

Southern Great Plains



W. Ross Silcock | Joseph A. Grzybowski

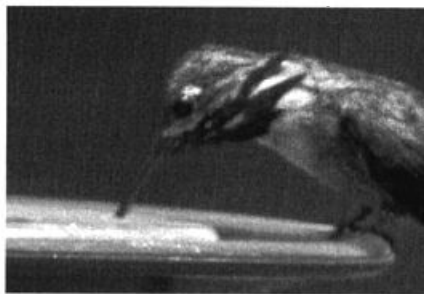
The summer was intriguing in the number of more northerly breeding species located in the Region, a phenomenon expected in waterbirds and shorebirds but also recently noted in other groups, from rails to passerines. Cassin's Sparrows and Dickcissels, whose ranges normally shift harmoniously in wet and dry years, may have broken pattern this season, at least in parts of the Region: normally, drought years (such as 2006) result in eastward shifts of both species, but Dickcissels also moved westward, into western Nebraska, this season. Drought conditions continue to affect some waterbirds negatively, particularly Western, Clark's, and Eared Grebes, Black-necked Stilts, and California Gulls in Nebraska, although stilts are still prospering at a few sites in Oklahoma. Southbound shorebird migration seemed somewhat tepid this season.

Abbreviations: Hackberry Flat (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Harvard Marsh (Harvard Marsh Waterfowl Production Area, Clay, NE); 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); Valentine (Valentine N.W.R., Cherry, NE).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAILS

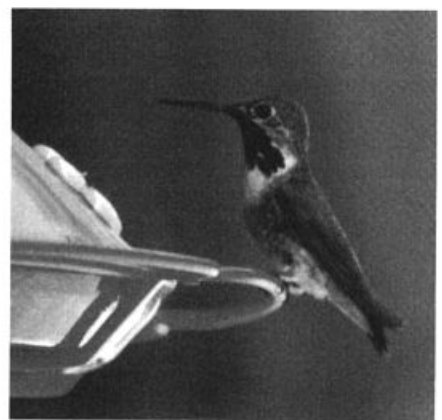
Now expected at Red Slough, up to 15 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were present 6 Jun–31 Jul (DA, BH). Rarities elsewhere in the Region, one Black-bellied was n. to Lancaster, NE 16 Jun (LE), one was in Johnson, KS 29 Jun (BW), and 2 were at Quivira 26 Jul (RG). A Greater White-fronted Goose tarried at Quivira 4 Jul (MG, AM), while a Cackling

Goose in Sarpy, NE through the period (L&BP) appears to have become resident there. At least nine pairs of Trumpeter Swans with cygnets were noted in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska (CNK, TH, BFH); unexpected s. of the breeding range was an ad. at North Platte 20 Jun (TJW). Southerly ducks included 2-4 Gadwalls at Red Slough 6 Jun–31 Jul (DA), several American Wigeons in Cimarron, OK 4 Jun (M&MP), and another wigeon in Lancaster, NE 28 Jun (LE). A male American Black Duck paired with a Mallard was flushed at Valentine 12 Jul, but no brood was evident (TH). Rare anywhere in the Region, up to 3 Mottled Ducks were at Red Slough 2-27 Jun (BH, DA). Usually mere migrants in Oklahoma, a Cinnamon Teal was in Cimarron 4 Jun (M&MP), and 2 were in Texas 14 Jul (JWA), while up to 2 at Quivira 30 Jun–4 Jul were unexpected (SS, TC, DB, MG, AM). Green-winged Teal summering s. of usual quarters included 3 at Red Slough 6 Jun–15 Jul (DA, BH) and one in Cimarron 4 Jun (M&MP). Also lingering were a Ring-necked Duck at Red Slough 25 Jul (DA) and a Bufflehead in



Calliope Hummingbirds were photographed twice in summer 2006 in the Southern Great Plains: on 27 July in Pratt County, Kansas (top image) and on 31 July in Comanche County, Oklahoma. Photographs by Lee Quell and Kurt Meisenzahl, respectively.

