



The highlight of the 2006 Alberta fall migration was the province's first Yellow-throated Warbler, present at Calgary on 9 and 10 (here) September 2006. Photograph by Terry Korolyk.



This immature Black-headed Grosbeak at Alonsa, Manitoba, present from early November 2006 until the 17th (here), provided the province with its latest record. Photograph by Harry Harris.

Longspur at Banff 31 Oct (JR). A Black-headed Grosbeak at Alonsa, MB early-17 Nov was record late (ph. HH). Rusty Blackbird is a species of concern, so good numbers reported from Manitoba's s. Interlake region, including 300+ at Grosse Isle 13 Oct, were encouraging (KG). A Common Redpoll was banded at Delta on the early date of 21 Aug (HdH). From mid-Oct+, good numbers of both redpoll species appeared in the s., in sharp con-

trast to their near absence in the previous fall season.

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## Northern Great Plains



usual of late, gulls made a good showing in the Region. Redpolls staged an early flight, and Gray Jays invaded North Dakota. South Dakota had a number of late shorebirds. However, across the board, numbers of migrants were low.

### WATERFOWL THROUGH LOONS

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was photographed and seen by many at the Jamestown Sewage Lagoons, ND 10-16 Sep (SS); this represents the first record of the species for the state. A rare blue-morph Ross's Goose was at Long Lake N.W.R., ND 10 Nov (DNS). Rare in fall in the Dakotas, a Cinnamon Teal was in Grant, SD 12 Oct (BU). Unbanded, but probably an escapee, a White-cheeked Pintail was shot by a hunter in Stutsman, ND 4 Nov (p.a., SC). Besting the previous state high of 2, a flock of 5 Harlequin Ducks was at the Fargo Lagoons, ND 22-24 Oct (p.a., DWR, CDE, REM). An average flight of Surf and White-winged Scoters included a nice peak of 12 Surf Scoters at Cooney Res., MT 5 Oct (BJ). Black Scoters made a good showing in North Dakota, with six reports 8 Oct-10 Nov. They were noted in



Furnishing the first record for North Dakota, this Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was at the Jamestown Sewage Lagoons 10-16 (here 12) September 2006. Photograph by Dave Lambeth.

### Ron Martin

The warm and dry weather of July continued through mid-September. The second half of September brought some precipitation and moderating temperatures. By contrast, October was cold and wet, with some snow late in the month. The warm and dry weather returned in November, and most of the Region had no snow cover by the end of the season. Some larger water areas that froze in October reopened in November, only to freeze again by month's end.

The parade of vagrants that began in spring in North Dakota continued unabated. Two possible first state records were documented. Montana recorded a good number of eastern strays, and one state first was recorded. As

two South Dakota counties 22 Oct-10 Nov, and a single was at Cooney Res., MT 5 Oct (BJ). Long-tailed Ducks staged a good movement in North Dakota, with an early bird 22 Sep at the Minot Lagoons (RJL) and a peak of 4 in McLean 26 Nov (REM). A new high count for North Dakota, 6000 Common Goldeneyes were in Ramsey 19 Nov (EEF).

The 10th report for North Dakota, up to 2 Pacific Loons were on L. Audubon 18-25 Oct (p.a., REM, CDE). A Pacific Loon in Pierre, SD 15 Oct-2 Nov furnished about the 15th report for the state (p.a., KM, RDO). If accepted, a distant Yellow-billed Loon on L. Audubon, ND 24 Nov would furnish the 2nd



Five Harlequin Ducks at the Fargo, North Dakota Sewage Lagoons 22 (here) through 24 October 2006 provided a new state high count for this casual species. Photograph by Dean Riemer.



Both rare migrants in South Dakota, this Long-tailed Duck and Black Scoter were photographed 22 October 2006 in Pierre. Photograph by Doug Backlund.



This Tricolored Heron was seen by many 21 (here) through 25 September 2006 at Lake Alice National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota, just the eighth record for the state. Photograph by Scott Ralston.



Furnishing the ninth record for North Dakota were two Snowy Plovers at Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge 11 August 2006 (here). Photograph by Dean Riemer.

record for the state (p.a., REM, CDE). A possible 6th record for Montana, a Yellow-billed Loon was photographed in Billings 18-26 Nov (p.a., RV, GM).

### EGRETS THROUGH PHALAROPES

A notable peak of 255 Great Egrets was tallied in ne. North Dakota 13 Sep (EEF). The only Little Blue Heron reported was at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., ND 1 Sep (p.a., REM). The 8th report for North Dakota, a Tricolored Heron was photographed and seen by many at Lake Alice N.W.R., ND 21-25 Sep (p.a., MRF, BV). A new peak for North Dakota, 119 Turkey Vultures were counted in Burleigh and Oliver 8 Sep (HCT, CDE). Probably the highest one-day total for Montana, 10 Broad-winged Hawks were at Westby 25 Sep (TN). A Merlin was early 16 Aug in Lake, SD (JSP). Four Gyrfalcons were reported for North Dakota, and a single was noted in South Dakota. In general, however, the hawk migration was uninspiring.

