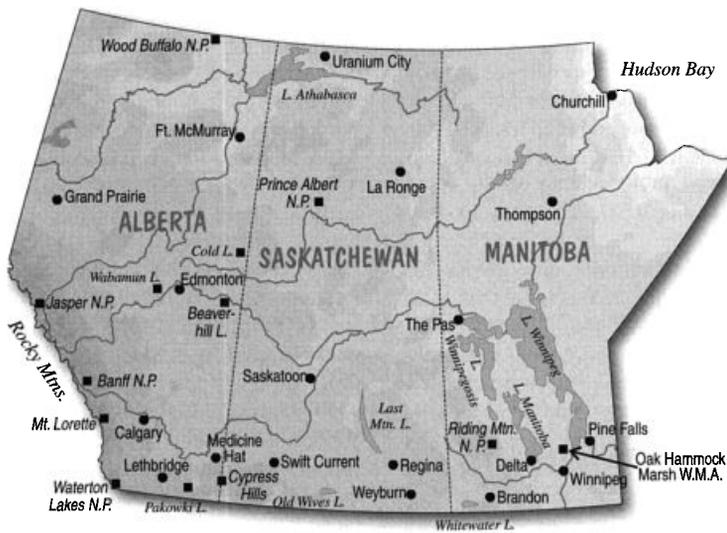


# Prairie Provinces



**Rudolf F. Koes**

135 Rossmere Crescent  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2K 0G1  
(rkoes@mts.net)

**Peter Taylor**

P.O. Box 597  
Pinawa, Manitoba ROE 1L0  
(taylorp@granite.mb.ca)

March ranged from mild in the west to cold in the east, but by late in the month, warm weather covered the entire south of the Region, bringing in a flood of early migrants. April and May were about normal temperature-wise, with little moisture in the west, most of which came near the end of the period. Although there were many highlights in the form of waders, waterfowl numbers, and assorted rarities, the overall impression was of a lack of birds. In Manitoba, migrating shorebirds and passerines (flycatchers, *Catharus* thrushes, warblers, sparrows) were particularly scarce, likely reflecting last year's dismal breeding season.

## GREBES THROUGH DIURNAL RAPTORS

An Eared Grebe at Pine Coulee Res., AB 30 Mar was extremely early (TK). Single Snowy Egrets were at Vonda, SK 12 May (*vide FR*) and at Whitewater Lake W.M.A., MB 25 May (JS, LV). Cattle Egret numbers were high in s. Manitoba, with peaks of 24+ near Melita 23 May (BF et al.) and 25+ at Whitewater Lake W.M.A. 25 May (JS, LV). Four were at Rowatt, SK 10–24 May (VT, DT, m.ob.). A probable imm. **White Ibis** was seen briefly near Boissevain 25 May, providing Manitoba with its 3rd report (JS, LV). Whitewater Lake W.M.A. hosted up to 2 **Glossy Ibis** 24–25

May (KD, AW, m.ob.), while at least 20 **White-faced Ibis** were there 25 May (JS, LV, m.ob.). A single of the latter species at Saskatoon, SK 15 May was a first for the city (*vide FR*). A flock of 65 **Ross's Geese** near Stavely, AB 2 May was noteworthy (TK). **Trumpeter Swans** continue to make inroads in Manitoba, with 3 at Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A., MB 13 May (RK) and one near Altona 28–29 May (HL, AS). Another was near Calgary, AB 27 May (TK). About 2000 **Tundra Swans** gathered near Nanton, AB 30 Mar (TK). **Male Eurasian Wigeons** were at Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A. 24–30 Apr (RA, m.ob., ph. LdM) and at Delta, MB 6 May (ph. FG). At least 46 in total were reported in Alberta, where the species is increasingly common, 25 Feb+ (m.ob.). A male **American Wigeon** × **Mallard** hybrid at Clear L., AB 13 Mar was an unusual find (ph. TK). Other notable duck reports included single **Cinnamon Teal** at Cypress L., SK 16 Apr (AH), at McTaggart, SK 5 May (VT, DT), and at Saskatoon 7 May (DS). Concentrations of