Red Slough is the only regular Regional site for Anhinga; up to 6 were there 6 Jun–26 Jul (DA, BH). Observations of Least Bittern, although expected in most of the Region, are still noteworthy; up to 3 were found at Red Slough 7-15 Jun (BH), 2 each at Quivira 28 Jul (T&SM) and in Sumner, KS 30 Jul (MT, GY), and singles were found as far to the nw. as Cherry, NE 13 (JED) & 20 Jun (TH). West-erly were Green Herons in Morrill, NE 11 Jun (SJD) and near North Platte, NE 8-9 Jul (TJW). Despite amazing numbers of White Ibis at Red Slough (e.g., 1800 on 6 Jun and 1000 there 5 Jul [DA, BH]), the only report elsewhere was of one in Douglas, KS 30 Jul (MRo, m.ob.). The dry conditions in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska may not have affected White-faced Ibis, as 122, many of them juvs., were in Garden 29 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). Good numbers were also reported elsewhere in the Sandhills (WM, TH). As far s. as Red Slough, one or 2 White-faced Ibis 28 Jun and 31 Jul (DA) were somewhat extralimital. A Glossy Ibis × White-faced Ibis hybrid was found in Alfalfa, OK 1 Jun (SM). Roseate Spoonbills



Scotts Bluff, NE 11 Jun (SJD). A female Hooded Merganser with 3 young at Red Slough 5-13 Jun (DA) provided rare confirmation of breeding there.

A Pacific Loon in breeding plumage at McConaughy 7 Jun (KSk) was a good find, only the 9th summer record for Nebraska. Summering Common Loons were found as far s. as McCurtain, OK 30 Jun (BHe, BH), with others in Riley, KS (TC, LJ) and northward (fide WRS). Western and Clark's Grebes appear to have suffered from dry conditions in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska; the only breeding reported for either species was for Clark's at Valentine (TH). Although Valentine is a new breeding site for Clark's, a record count of 44 at McConaughy by 30 Jul included no juvs. (SJD, WRS, KN) and suggests complete breeding failure. A Western Grebe at Quivira 4 Jul (MG, AM) was unexpected.

were found only at Red Slough, as expected, with up to 5 present 8-31 Jul (BH, DA). A Wood Stork was in Saunders, NE 2-3 Aug (JC, SSc, ph. JGJ, JS, B&GC); possibly the same bird was found 16 km away on 15 Jun—included here by virtue of a good drawing made by a six-year-old birder (ADG, fide RW). Wood Stork is expected in the Region only at Red Slough, where 10 juvs. appeared 4 Jun and numbers increased to 150 by 31 Jul (DA, BH, m.ob.).

An Osprey was in Hitchcock, NE 18 Jun (BFH). Breeding Mississippi Kites continue at Ogallala, the only regular breeding site in Nebraska; up to 6 were there 25 Jun (CWH), with a nest noted 29 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). One in Crawford, KS 30 Jun (RM) was e. of the usual range. Cooper's Hawks continue to be reported more commonly throughout the region, even in Oklahoma, where summer ob-

servations were scarce only a few years ago. Merlins appear in the n. parts of the Region in Aug and later in the s.; thus one at Red Slough 31 Jul (DA, MD) was very early for the locale. Also early were single Peregrine Falcons at McConaughy 29 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN) and in Pawnee, KS 23 Jul, the latter a very dark individual (SS).