Providing the 9th report of the species for North Dakota, 2 juv. Snowy Plovers were at Long Lake N.W.R. 11 Aug (p.a., CDE). A Piping Plover in Sully, SD 22 Sep provided the latest recorded date for the state (p.a., RDO). A new peak for North Dakota, 34 Long-billed Curlews were seen in Slope 6 Aug (DSA). Two Least Sandpipers were late 30 Oct in Grand Forks, ND (EEF). Furnishing the latest record for South Dakota, a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was in Sully 9 Oct (p.a., RDO). In Montana, Buff-breasted Sandpipers were at two Valley locations 8 & 14 Sep (JC), the 17th and 18th records for the state. The latest record for South Dakota, a Short-billed Dowitcher was in Sully 27 Oct (p.a., RDO). Wilson's Phalaropes were late 26 Oct in Ward, ND (REM) and Stanley, SD (RDO). Single Red Phalaropes were documented 17 Sep in Cass (p.a., REM, CDE, DWR), 18 Sep in Ward (p.a., REM), and 20 Sep in Grand Forks (p.a., EEF), the 18th through 20th reports for North Dakota.

### JAEGERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

About the 12th report for North Dakota, a Parasitic Jaeger was in Wells 9 Sep (p.a., REM). A Little Gull was at Big Bend Dam, SD 10-15 Sep (p.a., RDO, KM). This provided the 9th report for the state. In North Dakota, the 16th and



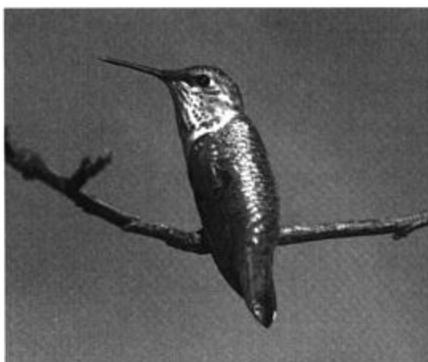
One of three Red Phalaropes seen in North Dakota during the season, this individual was at the Minot Sewage Lagoons 18 September 2006 (here). Photograph by Ron Martin.

17th reports of Little Gull came in, with a juv in Williams 19 Aug (p.a., REM, CDE) and an ad. in Ramsey 22-23 Sep (p.a., REM). A Mew Gull was at Pierre, SD 13 Oct-26 Nov (RDO) In North Dakota, 5 Mew Gulls spanned 18 Oct-25 Nov, including the first Ward record 19



The first for North Dakota, if accepted, an apparent Broad-tailed Hummingbird was present 3 (here) through 11 September 2006 in Kidder County. Photograph by Peder Swingen.

Oct (p.a., REM). An Iceland Gull at Garrison Dam, ND 11 Nov (p.a., REM, CDE) was joined by a 2nd bird 25 Nov (p.a., DNS, DWR). There are now 20 reports for the state. A possible 5th record for South Dakota, an Iceland Gull was at Pierre 26 Nov (p.a., RDO). Lesser Black-backed Gulls peaked at 4 at Bismarck, ND 18 Oct (CDE), while a single in Bowman, ND 29 Oct provided a county first (REM). Glaucous Gulls away from the Missouri R. system included singles in Day, SD 16 Nov (BU) and



A rare transient in the northern plains, this probable Rufous Hummingbird visited Pierre, South Dakota 31 August 2006. Photograph by Doug Backlund.



Furnishing a first record for Montana, and one of the northernmost anywhere, this Curve-billed Thrasher was near Roundup 8 (here 23) September 2006 through the end of November—bested this season only by a Curve-billed in Saskatchewan. Photograph by John Carlson.



Montana had its sixteenth record of Scarlet Tanager with this individual in Fort Peck 18 September 2006 (here). Photograph by Chuck Carlson.



A good-sized flock of 125 Smith's Longspurs, including this one, was found in Renville County, North Dakota 6 October 2006 (here). Photograph by Ron Martin.

**SA** A Gray Jay invasion that had reached s. Manitoba at Winnipeg by mid-Sep began in North Dakota on 11 Oct, when Lambeth found a single bird in the Grand Forks Cemetery. There were several other reports from the Grand Forks area, including a group of 3 on 15 Oct on the n. edge of the city (DOL, REM, CDE). A single bird was noted as far s. as Brewer L., Cass 10 Nov (KRC). More details on the invasion will be provided in the Winter Season report.

