

with its 10,000th bird banded since the station opened in 2001; the celebrity bird was a hatch-year Magnolia Warbler, an appropriate "southeast Yukon specialty" (TMK). Cape May Warblers seem to have a small foothold at Albert Creek; 2 males were on territories there 3 Jun (ph. GR, TT); and single males were banded at the station 25 & 27 Jul (TMK). A male Bay-breasted Warbler singing at Congdon Cr. campground, Klunane L. 21 Jun (PS) established the Yukon's westernmost record. A first-year male Black-and-white Warbler, well w. of its range, was seen at Albert Cr., se. Yukon 3 Jun (GR, TT). An imm. American Redstart, a rare breeder in sw. Yukon, was reported from Haines Junction 18 Jul (DH). MacGillivray's Warbler was found to be common in deciduous shrubs along the Haines Rd. from Dezadeash L. s. to the British Columbia border 22-26 Jun (CE, PS); elsewhere in s. Yukon, a pair carrying food was observed just w. of Rancheria Falls 2 Jul (HG).

An extralimital male Western Tanager singing on territory in Whitehorse, Yukon 16-17 Jun managed to find a good patch of habitat but not likely a mate (ph. CE). A male Spotted Towhee, Nunavut's first, was a surprising find at Arviat 7-8 Jun (ph. LS). Sooty Fox Sparrow was confirmed breeding

in the Yukon with the observations of 5 ads., one feeding 2 juvs. at treeline along the Haines Rd., just n. of the British Columbia border 24-26 Jun (ph. CE, PS). Three Song Sparrows were also noted along the Yukon section of the Haines Rd. 26 Jun (PS). Those in search of Smith's Longspur on its breeding grounds need look no farther than Tombstone Territorial Park, cen. Yukon; this year a singing male was noted at km 98 Dempster Hwy. 13 Jun (HG), and one was seen at the same spot again 2 Jul (RF). Late but noteworthy was the report of a one-day count of about 2000 Snow Buntings, including one flock of at least 1000 birds, along the Alaska Hwy. between Haines Junction and Beaver Creek, sw. Yukon 24 Mar (JW). Herschel Island's reputation as n. Yukon's top rarity hotspot was further enshrined by the territory's first McKay's Bunting, a well-studied male, which looked right at home in the driftwood around Pauline Cove 16-28 Jul and possibly later (ph. LJM, ph. CE et al.). A singing Western Meadowlark was seen near Ft. Liard, NWT 10 Jun (vr. ph. GK, TH, LAr). A silent and skittish meadowlark, beyond its range regardless of species, was seen at Akimiski I., Nunavut 2 Jun (KA, LN); Easterns seem to stray shorter distances out of range than Westerns, which have been

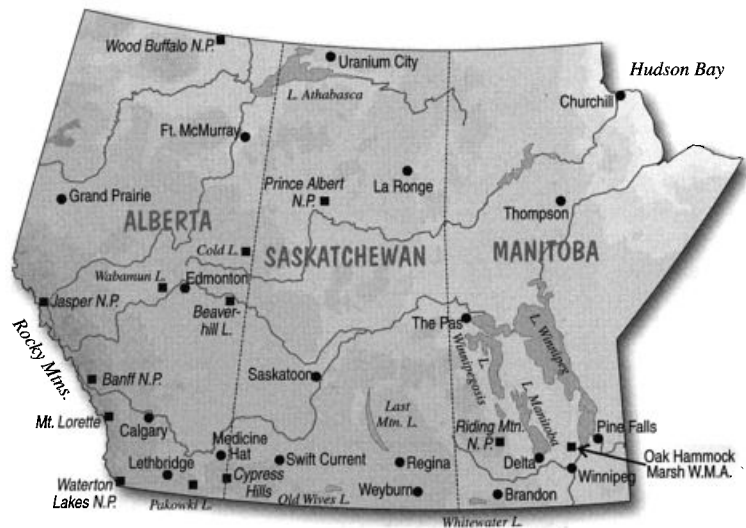
recorded in Siberia. A prolific White Spruce cone crop provided food for an abundant and widespread population of White-winged Crossbills in se. Yukon and sw. Northwest Territories this summer (CE; DT).

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Exceptionally heavy rains in June and the first half of July brought widespread, record-breaking floods across the southern third of the Region. Riparian species such as Spotted Sandpiper, Belted Kingfisher, and Bank Swallow probably suffered heavy nesting losses, and many Western Grebe and Franklin's Gull colonies were disrupted or displaced by high lake levels. The impact on other colonial waterbirds is difficult to assess because of the remote locations of major colonies. Exceptional numbers of American White Pelicans benefiting from floodwater across s. Manitoba and s. Saskatchewan may have been displaced from northern lakes or from abandoned colonies in the Northern Great Plains.

