started accordingly. Leaves appeared on trees by late April, a full month ahead of last year's leaf-out.

## EGRETS THROUGH HAWKS

Casual in Montana, a single Great Egret was at Freezeout L. N.W.R. for several days around 22 Apr (JN). Snowy Egrets made a fine showing in North Dakota, with a peak of 21 in *Sargent* in late May (KRC). Accidental w. of the Missouri R. in North Dakota, new county records for Snowy Egret were established in *Adams* in May (DAG, CG) and in *Bowman* 18 May (PHS). Now nearly annual in North Dakota, the state's earliest-ever Little Blue Heron was photographed in *Foster* 9 May (p. a., REM). Two Little Blue Herons were in *Cass*, ND 16 May (p. a., MO). Provid-

ing the 2nd earliest spring record, White-faced Ibis arrived at their large nesting colony at Sand L. N.W.R., SD 15 Apr (SLS).

Trumpeter Swan sightings in North Dakota continue to increase. Two were in Fargo 8 Apr, furnishing about the 20th report for the state (p. a., GEN). Accidental in spring in South Dakota, a White-winged Scoter was noted in *Meade* 28 Mar (AKB). Casual in the Dakotas, Barrow's Goldeneyes made a fine showing. In South Dakota, singles were in *Charles Mix* 20 Mar (p. a., RM) and in *Brown* 29 Mar-1 Apr (p. a., SLS). About the 16th report for North Dakota, a male was noted in *Logan* 27 Mar (p. a., BS).

If accepted, a *Mississippi Kite* documented 18 May in *Davison*, SD would provide the 3rd record for the state (p. a., CP). Broad-winged Hawks made a strong showing at the w. edge of the Region. Four individuals were noted in *Dickinson*, ND in May (JPL, PHS), and a single was in *Bowman*, ND 21 May (JPL). In Montana, a single was at *Malta* 7 May

(JC), and another was at *Westby* 28 May (CP). In South Dakota, one individual was in *Harding* 24 May (CEM, KM). Documentation was received for a Red-shouldered Hawk in *Ransom*, ND 24 Mar (p. a., BS). There are now more than 20 reports for the state.

## PRAIRIE-CHICKEN THROUGH GULLS

The reintroduced population of Greater Prairie-Chickens in *Grand Forks*, ND continues to flourish. The 2nd recent report for *Cass*, ND, one Greater Prairie-Chicken was near *L. Bertha* 11 Apr (MO). May rains apparently created excellent habitat for Yellow Rails in *Grand Forks*, ND. Individuals were calling in eight different sections on 16 May, and 8 were heard from one spot nw. of *Grand Forks* 27 May (DOL). The first sighting in recent years for e. Montana, a Whooping Crane was photographed near *Glasgow* 6 Apr (CC).

Flocks of Whimbrels were notable this season. Sixteen were seen 20 May in *Bowman*, ND (PHS). The 27 noted at *Benton Lake N.W.R.*, MT 19 May set a new high mark for the refuge (SM). The species was recorded on three other May dates in Montana. A new peak for South Dakota, 160 Ruddy Turnstones were counted in *Kingsbury* 31 May (JSP). Also in *Kingsbury* 31 May, 100 Sanderlings made a notable assemblage (JSP). Early Baird's Sandpipers were in *Codington*, SD 16 Mar (JDW) and in *Burleigh*, ND 22 Mar (JS). Pectoral Sandpipers were also recorded notably early, with birds in *Kingsbury* and *Charles Mix*, SD 22 Mar (JSP, RM). The earliest for North Dakota, a Pectoral was in *Fargo*, ND 23 Mar (DR). The species peaked at 515 in *Renville*, ND 4 May (REM).

A potential 7th record for South Dakota, a *Mew Gull* was in *Hughes* 26 Mar-16 Apr (p. a., RDO, KM). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded in all three states. A possible first for Montana, a single ad. was photographed at *Ft. Peck* 17 Mar (p. a., CC). The 3rd spring report and the 11th overall, a second-winter Lesser-Black-backed was at *Garrison Dam*, ND 27 Apr (p. a., REM, DNS). The 7th report for South Dakota, one individual was at *Pierre* 3-6 Apr (p. a., KM, RDO). Casual in spring in North Dakota, 2 Glaucous Gulls were at *Long Lake N.W.R.* 30 Mar (CDE,

**SA** A bird exhibiting the characteristics of a *Mottled Duck* was found by David Lambeth at Kelly's Slough N.W.R., *Grand Forks*, ND 16 Apr. The bird remained to 21 Apr and was photographed and described by many observers. A potential first for the state and the Region, this individual garnered myriad opinions. Some noted the bird would not have merited a second glance in its home range, but very thin white lines bordering the speculum suggested to some a possible hybrid. However, experts polled were not in agreement about this character as a sure indication of hybridization. Opinions on provenance were also varied, although the bird had no bands, no missing halux, and no indication of excessive feather wear. The species is clearly expanding northward, perhaps a point that favors wild origin.

