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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



This subadult Reddish Egret made it out onto the short-grass plains of the Oklahoma Panhandle in Keyes, Cimarron County 2 September 2006 (here). Photograph by Steve Metz.

three-week old chicks in *Sarpy*, NE 7 Nov (AR). An early Red-throated Loon was in *Johnson*, KS 20-26 Oct (DF, m.ob.), 2 were at *Tenkiller* 29 Oct (BH), and one was in *Oklahoma* 21 Nov (PV). Pacific Loons were noted



Good numbers of Piping Plovers were reported after an apparently good breeding season in 2006, including this hatch-year bird at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma 17 August 2006 (here). Photograph by Pat Veltz.

at *Tenkiller* 23 Oct (3; JWA) and 3 Nov (one; SB); other singles were in *Lincoln*, NE 31 Oct (SJD), in *Washington*, OK 2 Nov (MP), at *McConaughy* 3 Nov (TJW), and in *Cowley*, KS 24 Nov (MT), with 2 in *Kingman*, KS 12 Nov (D&FV). A very early migrant Horned Grebe was found grounded in *Tulsa* 12 Sep (SM). A big season was also noted for Red-necked Grebes in Nebraska, with at least 16 birds reported, including a basic-plumaged bird in *Keith*, NE 3 Sep (DH), presumably an imm., and an unprecedented 11 at *Branched Oak L.*, *Lancaster* 28 Oct (JGJ). Three errant Western Grebes were in *Knox*, NE 13 Aug (BFH). The high count for Westerns at *McConaughy* was a modest 8160 on 26 Aug (SJD, AB, JG). Away from Nebraska, Westerns were located in *Custer*, OK 26-29 Oct (BS), *Pawnee/Noble*, OK 23-29 Oct (TC, m.ob.), *Washington*, OK 2-20 Nov (up to 3; MP, MD), *Jefferson*, KS 5 Nov

(ML, MG, AM), *Reno*, KS 11 Nov (13; MG, PM), and *Tenkiller* 23 Nov (MMI). *Aechmophorus* hybrids (or, more likely, imm.) were noted in *Gosper*, NE 16 Nov (PD) and in *Sarpy*, NE 29 Aug (JWH). Clark's Grebes e. of usual areas were noted in *Platte*, NE 23 Oct (CW) and *Pierce*, NE 27-29 Oct (MB, PR), with 21 at *McConaughy* 15 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN).

In Kansas, Neotropical Cormorants appeared in *Barton* 26 Aug (SS) and *Coffey* 19 Sep (MG), the only ones away from *Red Slough* this season. An American Bittern lingered through 13 Nov in *Thayer*, NE (WF). The only report of Least Bittern was in *Knox*, NE 17 Sep (MB), also a rather late date. A surprising 61 Snowy Egrets were found 5 Oct in *Fillmore*, NE (JGJ), with one very late at *Niobrara*, NE 25 Oct (MB). Also quite tardy were an imm. Little Blue Heron in *Knox/Cedar*, NE 9 Oct (DW) and a Cattle Egret in *Knox*, NE 4 Nov (MB). A real surprise was a Reddish Egret photographed in *Cimarron*, OK 2 Sep (SM et al.). Tricolored Herons away from *Red Slough* included singles in *Pawnee*, OK 11 Aug (JWA), *Oklahoma* 20-27 Aug (JB, PV, m.ob.), *Cleveland*, OK 20 Aug (DG), and *Salt Plains* 26 Aug (MP, MaP). Vagrants were a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in *Chase*, NE 19 Aug (DH) and a White Ibis in *Douglas*, KS 1-5 Aug (MT, MRo). Two White Ibis lingered through 3 Oct at *Red Slough* (DA, BH). Adding to the string of reports in recent years were Glossy Ibis at *Quivira* 20 Aug (ML, MG, AM, WCT) and in the e. *Rainwater Basin*, s.-cen. Nebraska 5 Oct (JGJ). Quite tardy was a White-faced Ibis in *Johnson*, NE 27 Oct (EBn). Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks continue to enter the Region almost exclusively at *Red Slough*, with high counts of 7 spoonbills 28-29 Aug and 186 storks 12 Aug (DA et al.). A spoonbill was discovered in *Cleveland*, OK 4 Sep (CWh). The Wood Stork reported during summer at *Saunders*, NE remained through 3 Aug (fide WRS). Two Turkey Vultures in *Otoe*, NE 30 Nov (L&CF) were rather late.

## HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Always a remote possibility, a White-tailed Kite was located in *Jefferson*, KS 11-22 Sep

(GP, m.ob.). Part of the northward expansion of Mississippi Kites, 40 were counted in *Grant*, KS 24 Aug (KH) and 26 in *Saline*, KS 23 Aug (RH). There has been a general pattern of range expansion for several e. species westward, including Red-shouldered Hawks that are now noted routinely w. to *Sedgwick*, *Sumner*, *Ellis*, and *Morris*, KS (fide LM) and *Lancaster*, NE (JGu). Broad-winged Hawks were noted w. to *Perkins*, NE 5 Oct (DH), and up to 5 were in *Morton*, KS 20 (SP, CH, MT) & 29 Sep (TCa). Easterly were a Ferruginous Hawk at two locations in *Tulsa*, OK beginning 26 Oct (LMc, JSi, TC) and Golden Eagles in *Lancaster*, NE 21 Oct (EBd) and *Riley*, KS 28 Oct (DR, JN). Merlin reports have clearly been on an upswing over the past decade; early *columbarius* arrivals were noted in *Seward*, NE 17 Aug (JGJ), *Clay*, NE 19 Aug (JGJ), and *Tulsa*, OK 27 Aug (JWA). Peregrine Falcon reports have become more routine, with at least 20+ birds reported. The easternmost Prairie Falcons for the Region came from *Pawnee*, NE 21 Nov (TEL) and *Harvey*, KS 4 Nov (RW).

A modest 2-3 Yellow Rails were flushed at *Red Slough* 12-29 Oct (DA et al.). Black Rails continue to be located at *Quivira* (NL, JLe). A possible rail haven was located in *Sumner*, KS 6 Aug, when a King Rail, 2 Virginia Rails, 8 Soras, and 4 Common Moorhens with 11 young were located (MT, GY). The presence of a pair of Sandhill Cranes with 2 colts in



Among a number of Red-necked Phalaropes reported in the southern portion of the Southern Great Plains Region was this bird at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Alfalfa County, Oklahoma 16 September 2006 (here). Photograph by Steve Metz.

*Rock*, NE 15 Aug (CHa) almost certainly indicates nesting. Whooping Cranes were detected within their normal migration window 23 Oct-11 Nov (AW, fide WRS, LM).

Healthy fall counts were 40 Black-bellied Plovers at *McConaughy* 30 Sep (DH) and 320-336 American Golden-Plovers in *York*, NE 3-5 Oct (JGJ)—but then, consider seeing 1100 Snowy Plovers at *Salt Plains* 16 Sep



Fall 2006 was clearly an above-average season for Sabine's Gulls in the continent's interior. This juvenile was at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Alfalfa County, Oklahoma 22 September 2006. Photograph by Jim Arterburn.

(JWA, SM), with 430 still present 5 Oct (JWA, RS). Tardy were a Semipalmated Plover in Platte, NE 18-23 Oct (CW) and a Piping Plover in Lancaster, NE 28 Sep-11 Oct (JGJ), with another in Platte, NE 18 Oct (CW). Migrant Pippings were found in Clay, KS 6 Aug (CO), Red Slough 8 Aug (DA, BH), and Oklahoma, OK 13 Aug (JAG, PV) through 9 Sep (2; JW, MF). A high count for the species, modest as it is, was 28 Mountain Plovers in Kimball, NE 31 Aug (LS).

Among tardy shorebirds were a single Willet at McConaughy 7 Oct (KN, BSc) and 43 at Salt Plains 16 Sep (JWA, SM). Among the latest Long-billed Curlews for the season were one at McConaughy 15 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN) and 22 at Hackberry 19 Sep (L&MT). Marbled Godwits, also setting a pattern of later records, were noted through 30 Sep in Oklahoma (4; JW, MF). Just a drop in the bucket of the numbers that pass over the Region were the 487 Upland Sandpipers counted in Wagoner, OK 6 Aug (JWA). Regular but rare, 7 Ruddy Turnstones were recorded in the Region, 5 from Nebraska, the first in Platte 5 Aug (CW), the latest in Lancaster 16 Sep (CNK, D&JP). Red Knot was a tougher-than-normal find this season, with only one: 16 Sep at Salt Plains (JWA, SM). While getting scarcer in recent decades, 143 and 80 Western Sandpipers were tallied at Salt Plains 16 & 21 Sep, respectively (JWA et al.), these among a respectable fall concentration of shorebirds that included 4000 Semipalmated, 3000 Least, 610 Baird's, and 930 Stilt Sandpipers. Only a few scattered Westerns were otherwise noted.

