

# Great Basin



## Rick Fridell

Weather this spring was unremarkable, with many observers reporting a slow spring migration. By the end of the season, most of the Region was unseasonably hot, with temperatures well above average and returning drought conditions. As usual, spring migration brought a variety of rare and vagrant species to the Great Basin Region. Nevada highlights included a Zone-tailed Hawk near Lake Mead and many eastern warblers, including Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, and Worm-eating Warblers. The second confirmed Philadelphia Vireo, a Common Ground-Dove, a Dickcissel, and a Lawrence's Goldfinch were Utah highlights. I sincerely appreciate the individuals who submitted a quarterly report and documentation on their sightings, and I'd like to extend a very special thanks to Joshua Kreitzer, who assisted with monitoring the hotlines and assembling the spring database.

**Abbreviations:** Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); Farmington Bay (Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis, UT); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); L. 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

Drake Eurasian Wigeons were reported 3 Mar at Clear L. W.M.A., Millard, UT (EH) and 9 Apr at Farmington Bay (ph. TA), and a female was found 10 Apr in West Reno, Washoe, NV (EK). A male and female Black Scoter, first located 23 Feb at Sand Hollow S.P., Washington, UT lingered at least until 14 Mar (ph. RF). Up to 3 Long-tailed Ducks lingered at Antelope I. through 1 Apr (KE, JR), and 6 Barrow's Goldeneyes were a surprise at Rock-

port S.P., Summit, UT 23 Mar (KP). Utah's 2nd confirmed Scaled Quail, first found 6 Jan (JSh), were observed regularly through 14 Apr in Montezuma Creek, San Juan (LT et al.). Low numbers of Horned Grebes are often observed in the Region; however, up to 25 wintering at Sand Hollow S.P., Washington, UT (15 Mar, RF et al.) was quite an unusual count. A Least Bittern was observed again this season at H.B.V.P. 11 May+ (TW, JBr). A possible Glossy Ibis photographed 8 Apr at Hite Crossing, San Juan, UT (p.a., ph. TA, DSL) would be the 3rd for the state and the first for s. Utah.

## HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

A White-tailed Kite was reported 11 Apr with limited details at Pahrnagat N.W.R., Lincoln, NV (p.a., B&BD). Nevada provided all Red-shouldered Hawk reports this spring, with single individuals at Pahrnagat N.W.R., Lin-



**Zone-tailed Hawk sightings have been on the rise in recent years in the southern portion of the Great Basin, particularly southwestern Utah and southern Nevada. This individual was photographed 9 April 2007 at the Boulder Beach Campground, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Clark County, Nevada. Photograph by Dennis Ghiglieri.**

coln 3 Mar–5 Apr (B&BD), Lemmon Valley, Washoe 8 Mar (MMe), and West Reno, Washoe 5 Apr (AW). A single Broad-winged Hawk was observed 2 Apr flying over Central, Washington, UT (LT), and another lingered at Lytle 20–28 Apr (LT et al.). A Zone-tailed Hawk photographed 9 Apr at Boulder Beach Campground, L. Mead (†RSt, ph. DG) constituted a rare s. Nevada record.

Fall is usually the premier time for finding rare and vagrant shorebirds in the Great Basin, but this was an exceptional spring, with Antelope I., as usual, leading the way with many noteworthy sightings. Three American Golden-Plovers were photographed there 16 Apr (TA), and a single was observed 10 May at



**One of only a few notable flycatchers observed in the Great Basin during spring 2007, this Eastern Phoebe was seen 10 (here) through 20 April at the Corn Creek Unit of the Desert National Wildlife Range, Clark County, Nevada. Photograph by Dennis Ghiglieri.**