**Northern Pintails** totaled 20,000 near Nanton 30 Mar (TK) and 10,000+ at Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A. in late Apr (m.ob.). Rare were a **Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal** at Clear L. 29 Apr (TK), 3 **Harlequin Ducks** at Tyvan, SK 30 May (BC, VT, DT), and a **Long-tailed Duck** at Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary, SK 25 May (DSa). Unusually early raptors included 2 **Ospreys** at McTaggart, SK 27 Mar (VT, DT) and single **Swainson's Hawks** at Swift Current, SK 29 Mar (RDU), at Windygates, MB 29 Mar (AS, DS), at Admiral, SK 6 Apr (MD), and near Weyburn, SK 6 Apr (VT). Between 12 Feb and 16 May, 2667 **Golden Eagles** were tallied at the Mt. Lorette, AB hawkwatch. This is 21% below the long-term average, despite increased coverage, and continues a declining trend in spring totals starting in 1996. Very few imm. were seen (PS et al.).

## RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Early **Yellow Rails** were 4 in the Tolstoi-Vita, MB area 23 Apr (IW, DD) and one at Spruce Siding Road, MB 3 May (M.N.S.). An estimated 50 were in the Douglas, MB area 24 May (KD, AW). A **Sora** at Ross, MB 20 Apr was also very early (GB).

**Shorebird** numbers and variety were spotty at best. **Nickle Dam**, SK hosted 4 **Black-necked Stilts** 14 Apr (MB, CB), and a single was at Chaplin L., SK 13 May (GK). A flock of 500 **Whimbrels** at Rolling Hills, AB 11 May was notable (J&MM). A **Long-billed Curlew** at Brokenshell Cr., SK 24 Apr provided the first local record in 30 years (MB, CB), while a flock of 10 near Harris, SK 12 May was considered large (WD). **Hudsonian Godwits** were more common than usual in Saskatchewan, with reports between 17 Apr and 28 May (GK, SW, m.ob.). A **Western Sandpiper** at Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A. 25 Apr was not only accidental in spring but also very early (ph. CA, LV).

Over 5000 **California Gulls** waited out inclement weather at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, AB 25 Mar (TK). **Lone Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary 21–25 Mar (BS, m.ob.) and at Saskatoon 13 Apr (RJ, SSh, RZ) were rare. A flock of 22 **Sabine's Gulls** briefly graced Glenmore Res., AB 30 May (BS), and one was a rare visitor to Valeport, SK the same day (BL).

Saskatoon's first **Eurasian Collared-Dove** made a brief backyard visit 29 May (SH), while Manitoba's first known breeding occurred at Lyleton, with 2 nearly-fledged juvs. on the nest 31 May (J&JM, KD). Caution is warranted in reporting this species: 3

**SA** For the first time ever, near-daily counts were made at the Windygates hawkwatch site in the Pembina R. valley of s. Manitoba, from 18 Mar through 13 Apr. Four days' counts were in the 1000+ birds range, all during a mild spell between 29 Mar and 3 Apr. **Bald Eagles** totaled 901, with a peak of 147 on 29 Mar, **Red-tailed Hawks** totaled 6546, peaking 3 Apr at 1384, and 61 **Golden Eagles** were tallied, with the 20 Mar count of 16 being highest. Including **Turkey Vulture**, 14 diurnal raptor species were reported (A&DS, m.ob.).

*Streptopelia* doves at La Broquerie, MB in Apr proved to be local escapees (*fide* JR). Northern Hawk Owls near Dafoe, SK 15 May (MBI) and at Winnipeg 19 May (*fide* DM) were probably laggard migrants. The Northern Pygmy-Owl first found at Cold L. in Nov was seen and heard again 19–27 Mar (DH, *fide* TH). After the major incursion of Great Gray Owls last winter, none was known to remain and breed in the traditional boreal forest areas of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (JD, SH). By contrast, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were plentiful in the farmland/parkland region of Manitoba, e.g., 23 of the latter were tallied in 20 km between Starbuck and Winnipeg 17 Apr (CA, LV, AW). A Vaux's Swift at Mt. Lorette 25 Apr may have been record early (PS), and 2 at Fish Creek P.P., AB 17 May were e. of their range (TK). A Red-headed Woodpecker at Last Mountain Lake Regional Park 24 May was a rare find (RJ, JSh, SSh), as was a Red-bellied Woodpecker at Kelvington, SK 24–26 May (*fide* BL).



