

migrant anywhere away from its last remaining stronghold in *Clay*, MN was a Chestnut-collared Longspur in *Lac Qui Parle* 17 Apr (BJU). A tardy flock of 20 Snow Buntings was found in *Columbia*, WI 7 May (CMA).

Michigan reported the only Painted Bunting, a male in *Marquette* 10 May (ph. GJ, LT). Not surprisingly, the only Great-tailed Grackle reports came from Minnesota, one 15-17 Apr in *Wright* (KTP, CMB) and 2 males and a female courting and nest-building in *Brown* 6 May+ (BTS). Michigan's winter Bullock's Oriole lingered through 5 Mar, while one in *Milwaukee* 3 May provided Wisconsin its 2nd record. Winter finches were reported in low numbers from Michigan, highlighted by a Hoary Redpoll in *Schoolcraft* 15 Mar (BJ) and singles at W.P.B.O. on 25 & 26 Mar and 8 Apr. Michigan had 2 Common Chaffinches in *Keweenaw* and another 2+ at W.P.B.O., all appearing in early May; these are certainly either escapees or the offspring of escapees. The wintering Eurasian Tree Sparrow in *Cass* lingered through 2 Apr, and another visited a feeder in *Ontonagon* 18 Apr-6 May (ph. RS, KW); these are Michigan's only state records!

Corrigenda: The Western Grebe in *Portage*, WI 25 Apr was reported by Murray Berner (MBe, not MB); the Black Vulture in *Shi-*

awassee, WI should have been from *Shiawassee*, MI; delete the Mississippi Kite from *Dane*, WI 22 May; and the Eurasian Tree Sparrow from *Schroeder*. *Cook* was erroneously attributed to Wisconsin instead of Minnesota (N.A.B. 59: 438-440).

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Iowa & Missouri



Stephen J. Dinsmore

The 2006 spring season was characterized by continued drought conditions throughout the Region. The season began with a strong southerly air flow in early

March that produced 38 tornadoes on 12 March in Missouri. Cooler weather returned in late March and retarded migration throughout the Region. April was generally warm, dry, and windy and saw a good push of migrants with the southerly winds during the latter half of the month. May was less consistent weather-wise, as several cold fronts swept across the Region in mid-month. This caused moderate groundings of Neotropical migrants, and the active weather produced good movements of migrants through the end of the month, especially in parts of Iowa. A big theme this spring was the excellent shorebird migration, especially on the western edge of the Region, and perhaps related to this was the exceptional flight of dark ibis. Rarities included Garganey, Ruff, Inca Dove, and Gray Kingbird, plus a nice assortment of lesser strays, many with a southern or western flavor.

Abbreviations: C.C.N.W.R. (Clarence Cannon N.W.R.); E.B.C.A. (Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, Boone, MO); Hawkeye (W.A.,

Johnson, IA); R.M.B.S. (Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, St. Charles, MO); Riverton (W.A., Fremont, IA); S.C.R. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO); T.G.P. (Tower Grove Park, St. Louis City, MO).

WATERFOWL

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued their pattern of spring occurrence in the Region, with two reports from Missouri: 2 on 13-15 May at Pertle Springs, *Johnson* (†Kurt Dean) and one on 14 May in *Greene* (Jerry Sowers, †Dean Rising et al.). Greater White-fronted Geese were well represented across the Region this spring: high counts were 800 on 2 Mar at Ted Shanks C.A. (PHa), 2600 on 4 Mar at Riverton W.A. (SJD), 17,830 on 7 Mar at S.C.R. (FD), and 3000 on 17 Mar at Badger L., *Monona* (GLV). White geese were also numerous, and Ross's Geese continue their slow increase, with numerous double-digit counts in Mar in the w. half of the Region. Tundra Swans were again scarce this spring, with one Missouri and three Iowa re-



This Sandhill Crane nest, apparently only the second for Missouri, was discovered 17 May 2006 (here) at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Holt County. Photograph by Brian Lomas.