H.B.V.P. (JBr). Surprisingly high numbers of Whimbrels were reported in the Region, with 6 at Fallon, Churchill, NV 7 Apr (GS), one at Antelope I. 27 Apr (JBi, BH), one at Amargosa Valley, Nye, NV 20 May (GS), and 7 at Panguitch L., Garfield, UT 31 May (JKr, KW). A well-documented Hudsonian Godwit was found 22 Apr at Farmington Bay (J&KB, ph., †TA). Ruddy Turnstones were observed 3 Apr at Fallon, Churchill, NV (CNI) and 6 May at Antelope I. (J&KB). Ten breeding-plumaged Red Knots were reported 30 Apr at Antelope I. (p.a., TA). Unprecedented numbers of Semipalmated Sandpipers were reported in the Region this spring, led by a remarkable 40 observed 5 May at Antelope I. (TA, CNe). Additional Semipalmated Sandpiper reports included an individual lingering at Lemmon Valley, Washoe, NV 23 Apr–6 May (HPe), 4 on at Chicken Creek Res., Juab, UT 27 Apr (TA, CNe), and one at Sand Hollow S.P., Washing-



**This Philadelphia Vireo was observed 24 May 2007 in Capitol Reef National Park, Wayne County, Utah—the state's second. The other state record comes from 27 October 2002. Photograph by Tim Avery.**



One of several noteworthy eastern warbler sightings this spring in desert migrant traps, this Magnolia Warbler was found 28 May 2007 at Miller's Rest Area along Highway 6/95, Esmeralda County, Nevada. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.



This Black-throated Blue Warbler made a rare spring appearance at the Circle L Ranch, Esmeralda County, Nevada on 26 May 2007. Photograph by Martin Meyers.



This male Hooded Warbler lingered 15 (here) through 19 April 2007 at the Torrance Ranch, Nye County, Nevada. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.

ton, UT 8 May (RF). Three Baird's Sandpipers were reported 17 Mar in Salt Lake, UT (CNe, TA), and 2 Pectoral Sandpipers were reported 28 Apr in St. George, Washington, UT (RF); both of these species are rarely found during spring migration in the Great Basin. A high

count of 30 Dunlins at Carson L., Churchill, NV 7 Apr was noteworthy; up to 9 were at Antelope I. 22 Apr–5 May (TA, CNe et al.). Short-billed Dowitchers were observed at Amargosa Valley, Nye, NV 15 Apr (GS), H.B.V.P. 27 Apr–3 May (*vide* JBr), and the Hurricane Fields, Washington, UT 30 Apr (RF, ph. KW).

Several wintering gulls lingered into the spring season, including Thayer's Gulls at Farmington Bay (3 Mar; TA et al.) and Walker L., Mineral, NV (9 Mar; MMe). Utah's first documented Western Gull (originally found 27 Dec) lingered at Farmington Bay through at least 4 Mar (†TA, KP). At least 2 wintering Glaucous Gulls lingered in Davis and Salt Lake, UT through 3 Mar (TA et al.). A possible Common Tern, rare in the Region in spring, was reported 15 May at the Lee Kay Ponds, Salt Lake, UT (TA).

## DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Wayward White-winged Doves were found n. of expected range at Fish Springs N.W.R., Juab, UT 16 Apr (JBa), Jensen, Uintah, UT 2 May (C&CJ), Dugway, Tooele, UT 20 May (CZ), and Dyer, Esmeralda, NV 26 May (JD, GS, RSt et al.). A Common Ground-Dove was observed in Santa Clara, Washington, UT 26 Apr–7 May (ph. LR); if submitted and accepted, this will be the 4th confirmed Utah record for this species. The only Vaux's Swift observed outside of expected Nevada areas was at Willard Bay S.P., Box Elder, UT (†KP, ph. IA). A female Magnificent Hummingbird was reported at a West Las Vegas residence, Clark, NV 7-17 Mar (p.a., ph. PG), and a male Costa's Hummingbird made a surprise appearance at a West Reno, Washoe, NV feeder 18 Apr (AW). An Acorn Woodpecker was observed 28 Apr near Kolob Res., Washington, UT (RF). A juv. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported 2 Mar at Lytle (p.a., LT), and an ad. female was seen 15 Apr at Salt Cr., Canyonlands N.P., San Juan, UT (†BGa). There are only two previously accepted Yellow-bellied Sapsucker records in Utah. A Ladder-backed Woodpecker was a nice surprise in Dyer, Esmeralda, NV (6 May; GS, RSt, DG).