Impending flooding of Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan led to a heroic Piping Plover captive-rearing effort coordinated by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. With 113 nests threatened by inundation, 260 eggs were collected and over 100 young were eventually released at Chaplin Lake. Word on grassland sparrows was mixed but was generally bad in Saskatchewan. Baird's Sparrow continued to decline in southwestern Manitoba, but Grasshopper Sparrow numbers were above average there and in southern Alberta. Moisture-loving Le Conte's Sparrows appeared to thrive, as did Black Terns and most dabbling ducks. Bobolinks

# Prairie Provinces



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too seemed to benefit from the moist conditions and delayed hay harvest. Conversely, Swainson's Hawks near Saskatoon seemed to find better hunting following hay-cutting than those near Kindersley, where reduced numbers of grazing cattle could not keep up with exuberant grass growth (SH). Widespread reports of Yellow Rails from Calgary to Winnipeg suggest that many were displacements from more traditional marshes and fens to wet fields.

## GREBES THROUGH OSPREY

A colony of 500+ pairs of Western Grebes was "discovered" (known to locals) near the n. range limit at Ile-à-la-Crosse, SK 25 Jun (SS). A nesting pair of Great Egrets at St. Albert, AB (LBo, DN, ph. GR) provided a first provincial breeding record. Single Great Egrets were also noted near Rosebud, AB 9 Jun (Bl, Bul) and Chaplin L., SK 24 Jul (LD, MD, RD, DT, VT), a Little Blue Heron was seen at Whitewater L., MB 28 Jun (WC, MW, BCa), and a Cattle Egret was at Eyebrow, SK 18 Jun (*vide* VT). Exceptional numbers of egrets in Manitoba continued to increase in late summer; highlights will be summarized next season. Up to 5 White-faced Ibis were at Chaplin L. 24–26 Jul (LD et al.), and up to 15 were repeatedly seen at Whitewater L., MB (m.ob.). Manitoba breeding for this species was finally confirmed at Whitewater L., with two nests found 7 Jul (ph. RB).

A pair of Tundra Swans accompanied 2 cygnets 1 Jul near Clavet Mine, SK, where a pair also nested successfully in 2003 (M&SL). Outside the recently established breeding range in Manitoba, single Trumpeter Swans were found near Lyleton 6 Jun (KDS, JCo), Steinbach 16 Jun (KDS et al.), Pinawa approximately 5–20 Jun (E&OG, PT), and Churchill 13 Jun (C.N.S.C.). A Mute Swan was a remarkable visitor to Churchill 2 Jul (BC). Several small groups of Snow Geese summered in s. Manitoba and s. Saskatchewan; more unusual was a Ross's Goose at Lac Vert, SK 14 Jul (*vide* MD). Up to 8 Brant were observed on shoreline flats at Churchill 13 Jun (FG., C.N.S.C.). An orange-billed male Common Eider at Churchill 16 Jun (BDL, TH) was apparently of the subspecies *v-nigrum*. A Barrow's Goldeneye was inshore near Churchill 27 Jul (BC, PM).

## RAILS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Virginia Rail was unusual w. of Calgary, AB 31 Jul (TB). Two family parties of Black-necked Stilts were seen at Chaplin L., SK 31

Jul (BL, FB). An American Avocet wandered n. to Churchill, MB 11–18 Jun (RR, m.ob.). A male Ruff appeared e. of Irricana 16 Jul (RC). An American Woodcock furnished a n. sighting near The Pas 9 Jul (DR). A female Red Phalarope was at Eagle L., Strathmore, AB 17 Jul (MM), and 2000 Red-necked Phalaropes gathered at nearby Namaka L. 23 Jul (TK).

Twenty-two Little Gulls near Churchill 10 Jun equaled last year's peak count, and at least two pairs nested there (BC). A second-year Glaucous Gull furnished an unusual summer record at Cold L., AB 10 Jun (THm). Notable at Churchill were 2 Iceland Gulls 6 Jun (BF et al.) and an ad. Great Black-backed Gull 12 Jun (FG., m.ob.). An Arctic Tern was a rarity at Eagle L., AB 18–19 Jul (BG, TG, MM, m.ob.). Two Black Terns wandered n. to Churchill 10–16 Jun, and one was also seen there 14 Jul (RK, m.ob.). Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their expansion in Saskatchewan, with sightings at Val Marie 2 (BDL) & 10 Jun (KB) and a fledgling at a Weyburn feeder 5 Jul (MB, CB).

A Snowy Owl at Winnipeg 10 Jun (RPo) may have been a release from rehabilitation elsewhere. Exceptionally, 5 Northern Hawk Owl nests were found in Saskatchewan; one was unusually situated in an aspen copse in a horse pasture near Glaslyn (SH); also just outside the forest proper was a pair at Silver Falls, MB throughout Jul (JM, PT). No nesting Great Gray Owls were found in se. Manitoba, but Long-eared Owls were unusually numerous in agricultural Manitoba, with 34+ confirmed or probable breeding occurrences (JD). Only one of eight Short-eared Owl nests found in Saskatchewan was successful (MB, AHo, *vide* SH).