ports, all in Mar. Cinnamon Teal were well represented, with at least four Missouri reports and two Iowa reports; two pairs at S.C.R. 18 Apr (TR) was an unusually large number for the Region. A stunning male Garganey was discovered 7 Apr s. of Sioux City, Woodbury, marking the 3rd Iowa record (ph., †PR). A count of 50,000 Canvasbacks 11 Mar at Pool 19, Lee (CRE) highlights the importance of this Mississippi R. spring staging area for the species. The only "sea" ducks reported were a Surf Scoter 26 Apr–2 May at R.M.B.S., St. Charles (JWE et al.) and a Long-tailed Duck 22 Apr at Twelve Mile L., Union, IA (JG, SJD, AB). A count of 564 Red-breasted Mergansers at Saylorville 2 Apr (BE) was a remarkable spring total for the Region. Lingering waterfowl seemed more numerous than usual, especially in Missouri, with May records for all of the more common species.

GROUSE THROUGH RAPTORS

There were only three reports of Gray Partridge, all from the n. half of Iowa, an indication that this species has still not recovered from the precipitous decline in the early 1990s. There was mixed news on Greater Prairie-Chicken, although numbers at most Missouri sites and the single Iowa locale seemed to be steady or slightly increasing. Notable loon reports included a Red-throated Loon at Little Wall L., Hamilton, IA 14 Apr (†MPr, m.ob.) and a Pacific Loon 15 Apr at Stockton L., Cedar, MO (BB). Red-necked

Grebes were reported only in Iowa, with six reports after 1 Apr; some of these birds were noted at potential nesting locales in May. Western Grebes were reported from six locales in the w. half of Iowa, including a record spring count of 15 on 5 May at L. Manawa, Pottawattamie (LJP, BKP).

Missouri documented the first nesting by Double-crested Cormorants in the w. half of the state with 24 nests on 26 May at Truman L., Henry (†Brad Jacobs). Herons were well reported in both states, although their distribution differed in that few were found in traditional sites in se. Missouri, but more than usual occurred throughout the rest of the Region. The eight Snowy Egret reports from Iowa were indicative of a good spring and complemented five Little Blue Heron reports. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were found in small numbers throughout Missouri and the s. half of Iowa, except for one in Chickasaw, IA 9 May (DCH). Unusual were two White Ibis reports in Missouri: one s. of Belton, Cass 29 Apr (†Tom Martin) and another 8 May at Bob Brown C.A., Holt (†KM). One of the big patterns of the spring was the push of *Plegadis* through both states. Glossy Ibis, a casual but increasing spring migrant, were reported only in Missouri, with one at Bean L., Platte 15 Apr (†KM) and up to 2 at S.C.R. 26 Apr–20 May (†TR, m.ob.). White-faced Ibis were widely reported this spring, and in unprecedented numbers, especially along the Missouri R. corridor. The first were 12 on 12 Apr at

Owego Wetlands, Woodbury (GLV). Huge numbers were found at S.C.R. mid-Apr+, with top counts of 137 on 2 May (TR) and 80 on 28 May (KM, JPU).

Mississippi Kites were well reported in Missouri, especially away from their traditional Mississippi R. haunts, but none were found in Iowa. Nesting Bald Eagles are becoming so numerous that they now draw little attention. In Missouri, there were 123 nests this spring, an increase of 50 from 2001 (Andy Forbes). Swainson's Hawks were well reported in both states, with 200 on 18 Apr at Bigelow Marsh, Holt (†PM et al.) being a record count for Missouri. Late Merlins were reported in both states, through 14 May in Missouri and 21 May in Iowa. Peregrine Falcons were perhaps more numerous than usual this spring, especially in early and mid-May as they tracked the shorebird migration through the Region. The only Prairie Falcons were in Missouri, where there were three mid-Mar reports

