



W. Ross Silcock • Joseph A. Grzybowski

The repeated words depicting this season were “tardy” and “late,” followed by “northerly,” as more and more observations seemed to extend what we expect as departure times and northerly limits for species across many taxa. Despite extensive rains in some areas, water levels were lower this season in ponds, lakes, and reservoirs, particularly in Oklahoma, and waterbird numbers were correspondingly low.

Abbreviations: McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (playa wetlands s.-cen. Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa, OK).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANE

The only report of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was from Red Slough 28 Aug (DA), a regular location. Summer vagrant Greater White-fronted Geese were all in Nebraska, 4 birds through 17 Sep (*vide* WRS). Given the warm autumn, dabbling and diving ducks provided few headlines. The only Eurasian Wigeon reported was an ad. male at Quivira 29 Oct (TH), one of few Kansas records. Two Mottled Ducks at Quivira 5 Sep (DS, SP, GP, MM) support the continued isolated pattern of occurrence in cen. Kansas over the years. A Ring-necked Duck at Red Slough 25–26 Aug (DA) was unexpected; such records are rare even in Nebraska, where 2 of 3 birds summering in Hamilton were still present 25 Aug (RE). Normally, few Greater Scaup are reported in the Region, making the 109 in Tulsa, OK 25 Nov (JWA) an impressive count. There were four reports of Surf Scoter 21 Oct–19 Nov, from all three states (ML, JWA, KD, WF), as well as single White-winged Scoters in Kansas

21 Oct (ML) and Nebraska 11 Nov (MB); a Black Scoter was in Tulsa, OK 25 Nov (JWA). Only 2 Long-tailed Ducks were reported, one at Salt Plains 27–28 Oct (RSh, AW) and the other in Burt, NE 28 Nov (EB). At the ne. corner of the species’ breeding range was a female Lesser Prairie-Chicken with 4 chicks in Rush, KS 25 Aug (SS, DSe, SSe).

Pacific Loons, still rare in the Region, were found at L. Tenkiller, Cherokee, OK 27 Oct (JWA), Osage, KS 12 Nov (MM, GP), and Oklahoma, OK 16 Nov (JAG). Also rare in the Region, increasingly so to the s., Red-necked Grebes were found in Riley, KS 14 Oct (LJ) and Harvey, KS 20 Nov (GF). Far fewer Western Grebes than usual were at McConaughy, only 2500 on 23 Oct (TL); recent fall peaks have been 30,000+ in late Sep. The only report of Clark’s Grebe was of 6 at McConaughy 23 Oct (TL). Neotropical Cormorants continue to be seen some distance n. for the Region in Coffey, KS: 3 were there 6 Nov (DG). Anhingas made a great showing at Red Slough, with 50 there 9 Aug (DA, BH); a single lingered as late as 22 Oct (JC, BH et al.).

In recent years, more Great Egrets are lingering in fall, with records this season for

Omaha, NE 12 Oct (RE) was late. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons showed well in the Rainwater Basin, with 13 in all, including a record count of 9 near Hastings 19 Aug (PD) White Ibis appeared n. to Quivira, with an imm. 14 Aug (AM), and w. to Canadian, OK, with 2 on 3 Sep (RA); up to 4 were at Red Slough exceptionally late on 21 Nov (DA et al.). Still a rare find, single Glossy Ibis were at Hackberry Flat, Tillman, OK 25 Oct (VF) and as far n. as Adams, NE 19 Aug (PD), the latter only the 8th for Nebraska. Rather late White-faced Ibis were the presumed 8 (carefully reported as *Plegadis* species) in Hamilton, NE 14 Oct (RE) and 2 at Hackberry Flat, Tillman, OK 25 Oct (VF). Rare e. as far as Osage, OK were 4–10 White-faced Ibis 18–21 Aug (PR) A “zootie” for Kansas was a Roseate Spoonbill in Riley 17 Aug (DB, DR); the last at Red Slough, where summer wanderers appear, was 18 Oct (BH, DA). Wood Storks usually occur only at or near Red Slough in the Region; an excellent count even there was of 250 seen 13 Sep (DA, BH). A Black Vulture wandered as far as Jefferson, KS 18 Oct (BW)