HCT), and a single was in *Kidder* 24 Apr (CDE).

**DOVES THROUGH SOLITAIRE**

A single Eurasian Collared-Dove was again noted in *Malta*, MT (SJD). The species was observed in six North Dakota counties, and nesting was again recorded in *Grand Forks* 27 Apr (TD). In South Dakota, the species was also noted from six counties. The 2nd record for North Dakota, a *White-winged Dove* was photographed at a *Minot Feeder* 7-10 May (p. a., BSa, REM). A potential 4th South Dakota record, a *White-winged Dove* was documented 25 May in *Clay* (KM).

Whip-poor-wills staged an invasion in North Dakota. Seven birds were noted 4-14 May in *Fargo* (DPW), where a few were recorded each spring. Unusually far w. were singles in *Bismarck* 6 May (CDE), *Kidder* 18 May (DLR), and in *Stutsman* 18 May (TS). The *Pierre*, SD *Chuck-will's-widow* returned for its 4th consecutive year (DB).

A territorial *Yellow-bellied Sapsucker* was in *Stanton*, ND 26 May (REM). There are no published nesting records for the *Missouri R. valley*. An early *Yellow-bellied Sapsucker* was in *Lake*, SD 27 Mar (JSP). Providing a first record for *Eddy*, ND, a *Pileated Woodpecker* was noted 15 May (PRS).

Casual in Montana, *Purple Martin* singles were at *Bowdoin N.W.R.* 20 May (DP) and *Westby* 29 May (CP). The 6th spring sighting for South Dakota, a *Carolina Wren* was in *Brown* 8 May (DAT). A *Golden-crowned Kinglet* was late 10 May in *Hughes*, SD (KM), and a *Ruby-crowned* was early in *Stanley*, SD 21 Mar (RDO). A *Townsend's Solitaire* 15 May in *Stanley*, SD provided the first May record for the state away from breeding areas in the *Black Hills* (RDO).

**WARBLERS THROUGH SISKIN**

The first Apr record for South Dakota, a *Black-throated Blue Warbler* was in *Brown* 23 Apr (DAT). The 10th report for Montana, a *Black-throated Blue Warbler* was documented at *Tongue R. Res.*, *Big Horn* 19 May (p. a., SJD). A *Pine Warbler* was unusual in *Stanley*, SD 7 May (RDO). The 8th report for North Dakota, a *Townsend's Warbler* was photographed in *Stark* 14 May (p. a., JPL). A *Yellow-throated Warbler* photographed in *Grand Forks* 23-24 May provided the 5th report for North Dakota and the 3rd consecutive spring the species has been recorded in the state (p. a., DOL). *Bay-breasted Warblers* made another strong w. appearance. The 10th report for Montana, a single was documented in *Big Horn* 19 May (p. a., SJD).

Four reports for the w. Dakotas spanned 18-31 May. The 7th report for North Dakota, a *Kentucky Warbler* was seen 19 May in *Kulm* (p. a., PMK). Nineteen *Connecticut Warblers* were reported in North Dakota. Casual in spring in South Dakota, a *Hooded Warbler* was photographed in *Brown* 5 May (p. a., DAT).

A *Summer Tanager* in *Fessenden, Wells*, ND 7-22 May furnished about the 20th report for the state (p. a., MT). In South Dakota, singles were in *Edmunds* 29 Apr (p. a., JDW) and *Stanley* 3 May (p. a., KM, RDO).

A wintering or early *Eastern Towhee* was observed in *Lake*, SD 13 Mar (RNB). Unusually far w., an *Eastern Towhee* was in *Meade*, SD 23 Apr (p. a., REP). *White-throated Sparrows* peaked at an incredible 1580 in *Grand Forks*, ND 4 May (EEF). The 7th report for North Dakota, a *Gray-headed Junco* was noted 29 May in *Emmons* (p. a., PTF).

*Northern Cardinals* continued their recent extralimital appearances. In w. North Dakota, a male was singing in *Bowman* 19 May (PHS), and in w. South Dakota, singles were tallied in *Pennington* 12 Mar (JLB) and *Meade* 18 May (REP).

A potential 2nd record for Montana, a *Great-tailed Grackle* was documented at *Bowdoin N.W.R.* 23 May (p. a., SJD). The first May report for e. South Dakota, a *Pine Grosbeak* was documented in *Edmunds* 23 May (p. a., JDW). At the e. edge of range in Montana, a *Cassin's Finch* was singing near *Decker* 9 Apr (BW). Very few *Pine Siskins* were reported from North Dakota cities. Just a few years ago, the species was nesting regularly in numbers in most larger towns.

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