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Yellow Rails were reported only in Iowa, where there were three reports in the period 24–29 Apr. King Rails are a species of concern throughout the Region, so it was heartening to have small numbers detected by dedicated rail surveys in Missouri, including up to 12 birds in May at C.C.N.W.R., Pike and up to 6 in May at BK Leach/Bittern Basin, Lincoln (AD et al.). None were reported in Iowa. Single Common Moorhens were reported in both states after 20 Apr. A Sandhill Crane nest was discovered 17 May at S.C.R., Holt (†FD, ph. Brian Lomas), marking only the 2nd nesting record for this species in Missouri. A pair n. of C.C.N.W.R., Pike on 22 May (AD) was suggestive of nesting. This species was also widely reported in Iowa in Apr and May, with many of the reports probably pertaining to nesting birds. Five wandering subad. Whooping Cranes from the reintroduction project at Necedah N.W.R. in Wisconsin spent 6–26 May at Lande River W.A., Winnebago, IA (†CJF, Robert Schwartz). A later flock of 7 explored as far w. as Palo Alto, IA 19 May before returning home (†Robert Schwartz). One wonders if this pattern of occurrence in the Region will increase.

The shorebird migration was excellent this spring, especially along the Missouri R. corridor in both states. In Missouri, the hotspot was S.C.R., where impressive numbers on 13 May included 10,005 Lesser Yellowlegs (TR) and 516 Hudsonian Godwits, 2903 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 8918 White-rumped Sandpipers, 5002 Pectoral Sandpipers, 1012 Stilt Sandpipers, 1720 Dunlins, and 2011 Wilson's Phalaropes (DAE et al.). The hotspot in

Iowa was Riverton, just to the n. of S.C.R., where counts that same day (13 May) included 491 Hudsonian Godwits, 2000 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 800 White-rumped Sandpipers, 213 Stilt Sandpipers, 284 Wilson's Phalaropes, and 71 Red-necked Phalaropes (SJD). Dowitcher ratios (Short-billed to Long-billed) of 701:50 at S.C.R. (DAE et al.) and 77:244 at Riverton (SJD) on 13 May did little to clarify the timing and abundance of their migration through the w. part of the Region. Long-billed Dowitcher is generally far more abundant along the Missouri R., and they occur here much later in spring than elsewhere in the Region.

American Golden-Plovers staged a relatively early migration this spring, with a peak of 2000 in Lincoln 1 Apr (Tom Borman, DR); peak numbers in Iowa occurred in the period 8-12 Apr, and few were seen anywhere in May. Black-necked Stilts continue to increase in the Region. In Missouri, these included up to 3 after 15 Apr at S.C.R. (KM, m.ob.), one at E.B.C.A. 23-27 Apr (KA et al.), 2 at R.M.B.S. 28 Apr (JWE), and 2 in Lincoln 13 May (SS, Eric Schuette). In Iowa, pairs were seen 25 May at Mallard Marsh, *Cerro Gordo* (ph. PH) and 25-27 May at Hawkeye (CRE, DP). There was a decent flight of American Avocets through the Region in late Apr, with peaks of 30 at Coralville Res., Johnson, IA 20 Apr (CRE et al.) and 38 at R.M.B.S. 25-26 Apr (JPU, JWE); other predominantly "western" migrants like Willet and Marbled Godwits occurred in near-normal numbers. Rarities included 2 Whimbrel reports in each state between 9 and 21 May and at least one female Ruff 29 May-1 Apr at Bigelow Marsh, Holt, MO (†DAE, †TR, m.ob., ph.) and another 21 May at E.B.C.A. (†Jean Leonatti).

Laughing Gulls are rare spring transients in the Region, and the only reports were single ads. on 12 Apr and 25 May at R.M.B.S., St. Charles (DR, CM). Franklin's Gulls were one of the few "western" waterbirds that was scarce this spring, with no reports of concentrations over 200 birds. An ad. Little Gull at R.M.B.S., St. Charles 12 Apr (ph., †JPU) was a good find in spring. Other notable gull reports included a California Gull 2 Mar at Saylerville (†AMJ), 3 Iceland's in Scott, IA through 28 Mar (ph., †SMF, m.ob.), Lesser Black-backs in Iowa (five reports) and Missouri (one report), and possibly as many as 5 Great Black-backs through 7 Apr in Scott, IA (†SMF, m.ob.). There were 2 reports of Least Terns from each state, all from expected locales along major rivers.