Very rare anywhere in the Region, Swallow-tailed Kites were reported in Sumner, KS

27 Aug (GD) and in Pushmataha, OK (undated; JK). A Mississippi Kite in Johnson, extreme ne. Kansas 15 Aug (BL) fits the recent pattern of fall movement for se. Nebraska (*vide* MO). Another in Oklahoma, OK 26 Oct (TS) was tardy. An early or summering Sharp-shinned Hawk was at Red Slough 11 Aug (DA). Three Northern Goshawks were reported, 2 quite early in Nebraska 7–8 Oct (B&LP, EB) and one in Pawnee, KS 9 Nov (SS). Perhaps the bird of the season was the Gray Hawk photographed in a Wichita, KS yard 20–30 Oct (MBr), the first Kansas record with tangible evidence. A Broad-winged Hawk in Ellis, KS 20 Oct (MR, JR) was westerly. Merlins first appear in the Region in Aug, early reports were from Oklahoma 15 Aug (PV), Lincoln, NE 19 Aug (TJW), and Sedgwick, KS 30 Aug



This male Merlin of the nominate subspecies was early on 15 August 2005 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Photograph by Pat Velte.

Washington, NE 19 Nov (CNK) and Oklahoma, OK 30 Nov (PV). Also late were Snowy Egrets in Harlan, NE 17 Oct (PD) and at Red Slough 8 Nov (DA et al.), and a Little Blue Heron in Cleveland, OK 13 Nov (JAG). Still a bird of note, 2–4 Tricolored Herons were at Red Slough 2–16 Aug (DA). Tardy were a Cattle Egret at Red Slough 8 Nov (DA, BH) and a Green Heron there 7 Nov (DA). The 4–5 Least Bitterns in Knox, NE 4–13 Aug (MB, DSt) were indicative of breeding; another in

(PJ). About 14 Peregrine Falcons were reported 3 Aug (in Morton, KS; MR, TC) through 30 Nov (in Tulsa), the latter possibly a “city bird” (JWA, JL, m.ob.). A Prairie Falcon reached e. Nebraska rather early, 19 Sep in Knox (MB), while another was easterly in Washington, NE 29 Nov (D&JP).

Regional sightings of Yellow Rail are scarce, but Red Slough is becoming a regular fall stopover site; up to 3 were found there 3 Oct–15 Nov (DA, JC, BH et al.). Black Rails are

found regularly at Quivira, but seemingly rather late were the 3 calling there 8 Nov (DG). Another scarce rail in the Region now found more regularly at Red Slough is King Rail; up to 5 were there 28 Aug–21 Nov (DA, BH et al.). Also of note, 5–6 Virginia Rails were found in Ellis, OK 24 Oct (ES). Not often observed, young Virginia Rails were with ads. in Knox, NE 20 Aug (MB). A Sora at Red Slough 8 Nov (DA) was late. Purple Gallinules occur rarely at Red Slough Jun–Jul, but one was in Oklahoma, OK on the very late date of 17 Oct (*fide* JWA, JL). Another rallid most often seen at Red Slough is Common Moorhen; tardy were the up to 3 there 4 Oct–1 Nov (DA, BH). A total of 22 Whooping Cranes was reported in all three states 23 Oct–10 Nov (CHa, HH, AW).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

