



Ron Martin

March brought average temperatures and above-average precipitation over much of the Region. April was dry throughout, with cool temperatures in the first half of the month and above-average temperatures the second half of the month. The heavy rains started in mid-May and continued to the end of the period. The Red River on the North Dakota–Minnesota border ran high from mid-March to June.

There were many early dates for migrant species from late March to early May, but in general the migration was spotty and numbers were low. There were a few localized fall-outs in May, and a nice concentration of shorebirds occurred in May at Round Lake on the North Dakota–Montana border. Shorebird numbers in most of the Region were low. A first record for North Dakota, a Painted Bunting came to a feeder in early May.

## DUCKS THROUGH FALCONS

A Eurasian Wigeon at Upper Souris N.W.R. 7 Apr provided about the 17th report for North Dakota (p.a., RR). An American Black Duck was well w. of usual haunts in Williams, ND 26 May (NDBS). Very rare in the spring season, a White-winged Scoter was in Yankton, SD 8 Apr (GJS). Two Barrow's Goldeneyes were seen in North Dakota, the 18th and 19th reports for the state. One was at Arrowwood N.W.R. 1 Apr (p.a., SS) and another in Eddy 11 Apr (p.a., SLW). A late Barrow's Goldeneye was at Bowdoin N.W.R., MT 30 May (SD, PS). A Common Loon was early 31 Mar in Richland, ND (MAO), and a peak of 21 was noted 20 Apr at Ft. Peck, MT (CC). Horned and Eared Grebes were early 12 Mar in Charles Mix, SD (RM). Colonial waterbird nest counts in South Dakota turned up 6140 Double-crested Cormorant nests (ND). A new spring high count for North Dakota, 40 American Bitterns were at Kelly's Slough N.W.R. 18 May (EEF). Casual in South Dakota, a Tricolored Heron was in Brown 15 May (p.a., ND). Casual in cen. North Dakota, Green Herons were in Minot 23 May (REM) and in Sheridan 25 May (JL).

The Turkey Vulture in Clay, SD 16 Mar was early (NT), and the group of 33 in Brookings

21 Apr made an unusually high number for the e. Dakotas (KJ). If accepted, a Mississippi Kite 18 May in Butte, SD would provide the 6th record for the state (p.a., SW, BK). A peak of 552 Red-tailed Hawks was noted 24 Mar in 1.75 hours of watching along the Red R. at Grand Forks, ND (EEF). Rough-legged Hawks peaked at 115 in Grand Forks, ND 16 Mar (EEF), and a late bird was in Burke, ND 24 May (CDE). Four Peregrine Falcons were attending the large shorebird flock at Round L. near Westby, MT 19 May (TN).

## SHOREBIRDS

A Black-necked Stilt at Freezeout Lake N.W.R., MT 23 Mar was a month earlier than the average arrival date (JN). There were three Black-necked Stilt reports from North Dakota and one from South Dakota. A Long-billed Curlew was early 27 Mar in Custer, SD (MM). Two Long-billed Curlews in Williams, ND 8 May were a rare find n. of the Missouri R. (JT, AT). Rare in Montana, 5 Hudsonian Godwits were in Valley 10 May (JC). Casual in South Dakota, a Red Knot was in Sully 20 May (p.a., RDO). Three Semipalmated Sandpipers at Freezeout L., MT 1 Apr were a month earlier than the average arrival date (MS, JN). The 2nd earliest record for North Dakota, a Pectoral Sandpiper was at Minot 29 Mar (REM). The 2nd highest spring count for North Dakota, 80 Buff-breasted Sandpipers were at the Minot Sewage Lagoons 22 May (REM). There was one other report of this species from North Dakota and two from South Dakota. An American Woodcock was early 11 Mar in Hughes, SD (KM). In North Dakota, cold weather and snow drove American Woodcocks to unusual localities. An individual was noted 4-13 Apr feeding along the snow-free edge of buildings on the Capitol grounds in Bismarck (CDE), and another was on the courtyard lawn at an elementary school in Grand Forks 5 Apr (DOL). Red-necked Phalarope peaked at 4460 at Bowdoin N.W.R., MT 24 May (SD, PS).

