

30 Sep (p.a., AS, A. Boyce). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak 18-26 Nov was not only very late but on the "wrong" side at Paonia (JBn); an even tardier individual was at Boulder 24-28 Nov (TF). A Blue Grosbeak at Valco 7-9 Oct (BKP) provided a new late date for Colorado; a Lazuli Bunting not far away on 14 Oct (BKP)—if not for an older Nov record—would have provided the same for its species.

Colorado birders continue to work out the distribution of Eastern Meadowlark in the state; another datum was provided by a singing bird 5 Oct n. of Two Buttes Res. in Prowers (S. Moss), probably a Lilian's. An ad. male Baltimore Oriole provided a first for Carbon, WY 25 Sep at Saratoga (ph. F. Bergquist), and a Bullock's Oriole 15 Sep at Crow Valley (DAL) was late. A brown-plumaged Purple Finch at Last Chance, Washington 28 Sep (DAL) provided the only report of the season. Lesser Goldfinch has only re-

cently colonized the se. mts. of Wyoming and is rare on the plains anywhere in the Region, so the 3 at Hereford Ranch 21 Sep (WFO) were of interest for multiple reasons.

**Addendum:** Omitted from the summer 2006 report, a male Eastern Bluebird attended a nest in the upper reaches of Upper Beaver Meadows, Rocky Mountain N.P., Larimer late May-late Jun (S. Roederer). Most interesting was that the female bluebird at that nest was a Western (TL).

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## Idaho & Western Montana



### David Trochell

Early autumn was unusually dry and warm in most areas of the Region, but weather patterns reversed course in October and November, bringing much precipitation. While shorebird and waterfowl migration seemed fairly typical, some reports indicated significant movements of passerines in August and September in response to a series of cool, wet frontal systems.

Late-season reports of low passerine numbers in southern Idaho's valleys were especially perplexing and troubling. Some contributors speculated that adequate wild food availability and mild weather may have allowed

birds to forego migration to the area, but others opined that widespread mortality from West Nile Virus was the probable cause. This darker explanation seemed likely, especially after the Center for Disease Control published a fall report documenting nearly a quarter of the nation's cases of West Nile in southern Idaho.

**Abbreviations:** A.F.R. (American Falls Res., Bingham/Power, ID); Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); I.P.R. (Island Park Res., Fremont, ID); L.P. (Idaho Bird Observatory's banding station at Lucky Peak near Boise).

### GEESE THROUGH PIGEONS

Representing a latilong first was a Greater White-fronted Goose at L. Helena, MT 18 Nov (BM). Unusually late was a Ross's Goose at Bozeman, MT 23 Nov (LAH). A total of 16 Cackling Geese was reported 5-17 Nov, more than three times last autumn's count. Only 4 Eurasian Wigeons were recorded, barely up from last year's weak tally. If accepted, 2 **American Black Ducks** at Camas 16 Oct (†JC) will represent Idaho's 4th record. About average was the season's count of 16 Surf Scoters and 12 White-winged Scoters. Rare **Black Scoters** visited both states, with 2 at L. Helena 17 Oct (ph. BM) providing Montana's 16th record and one in Valley 17-20 Nov (†JC) that will represent Idaho's 3rd record, if

accepted. The fall tally of 8 Long-tailed Ducks was above average. A Red-throated Loon in Kootenai 16 Oct (†LH) brought in Idaho's 29th report. Pacific Loons came through in fairly good numbers, with a total of 13 reported. Staging Common Loons peaked at about 250 at Montana's Ennis L. 22 Oct (EH, JP), one of the Region's primary loon hotspots. Raptor watchers at L.P. made commendable counts of 17 Broad-winged Hawks 10 Sep-3 Oct (JC), and Montana reported 12 at the Bridger Ridge site in mid-late Sep. A surprisingly high tally of 60 staging Bald Eagles was made at Ennis L., MT 25 Nov (AH) Unprecedented was the Gyrfalcon documented at the Bridger Ridge, MT hawkwatch site 28 Oct (CC, JG); one in Lake, MT 9 Nov (BR) was less unusual. Shocking was an estimated 40,000 American Coots at Ennis L., MT 9 Oct (EH, JP).