Reports of Black Rail in Oklahoma and Nebraska are few, with status of the species in the Region perhaps best considered enigmatic. Two reports added to the database: one was "calling incessantly" at Valentine, *Cherry* 24 Jun (TH), and another was in *Beaver*, OK 11 May and 7-13 Jun (EB). King Rails were found as far n. as Valentine, where one was calling 20 Jun (TH); others were at Quivira, including an ad. and a chick 23 Jul (RG, PJ), and in *Sumner*, KS 30 Jul (MT, GY), with singles at Red Slough 4 Jun (BH) and 30 Jul (M&MP). Virginia Rail nested at Quivira also, with a downy chick seen there 23 Jul (PJ, T&SM). Rare in most of Oklahoma during summer, single Virginia Rails were found in *Texas* 6 Jun (GK) and *Harper* 13 Jun (EB, BuH, BH). Unusual in Kansas during summer, a Sora was in *Crawford* 26 Jun (RM), and 2 were in *Johnson* 29 Jul (ML, MG). Purple Gallinules appear regularly, albeit rarely, at Red Slough, where one was present 5-7 Jun (DA, BH). Common Moorhen reports included up to 5 at Red Slough during the period (BH, DA) and 2 ads. with 5 juvs. in *Sumner*, KS 30 Jul (MT, GY). Sandhill Cranes continue to add new breeding sites in Nebraska; very exciting was the discovery of a pair with 2 chicks in *Morrill* 18 Jul (EM, BG; ph.). One flew over *Dixon*, NE 7 Jun (JJ).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

The summer period provides the puzzles of late and early shorebirds. Late, lingering, or early was a Black-bellied Plover at Valentine 8 Jul (TH). Oddball American Golden-Plovers were located at Red Slough 2-7 Jun (BH) and at McConaughy 29 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). Snowy Plovers thin out as far n. as McConaughy, where only an ad. and 2 juvs. were noted 29-30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). McConaughy again hosted excellent numbers of Piping Plovers, the best count being of 132, including many juvs., 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). Others were reported from regular Nebraska locations (*vide* WRS), but one at Quivira 4 Jul (MG, AM) was unexpected. Mountain Plover observations in the s. Nebraska Panhandle reported by the Nebraska Prairie Partners personnel included 84 nests, at least 37 successful and most of the others still under incubation 16 Jun (*vide* JGJ). Dry conditions reduced

the numbers of Black-necked Stilts reported in Nebraska, both in the Sandhills and Rainwater Basin (*vide* WRS). A pair with young in *Seward*, NE 11 Jul (JGJ) constituted the easternmost breeding record for the state. An excellent count of 20 stilts came from Hackberry Flat 11 Jun (M<).

Very early Solitary Sandpipers appeared 26 Jun in *Lancaster*, NE (JGJ) and at Red Slough the next day (DA). The 8 Greater Yellowlegs at Hackberry Flat 11 Jun (M<) may have been fall migrants; another was in *Grant*, NE 13 Jun (JED). Also southbound early were the 40 Willets in *Grant*, NE 18 Jun (EBd) and one in *Morton*, KS 22 Jun (SP, KH). A Hudsonian



This pair of Mottled Ducks was at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, McCurtain County, Oklahoma 2 June 2006; the species is now found annually, if sparingly, in the state. Photograph by Berlin Heck.