An exceptionally high count of about 300 Black-bellied Plovers was made at Salt Plains 30 Sep (JWA); even counts as high as 40 are unusual in the Region. The ad. and 2 juv. Snowy Plovers at McConaughy 17 Sep documented a late-hatched brood (SJD, WRS, KN). Migrant Piping Plovers included one in Riley, KS 18 Aug (LJ) and a lingering single in Pierce, NE 1 Oct (WF). The last Black-necked Stilts to depart the Rainwater Basin were 10 juvs. in Seward and York, NE 6 Aug (JGJ). American Avocets continue to press the season; as many as 176 were still in Riley, KS 3 Nov (DB), with one in Tulsa, OK 20 Nov (BC, TM). A Solitary Sandpiper in Tulsa, OK 18 Oct (JL et al.) was also tardy. A Long-billed Curlew in Geary, KS 20 Aug (C&JO) was easterly, as were 2 Marbled Godwits in Riley, KS 21 Aug (C&JO). Two Marbled Godwits at Salt Plains 30 Sep (JWA) were late. Scarce in fall, a Ruddy Turnstone was in Lancaster, NE 26 Aug (LE), 2 imms. were in Douglas, KS 14 Aug (MM), and 5 were at Quivira the same day (AM). Two juv. Red Knots were found at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, KN, WRS), rarest of the *Calidris* this season. Three Semipalmated Sandpipers in Canadian, OK were rather late 28 Oct (JWA). The only report of Western Sandpiper came from McConaughy: 2 juvs. 17 Sep and 7 the next day (SJD, WRS, KN). Buff-breasted Sandpipers migrate over a wider front in fall than in spring; 71 were reported in Nebraska through 17 Sep (*fide* WRS) and 45 in Kansas 6–14 Aug (*fide* LM). No fewer than 278 Buff-breasteds were at two locations in Tulsa 14 Aug (JL, JM, BH), with 24 in Wag-

oner, OK 4 Sep (JM). A Regional rarity, an ad. male Ruff made a rather late appearance at Quivira 5–13 Nov (BKP, SP, m.ob.). Two reports of Short-billed Dowitcher coincided with expected fall dates for juvs.: 2 in Douglas, NE 29 Aug (CNK) and one in Chase, KS 5 Sep (WRS). Two American Woodcocks in Knox, NE 6 Sep (TJW) were westerly. Two Wilson's Phalaropes in Alfalfa, OK 30 Sep (JWA) and one in Woods, OK the same day (JWA) were rather late, but one at Quivira 13 Nov (SP, CH) was exceptionally so. Rare in the s. part of the Region, a Red-necked Phalarope was in Texas, OK 26 Aug (JWA). Much less expected were 4 Red Phalaropes this season, including an ad. and a juv. at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN) and singles in Morton, KS 2 Sep (DS, GP, MM, SP) and at Quivira 3 Sep (D&FV).

A rented ski-boat allowed close observation and photographs of a dark juv. Pomarine Jaeger at McConaughy 17–18 Sep (SJD, KN, WRS). Much rarer in the Region was a subad. Long-tailed Jaeger in Riley, KS 28 Aug (TC).



Typical of the few that visit the Southern Plains region in autumn, this Red Phalarope is in transition between juvenal and first-basic plumages; this photograph was taken 2 September 2005 in Elkhart, Morton County, Kansas. Photograph by Dave Seibel.

Reported most falls now, 5 Laughing Gulls were found 22 Aug–21 Oct, 3 of these in Kansas (*fide* LM), the others in Oklahoma (*fide* JWA, JL). Much less often reported, a basic ad. Little Gull was at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, KN, WRS). A good count of California Gulls was 82 at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD). The only Thayer's (one) and Glaucous (2) Gulls reported were in Douglas, KS 21 Nov (GP). Observed most falls now, 5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were found 17 Sep–29 Nov, at least one in each state (m.ob.). Still quite rare, a worm ad. Great Black-backed Gull was at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN). At least 13 Sabine's Gulls were reported from Nebraska and Kansas 15 Aug–24 Sep

(*fide* WRS, *fide* LM); surprisingly, none were reported in Oklahoma.

The dozen Caspian Terns in Mayes, OK 6 Nov (JWA) were late, and even later were another dozen in Wagoner, OK 22 Nov (JWA). About 38 Common Terns were reported 17 Sep–8 Oct, including an excellent count of 27 in Wagoner, OK 25 Sep (JWA). Three Black Terns in McCurtain, OK 11 Oct (BH) were also tardy.