A good concentration of shorebirds was noted at Round L. on the North Dakota–Montana line near Westby, MT 10 May through early Jun. At least 22 species were recorded. Peak numbers from the estimated 25,000 birds present 23 May included 10,000 Sanderlings, 5000 Stilt Sandpipers, 5000 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 1000 White-rumped Sandpipers, 1500 Wilson's Phalaropes, 500 Red-necked Phalaropes, and 100 Baird's Sandpipers. Rare in Montana, 5 Short-billed Dowitchers, one Ruddy Turnstone, and 4 Red Knots were seen 20 May (TN).

## GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A potential 7th record for South Dakota, a Laughing Gull was in Pierre 26-30 May (p.a. RDO). About the 18th report for North Dakota, 2 ad. Little Gulls were at Devils L. 23 May (p.a., TCL, DOL, CLW, PHS). A Bonaparte's Gull was early 28 Mar in Jamestown, ND (RBU). The only Mew Gull reported came from Pierre, SD 14-17 Mar (RDO, KM). The White-winged Dove reported last year from Beadle, SD continues at the same location in Huron (JSP, BH). A possible Eurasian Collared-Dove x Rock Pigeon first seen last year in Pierre, SD was seen 21 Mar this year mated with a Eurasian Collared-Dove. Two nesting attempts produced two unhatched clutches (RDO). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was early 8 May in Pierre, SD (ES). Black-billed Cuckoos were also noted earlier than average in the Dakotas. The earliest for South Dakota, a Barn Owl was in Sully 23 Mar (KM). Continuing the trend of increased sightings in North Dakota, a Barn Owl was flushed 15 Apr in Burleigh (CDE). Very rare in North Dakota, a rufous-morph Eastern Screech-Owl was in McHenry 9 May (REM). In Grand Forks, ND 72 Short-eared Owls were counted 5 Mar (EEF). A Red-naped Sapsucker was early 6 Apr in Meade, SD (AB). Pileated Woodpeckers were at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R. and Minot, ND 29 Apr (REM, JS); these provided the first county records for McHenry and Ward and the first in the Souris R. loop.

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was early 7 May in Union, SD (DS). An Eastern Phoebe in Clay, SD 13 Mar provided the earliest spring record for the state (DS). The Eastern Phoebe at Westby, MT 7 May would, if accepted, furnish the 10th record for the state (p.a., TN). Casual in South Dakota, a Cassin's Kingbird was in Custer 25 May (RDO). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher photographed in Burleigh, ND 7 May was the 10th reported in the state (p.a., AV). In South Dakota, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Mellette 31 May furnished the 15th report for the state (p.a., DB). A Warbling Vireo 29 Apr in Clay tied the earliest date for South Dakota (GJS). In North Dakota, a Plumbeous Vireo 14-17 May in Fargo provided the 5th report for the state and the 3rd documented (p.a., PB, RHO, GEM). The winter Gray Jay invasion in North Dakota ended with the last sighting 17 Apr in Grand Forks (DOL). Three Purple Martins around a nest box in Westby 30 May led to speculation about a first nesting for Montana (TN). Pygmy Nuthatch reports from the Black Hills of South Dakota have been on the increase recently. This spring, there were eight reports from three counties

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was early 21 Apr in Union, SD (DS); three North Dakota reports spanned 5-15 May. A Hermit Thrush was early 29 Mar in Cass, ND (MAO). Two Wood Thrush reports from North Dakota were both far w. of usual haunts. A single was in McHenry 19 May (REM), and another was at Bowman 25 May (TCL, PHS, CLW). The Curve-billed Thrasher that wintered s. of Roundup, MT was last seen 13 Apr (LH). An American Pipit was early 31 Mar in McHenry, ND (REM). Territorial Sprague's Pipits were numerous in much of North Dakota this spring. Peaks of up to 30 per day were noted in McHenry, ND.