Rather late were 2 Sanderlings in Pawnee, OK 27 Oct (JWA), 18 Baird's Sandpipers in Knox, NE 4 Nov (MB), and 2 Stilt Sandpipers in Lancaster, NE 28 Oct (JGJ). An impressive count was the 800 Pectoral Sandpipers in Platte, NE 15 Aug (CW). Buff-breasted Sand-

piper may locally stage in e. Oklahoma, where 431 were counted on Wagoner sod farms 6 Aug (JWA) and 185 in Pawnee 11 Aug (JWA); one was noted w. to McConaughy 20 Aug (CG), and 4 were in Perkins, NE 1 Sep (DH). Only a handful of Short-billed Dowitchers this season included 4 in Sarpy, NE 5 Aug (CNK), ads. in Platte, NE 15 & 18 Aug (CW), and singles in Cimarron, OK 2 Sep (SM), at Red Slough 12 Sep (DA), and Salt Plains 22 Sep (JWA et al.). An amazing tally was the record 5500 Wilson's Phalaropes (includ-

ing an albino) at Crescent Lake N.W.R., Garden, NE 26 Aug (SJD, AB, JG). Single Red-necked Phalaropes, rare e. and s. in the Region, were located in Oklahoma, OK 26-27 Aug (JW, m.ob.), Cheyenne, KS 2 Sep (PJ et al.), and Lancaster, NE 22 Sep (JGJ); better-than-average seasonal counts included 22 at McConaughy 26 Aug (SJD, JG, AB) and 56 and 31 at Salt Plains 16 & 22 Sep, respectively (JWA et al.). Rarest of the phalaropes in the Region, Reds were found at McConaughy 26 Aug (SJD, AB; ph. SJD) and 15 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN; ph. SJD), only the 12th and 13th records for the state.

Jaegers have been hard to come by in the Region for some time. This season brought a single light morph juv. Pomarine Jaeger to McConaughy 17 Sep (ph. SJD, KN, WRS), the 13th record for the state, and a Parasitic 30 Oct into Riley, KS (TCa). Laughing Gulls this season included birds in Pawnee, OK 25 Aug (JWA), in Wagoner, OK 2 Sep and 8 Oct (JWA), at Salt Plains 22 Sep (JWA, SM et al.), in Lancaster, NE 22 Oct (a first-year bird; JGJ), and in Pierce, NE 27 Oct (a second-year bird; MB). Not annual in the Region, Little Gulls were noted at McConaughy 27 Aug (juv.; ph. SJD, AB, JG), in Pawnee, OK 23 Oct-13 Nov (TC, JWA), in Lancaster, NE 25 Oct (ad.; JGJ), and in Reno, KS 28 Oct (juv.; PJ, WAS). At McConaughy, 124 California Gulls were present 15 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN); others in Oklahoma were in Oklahoma on 13-23 Aug (ad.; JAG, PV), 16

Sep, and 4 Nov (JAG), and in Wagoner 8 Oct (JWA). Early migrant and/or summering Herring Gulls included one 2 Aug in Sarpy, NE (CNK) and 3 ads. at McConaughy 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG); juvs. were at Hefner 16 Sep (JAG), in Lancaster, NE 22 Sep (JGJ), and at Salt Plains 22 Sep (JWA et al.). The only Thayer's Gull reported was an ad. in Cedar/Knox NE 11 Nov (BFH). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at McConaughy 25 Aug (SJD, AB, JG), 15 Sep (2; SJD, WRS, KN), 17 Sep (2; SJD, WRS, KN), and 31 Oct (2; SJD); singles elsewhere were in Wagoner, OK 14 Oct-4 Nov (JWA), in Sedgwick, KS 1 Nov (PJ), and in Sequoyah, OK 23 Nov (JNE, MML). An ad. Great Black-backed Gull was at McConaughy 1-31 Oct (MJI, DH, SJD; ph. SJD). Among the birders' delights this season was a remarkable array of juv. Sabine's Gulls, including 22 in Ne-



This Barred Owl was photographed in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska 18 November 2006 (here), west of the species' typical range. Photograph by T. J. Walker.