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

Suffice it to say that Eurasian Collared-Doves are established in the Region. However, White-winged Doves are still noteworthy in Kansas and Nebraska, where no fewer than 11 were reported, including 5 in Clark, KS (SP, GP, MM, DS). A White-winged in Muskogee, OK 11 Nov (JI) was e. of the areas in which the species has established itself in the state. More slowly establishing itself in Kansas, Inca Dove was widely reported there, with 5 birds noted from Crawford in the se. to Grant in the w., and one as far n. as Douglas 15 Oct (CC).

Extremely late was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Sedgwick, KS 12 Nov (TH). Greater Roadrunners continue to make news in cen. Kansas, where singles were noted as far n. as Barton 1 Aug (GC) and Rush 20 Aug (SS; now for 3rd year), as well as in Edwards 26 Oct (DK). Short-eared Owls were at Red Slough 16 Nov (DA), where rare. Common Poorwill has a penchant for hanging around until it gets cold; singles were in Tulsa, OK 20–21 Oct (JWA, m.ob.) and in Rush, KS as late as 12 Nov (TH). A White-throated Swift in Riley, KS 1–4 Oct (MMA, TC, DB) was an unexpected rarity in e. Kansas; another very easterly bird picked up alive in Lincoln, NE 11 Oct died 13 Oct (BT et al.); it furnished the 2nd report for e. Nebraska.

Kansas boasted no fewer than 3 Black-chinned Hummingbirds (where rare): singles in Pawnee 2–10 Aug (DK), Morton 3 Aug (MR, TC), and Sedgwick 13–28 Aug (PG). Much rarer were 2 Anna's Hummingbirds, one in Hays, KS 28 Oct–22 Nov (MS, GFa, TMa, m.ob.) and another in Sedgwick, KS 10 Sep (PG). Continuing the hummer drum-roll for Kansas was a subad. male Costa's Hummingbird in Riley 27 Sep–7 Nov (TC, m.ob.). Some 7 Calliope Hummingbirds were in Nebraska and Kansas through 7 Sep (*fide* LM, *fide* WRS), and 11 Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were reported from Nebraska and Kansas through 7 Sep, with about 21 Rufous

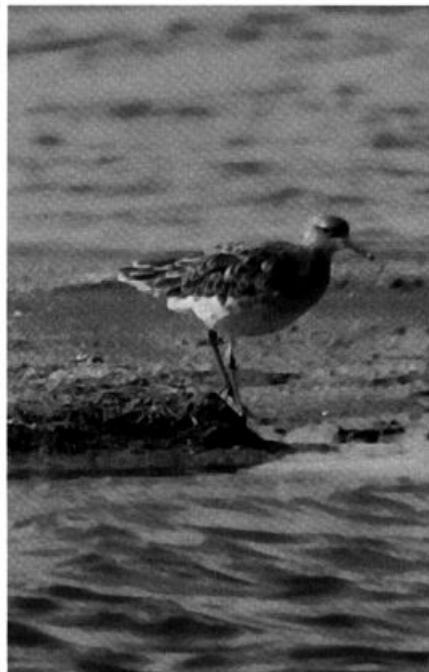
Hummingbirds reported from all three states (*vide* WRS, *vide* LM). Adding to the limited database on the species were single Red-naped Sapsuckers in *Kimball*, NE 18 Sep (ad. male; WRS, SJD, KN) and *Sioux*, NE 16 Oct (HKH). A Ladder-backed Woodpecker on the edge of its range was in *Clark*, KS 2 Sep (GP, MM, DS, SP).