Grant, ND 18 Nov (REM). A probable 5th record for North Dakota, a Great Black-backed Gull was at Long Lake N.W.R. 10-11 Nov (p.a., DNS); four of the five records came from 2006. Sabine's Gulls were reported from all three states, with dates spanning 8 Sep–3 Oct.

The 3rd report this year, and the 7th overall, a White-winged Dove was in Ward, ND 10 Aug (p.a., SDL). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was late 4 Sep in Steele, ND (DLK). About the 13th report for South Dakota, a Calliope Hummingbird was in Pennington 12 Aug (p.a., RDO). A possible first for North Dakota, a Broad-tailed Hummingbird was photographed in Kidder 3-11 Sep (p.a., REM, CDE). Out-of-range Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds included a single 30-31 Aug in Hughes, SD (p.a., KM) and another in Mountrail, ND 16-17 Sep (p.a., BH, REM, CDE). The North Dakota bird provided the 5th report of the genus for the state.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH THRASHERS**

Accidental away from the Black Hills, a Red-naped Sapsucker was in Stanley, SD 28 Sep (p.a., RDO). Northern Flickers peaked at 444 in Grand Forks, ND 16 Sep (EEF). An extralimital Pileated Woodpecker was seen in Mountrail, ND 9 Oct (SV, *vide* REM). Rarely reported in South Dakota in fall, an Alder Flycatcher was in Clay 3 Aug (DS). The 9th record for Montana, an Eastern Phoebe was at Westby 12 Aug (TN). The 9th and 10th records for Montana, single Great Crested Flycatchers were at Westby 18 Aug (DC, JC) and in Glasgow 26 Aug (DE). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Sully, SD 10 Sep would provide the 14th record for the state if accepted (p.a., RDO). Out-of-range Blue-headed Vireos in Montana included 2 in the Pryor Mts. 9 Sep (BJ) and one in Great Falls 17 Sep (RM, AE).

A Common Raven was unusual at Westby, MT 25 Sep (TN). Two Canyon Wrens were in the N. Cave Hills of Harding, SD 2 Sep (DB). This provided only the 2nd record for the state away from the Black Hills. A Winter Wren was early 26 Aug in Stanley, SD (RDO), and a nice peak of 3 was tallied at Sully's Hill National Game Preserve, Benson, ND 23 Sep (PHS). A Townsend's Solitaire was early 9 Sep in Wells, ND (REM). The first record for Montana, a Curve-billed Thrasher was found 8 Sep at the Harris Ranch in the Bull Mts. n. of Billings (WH,

LH); the bird remained through the season.

**WARBLERS THROUGH REDPOLLS**

The 7th accepted record for Montana, a Northern Parula was near Culbertson, Roosevelt 30 Aug (TT). An early Black-throated Blue Warbler was in Stanley, SD 22 Aug (RDO). In Montana, the 13th record for Black-throated Blue Warbler was furnished by a single 22 Sep in Daniels (CF, TF). A Black-throated Gray Warbler photographed in Fargo, ND 25 Aug provided the 2nd record for the state (CDE, KRC). About the 15th report for South Dakota, a Townsend's Warbler was in Pennington 26 Aug (p.a., TJ). A casual migrant in South Dakota, a Pine Warbler was in Deuel 14 Sep (BU). Out-of-range Connecticut Warblers were in Pennington, SD 20 Aug (p.a., TJ) and at Medicine Lake N.W.R., MT 30 Aug (TT), the latter furnishing the 10th record for the state. A Yellow-breasted Chat was late in Hughes, SD 9 Oct (KM). A Scarlet Tanager seen 18 Sep in Ft. Peck, MT furnished the 16th record for the state (CC), while one in Bismarck, ND 16 Sep was a very rare migrant for s.-cen. North Dakota (CDE). The number of migrant White-crowned Sparrows was notably low this season. Smith's Longspurs peaked at 125 in Renville, ND 6 Oct (REM). Two Smith's in Haakon 30 Sep made the only South Dakota report for the season (RDO). A nice fall peak of 2000 McCown's Longspurs was in Valley, MT 8 Sep (JC). The 2nd record for Montana, a Painted Bunting was in Saco 15 Aug (DM, HM). Over 100 Rusty Blackbirds in Ft. Peck 25 Oct was an astonishing number in Montana for this declining species (CC).

Pine Grosbeaks made a push into the Region. Among seven North Dakota reports was a peak of 23 in Pembina and Walsh 25 Nov (REM, CDE). There were two reports each from Montana and South Dakota. A Cassin's Finch was unusually far e. at Westby, MT 6 Oct (TN). An early Common Redpoll was in Hughes, SD 13 Oct (KM). The earliest on record for North Dakota, a Hoary Redpoll was in Bottineau 14 Oct (REM).