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

White-winged Doves, clearly on the increase in the Region, were reported only in Missouri, with singles 15-18 May at Liberty, Clay (Linda Williams) and 16 May at East Prairie, Mississippi (site of a 2005 nesting attempt; Shane Pruett). An Inca Dove made a rare appearance 12 Apr at Columbia, Boone (†Sarah Pelc et al.). The only spring holdovers from the Snowy Owl irruption were in Iowa, where an



A Prairie Warbler was present at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area, Benton County, Iowa after 20 (here 27) May 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam.

ad. male lingered through 25 Apr at Clear Lake, *Cerro Gordo* (ph. PH). Two Long-eared Owl nests in Livingston (SK) provided a rare Missouri nesting record. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrived ahead of schedule in both states, on 2 Apr at both Cape Girardeau and St. Louis in Missouri (*vide* CM) and on 22 Apr in Carroll, IA (†Victor Webber).

Yellow-bellied and Alder Flycatchers were reported in small numbers from both states, most during their expected mid- to late May migration window. Western Kingbirds continue to consolidate their range slowly in both states, with increasing reports in the e. part of the Region. A Gray Kingbird reported 24 May at Salem, Dent (†David Plank), said to have been present for several days prior to this date, would be a first for Missouri and the Region if accepted. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are expanding northward in Missouri, with Apr-May reports from Boone, Buchanan, and Cass; there was a lone report from Iowa on 29 Apr in Fremont (Steve Matherly, *vide* WRS), where the species is still rare.

White-eyed Vireos were reported from 11 Iowa counties after 22 Apr, an above-normal number for spring. Fish Crows were again well reported from Missouri, with a few scattered individuals n. and w. of their core range, especially along the Missouri R. Black-billed Magpies continue to maintain their toehold in nw. Iowa: 2 were in Plymouth 15 May (Dick Bierman). Swallows arrived early this spring,

especially Tree Swallow, with first reports on 6 Mar at E.B.C.A. (KA) and 12 Mar in Lee, IA (Linda Johnson). A few Red-breasted Nuthatches remained from the minor invasion this winter, including late dates of 7 May at T.G.P. (Mike Thelen) and 12 May at Ames Story, IA (David C. Edwards). Bewick's Wrens continue to be scarce in the Region. In addition to the usual scattered few in Missouri, reports included a pair in Decatur, IA 8-22 Apr (†JRL), 2 in Boone, MO late Apr-12 May (PM), and a pair after 15 May at Shimek S.F., Lee, IA (CRE, DP).

The thrush migration was fair through the Region, with good numbers detected on the ground and at night in early to mid-May. The Gray-cheeked Thrush movement was particularly good in both states, and late Hermit Thrushes were detected 13 May in Buchanan, MO (LL) and 19 May in Hancock, IA (AB, ph.). A Sprague's Pipit 22 Apr in Fremont (†SJD, †AB, †JG) was found as a result of a targeted search for this species, which may be a regular but overlooked migrant in w. Iowa. An extremely late American Pipit on 29 May at R.M.B.S. (†BR) was the latest ever for Missouri.