Tardy, or not often detected in Sep, an Acadian Flycatcher was seen 14 Sep in *Tulsa*, OK (BC). Summering Willow Flycatchers at Red Slough were noted through 9 Aug (DA); another was rather late in *Otoe*, NE 22 Sep (L&CF). The only Hammond's Flycatcher reported was in *Greeley*, KS 4 Sep (PJ, TH, K&LG), and the only Dusky was in *Kimball*, NE 18 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN); these species have been rare-but-regular migrants at the w. edge of the Region. A breeder in the extreme nw. corner of the Region, Cordilleran Flycatcher, is a rarely noted migrant; one was in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 3 Sep (AK). Back for a 2nd season was a **Black Phoebe** 6–30 Nov in *McCurtain*, OK (BH, DA). Unusual so far e. were single Say's Phoebes in *Harlan*, NE 10 Sep and *Furnas*, NE 10 & 18 Sep (G&WH, KD, LR, RH). Four Vermilion Flycatchers in *Cimarron*, OK were still at this outpost location 29 Aug–4 Sep (BH, m.ob.). Rare but regular in *Morton*, KS, single Ash-throated Flycatchers were seen at two locations there 2–3 Aug (TC, MR). A Great Crested Flycatcher in *Otoe*, NE 8 Oct (L&CF) was late, as was a Western Kingbird in *Lancaster*, NE 8 Oct (EB). Single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were as far n. as *Knox*, NE 13 Sep (EB, MB) and *Cherry*, NE 20 Sep (CR); summer-season birds have been increasing in Nebraska.

Arriving Northern Shrikes were on schedule 17 Oct in Nebraska (TJW) and 24 Oct in Kansas (SS) but considered early 26 Oct in *Alfalfa*, OK (NS, RSh, m.ob.). Cassin's Vireo is another rare but regular migrant at the w. edge of the Region; 3 were at two locations 27 Aug in *Cimarron*, OK (where still a state rarity; JAG, JWA), and singles were in *Keith*, NE 17 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN) and in *Kimball*, NE 18 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN). Five Philadelphia Vireos were reported for Nebraska 21 Aug–23 Sep (*vide* WRS). Single Purple Martins at different locations in *Tulsa*, OK 27 Sep (BG et al.) and 15 Oct (BC) were late, as were 2 Tree Swallows at Red Slough 8 Nov (DA, BH, BS). Cave Swallow is being reported in Kansas by observers searching flocks of Cliffs: 2 were documented in *Ford* 2 Sep (MM, GP, DS, SP), and another was in *Hamilton* 4 Sep (PJ, TH, K&LG). Two Mountain Chickadees were well seen in *Sheridan*, NE 14 Oct (Sj). The first Red-breasted Nuthatches were on time in *Douglas*, NE 8

Aug (JHa) but rather early as far s. as *Cleveland*, OK 12 Aug (DKa). Furnishing one of few e. Nebraska records of Rock Wren was one in *Lancaster* 6 Sep (KP); another in *Hayes*, NE 26 Oct (TJW) was late. Reports at the expanding nw. margin of the Regional range of Carolina Wren came from *Webster*, *Nuckolls*, and *Colfax*, NE (*vide* WRS); 3 were in *Hitchcock* 26 Nov (LR, RH).

Nebraska Blue-gray Gnatcatchers along the fringes of their ranges were in *Dixon* 20 Aug (JJ) and *Dodge* 2 Sep (D&JP); one was late in *Muskogee*, OK 22 Nov (JWA). Single Townsend's Solitaires appeared e. of usual in *Washington*, OK 5 Nov (JH) and at two locations in *Johnson*, KS 10 Nov (AM, M&EC). A Swainson's Thrush in *Sioux*, NE 20 Oct



This Ruff photographed 6 November 2005 at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Stafford County, Kansas remained there for over a week. Photograph by Dave Seibel.