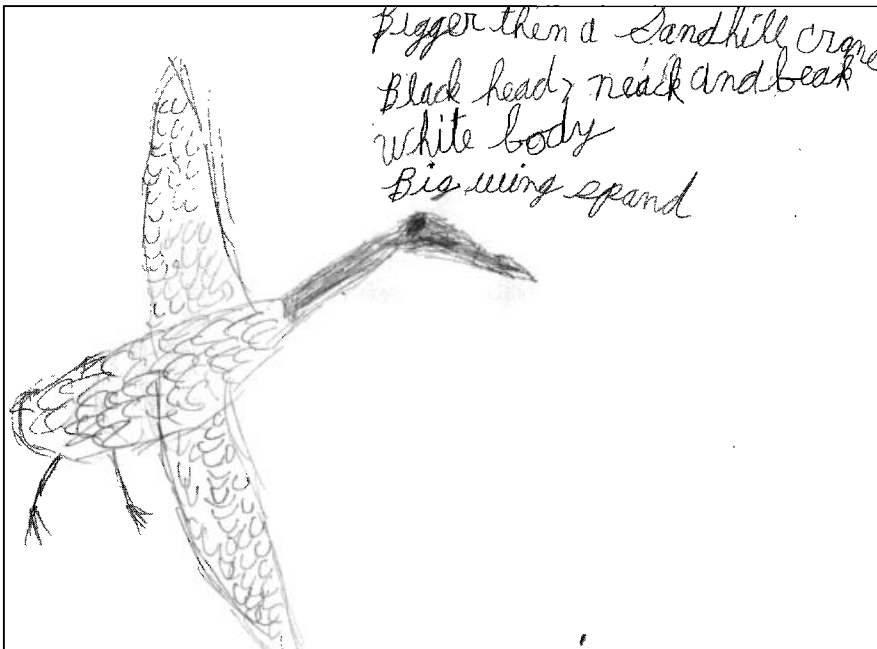
Godwit in *Lancaster*, NE 23 Jun (MU) was record late for the state. Marbled Godwit breeds in low numbers in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska; this year, four pairs were found at three locations (BFH, JED, WM). Fall flocking of Marbled Godwits occurs early; 26-28 were at a pond in *Grant*, NE 22-26 Jun (GG, WM), and early migrants were singles in *Alfalfa*, OK 19 Jun (LMA) and in *Washington*, OK 3 Jul (BGa). Late-spring Sanderlings included one in *Texas*, OK 8 Jun (GK) and 2 at McConaughy 11 Jun (SJD). A Baird's Sandpiper was at McConaughy 18 Jun (WRS); 2 in *Garden*, NE 22 Jun (GG) may have tarried there rather than migrate northward. A Pectoral Sandpiper 12 Jun at Red Slough (DA) and a Stilt Sandpiper at Hackberry Flat 11 Jun (M<) were likely tardy spring migrants. The first Buff-breasted Sandpipers moving southward are ads.; an excellent count of 281 came from sod farms in *Wagoner*, OK, and 37 were in *Tulsa* 29 Jul (JWA). A Buff-breasted at McConaughy 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN) provided a rare westerly record. Ad. Short-billed Dowitchers, as expected, arrived early, with 10 in Nebraska, 8 of these 11-12 Jul (JGJ, CNK) and only one other, at Quivira 23 Jul (PJ). Late or lingering Long-billed Dowitchers were singles at Hackberry Flat 11 Jun

(M<) and in *Grant*, NE 22 Jun (GG). A Wilson's Snipe was equally late in *Alfalfa*, OK 13 Jul (JWA, SM), while 2 in *Texas*, OK the next day (JWA, SM) were puzzling, possibly very early southbound migrants. Somewhat nw. of the expected summer range was an American Woodcock in ne. *Cherry*, NE 22 Jun (JED). Rather late for spring in Oklahoma were 10 Wilson's Phalaropes in *Cimarron* 4 Jun (M&MP) and another at Hackberry Flat 11 Jun (M<), while the 200+ in *Texas*, OK 14 Jul (JWA, SM) were fall migrants.

The only Laughing Gull reported was a first-summer bird in *Geary*, KS 8 Jul (C&JO). A surprising count of returning Franklin's Gulls was the 2835 at McConaughy 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). An ad. Bonaparte's Gull at McConaughy 29-30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN) provided only the 3rd Jul record for Nebraska. California Gulls returned to McConaughy in good numbers, although the 80 there 30 Jul, including 70 ads. (SJD, WRS, KN), was suggestive of low breeding success. Other Californias were at Valentine 8 (3 birds) & 26 Jul (one; TH), and a third-summer bird was in *Reno*, KS 18 Jun (PJ, KG). Ad. Herring Gulls are rare before Oct in the Region; one was at McConaughy 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). The only Lesser Black-backed Gull was a first-summer bird, quite early at McConaughy 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). Nebraska's 3rd Arctic Tern was an ad. at McConaughy 11 Jun (SJD).

