



Rick Fridell

Weather in the Great Basin during the fall season was marked by extremes: starting off hot and dry in August and eventually turning much colder than normal throughout much of the Region by November. Fall birding in the Region was exceptional, with an abundance of rare and vagrant birds reported. Utah highlights included the first accepted Pacific Golden-Plover record, an individual lingering at the Antelope Island State Park Causeway, and the second documented Prairie Warbler. Nevada highlights included a Black Scoter on a small pond in Esmeralda County and an outstanding warbler showing, including Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Blackpoll, and Connecticut Warblers.

Abbreviations: Antelope Island (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); Lake Mead (Lake Mead N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

Seventy Greater White-fronted Geese, a high number, were observed 10 Sep at the H.B.V.P. (fide JBr). A cooperative Trumpeter Swan graced Layton City Park, Davis, UT 2-7 Nov (BF et al.). Up to 4 Wood Ducks lingered 27 Oct+ at Idlewild, Reno, Washoe, NV (RB et al.). There were fewer observations of scoters than usual this fall in the Region. As usual, Surf Scoters were the most observed species, with Nevada reports from Pyramid L., Washoe (14-22 Oct; MMe, RSt et al.) and Walker L., Mineral (4 Nov; GS). Surf Scoters were also found at several Utah locations, including Antelope Island 22 Oct-27 Nov (TA, CN et al.),

Baker Res., Washington 24-25 Oct (LT), Hyrum S.P., Cache 29 Oct (J&KB), and Kolob Res., Washington 30 Oct-11 Nov (RF). Utah supplied the only White-winged Scoter observations: an ad. male 25-29 Oct at Hurricane, Washington (KC, ph. RF) and a female at Antelope Island 9-27 Nov (ph. PH, ph. BC). Remarkably, the only Black Scoter found this season was a female photographed at the small Dyer Pond, in the nearly waterless Esmeralda, NV 5 Nov (GS). A Long-tailed Duck visited Antelope Island 26 Nov+ (J&KB), and a female Barrow's Goldeneye made a rare Washington, UT appearance 30 Nov-6 Dec at Gunlock S.P. (LT, RF).

It was an uneventful season for rare loon sightings in the Region. Highlights included a juv. Red-throated Loon found 11 Nov (GS, J&MC) and 2 ads. reported 13 Nov at Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead (FO, DB). Utah supplied the only Pacific Loon reports, with 2 at Hyrum S.P., Cache 21-29 Oct (BR, J&KB) and singles at Quail Creek S.P., Washington 6 Nov (RF) and Willard Bay S.P., Box Elder 18 Nov (DS). A Horned Grebe located 23-24 Sep on the Dyer Pond (GS, RSt, DG) likely supplied the first record for arid Esmeralda, NV. Red-necked Grebes were observed 28 Sep-3 Oct at Pahrnagat N.W.R., Lincoln, NV (ph. MJI, ph. RF) and 24 Oct at Little Dell Res., Salt Lake, UT (BH). A juv. Brown Pelican lingered at Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead 16-25 Aug (JBa). A Little Blue Heron was a nice find 27 Sep at Ash Meadows N.W.R., Nye, NV (p.a., HH; fide SG), and a juv. Reddish Egret made a rare appearance at Lake Mead 12-18 Sep (p.a., JK, TD).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Reports of migrant Broad-winged Hawks have been steadily increasing in the Region over the past five years, particularly at high-elevation areas in the Wasatch and Goshute Mts. This fall, there were no fewer than 14 individuals reported, with the majority observed along the Wasatch Front, Salt Lake/Utah, UT 2-26 Sep (ph. JL, †EH, MMe et al.). Nevada reports included a dark morph photographed 28 Sep at Corn Cr. (ph., †MJI) and a typical ad. 4 Oct at Miller's R.A. (DL). A Zone-tailed Hawk was observed again this year in the Kolob Meadows/Lava Pt. area of Zion 8-19 Aug (RF, DW, LW).

A Common Moorhen observed 9 Aug at Ruby Lake N.W.R., Elko, NV (JBo) was out-

side of typically reported areas. Utah's first Pacific Golden-Plover was confirmed this season at Antelope Island 25 Aug (J&BD, ph. KE et al.). Fortunately, it was very cooperative, allowing close photographs and study by many observers and lingering through 16 Sep (acc., †KP, †BR, ph. BC, ph. PH). Additional significant shorebird sightings at Antelope Island included a Whimbrel 6-9 Aug (JBi, J&KB) and 2 Ruddy Turnstones 4-6 Aug (CP, ph. JBi et al.). A well-documented White-rumped Sandpiper graced Decker L., Salt Lake, UT 23 Aug (†S&CS, PF). Stilt Sandpipers, rare transients through the Region, were reported from the unusual s. Nevada locations of H.B.V.P. (6-16 Sep; JBr et al.) and Key Pittman W.M.A., Lincoln (28 Sep; MJI). Utah's 12th confirmed Red Phalarope was photographed 11 Nov at Antelope Island (ph., †KR). An ad Heermann's Gull made a rare appearance in the Region at Virginia L., Reno, Washoe, NV 30 Oct (FP). A Mew Gull was photographed along the Antelope Island Causeway 3-5 Nov (ph. SCr, ph. PH, GB, MW). There were several reports of Sabine's Gulls this period: an ad. was observed 7 Sep at Cottonwood Cove, Lake Mojave N.R.A., Clark, NV (JM), while juvs. were noted 15 Sep at Antelope Island



Two Magnolia Warblers were documented in the Great Basin in fall 2006, including this male photographed 8 October 2006 (here) at the Arlemont Ranch, Esmeralda County, Nevada. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.