(HKH) and a Gray Catbird in *Sioux*, NE 2 Nov (HKH) were rather late. A Varied Thrush in *Sioux*, NE 2 Oct–2 Nov (KD, HKH) provided the 7th record for Nebraska since 1991. A rare migrant in w. Kansas, Sage Thrashers were found in *Grant* 21 Aug (KH) and 14 Sep (KH). The long-staying (since Oct 2002) Curve-billed Thrasher was in *Sioux*, NE through the period (*vide* AK), and another was in *Grant*, KS 13 Sep (SG), where rare. Two American Pipits in *Dixon*, NE 4 Sep (JJ) were early. Good numbers of Sprague's Pipits were reported in *Pawnee*, KS 27 Sep (SS) and 17 Oct (SS). A **Phainopepla** documented in *Morton*, KS 22 Sep by a lone observer (SP) was a first state record.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Late warblers included a Blue-winged in *Tulsa*, OK 14 Sep (BC), a Tennessee at Red Slough 25 Oct (DA), a Northern Parula in *Tulsa*, OK 10 Oct (MP), and a Chestnut-sided in *Leavenworth*, KS 3 Oct (JS). An amazing count was the 200+ Orange-crowned Warblers in *Butler*, KS 7 Oct (TH). Westerly were a Chestnut-sided in *Morton*, KS 3 Aug (MR TC), also very early for fall, and a Magnolia in *Grant*, NE 10 Sep (MB). The only Black-throated Blue Warbler reported was in *Butler*, KS 28 Sep–7 Oct (TH). The very few Regional records of Black-throated Gray Warbler increased by two: singles in *Morton*, KS 3 Aug (MR, TC), also a very early date, and *Grant*, KS 4 Oct (DW). The only Townsend's Warblers reported were singles in *Sioux*, NE 5 Sep (HKH) and *Kimball*, NE 18 Sep (SJD, WRS KN). Very early was a Blackburnian Warbler in *Otoe*, NE 7 Aug (L&CF). A rarity any time in Nebraska and Kansas, single Pine Warblers were in *Custer*, NE 6 Sep (TJW) and *Riley*, KS 18 Aug (LJ), with 3 in *Payne*, OK 24 Nov (TO), w. of the usual range. A casual fall migrant, a Blackpoll Warbler was in *Custer*, NE 6 Sep (TJW). Rare in cen. Oklahoma were single Ovenbirds in *Oklahoma* 11–12 Sep (TU) and *Pontotoc* 9 Oct (JP, DWo, WC). Another Ovenbird was rather late in *Douglas*, NE 23 Oct (DSt). Clearly a fall "zootie" was the Connecticut Warbler in *Sedgwick*, KS 1 Sep (TH). Hooded Warbler is an inveterate wanderer in much of the Region; one was as far nw. as *Sioux*, NE 5 Sep (HKH); another was a bit late at Red Slough 30 Sep (BH). Also quite early was a Canada Warbler in *Sarpy*, NE 14 Aug (EB). Different Summer Tanagers were late in *Tulsa*, OK 13 & 23 Oct (JWA).

Locally rare, a Rufous-crowned Sparrow was in *Morton*, KS 11 Nov (SP, CH). A Chipping Sparrow lingered at a feeder in *Otoe*, NE until 20 Nov (L&CF), and a Grasshopper Sparrow was rather late in *Thayer*, NE 30 Oct (MB). Henslow's Sparrow is at the nw. edge of its range in se. Nebraska; singles were in *Lancaster* 2 Oct (EB) and, rather late, 21 Oct (LE). A regular migrant but found only in low numbers, single Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were in *Lancaster*, NE 8 Oct (EB) and at Red Slough 23 Oct (DA et al.). An intriguing Fox Sparrow picked up dead in *Dodge*, NE 7 Nov was very dark, with plumage suggestive of the subspecies *schistacea* (D&JP), usually called Slate-colored Fox Sparrow. Although the type specimen of *schistacea* was collected in Nebraska, there have been no subsequent records in the state. Arriving early were a Fox Sparrow 10 Oct (MP) and a White-throated 19 Sep (LU), both in *Tulsa*, as well as a Lincoln's Sparrow in *Cimarron*, OK 30 Aug–1 Sep

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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS



Probably a more regular migrant through the Southern Great Plains than the few well-documented records indicate, this Hammond's Flycatcher was nicely photographed 4 September 2005 in Tribune, Greeley County, Kansas. Photograph by Matt Gearheart.