DOVES THROUGH THRASHERS

A Band-tailed Pigeon that appeared in *Texas*, OK 28 Jun (KS) was a real surprise. Northerly reports of White-winged Dove are becoming routine; this summer, Nebraska had five (*vide* WRS). Encouraging were reports of 9 Black-billed Cuckoos from Nebraska (*vide* WRS). Greater Roadrunners keep expanding northward into *Kiowa*, *Barber*, *Pratt*, and *Cowley*, s.-cen. Kansas (GF, EF, MB, MT). Burrowing Owls nested far e. of the normal range, with an ad. and juv. in *Dixon*, NE 1 Jul (BFH, JJ) and a first county nesting in *Geary*, KS, where 2 ads. and 4 young were seen 18 Jun (C&JO). Regular but hard to find in extreme sw. Kansas, a Western Screech-Owl was reported in *Morton* 13 Jun (TC). Calliope Hummingbird, more recently of regular occurrence, was reported in all three states: an imm. in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 31 Jul (KD), an ad male in *Pratt*, KS 27 Jul (L&JQ), and a male in *Comanche*, OK 31 Jul (D&CS, S&KM). The only Broad-tailed Hummingbirds reported were singles at a *Scotts Bluff*, NE feeder 19 & 31 Jul (KD), where the species occurs regularly. Most common of the w. hummers in



Documentation of birds can be a habit acquired early in life, as demonstrated by this drawing of a Wood Stork near Greenwood, Saunders County, Nebraska 15 June 2006 made by a six-year-old birder—and representing one of only three documented records for the state. Sketch by Alex DeGarmo.

the Region, a total of 9 Rufous was reported, 6 from Nebraska (*vide* WRS), 2 in Pawnee, KS 24 Jul (DK, *vide* LM), and one in Comanche, OK 31 Jul (S&KM). The only Lewis's Woodpecker reported was in Dawes, NE 1 Jul (RHu).

Rather late Olive-sided Flycatchers were in Morton, KS 14 Jun (TC) and Lancaster, NE 16 Jun (LE). The 4 Western Wood-Pewees in Cimarron, OK 15 Jul (JWA, SM) were suggestive of local breeding. Both this species and Eastern Wood-Pewee were found breeding at Valentine (TH); a singing Eastern as far w. as Lincoln, NE 1 Jun (TJW) was almost certainly a migrant. An Alder Flycatcher banded and measured in Washington, NE 30 Jul (RS) provided rare confirmation of this migrant in the state. Least Flycatcher was noted w. to Morton, KS 22 Jun (SP, KH). Cimarron, OK remains a viable outpost for Vermilion Flycatchers, with several broods noted in the nw. corner of the county at Black Mesa S.P. 4-7 Jun (M&MP, GK), 14 Jun (BuH, BH), and 14 Jul (JWA, SM). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher pair returned to Kearney, NE, feeding 2 fledglings 8 Jul (JM, KSk), with other pairs noted in Lancaster 16 & 28 Jun (LE) and in Gage 27 Jul (L&BP). Westerly Yellow-throated Vireos were in Cedar, NE 23 Jun (JJ) and Cowley, KS 22 Jun (MT, DS, GY), and 2 Red-eyed Vireos were in Sioux, NE 28 Jul (HKH).

Common Raven has a restricted range in the Region; 2 were in Morton, KS 14 Jun (TC). Usually only a migrant in Alfalfa, OK, a Tree

Swallow there 19 Jun (LMA) may have indicated incipient breeding. Red-breasted Nuthatches showed unexpectedly in Lincoln, NE 24 Jun (MU) and Omaha, NE 26 Jun (RS), with 2 at Valentine 8 Jul (TH) and another in Sedgwick, KS 23 Jul (HG). Unexpected was a Rock Wren as far e. as Manhattan, KS 24 Jun (LJ). Continuing a recent trend of northwesterly expansion, Carolina Wrens appeared in Nebraska at North Platte 8 Jul (MB) and Kearney 11 Jul (LR, RH). An errant Ruby-crowned Kinglet was in Tulsa, OK 13 Jun (BGe). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher reached the nw. and ne. corners of Nebraska; the first nesting for Dakota, NE was documented 11 Jun (BFH), and one was in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux, NE 19 Jun (GG). A Swainson's Thrush in Comanche, OK 12 Jun (JK) was late. Sage Thrashers appeared early in the w. Nebraska Panhandle, with 4 reported 19-25 Jul in Kimball (WM, JGJ). The resident (since Oct 2002!) Curve-billed Thrasher is still at its se. Sioux, NE ranch, where it now follows the rancher around (*vide* AK). Another, alas too far away for the 2 to find each other, was at Valentine 8-10 Jul (TH), only the 6th for Nebraska.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Blue-winged Warbler was noted in Cherokee, OK 3 Jun (MRe). An incubating Northern Parula in Thurston 13 Jun (BFH, JP) was Nebraska's northernmost. Westerly Northern Parulas were in Alfalfa, OK 19 Jun (LMA), Comanche, OK 11 Jun (KM), and at Valentine