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## Southern Great Plains



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Fall can be an exciting period, as many populations are at their highs after a summer's breeding season, and movements of these birds provide ample opportunities to document large concentrations as well as extralimital individuals. Patterns of extended drought in the Region tend to concentrate numbers of birds around fewer water sources, thus possibly also providing false impressions of large populations. Waterbirds provide many examples, but galliform observations in south-central Kansas may also be germane.

As autumn seasons go, 2006 had a near-average mix of eastern and western species criss-crossing the Plains. The northward shift of some species continues, but it is also clear that westward shifts are underway in several species—probably owing to encroaching woody growth, a consequence largely of fire suppression. A pattern that appears to be emerging more recently, and possibly exhibited this season, has been the earlier fall arrivals of more northerly nesting species (and later departures for some), possibly reflecting adjustments or perturbations in migration patterns because of climate change.

**Abbreviations:** Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); Hackberry Flat (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa, OK); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

### DUCKS THROUGH VULTURES

The high count of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, now routine in extreme se. Oklahoma, was 19 at Red Slough 14 Aug (DA, PG). Exceptional were 2 Black-bellieds in Johnson, KS 23 Aug (BW). A Greater White-fronted Goose at McConaughy 25 Aug and 17 Sep had probably summered (SJD); 6 in Oklahoma 29 Sep (RA) were somewhat early. A now-resident Cackling Goose was noted in Sarpy, NE 8 Sep (L&BP). As in many other areas, swan identification may now be an "issue," as Tundra Swan has become probably less numerous than Trumpeter. Ten Tundras were at Quivira 4-25 Nov (RW, m.ob.), and 2 ads. and a juv. were in Platte, NE 10-23 Nov (CW, m.ob.). Up to 4 Gadwalls summered at Red Slough (DA). A Mottled Duck was at Quivira, where there are many recent records, 20 Aug (ML, MG, AM, WCT). Quite the collections were the 3000 Northern Pintails at Salt Plains 16 Sep (JWA, SM) and 2000 Blue-winged Teal at Hackberry 19 Sep (L&MT). A female or juv. Garganey was reported in Nance, NE 12 Oct (p.a., CW).

Any collection of Canvasbacks is noteworthy, but 1388 at McConaughy 31 Oct (SJD) and 200 at Quivira 28 Oct (SS, DB) were especially robust counts. Two Ring-necked Ducks in Harlan, NE 4 Aug (JSt) provided a rare summer record. Greater Scaup were noted in small groups beginning 31 Oct in Lincoln, NE (SJD), with a concentration of 127 at their favored site, Sooner L., Pawnee/Noble, OK 24 Nov (JWA, JS, JT). Four Harlequin Ducks in Holt, NE 12 Nov (SW)

furnished Nebraska's 5th documented report. Nebraska also posted a record showing of Surf Scoters this season, with 13 birds reported 22 Oct–16 Nov, including 6 at McConaughy 31 Oct (SJD, *vide* WRS). Other Surfs included singles in Cherokee, KS 7 Nov (DHe) and Tulsa 19 & 23 Oct and 4 Nov (BC, TC, and JWA, respectively). The only other scoters were Blacks, including a whopping 27 reported 15 Oct–28 Nov in Nebraska (*vide* WRS), among them a flock of 20 at Salt L., Lancaster 25 Oct (JGJ); one and 2 birds were noted at two locations in Tulsa 12 & 20 Nov (JWA; TC). Also appearing in above-average numbers were Long-tailed Ducks, with at least 7 reported from Nebraska beginning 30 Oct in Lancaster (early, JGJ) and singles in Blaine, OK 31 Oct (also early, shot by hunter, *vide* NW), in Sumner, KS 5 Nov (LHi), in Sedgwick, KS 5 Nov (PJ), in Osage, KS 11 Nov (MG, BAS), and at Salt Plains 11 Nov (TC). A Barrow's Golden-



This Red-throated Loon at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma City 26 November 2006 (here) was a genuine rarity there, though Oklahoma has had regular records from Lake Tenkiller. Photograph by Pat Velte.

eye was studied in Sedgwick, KS 11-27 Nov (PG, m.ob.). An injured Common Merganser was noted on the unusual date of 20 Aug in Tulsa (TC).

Greater Prairie-Chickens reported from Sheridan, NE 10 Aug (SJ) provided the first n Panhandle report since 1978, with other scattered reports across Nebraska, including 50 in Buffalo 26 Nov (TEL). A very late nesting for Wild Turkey was indicated by a hen with 2