braska, with dates ranging from 27 Aug in Keith (SJD, AB, JG) to 8 Oct in Chase (2, DH); the top count was of 7 at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN). Other notable Sabine's were 2 in Pawnee, OK 19 Sep (SM), 4 at Salt Plains 22 Sep (JWA, SM, RS, LMa) one at Sequoyah, OK 23 Sep (BHa), 2 in Morton, KS 20-22 Sep (MT, CH, SP), 2 at Quivira 24 Sep (SS, SP, CH), and one 27 Sep in Comanche, OK (EB, L&MT). Surprises were single Black-legged Kittiwakes in Hall, NE 6 Nov (ph. PD) and Coffey, KS 11-29 Nov (MG, BAS).

Seven Caspian Terns in Wagoner, OK 23 Oct and 6 there on 4 Nov (JWA) were tardy. Small groups of Common Terns were found at McConaughy 15 Sep (7; SJD, WRS, KN), at Salt Plains 16 Sep (9; JWA, SM), and in Pawnee, OK 4-5 Oct (4-8; JWA, m.ob.). A juv. Arctic Tern in Platte, NE 26 Sep-1 Oct (†CW, MB, PR, JJ, BFH), if accepted, would provide the 4th state record. The 250 Black Terns at Salt Plains 16 Sep were quite late for such a large number (JWA, SM).

## DOVES THROUGH RAVENS

Concentrations of Eurasian Collared-Dove continue to build: 75 were at Lincoln, NE 24 Oct (TJW) and 132 in Scott, KS 5 Nov (T&SS). White-winged Doves continue to expand in Nebraska, with reports from three locations this season (*vide* WRS) and 116 at feeders in Finney, KS 14 Oct (T&SS). Inca Doves are also filling in locations in Oklahoma, particularly e. areas (*vide* JAG). Black-



Found in some lonely brush in open prairie was this Hammond's Flycatcher in Leoti, Wichita County, Kansas on 2 September 2006 (here). Photograph by Matt Gearheart.

billed Cuckoo has become a rare bird in the Region; the only reports this season were from *Otoe*, NE 1 Aug (L&CF) and *Richardson*, NE 29 Aug (TR). Greater Roadrunners expanding northward were found in *Kingman*, KS 19 Nov (CS) and *Ellsworth*, KS in Aug (TT). On the advance westward with Red-shouldered Hawks, at least one Barred Owl moved as far w. in Nebraska as *Lincoln* 18 Nov (TJW).

Outstanding was a Lesser Nighthawk in *Morton*, KS 21 Sep (CH, SP). A Common Poorwill in *Tulsa*, OK 17 Oct (JWA) was tardy. It is difficult to imagine counting 70 White-throated Swifts going to roost in the Region, as seen at *Scotts Bluff N.M.*, *Scotts Bluff*, NE 8 Aug (KD). An imm. Ruby-throated Hummingbird photographed in *Sioux*, NE 23 Aug (HKH) made about the 5th documented report for the Nebraska Panhandle. Calliope Hummingbirds this season were remarkable at the w. reaches of the Region, reported through 29 Sep; 7 were at three sets of feeders in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (KD, RSg, AK); others were Kansas singles in *Pawnee* (DK) and *Grant* (KH), up to 5 in *Finney* (T&SS, MO), and at least one in *Sedgwick* (PJ, PG). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were reported in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 1 & 5 Aug (KD), *Sioux*, NE 12 Aug (LF), *Finney*, KS 13 Aug (DS, SSI), *Kimball*, NE 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG) and, most exceptionally, *Pawnee*, KS 24 Sep (DK, SS). The generally expected Rufous Hummingbird was noted e. to *Douglas*, KS 25 Aug (KM), *Sedgwick*, KS 26

Aug (RM), and *Sarpy*, NE, where one of 3 birds remained 19 Aug (L&SW) through 28 Nov (ph., fide CNK).

A Red-bellied Woodpecker, still rare as far w. as *Scotts Bluff*, NE, was noted there 18 Nov



Out of place and out of date was this Cassin's Kingbird lingering near the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Alfalfa County, Oklahoma 11 November 2006 (here). Photograph by Ann Wilber.