(BH). Only 2 Snow Buntings were reported, singles in *Lancaster*, NE 28 Oct (LE), rather early, and in *York*, NE 25 Nov (TEL).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *McCurtain*, OK 11 Oct (BH) was tardy, as was a Blue Grosbeak at *Red Slough* 7 Nov (DA). Unusual for Kansas were the 5 northerly Painted Buntings in *Douglas* 6 Aug (DG). Surprisingly, Dickcissels were still feeding young at two locations in Nebraska 14 & 19 Aug (LR, RH), and one was late in *Adams*, NE 15 Oct (PD). A Bobolink in *Tulsa*, OK 25 Aug (LMc) was a rare fall migrant. Unlike last year, few Purple Finches were reported this season, the first in Nebraska 21 Oct (B&LP, JJ), with one westerly in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 15 Nov (AK). Pine Siskins appeared early, with 3 in *Cimarron*, OK 5 Aug (LMa) and another in *Grady*, OK 20 Aug (M&JF). Filling out the late breeders was an American Goldfinch feeding a juv. on 9 Oct in *Sarpy*, NE (AR), late even for this species.

Cited observers (area editors in boldface): NEBRASKA: Elliott Bedows, Eric Bents (EBe), Ellen Brogie (EBr), Mark Brogie, Kathy DeLara, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Paul Dunbar, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Larry & Carol Falk, William Flack, Joan Hackett (JHa), Carolyn Hall (CHa), Robin Harding, Glen & Wanda Hoge, Helen K. Hughson, Jan Johnson, Stephen Jones, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Clem N. Klaphake, Tony Leukering, Thomas E. Labedz, Kay Niyo, Mark Orsag, Babs & Loren Padelford, Don & Jan Paseka, Kevin Poague, Lanny Randolph, Allen Reyer,

Christopher Rustay, W. Ross Silcock, David Stage (DSt), Barb Tebbels, T. J. Walker. KANSAS: Mark Bryant (MBr), Doris Burnett, Ted Cable, Cal Cink, Greg Copeland, Mark & Elaine Corder (M&EC), Gary Davis, Greg Farley (GFa), Gregg Friesen, Dan Gish, Paul Griffin, Kevin & Laura Groeneweg, Sam Guy, Helen Hands, Kellye Hart, Tyler Hicks, Chris Hobbs, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Don Kazmaier, Mark Land, Brenda Lea, Terry Mannell (TMa), Mark Mayfield (MMa), Mick McHugh, Aaron Mitchell, Lloyd Moore, Chuck & Jay Otte, Sebastian Patti, Brandon K. Percival, Galen Pittman, Jennifer Rader, Mike Rader, Dave Rintoul, John Schukman, David Seibel, Scott Seltman, Diane Seltman (DSe), Steven Seltman (SSe), Marilyn Sims, Don & Fran Vannoy, Bunnie Watkins, Dave Williams. OKLAHOMA: Randy Anderson, David Arbour, James W. Arterburn; Bill Carrell, William Carter, Jeff Cox, Vic Fazio, M. & J. Foster, Bob Germany, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Joe Hawkins, Berlin Heck, Jay Isbell, Deborah Kaspari (DKa), Jeff Kopachena, Jo Loyd, Larry Mays (LMA), Jeri McMahon, Lynn McRill (LMc), Terry Mitchell, Tim O'Connell, Mark Peterson, Joe Powlowsky, Paul Ribitzki, Terri Savage, Bill Shepherd, Ron Shepperd (RSh), Norman Smith, Ed Stegall, Terri Underhill, Laura Upshaw, Pat Velte, Anne Wilbur, Doug Wood (DWo). ☪

W. Ross Silcock, P.O. Box 57, Tabor, Iowa 51653, (silcock@rosssilcock.com); **Joseph A. Grzybowski**, 715 Elmwood Drive, Norman, Oklahoma 72072, (jgrzybowski@ucok.edu)

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