With only a handful of spring records of the species in Manitoba, this Western Sandpiper at Oak Hammock Marsh on 24 April 2005 was not only very rare but also extremely early. Photograph by Christian Artuso.

ports came from Altona, MB 16 May (MK) and Ericksdale, MB about 18 May (SS). A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch at a Poplar River feeder 17–24 Mar was about the 17th for Manitoba (ph. MH). A Common Redpoll at Winnipeg 24 May was weeks later than normal (GB). Pine Siskins were very numerous in s. Manitoba. Colorful feeder visitors were a male Eurasian Siskin in Winnipeg 13–24 Mar (ph. MHu, B&AH) and a Eurasian Goldfinch at St. Adolphe, MB 10 May (RD), both presumably escapees.

Observers (subregional compilers in bold-face): C. Artuso, R. Austin, M. Bailey, R. Barclay, C. Bjorklund, M. Blom (MBI), G. Budyk, B. Cameron, G. & F. Crow, D. Danyluk, W. Davenport, R. DeCruyenaere, K. DeSmet, L. de March, M. Dudragne, R. Dudragne (RDu),

**PASSERINES**

A Loggerhead Shrike at Seven Sisters Falls, MB 7 May (M.N.S.) and a Black-billed Magpie at Churchill, MB 25 Apr (*fide* BC) were out of range. Both rare and early was a Western Bluebird near Longview, AB 6–8 Mar (RB, J&MM). Manitoba Townsend's Solitaire reports came from Brandon, Headingley, and Winnipeg 13 Mar–14 Apr (m.ob.); another bird was at Biggar, SK 18 Apr (GW). A Wood Thrush at Winnipeg 7–8 May was seen by many (J&RK, m.ob.). Interesting records of American Pipits included an exceptionally early bird at Winnipeg 9 Apr (LV, AW) and unusually large flocks of 200+ at Calgary 30 Apr (TK) and 150 forced down by rain at Mt. Lorette 10 May (PS).



In an otherwise poor spring for passerines across the Prairie Provinces, this Hooded Warbler at St. Germain, Manitoba 10 May 2005 provided a nice highlight. Photograph by Fiona Crow.

The only highlights of the warbler migration were a good wave in s. Manitoba 24 May (m.ob.), a record-early Magnolia Warbler at Winnipeg 11 Apr (RS), and a Hooded Warbler at St. Germain 10 May (ph. G&FC), about the 13th for Manitoba. A Western Tanager visited Wascana Park, Regina, SK 23 May (BL, SW). A Field Sparrow occupied the same territory as last year at the Lauder Sandhills, MB (KD, m.ob.). Only Saskatoon experienced a notable, albeit short, migration of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows 7–12 May (SH). Lazuli Bunting re-

J. Duncan, B. Frenz, F. Greenslade, A. Hartley, M. Hindmarch, T. Hindmarch, S. Houston, B. & A. Huebert, M. Huebert (MHu), D. Huget, R. Johanson, J. Koes, R. Koes, T. Korozyk, G. Krätzig, M. Krueger, H. Lane, B. Luterbach, J. & M. MacDonald, D. MacNeill, Manitoba Naturalists Society, J. & J. Murray, J. Reimer, F. Roy, S. Saunders, D. Sawatzky (DSa), A. Schritt, D. Schritt, D. Seven, J. Shadick (JSh), S. Shadick (SSh), P. Sherrington, R. Staniforth, B. Storms, J. Swartz, V. Thomas, D. Thomas, L. Veelma, A. Walleyn, G. Wapple, I. Ward, S. Weir, R. Zuk. ☺

*Need a great bird slide?*



The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers nearly 2000 first-rate, full-color slides at reasonable prices.

Available individually or in specially priced sets. Some sets include written scripts or taped narration and bird sounds.

Perfect for educators, libraries, birders, artists, and commercial use.

Visit us on the Web at <http://birds.cornell.edu/closlides>

Write or call for a free catalog

**Cornell Lab of Ornithology**  
Visual Services

159 Sapsucker Woods Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 254-2450  
[birdslides@cornell.edu](mailto:birdslides@cornell.edu)

**SONG BIRD COFFEE**

**SHADE-GROWN COFFEE**



**SAVES TREES FOR MIGRATING BIRDS**

**BUY YOUR NEXT BAG OF SONG BIRD COFFEE FROM ABA SALES**

**800.634.7736**  
[WWW.AMERICANBIRDING.ORG/ABASALES](http://WWW.AMERICANBIRDING.ORG/ABASALES)



**American Birding Association**

YOUR PURCHASE SUPPORTS THE ABA'S BIRDERS' EXCHANGE PROGRAM