(KD). The tally of 75-100 Red-headed Woodpeckers in *Jefferson*, KS 26 Sep (BWa) was exceptional. Red-naped Sapsuckers, always scarce, were in *Sioux*, NE 19 Sep (KD) and 13 Oct (HKH) and in *Morton*, KS 30 Sep (TCa). A Western Wood-Pewee in *Sherman*, KS 2 Sep (PJ) was easterly. Unexpected was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at *McConaughy* 26 Aug (SJD, AB, JG), the westernmost fall record for

Nebraska. Two Alder Flycatchers vocalizing in *Sarpy* 16 Aug (L&BP) and another at *Red Slough* 14 Aug (DA, PG) provide slight insight into fall migration for this cryptic species. Up to 4 Willow/Alder Flycatchers were noted 8 Aug-12 Sep at *Red Slough* (DA, m.ob.), with a high count of 5 in *Wagoner*, OK 6 Aug (D&JV). Hammond's Flycatchers, rare fall migrants in the w., were in *Cimarron*, OK 21 Sep (G&MK), *Morton*, KS 1 Oct (TCa), and *Wichita*, KS 2 Sep (PJ et al.). Similarly distributed in the Region is Dusky Flycatcher; 2 were in *Kimball*, NE 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG), with a single in *Sherman*, KS 2 Sep (vocalizing; PJ). Rarely reported in fall, single Cordilleran Flycatchers were at two locations in *Morton*, KS 22 Sep (SP, CH, MT). A Black Phoebe returned to *Broken Bow Res.*, *McCurtain*, OK 3 Oct (BHo) for its 3rd winter there. Easterly was a Say's Phoebe in *Pottawatomie*, KS 13 Sep (DBu). Four Vermilion Flycatchers remained at their regular location in *Cimarron*, OK through at least 21 Sep (G&MK, JW), but a surprise was one far to the e. in *Washington*, KS 11-26 Sep (DT, WBu). Rare in the Oklahoma Panhandle, a Great Crested Flycatcher was in *Cimarron* 3 Sep (JW). Intriguing was a *Myiarchus* flycatcher with a "bright yellow belly" in *Morton*, KS as late as 3 Nov (JSh). Two Cassin's Kingbirds were within range in *Morton*, KS 22 Sep (SP, CH, MT), while a clearly extralimital and quite tardy Cassin's was photographed in *Alfalfa*, OK 11 Nov (AW, JW). Two imm. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in *Lancaster*, NE 14 Aug (DSh, fide TEL) may have been offspring of a pair that was in the area during Jun.

Southerly Northern Shrikes were in *Alfalfa*, OK 11 Nov (JW) and, rather early, in *Morton*, KS 22 Oct (SS, SP, TCa). A westerly surprise was a juv. White-eyed Vireo at *McConaughy* 15 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN), only the 2nd for Nebraska away from the east. Another at *Red Slough* 8 Oct (DA, BH, MD) was tardy. A Yellow-throated Vireo in *Holt*, NE 4 Sep (MB) was westerly. Rare for *Cimarron*, OK was a Plumbeous Vireo 3 Sep (JW). Adding to the few records of Cassin's Vireos from the w. edge of the Region were singles 2 Sep in *Cheyenne*, KS (PJ et al.), 3 Sep in *Keith*, NE (DH), and 1 Oct in *Morton*, KS (TCa). A Blue-headed Vireo in the w. portion of the Region, where rare, was in *Garden*, NE 16 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN); an early bird was at *Red Slough* 20 Aug (JM, DA); and a lingering bird was in *Crawford*, KS 2 Nov (LH). A good showing of 7 Philadelphia Vireos was reported in Nebraska (fide WRS); one in *Tulsa*, OK 23 Sep (ST) was more unusual, as was a westerly Red-eyed Vireo in *Cimarron*, OK 3 Sep (JW). A remarkable 125 Fish Crows were at a sod farm

in Tulsa, OK 17 Aug (TMi), while 2 were at the range limits in Butler, KS 15 Sep (GY). A Common Raven calling over Valentine N.W.R., Cherry, NE 28 Oct (SJD) provides only the 3rd documented record for the state since 1900.