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

The warbler migration drew mixed reviews, with generally weak flights in Missouri but good flights in many parts of Iowa. Interesting reports included a rare Brewster's Warbler in late Apr in Adair, MO (Philip Wire), single male Black-throated Blues in Iowa at Ledges S.P., Boone on 13-14 May (NAO) and at Jester Park, Polk 21 May (BE), a male Audubon's Warbler at Nine Eagles S.P., Decatur, IA 15 May (†SSP, †JRL), a Prairie after 20 May at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area, Benton, IA (Jim Forde et al.), and a Swainson's 22 Apr in St. Louis, MO (†Randy Korotev). Oddly, it was a poor year for Cape May Warblers in Missouri (three reports 30 Apr-13 May), but above-average numbers were detected in Iowa, especially 21-25 May in n.-cen. Iowa (SSP, KLP, PH, John Bissell). Species that drew attention in both states were Cerulean and Connecticut Warblers. Cerulean was widely reported from the e. half of Missouri, with a peak of 12 at Weldon Springs C.A., St. Charles 22 Apr (BB, Rad Widmer), while 17 Iowa reports were all from the se. portion of the state except for one in *Cerro Gordo* 20 May (SSP KLP). The Connecticut Warbler flight was better than average, with six Missouri reports 12-24 May and five Iowa reports 20-26 May exemplifying their narrow migration window in the Region. Hooded Warblers were thought to be expanding in Missouri, while the typical

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smattering of reports in Iowa included a cluster of three reports 6-20 May in n.-cen. Iowa (RGo, PH).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Spotted Towhee reports totaled 6 birds in Missouri and 2 in Iowa through early May. Clay-colored Sparrows experienced a typical migration, with a few in the e. parts of both states; high counts were reported at Algona,



This cooperative male Painted Bunting graced Brookside Park in Story County, Iowa 7 (here 11) May 2006 and later, providing just a second state record. Photograph by Jay Gilliam.

Kossuth, IA 3 May (12; MCK) and in Clay, MO 13 May (7; KM). Henslow's Sparrows were widely reported in both states, but especially in Iowa, and they are now considered locally common in s. Iowa, where rare 20 years ago. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows are rare-but-regular late spring migrants in the Region. This spring, there were 3 in Missouri 8-19 May (SK, PM, DR, CM) and 3 in Iowa 20-29 May (NAO, SSP, PH), about normal for spring. Sparrows, especially the *Zonotrichia*, lingered into mid-May in both states. A tardy Fox Sparrow through 18 May in Boone (†Edge Wade) was Missouri's latest ever. A Harris's Sparrow in Linn, IA 23 May (Bill Scheible) was late, as was a White-crowned Sparrow the same day in St. Charles, MO (JWE). Oddly, there were more May reports of Dark-eyed Juncos in Missouri than in Iowa, including a single through the end of the period at Kearney, Clay (Jo Ann Eldridge). Smith's Longspurs are known to be regular spring migrants across the Region, but their secretive habits, short migration window, and preference for open habitats not often visited by birders usually cause them to be underreported. Reports this spring were encouraging. The four Missouri sightings spanned 3 Mar-1 Apr, with a peak of 350 at St. Joseph, Buchanan 3 Mar (MR). The nine+ Iowa reports in the pe-

riod 5 Mar-22 Apr included peaks of 200 on 9-10 Mar in Decatur (†JRL, Nathan Miller) and 120 on 23 Apr at three locations in Kossuth (MCK, PH). Snow Buntings lingered into Mar in both states: 14 Mar at Mozingo L., Nodaway (†DAE) and 17 Mar at Hanlontown Marsh, Worth, IA (ph. PH).

Lazuli Buntings reports included 3 birds in w. Missouri in the period 14-17 May, more than normal; a report from Iowa is under review. A cooperative ad. male Painted Bunting 7 May+ at Brookside Park in Ames, Story (†SSP, KLP, m.ob.) furnished Iowa's 2nd record. The Great-tailed Grackle expansion in the Region seems to have slowed, although increasingly this species is appearing in the e. half of the Region, as indicated by this spring's reports of 5 in e. Missouri and one in e. Iowa. After the lackluster 2005-2006 winter finch flight, it wasn't surprising that few were reported this spring. Purple Finches lingered through late Apr in both states. Iowa had a White-winged Crossbill at Fairmont Cemetery, Scott 8 Mar (WMZ) and a Common Redpoll at Bacon Creek Park, Woodbury 22 Mar (PR). Pine Siskins were also scarce, but the few reports included singles in Holt, MO

through 1 May (TR), in Cerro Gordo, IA 4 May (CJF), and at Cedar Hill, Jefferson, MO 13 May (Wally George).

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