(KP), 16 Sep at Bear River (DS), 27 Sep at Las Vegas Bay, Lake Mead (MJI), and 21 Oct at Las Vegas, Clark, NV (RSa, J&MC).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Post-breeding White-winged Doves were observed at several locations n. of their expected range: Miller's R.A. 19 Aug (RSt et al.), Garr Ranch, Antelope Island 20 Aug-6 Sep (JBi et al.), and Halladay, Salt Lake, UT 26 Aug (DO). A Greater Roadrunner was a surprising visitor during a cold snap at Log Canyon, Steptoe Valley, White Pine, NV 26 Nov (BP). A remarkable flight of Vaux's Swifts went through Washington, UT 17 Sep, with at least 7 ob-

served among four separate county locations (ph. RF, LJ, LT); several swifts lingered at Red Hills through 22 Sep, providing Utah's 5th confirmed record (†RF). Northerly sightings of Anna's Hummingbirds continued this period, as individuals were reported visiting feeders in Davis, Weber, and Salt Lake, UT (MS, KP et al.). An ad. female Rufous Hummingbird was a very late visitor 1-29 Nov at a Sandy, Salt Lake, UT residence (ph. JBi). Five Acorn Woodpeckers were observed 19 Nov in the Kolob Meadows, Washington, UT (KC, RF), suggesting a possible breeding colony in the sw. corner of the state. Red-breasted Sapsuckers, seldom observed in Utah, were photographed at Red Hills (5 Oct; RF) and Lytle (14 Oct; †LT, ph. PC).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Least Flycatchers, likely more common transients than the number of accepted reports in the Region would suggest, were observed at Garr Ranch, Antelope Island 6-16 Sep (ph. RF, JR, KE) and Red Hills 17-22 Sep (LJ, RF). Eastern Phoebes were found at Capitol Reef N.P., Wayne, UT 3 Sep (†DW), Fish Springs N.W.R., Juab, UT 15 Oct (†JS), and Eihel M. Gardens, Henderson, Clark, NV 22 Oct (TS). An Eastern Kingbird made a surprise appearance 12 Sep at Corn Cr. (GS). A Blue-headed Vireo was reported 17 Sep along the Santa Clara R., Washington, UT (LT), and the only Red-eyed Vireo report was from Springville, Utah, UT 26 Aug (JBi, BH, BMc). A Blue Jay, hosted by the Mickelson family at their Tremonton, Box Elder, UT residence, remained from 6 Oct through at least 9 Nov, much to the delight of visiting birders. A Veery found at Red Hills 26 Oct (LT) furnished the first confirmed Washington, UT record. Varied Thrushes were observed at several unusual locations, including the Tonopah Cemetery, Nye, NV (30 Sep-1 Oct; GS, RSt, DG), Lytle (22 Oct; DS), and Dugway, Tooele, UT 27 Oct (CZ). The only Brown Thrasher report of the season came from Corn Cr. 22 Oct (J&MC, RS).

Once again this fall, the Great Basin lived up to its well-deserved reputation as an outstanding area for observing rare and vagrant warblers, with over 30 species reported. A Tennessee Warbler was found 13 Oct at Lytle (LT, PC). Northern Parulas made a nice showing this season in Nevada, with reports from Reno, Washoe 24 Aug (FP), Corn Cr. 4 Sep (J&MC), Miller's R.A. 9 Sep-7 Oct (GS et al.), Floyd Lamb S.P., Clark 27 Sep (RSc), and Circle L Ranch, Esmeralda 1 Oct (G&ES). The only Northern Parula observed in Utah was at River Lane, Utah 20 Aug-9 Sep (†J&KB et al.). Chestnut-sided Warblers

were documented at two Utah locations: Clover Spings C.G., Tooele, UT 28 Aug (†EH) and the Jordan River Parkway, Salt Lake 15 Sep (BH). Magnolia Warblers were found at Parley's Canyon, Salt Lake, UT 9 Sep (†DS) and the Arlemont Ranch, Esmeralda, NV 8 Oct (ph. MMe, ph. GS). Male Black-throated Blue Warblers were found at Corn Cr. 14-15 Oct (GS et al.) and the Watchman Campground, Zion 7 Nov (†T&CE). Hermit Warblers, once believed to be vagrants throughout Utah, now appear to be rare-but-regular migrants through the sw. corner of the state. This fall, there were three Washington, UT reports of first-year Hermit Warblers 6-12 Aug (LT, BL, LJ, DW). Utah's 2nd documented Prairie Warbler was observed 15 Oct at Central, Washington (†LT, BL). It was an excep-