## SWALLOWS THROUGH FINCHES

An incredible roost of 50,000 Purple Martins assembled in Wichita, Sedgwick, KS 9 Aug (KG). The only migrant Violet-green Swallows reported were in Morton, KS 22 Sep (CH, SP, MT). Quite easterly were Rock Wrens in Sarpy, NE 30 Sep (JWH) and Washington, OK 7 Sep (RVZ). Conversely, a Carolina Wren was westerly in Morton, KS 22 Sep (SP, CH, MT). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers continued their invasion of Nebraska; n. reports came from Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Holt, and Dixon (CG, MB, JJ, L&BP). Numbers of Mountain Bluebirds were noted during migration as far e. as Stafford, KS, where 5 were seen 28 Oct (SS, DB); best count was 75 in Russell, KS 18 Nov (MR). Townsend's Solitaires arrived early and spread out quickly; one was in Morrill, NE 20 Aug (CG), another as far e. as Cedar, NE 24 Oct (RE), and one was s. to Pawnee, KS 4 Oct (DS). Noteworthy in fall were Swainson's Thrushes in Cimarron, OK 7 Sep (JM) and Tulsa, OK 14 Sep (LU). Hermit Thrushes of the Rocky Mt. subspecies *auduboni* arrive in the Region earlier than e. birds; 2 were in s. Sioux, NE 19 Sep (KD). Varied Thrushes were noted in s. Sioux, NE 24-28 Oct (HKH) and in Morton, KS 21-22 Oct (one or 2 birds; SP, SS). Continuing into its 4th year of residence and at least 6th year of age, the Curve-billed Thrasher in Sioux, NE began singing during Aug as a follow-up to its usual philanthropic attempts to feed other birds' young (LF). A good count of American Pipits was 600 in an alfalfa field in Adams, NE 21 Oct (PD). The only report of Bohemian Waxwing was of one with Cedar Waxwings in Lancaster, NE 22 Nov (JGJ).

Rare e. warblers included singles of Golden-winged Warblers in Lancaster, NE 26 Aug (LE), Johnson, KS 31 Aug (DSe), and Otoe, NE 13 Sep (L&CF). A laggard Nashville Warbler in Tulsa, OK 2 Nov (JWA) was outdone by another in Sioux, NE 27 Nov (LF). Westerly Nashvilles, in Nebraska at least, are usually of the subspecies *ridgwayi*; one was at McConaughy 26 Aug, amidst 443 Yellow Warblers (SJD, AB, JG). This was a good fall for Chestnut-sided Warblers; 3 were reported w. to Keith and Sioux, NE 29 Aug-15 Sep (DH, SJD, WRS, KN, RSg), and singles were in Cimarron, OK 7 Sep (JM) and Oklahoma, OK 6 Sep (NV). Rare in fall in Oklahoma, a Magnolia Warbler was in Canadian 6 Oct (JW).



This Bohemian Waxwing accompanying Cedar Waxwings in Lancaster County, Nebraska 22 November (here) was the only one reported in the Southern Great Plains Region in fall 2006. Photograph by Joel Jorgensen.

Very rare westward, and only Nebraska's 8th fall record overall, was a female Cape May Warbler at McConaughy 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG). Three Black-throated Blue Warblers were reported: singles in Tulsa, OK 1-4 Oct (JH, m.ob.), Sioux, NE 5-7 Oct (HKH), and Douglas, NE 14 Oct (BHy). Early was a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Tulsa, OK 23 Sep (TMi), and a Black-throated Green was westerly in Comanche, OK 17 Oct (K&SM). A total of 16 Townsend's Warblers (a banner season) was



Artistically captured on film was this Townsend's Warbler near Kenton, Cimarron County, Oklahoma 3 September 2006 (here); this is a rare, if recently more regular, migrant in the western reaches of the Southern Great Plains Region. Photograph by Steve Metz.

reported from the w. 17 Aug-22 Sep, 13 of these in Nebraska (*fide* WRS, JW, G&MK, SP, CH, MT). Westerly was a Blackburnian Warbler at McConaughy 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG). A rarity anytime in Nebraska, 2 male Pine Warblers with Yellow-rumpeds were westerly in North Platte, NE 10 Oct (TJW). Rare in fall in the Region, single Palm Warblers were in Dixon, NE 26 Aug (JJ), a record-early arrival, and at Red Slough 3 Oct (DA, BHo) and Otoe,

NE 5 Oct (L&CF). Only 3 Bay-breasted Warblers were reported, singles in Richardson, NE 29 Aug (TR), Sedgwick, KS 9 Sep (PJ, KG), and Otoe, NE 14 Sep (L&CF). Rare so far w were a Black-and-white Warbler and a female American Redstart in Cimarron, OK 3 Sep (JW). Early Ovenbirds were picked up dead in Tulsa, OK 16 Aug and 1 Sep (JWA). Rarely reported as fall migrants, 2 Kentucky Warblers were in Sarpy, NE 10 Sep (JWH). Good numbers of Canada Warblers were noted in Nebraska, with 6 found 26 Aug-2 Sep (*fide* WRS), including a female as far w. as McConaughy 27 Aug (SJD, AB, JG) and another in Comanche, OK 3 Sep (K&SM). A tardy Yellow-breasted Chat appeared in Tulsa, OK 21 Sep (JWA).