11-12 Jul (TH). A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Thomas, KS 4 Jun (PM) was a laggard but outdone by 2 Bay-breasted Warblers in Johnson, KS 13 Jun (MC). Present only in low numbers on the e. edge of the Region, Cerulean Warblers were reported from Cass, NE 27 Jul (SD) and Cherokee, OK 11 Jul (DC), with 6 summering birds noted in LeFlore, OK (JH). A Prothonotary Warbler in Comanche, OK 10-22 Jun (KM) was westerly. Definitely out of place for the date was a singing Ovenbird in Morton, KS 22 Jun (SP, KH). Northerly was a Louisiana Waterthrush in Thurston, NE 13 Jun (BFH). Apparently tarrying s. were single Wilson's Warblers at McConaughy 7 Jun (KSk) and at Valentine 8 Jul (TH). Certainly a mid-summer surprise was a MacGillivray's Warbler 22 Jun in Morton, KS (SP, KH).

A Summer Tanager in Cimarron, OK 15 Jul (JWA, SM) was likely lonely, while a Canyon Towhee in Texas, OK 24 May (MH) was e. of its usual limits. A Spotted Towhee, usually a winter visitor to Oklahoma, was in Cimarron 15 Jul (JWA, SM). Eight Cassin's Sparrows in Canadian, OK 2-10 Jun (RS, DW, JW, MF, JVB) were e. of usual range, as expected in a drought cycle; reports were more numerous than usual in Comanche, OK (VF) and widespread in Nebraska also, including a count of 37 in Chase 10 Jul (MB) and ads. with a fledgling in Keith 30 Jul (SJD, WRS, KN). The only Bachman's Sparrow reported was at Red Slough 6 Jun (DA). A Vesper Sparrow in Pottawatomie, KS 7 Jun (DR) was tardy. A Cimarron, OK specialty (though absent in recent years), 2 Black-throated Sparrows were there 15 Jul (JWA, SM). Savannah Sparrow breeds rarely in n. Nebraska; confirmation was provided at Valentine 20 Jun (TH). Henslow's Sparrow clearly moves in response to habitat changes; 23 were counted in se. Nebraska 3 Jun (WRS), and as many as 6 were in Johnson, KS 5-7 Jun (MG, ML, DS). A nest of Swamp Sparrows found at McConaughy 11 Jun (SJD) was westerly. This year's champ laggard may have been the Harris's Sparrow in Butler, KS 27 Jun (RB). Northern Cardinal is only rarely reported from extreme nw. Nebraska; one was in Dawes 14 Jun (TJW). Similarly, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were far from their usual e. limits in n. Sheridan, NE 10-15 Jun (SJ) and Morton, KS 22 Jun (SP, KH). South of where they should have been were a Black-headed Grosbeak in Pawnee, KS 23 Jul (SS) and a Lazuli Bunting in Morton, KS 22 Jun (SP, KH). Westerly, a Painted Bunting in Russell, KS 13 Jun (MR) was a good find. This was a banner year for Dickcissels in w. Nebraska; they appeared early and stayed late; two broods were found as far nw. as Valentine 15 Jun (TH).

A pair of Bobolinks on reclaimed mine land

in Linn, KS 7 Jul (MG, ML) was encouraging, as well as providing the first record for that area (*vide* LM). This species was also conspicuous farther se. than usual in Nebraska (*vide* WRS). A pure-looking Baltimore Oriole in n. Sheridan, NE 14 Jun (SJ) was somewhat w. of the usual summer range. Ad. Red Crossbills feeding young were noted at three locations in nw. Nebraska 10-14 Jun (CNK, WM, TJW). A Pine Siskin in Comanche, OK 11 Jun (KM) was unexpected, as was a black-backed male Lesser Goldfinch in Cheyenne, NE 16 Jun (AS), the 10th Nebraska record for the species.