This very late Worm-eating Warbler was a major surprise 25-27 (here 26) November 2006 at Beus Park, Ogden, Weber County, Utah. This is the third documented occurrence of this species in Utah. Photograph by Paul Higgins.

tional fall for Blackpoll Warblers in the Region, with an unprecedented six reports. The first was observed 2 Sep, along the Jordan River Parkway, Salt Lake, UT (†DS), followed by 2 photographed 16 Sep at the Circle L Ranch, Esmeralda, NV (GS, DG, CT et al.). Additional sightings included females at Lytle 23 Sep (LT, BL), Corn Cr. 28 Sep (MJJ), and Circle L Ranch, Esmeralda 1 Oct (G&ES). Surprisingly, the only Black-and-white Warbler reported this season was at Garr Ranch, Antelope Island 16 Sep (SCa et al.). A well-documented Prothonotary Warbler was at Duck Creek Village, Kane, UT 27 Sep (†CK); however, more surprising was one late at a Morgan residence, Morgan, UT 31 Oct-5 Nov (AS, ph. PH et al.). A likewise late Worm-eating Warbler was an excellent find 25-27 Nov at Beus Pond, Ogden, Weber, UT (KP, GB, ph. PH). An Ovenbird was observed 23 Sep at Corn Cr. (JCI, RSc), and a very late Northern Waterthrush was found 25 Nov at Harris Wash, Escalante N.M., Garfield UT (MB). A possible Mourning Warbler, reported 4 Sep at River Lane, Utah, (†J&KB), would be the first confirmed in Utah, if ac-

cepted. A well-described first-fall Connecticut Warbler was discovered at Corn Cr. 26 Aug (J&MC), and a Hooded Warbler was found at Lida, Esmeralda, NV 16 Sep (GS).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

There were several Clay-colored Sparrow reports in late Sep, including singles at Lytle 13 Sep (LT), Floyd Lamb S.P., Clark, NV 16 Sep (RSc et al.), and Central, Washington, UT 16 Sep (LT), plus 2 at Miller's R.A. 23 Sep (GS, RSt, DG). Harris's Sparrows were reported 18 Oct at Mantua Res., Box Elder, UT (KP) and 18 Nov at Corn Cr. (CT, TK). A female Painted Bunting graced Corn Cr. 4-11 Sep (ph. JH, J&MC, GS). Wayward Nevada Bobolinks were found at Miller's R.A. 23 Sep (GS, RSt, DG), Indian Springs, Clark 28 Sep (MJJ), and Wendover, Elko 28 Sep (MJJ). A first-year male Baltimore Oriole was photographed 8 Sep at Black Rock, Millard, UT (RF). A pair of Common Grackles visited Fish Springs N.W.R., Juab, UT 7 Sep-15 Oct (ph. RF et al.), and a juv. was observed at Amargosa Park, Nye, NV 27 Oct (J&MC). The only Lawrence's Goldfinch of the season made a brief appearance at Corn Cr. 28 Sep (MJJ).

Contributors and cited observers: Elisabeth Ammon, Tim Avery, Glenn Barlow, Joe Barnes (JBa), Joel & Kathy Beyer, Jack Binch (JBi), Donn Blake, Jim Boone (JBo), Je Anne Branca (JBr), Michelle Brodie, Richard Brune, Stephen Carlile (SCa), Steve Carr (SCr), Joan Clarke (JCl), Jack Cochran (JCo), Kristen Comella, Peyton Cook, James & Marian Cressman, Brian Currie, Bryan & Jean Dixon, Tom Driscoll, Tom & Chris Edell, Keith Evans, Bill Fenimore, Rick Fridell, Pomerance Fronce, Dennis Ghigleiri, Shawn Goodchild, Paul Higgins, Jim Holmes, Eric Huish, Heather Hundt, Bob Huntington, Marshall J. Iloff, Lee Jones, Charles Kahl, Joe Kahl, Tracy Kipke, Jerry Ligouri, David Lukas, Barbara Lykins, Bob McDougal (BMc), Jimmy McMorran, Martin Meyers (MMe), Brian Mickelson (BMi), Milton Moody (MMo), Colby Neuman, Deedee O'Brien, Lew Oring, Felix Owens, Brad Pendley, Fred Petersen, Cheryl Peterson, Kristin Purdy, Jack Rensel, Kimberly Roush, Buck Russell, Rick Saval (RSa), Rita Schlageter (RSc), Erika Scyphers, Greg Scyphers, Dennis Shirley, Jack Skalicky, Dave Slager, Mort Somer, Steve and Cindy Sommerfield, Arnold Smith, Rose Strickland (RSt), Toby Sulenski, Carolyn Titus, Larry Tripp, Merrill Webb, David Wheeler, Kevin Wheeler, Larene Wyss, Candy Zaffis. 📷

Rick Fridell, 3505 West 290 North Hurricane, Utah 84737, (rfridell@redrock.net)