A Western Tanager and Green-tailed Towhee in Morton, KS 22 Sep (SP, CH, MT) were the only ones reported. Tricky to locate in fall, 2 Cassin's Sparrows (an ad. and a juv.) were at McConaughy 26 Aug (SJD, AB, JG). Rarely reported in migration, a Brewer's Sparrow was in Cheyenne, KS 2 Sep (PJ). Highlighting the peak migration period were 311 Savannah Sparrows at Red Slough 1 Nov (DA, BH). Two sites in Pawnee, NE consisting of CRP grassland with native grass admixtures had a total of 21 Henslow's Sparrows 13 Aug (WRS); a juv. Henslow's was photographed in Seward, NE 15 Aug (CG). Unexpected at Red Slough, but possibly within the wintering range, were 2 Henslow's Sparrows 7 Nov (DA). Eight Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found 2-7 Oct in Nebraska and Kansas (CW, PD, ML), 6 of these in Jefferson, KS 7 Oct (DGi). Rare away from the Nebraska Panhandle were an ad. McCown's Longspur as far e. as Adams 19 Oct (PD) and a juv. at McConaughy 17 Sep (SJD, KN, WRS), both photographed. Twenty Smith's Longspurs in Dawes, NE 15 Oct (JF) were somewhat early and among the few reported in Nebraska. Easterly was a first-winter Chestnut-collared Longspur photographed 24 Sep in Adams, NE (PD), the only documented fall record from the e. half of the state. Several Snow Buntings made it into Nebraska beginning 12 Nov (CNK), including 2 as far s. as Harlan 12 Nov (G&WH).

Only the 5th sighting of Northern Cardinal in nw. Nebraska since 1960 was a male in Dawes 7 Sep (SA). Westerly were 2-4 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at McConaughy 26-29 Aug (SJD, AB, JG, DH) and one in Cimarron, OK 21 Sep (G&MK), while another in Rogers, OK 1 Nov (M&ML) was quite tardy. Lingering Black-headed Grosbeaks were in Scotts Bluff, NE 15 Oct (RSg) and Johnson, KS 20 Nov (ML). A very late Bobolink was at Red Slough 1 Nov (DA, BH), and an Orchard Oriole in Adams 2 Oct (PD) was the 4th latest for





This Chestnut-collared Longspur in Adams County, Nebraska 24 September 2006 provides the first documented record for the eastern part of the state. Photograph by Paul Dunbar.

Nebraska. A Bullock's Oriole in Canadian, OK 17 Sep (JW) was easterly and tardy. The few Purple Finches reported arrived later than usual; noteworthy were singles as far w. as Scott, KS 5 Nov (T&SS); the only one reported in Nebraska was in Platte 23 Nov (MB). A Cassin's Finch was found in Morton, KS 22 Oct (SS). Quite rare was a Lesser Goldfinch in Scotts Bluff, NE 3 Sep (*vide* AK).

Cited observers (subregional and State compilers in boldface): NEBRASKA: Sue Amiotte, Elliott Bedows (EBd), Eric Bents (EBn), Aaron Brees, Mark Brogie, Kathy DeLara,