Above-average Common Nighthawk numbers in s. Saskatchewan and s. Alberta were encouraging. Single Common Poorwills were noted at Eastend, SK 11 Jun (LD, MD, RD) and near Purple Spring, AB 10 Jul (LB), and 3 were found in traditional areas of the Cypress Hills, SK 5 Jul. (AH). A Whip-poor-will was far n. at Partridge Crop L. near Thompson, MB around 22 Jun (*vide* DR). Chimney Swifts have declined in Manitoba in recent years, making outlying sightings of 3–4 at The Pas 1 Jun (BF et al.), 2 at Melita 25 Jun (RK), and 2 in Brandon 25 Jul (CC) note-

worthy. A Red-headed Woodpecker was found near Patricia, AB 17 Jul (DTo). Rare in summer, a Red-bellied Woodpecker was at La Rochelle, MB 31 Jul (JR). Two Hairy Woodpeckers near Churchill 27 Jul (BC) added to a string of recent records there.

## PASSERINES

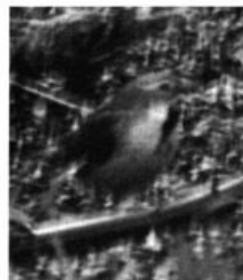
A Gray Flycatcher at Hay Meadow, AB 6–7 Jul (p.a., PS, BW) was a potential provincial first. A Western Kingbird lingered at Churchill 10–14 Jun (AC, C.N.S.C., m.ob.). Purple Martins had a bumper year near Saskatoon, with 202 young fledged from 55 nests at one colony (GP, MHo). Common Ravens nested within residential Saskatoon, SK for the first time, with well-grown young 5 May (MSt, *vide* Stuart Houston). A Rock Wren established a territory at Grande Clairière, MB 21–26 Jun (GB, m.ob.), while a Sedge Wren along Goose Creek Rd. 18 Jun was only the 2nd for the Churchill area (BDL, TH). Northern Mockingbirds appeared in Alberta at Calgary 3 Jun (DC) and e. of Dorothy 21 Jun (CM), and 2 Winnipeg birds were also present in Jun (JC, AM, RA, LC). Manitoba's 2nd Sage Thrasher was the bird of the year at Churchill 11–15 Jun (LCm, m.ob., ph. JK). A pair of Northern Shrikes was building a nest about 20 km s. of Thompson, MB 8 Jun (KDS, EG.).

A Blackburnian Warbler was well s. of the Alberta breeding range at Mt. Lorette 23 Jun (PC, CH, JP, MS). A Canada Warbler at Churchill 9 Jun was well described (SJ, *vide* BF). An obliging Yellow-breasted Chat lingered near Grande Clairière 20–26 Jun (KDS, m.ob.). New for Grasslands N.P., SK was a Western Tanager 19 Jun (KB), while one near The Pas 9 Jun (DR) added to the list of summer records from w.-cen. Manitoba. A feeder-visiting Scarlet Tanager 10–11 Jun (EB) was a Churchill-area first.

A Northern Cardinal visited Indian Head, SK 12–25 Jul (B&SE, m.ob.). A male Dickcissel at Exshaw 4–8 Jun (LP, m.ob., ph.) provided Alberta's 5th record, and sightings near Melita 2 (RP, JS, LV) & 20 Jun (CC) perhaps involved different birds. A Field Sparrow remained in the Lauder Sandhills, MB late May–26 Jun (KDS, LV, m.ob.). Also unusual were a Lark Sparrow near Millarville, AB 3 Jul (TK), a male Lark Bunting near Melita 23 Jun (GB) and a female at L. Macdonald, Calgary 24 Jul (RW), and a territorial Swamp Sparrow within Calgary city limits 11 Jun (BG, JB). A Harris's Sparrow was late at St. Ambrose, MB 12 Jun (CBr). Saskatchewan's first Eastern Meadowlark was carefully observed near



The bird of the season in the Prairie Provinces region was undoubtedly Manitoba's second Sage Thrasher, present at Cape Merry, Churchill 11–15 June (here 13) 2005. Photograph by Jerry Kumery.



Dickcissels have been exceedingly rare across the Prairie Provinces for over a decade. This male at Exshaw, Alberta 4–8 (here 6) June 2005 furnished only the fifth record for the province. Photograph by Terry Korolyk.

Longney's Crossing 19 Jun (BL). Five Brewer's Blackbirds were far n. at Churchill 15 Jun (BDL, KN). Irregular in Saskatchewan, a male Bullock's Oriole was near Grasslands N.P. 10 Jun (KB), and an apparent hybrid Bullock's Oriole x Baltimore Oriole was at nearby Val Marie 14-15 Jun (AH).