Usually rare American Golden-Plovers came through in good numbers, with Idaho hosting at least 24 and Montana reporting 26 Idaho birders reported Snowy Plovers in Canyon 7 Aug (†DH) and at A.F.R. 3-5 Sep (†JC), where they are casual visitors. Especially rare in autumn in w. Montana was a Black-necked Stilt in Somers 2 Sep (DC). A Red Knot, less than annual, was a show-stopper at I.P.R. 29 Sep-6 Oct (JC, ph., †CW). Top shorebird honors go to the single **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at L. Helena, MT 3 Sep (ph

BM), w. Montana's 9th record, and at A.F.R. 23 Sep (†JC), which will furnish Idaho's 4th, if accepted. Fairly typical was the total of 5 Short-billed Dowitchers 15 Aug–9 Sep. The only reported jaegers were single Parasitics at Ennis L., MT 29-30 Sep and 9 Oct (†EH, JP). A wayward Franklin's Gull visited L. Coeur d'Alene, ID 20 Oct (MH), where they are now nearly annual. The tally of rare-but-regular larids was about average, with 5 Mew Gulls, 5 Thayer's Gulls, 3 Glaucous-winged Gulls, 2 Glaucous Gulls, and 9 Sabine's Gulls reported. The gull of the season was a Black-legged Kittiwake at A.F.R. 2-9 Nov (†JC, ph., †CW) that represented Idaho's 7th report. An imm. Arctic Tern was discovered at A.F.R. 3-5 Sep (†JC), the Region's hotspot for the species. Montana's 9th Ancient Murrelet was found dead near Deer Lodge 22 Nov (GS). A Band-tailed Pigeon was especially unusual near Challis, ID 11-12 Sep (D&EF); these casual visitors are seldom reported outside of spring.

## OWLS THROUGH ORIOLES

Apparently Barn Owls are increasing in w. Montana, as evidenced by scattered sightings in *Beaverhead*, *Gallatin*, *Granite*, and *Lake*. A record-early Snowy Owl was observed in *Boundary*, ID 26 Aug–3 Sep (ph. MM), and another was discovered in *Kootenai*, ID 22 Nov (SS). Five Anna's Hummingbirds were documented throughout Idaho 1 Sep–30 Nov, where they are now almost expected in autumn. Montana's 13th Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was an exciting find near Lincoln 20 Sep (MHu). Only 9 Blue Jays were recorded in Ida-

ho, representing a 95 per cent reduction from last year. In Montana, a Blue Jay fledgling near Manhattan in early Sep (JE) established a first breeding record for Latilong 38. A storm put down a mind-blowing 2000 migrating Mountain Bluebirds near Gardiner, MT 17 Sep (MD). A Northern Mockingbird at Camas 2 Aug was interesting, but even more unusual was the Brown Thrasher there 24 Sep (JC). It was a good season for e. vagrant warblers, with reports of 4 Tennessee Warblers at Camas & L.P. 25 Aug–1 Oct (JC), a Northern Parula in *Fremont*, ID 8 Sep (†CW), and a Palm Warbler in *Beaverhead* (EHe, D&JJ) that provided a first record for sw. Montana. The relatively new songbird banding station at Camas produced unusual captures, including Chestnut-sided Warblers 22-23 Aug and 7 Sep, a Black-throated Blue Warbler 11 Sep, a Blackpoll Warbler 12 Sep, a Black-and-white Warbler 26 Sep, and an Ovenbird 12 Aug (JC). Remarkably late was a Nashville Warbler in Lewiston, ID 11 Nov (TG). A vagrant Hooded Warbler in *Missoula* 7 Sep (TT) provided Montana's 2nd record and a seasonal highlight.

A local late record was set by the Chipping Sparrow that held over near Hailey, ID 29-30 Nov+ (ph. PWP). Clay-colored Sparrows are increasingly reported in Idaho; this season, one was banded at Camas 14 Aug (ph. JC), and another was near Moscow, ID 4-6 Sep (KD, TG). An incredible find was a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow near Bozeman, MT 18 Oct (†EH) that will be w. Montana's 2nd, if accepted. The only Swamp Sparrow report was from Hagerman Valley, ID 7 Nov (†JC), where

the species may regularly winter. It was a good season for rare *Zonotrichia*, with at least 10 White-throated, 17 Golden-crowned, and 2 Harris's Sparrows reported. Especially notable were the record 15 Golden-crowned banded at L.P. in Sep (JC). A Lapland Longspur discovered in Sandpoint (MH) furnished just the 3rd n. Idaho record. Notable captures at Camas included a Rose-breasted Grosbeak 8 Sep, a Blue Grosbeak 12-15 Aug, and an Indigo Bunting 13 Aug (JC). A flock of about 30 Common Grackles in Rexburg, ID 4 Oct (DCI) was impressive, as was the report of 2 others in *Owyhee*, ID 27 Oct (JC), where they are only casual. Idaho's *Owyhee* also hosted the only Great-tailed Grackles, with 2 there 27 Oct (JC). If accepted, a well-described Orchard Oriole at Camas 21-24 Aug (†JC) will provide Idaho's first record.

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