Stephen J. Dinsmore, Paul Dunbar, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Larry & Carol Falk, William Flack, John Flavin, Lonnie Frimann, Jay Gilliam, Carlos Grandes, Joe Gubanyi (JGu), Carolyn Hall (CHa), John W. Hall, Barbi Hayes (BHy), Derek Hill, Glen & Wanda Hoge, Helen K. Hughson, Bill F. Huser, Marshall J. Iliff, Jan Johnson, Stephen Jones, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Clem N. Klaphake, Thomas E. Labeledz, Kay Niyo, Loren & Babs Padelford, Don & Jan Paseka, Allen Reyer, Tommie Rogers, Paul Roisen, Bill Scheible (BSc), Don Showen (DSh), Rueben Siegfried (RSg), W. Ross Silcock, Larry Snyder, Jon Strong (JSt), T. J. Walker, Scott Wessel, Cole Wild, Lin & Steve Willet, Duane Wolff. KANSAS: Dave Bryan, Doris Burnett (DBu), Burroughs Audubon Society (BAS), Ted Cable (TCa), Will Chatfield-Taylor (WCT), Dave Fischer, Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish (DGi), Paul Griffin, Kevin Groeneweg, Kellye Hart, Dave Henness (DHe), Larry Herbert, Leon Hicks (LHi), Robert Highgate, Chris Hobbs, Pete Janzen, Don Kazmaier, Mark Land, Jane Leo (JLe), Nancy Leo, Patty Marlett, Kathy McDowell, Ross McHenry, Aaron Mitchell, Lloyd Moore, Jackie Nooker, Marie Osterbuh, Chuck Otte, Sebastian Patti, Galen Pittman, Mike Rader, Dave Rintoul, Mark Robbins (MRo), Carolyn Schwab, Dave

Seibel (DSe), Diane Seltman, Scott Seltman, Steven Seltman (SSl), Tom & Sara Shane, Jim Shroyer (JSh), W. Ross Silcock, Tom Taggart, Dan Thalman, Max Thompson, Don & Fran Vannoy, Bunnie Watkins (BWa), Rod Wedel, Wichita Audubon Society (WAS), Brad Williamson, Gene Young. OKLAHOMA: Randy Anderson, Dave Arbour, James W. Arterburn, Jim Bates, Eric Beck, Sandy Berger, Bill Carrell, Tom Curtis, Melinda Droeger, Max Fuller, P. Gay, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Dick Gunn, Brad Harris (BHh), Berlin Heck, Jim Hoffman, Bob Holbrook (BHo), George & Martha Kamp, Jo Loyd, Mike & Merry Ludwig, Larry Mays (LMa), Jeri McMahon, Lynn McRill (LMc), Kurt & Sharon Meisenzahl, Steve Metz, Terry Mitchell (TMi), Mike Mlodonow (MMl), Joe Neal (JNe), Mark Peterson, Mary Peterson (MaP), Jana Singletary (JSi), Jerry Sisler, Ron Shepperd, Brady Surber, S. Tedder, Jim Thayer, Lou & Mary Truex, Laura Upshaw, R. VanZent, Don & Joyce Varner, Pat Velte, Nancy Vicars, Noel Wamer, Cynthia Whittier (CWh), Anne Wilbur, Ken Williams, Jim Woodard. 🌐

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## Texas



**Mark W. Lockwood | Eric Carpenter  
Willie Sekula**

**O**n the weather front, the big news was made in the El Paso area. This region of the state averages just 15.24 cm of precipitation each year; however, over 40 cm

of rain fell on 1 August alone! Abundant rains continued through mid-October, with scattered locations in El Paso County receiving over 100 cm of rain for the period! The Davis Mountains and Big Bend region also saw over half of year-to-date rainfall totals during August. Welcome rains also fell during October in the South Texas Brush Country and along the Coastal Prairies. The remainder of the state was more on the dry side, with water levels in reservoirs and ponds dropping through the season.

In many ways, good shorebird habitat was created in the areas where rainfall was abundant due to localized flooding of agricultural fields and in the Rio Grande floodplain, as well as in the drier regions of the state, where mudflats were exposed by receding water levels. In the western half of the state, hummingbird numbers were reduced at feeders, presumably a result of increased natural food sources. Migrant passerines also appeared to be in reduced numbers, as they were less concentrated in oases visited by birders.

There was no real push of montane irruptives. Jays, nuthatches, and winter finches were conspicuously absent from the Trans-Pecos and northwestern Texas. However, Western and Mountain Bluebirds made good showings. Rarities were in themselves a rarity this fall, but that is not to say there were not some tantalizing finds during the season. The highlights of the season were a Barred Antshrike in Harlingen, discovered in odd circumstances, and a Black-vented Oriole in Big Bend. Also of interest was a strong cold front in late October that pushed many species down to the coast for early, or in some cases, produced most unexpected records—such as McCown's and Lapland Longspurs on the beaches of Brazoria County.

### WATERFOWL THROUGH STORKS

An amazing count of over 2000 Canvasbacks was noted at Stillhouse Hollow Res., Bell 4 Nov (JHa). Two Greater Scaup near Grassland, Lynn 25 Nov (AHe) were the only ones reported on the South Plains. Inland Surf