## WARBLERS

Five Golden-winged Warbler reports from the e. Dakotas spanned 5-27 May. An early Northern Parula was in Lake, SD 21 Apr (JSP). Cape May Warblers w. of the usual path included a single 12 May in Stark, ND (JWH), and one in Glasgow, MT 14 May (p.a., DE). The 14th record for Montana, if accepted, a Black-throated Blue Warbler was in Plentywood 27 May (p.a., CP). Rare in Montana, a Black-throated Green Warbler was in Ft. Peck 16 May (p.a., JC). The 6th record for South Dakota, if accepted, a Black-throated Gray Warbler was in Union 9 May (p.a., NT). Providing the

11th report for North Dakota, a Worm-eating Warbler was photographed 23 May in Grand Forks (TCL, DOL, PHS, CLW). A Prairie Warbler 27 May+ in Lincoln, SD would, if accepted, furnish the 10th record for the state (p.a., RDO, JSP). Connecticut Warblers made a stellar showing in North Dakota, with 15 reports and a peak of 7 in Kidder 27 May (PHS).

## TANAGERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Two Summer Tanager reports were singles at Pierre, SD 13-14 May (p.a., KM, DB) and in Stutsman, ND 26 May (p.a., WM). A potential 11th record for South Dakota, a Green-tailed Towhee was in Pennington 13 May (p.a., JF). An Eastern Towhee was early 11 Apr in Clay, SD (GJS), and a Spotted Towhee was e. of normal in Grand Forks, ND 26-28 Apr (DOL). Now a casual migrant in the Dakotas, a McCown's Longspur was early and e. of their normal route in Stanley, SD 15 Apr (DB, RDO). A Lazuli Bunting was early 29 Apr in Stanley, SD (RDO). A male Painted Bunting at a feeder in Stark 1-2 May provided the long-awaited first record for North Dakota (JPL, CDE, LL). The 2nd earliest for North Dakota, a Dickcissel was in Jamestown 3 May (SS). A Pine Grosbeak was a rare visitor in Ft. Peck, MT 24 Mar (JC). Casual in cen. South Dakota, a Hoary Redpoll was in Hughes 7 Mar (RDO). About

the 10th report for Montana, a Lesser Goldfinch was in Poplar 22 May (p.a., LL). A Chaffinch photographed 23 Apr in Ward, ND (SH, REM) was certainly an escapee.

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# Southern Great Plains



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Early, early, early arrivals seemed to be an overriding theme of the season across taxonomic groups from shorebirds to swallows, flycatchers to warblers. However, the scattering of eastern birds west and western birds east was less evident this season than in many previous seasons.

The effects of very heavy rains, especially across more southerly stretches of the Region, persist, both in disruptions of breeding cycles and in augmentations of wetland areas. Western Nebraska, by contrast, was very dry. The season was strangely interesting, and strangely dull, as it just seems to be harder and harder to find substantial concentrations of Neotropical migrants, although "digging around" still has its rewards.

**Abbreviations:** Hackberry (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Hefner (L. Hefner, Oklahoma, OK); McConaughy (L. Mc-

Conaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (playas in s.-cen. and se. Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH IBIS

The only regular Regional site for Black-bellied Whistling-Duck is McCurtain, OK; best count there was 20 on 20 May (DA). Two Black-bellieds farther n. in Tulsa, OK 12 May were unexpected (BC). Clearly a Regional "zootie," 4 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were seen at Tishomingo N.W.R., Johnston, OK 30 Apr (EBr, JRe). Best Snow Goose counts were 350,000 between Gothenburg and Kearney, NE 4 Mar (SB), and 200,000 at Harvard Marsh 16 Mar (PD). Two Snows, one injured, were in Cimarron, OK 11 (JW) & 18 May (JAG). A Ross's Goose in Tulsa, OK 11 Apr (LMc) was tardy. Tundra Swan, now the rarer of the native swans, was reported from Quivira 3 Mar-1 Apr (family group of 5; SS, m.ob.), with 3 at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo, NE 4 Mar