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Texas



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The summer was a season of extremes. For most of the central portion of Texas, the summer was characterized by above-normal temperatures and virtually no precipitation. This resulted in low productivity in the avian communities and also a drop in water levels in reservoirs and other water impoundments. The same pattern held in the High Plains and the Trans-Pecos until widespread monsoonal moisture finally arriving in late July. These rains were virtually the first of the year in some areas. For example, a storm on 27 July in Big Bend National Park dropped nearly a third of the year-to-date

rainfall. El Paso also received heavy rainfall in late July, culminating in astonishing rainfall totals on 1 August, in excess of 25.4 cm in parts of the area. This resulted in an amazing green-up of the landscape and the onset of nesting activities. It also resulted in widespread flooding and extensive property damage. The eastern third of the state and Coastal Prairies seemed to be the wet areas for the state, with a drenching 39.9 cm at Houston or 18 cm above normal. These rains alleviated the drought conditions that had exposed bottoms of bayous not seen in recent memory.

WATERFOWL THROUGH ANHINGA

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued their northward expansion into cen. and e. Texas, as evidenced by records from Mason, Bell, Williamson, Hunt, Rains, and Camp. Fulvous Whistling-Ducks are tough to find well inland, so 2 in Gonzales 3 Jun (BFR) and up to 5 at Mitchell L., Bexar through Jun (AG et al.) were notable. A pair of Greater White-fronted Geese at Dallas, Dallas 29 Jul (BGi, RR, BoS) and 5 Snow Geese at Cactus Playa, Moore 17 Jun (BPi) apparently never migrated. Lingering American Wigeons were evident along the cen. coast, with groups of 3 at Pollywog Pond, Corpus Christi, Nueces 3 Jun, at Flour Bluff, Nueces 11 Jun (MC), and near Alamo Beach, Calhoun 11 Jun (PHo). A Gadwall, several Northern Shovelers, and a Redhead at L. Iowa Park, Wichita 18 Jul provided the first-ever Jul records for that area (T&JK). Also unexpect-

ed in summer was a drake Green-winged Teal at Santa Ana, Hidalgo 17 Jun (MG). Six pairs of Redheads found in a rice field near Alamo Beach, Calhoun 11 Jun were presumed to be lingering nonbreeders (PHo). Greater Scaup are extremely rare anywhere in Texas in summer, so singles at Balmorhea L., Reeves 5 Jun (MG) and Magnolia Beach, Calhoun 27 Jun (PHo, BFR) were of interest. Lesser Scaup regularly summer along the coast in small numbers, but 16, all paired, in a rice field near Alamo Beach, Calhoun 11 Jun (PHo) were surprising. A beached Surf Scoter along the Bolivar Pen., Galveston 23 Jun (ph. JKe) was the first-ever summer record for the Upper Texas Coast. Two ad. and 5 young Hooded Mergansers at L. Charlotte, Chambers 15 Jun (JKe) represent the first documented nesting for the Upper Texas Coast. One at Greenbelt L., Donley 10 Jun (BPi, m.ob.) furnished the 5th summer record for the Panhandle, while a flightless female at Belton L., Bell through 1 Jul (RKO, GE) was also notable.

A Pacific Loon photographed at Balmorhea L., Reeves 19 Jun (R&CG) was a seasonal first for the Region. Very large numbers of summering *Aechmophorus* grebes were noted at McNary Res., Hudspeth, with a high count of 260 on 9 Jun and two pairs of Clark's Grebes on nests 23 Jul (JPa). An imm. Masked Booby was seen along the surf at South Padre I., Cameron 15 Jun and 6 Jul (BMc). Rare but not unprecedented were beached Northern Gannets recovered from Galveston's Stewart