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June was one of the wettest on record in most areas of the Region. At the author's home near Minot, North Dakota, 19 cm of rain fell on 1 June, and the month total reached 40.6 cm. Other totals included 18 cm at Great Falls, Montana and 19 cm at Grand Forks, North Dakota. In contrast, July was hot in many areas, and precipitation was near record-low levels.

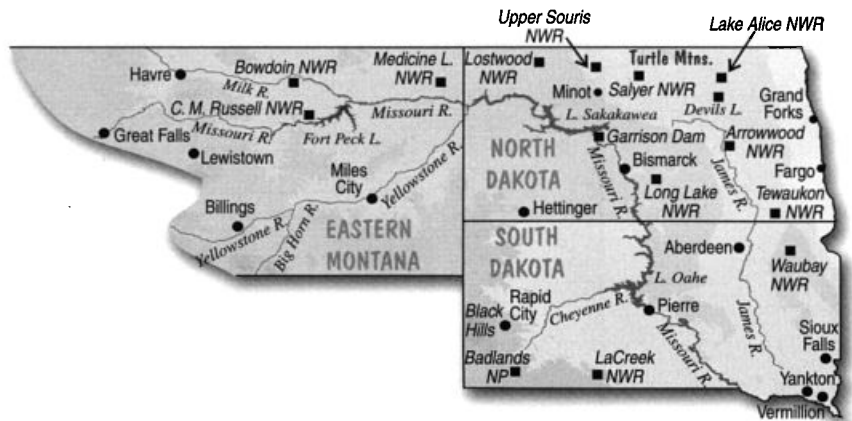
One of the results of the record precipitation was an incredibly verdant Region, even into usually dry eastern Montana. However, flooding was also a problem in many areas. Displaced birds were noted, and nesting was delayed or birds had to reneest. Colonial waterbirds were flooded in many places, but again, some reneested later in the season.

## GREBES THROUGH WRENS

Now a rare breeder in North Dakota, only one Horned Grebe was tallied. This species was a fairly common breeder as recently as two decades ago. In contrast, Red-necked Grebes continue expanding in the Region. A pair with young at Medicine Lake N.W.R., MT 13 Jul furnished the first nesting record for the refuge (EM, SL), and in ne. South Dakota, where the species is a local breeder, 11 pairs were confirmed nesting in three counties (ND). In a repeat of last year's event, most of the nesting American White Pelicans at Chase Lake N.W.R., ND abandoned nests and nestlings. The cause of these abandonments is still unknown. In South Dakota, 8000 nests were counted at Bitter L., Day (ND). Expansion of White-faced Ibis range continues, with 30 noted 25 Jun at a colony in Burke, ND (REM).

A Ross's Goose was unusual s. of Malta, MT 16 Jun (DP). Accidental in summer in South Dakota, a Tundra Swan was in Minnehaha 12 Jul (p.a., DC). An American Black Duck in Burleigh, ND 30 Jul was the first in 10+ years for the Bismarck area (CDE, HCT). Accidental in summer away from Grand Forks, a Greater Scaup was at Long Lake N.W.R. 18 Jul (HCT). The 3rd summer report for North Dakota, a Surf Scoter was photographed at Long Lake N.W.R. 3 Jul

# Northern Great Plains



(p.a., RC, fide MAG). Casual in summer, except in the Black Hills of South Dakota, a single Common Merganser was at Medicine Lake N.W.R., MT 15 Jun (TC). An ad. Bald Eagle in Malta, MT 10 Jun provided the first summer record for the area (DP). Rare in Cass, a Greater Prairie-Chicken was near Lake Bertha, ND 19 Jun (RHO).

Accidental in South Dakota, a Yellow Rail was in Tripp 17 Jun (p.a., DB); the species is also rare in se. North Dakota, where 2 were noted in Ransom 11 Jun (DLK). Common Moorhen is casual in South Dakota, where one was in Lake 3-7 Jun (p.a., ND, TJ, JSP, DC). Providing the first Jun report for the state, a Whimbrel was in Meade, SD 16 Jun (p.a., DC). A Stilt Sandpiper was early 25 Jun in Kingsbury, SD (JSP). Furnishing about the 9th report for North Dakota, a female Ruff was photographed in Grand Forks

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25 Jul (p.a., EEF) Constituting the 5th record for South Dakota, a Laughing Gull was in Yankton 27 Jul (p.a., DS). Now rare e. of the Missouri R. in North Dakota, a Burrowing Owl was in Foster 3-4 Jun (PRS, DOL).

Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in the Black Hills of South Dakota included singles in Lawrence (DGP) and at three locations in Custer (TJ, JF, JB, RDO). A first for South Dakota and the Region, a female Magnificent