One of three Hooded Warblers found in Nevada in spring 2007, this female remained 27-31 (here 28) May at Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda County, a well-known vagrant trap in west-central Nevada. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

It was a relatively uneventful spring for flycatchers in the Region, with the notable exception of a Least Flycatcher observed 31 May at Miller Spring, Juab, UT (RF) and one to 2 Eastern Phoebes observed 10-20 Apr at Corn Cr. (RSt, ph. DG, ph. GS, m.ob.). Vermilion Flycatchers were reported at the unexpected locations of Escalante, Garfield, UT (18 May; LG) and Hurricane, Washington, UT (22 May; MG). Utah's 2nd accepted Philadelphia Vireo was a singing individual 24 May at the Capitol Reef N.P. picnic area, Wayne, UT (ph., †TA). A possible Gray-cheeked Thrush was observed at Lytle 22-26 May (p.a., RF, LT); this species is not currently on the Utah state list. Six Varied Thrushes were reported from four Nevada counties (Clark, Esmeralda, Pershing, and Washoe) between 11 Mar and 25 May; however, the only Utah report was from 1 Apr at Smithfield, Cache (SD). Surprising sightings of mimids included a Gray Catbird photographed at Lytle 22 May (ph. RF) and a Brown Thrasher at Porter Springs, Pershing, NV 18 May (FP).

Nevada provided four Northern Parula reports, including singles at Corn Cr. (11 Apr RSt, DG, ph. GS), Dyer Pond, Esmeralda (19 May; GS, MMe), Dyer, Esmeralda (19 May, GS, MMe), and Tonopah, Nye (26 May; MMe, GS, D&RSe et al.). Utah's only parula was at Red Hills 21-22 May (ph. RF, †TA). A male Magnolia Warbler brightened Miller's R.A. 28 May (D&RSe, ph. GS et al.), and a female Black-throated Blue Warbler made a surprise spring appearance at the Circle L Ranch, Esmeralda, NV 26 May (JD, ph. MMe, ph. GS, ph. †DV). Equally surprising was singing male Blackpoll Warbler near Gunlock S.P., Washington, UT (26 May; LT). The only Black-and-white Warbler reported this spring was an early individual at Lytle 21 Apr (MW). Several American Redstarts were observed



Lark Buntings are rare migrants in the Great Basin region and particularly in Nevada, so this male was a surprise 12-13 (here 13) May 2007 in Dyer, Esmeralda County. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.

during May, including an ad. male at the Arlemonte Ranch, *Esmeralda*, NV (12 May; MMe, G&ES, DG, RSt), 2 at a private ranch, *Box Elder*, UT (18 May; CNe, TA), a male at Dyer Pond, *Esmeralda*, NV (19 May; GS, MMe), and females at Spring Mountain S.P., *Clark*, NV (22 May; J&MC) and Torrance Ranch, *Nye*, NV (27 May; RSt, DG, GS, MMe). A Worm-eating Warbler was a great find 25 May at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, *Clark*, NV (p.a., DF). No fewer than 4 Ovenbirds were observed in Ne-



The female Dickcissel was found in the orchard 20 May 2007 at Lytle Ranch along the Beaver Dam Wash, Washington County, Utah. Dickcissels are very rare in the Great Basin, and this individual was the only the third confirmed in Utah. Photograph by Tim Avery.

vada: at the Circle L. Ranch and Dyer Pond, *Esmeralda* (19 May; GS, MMe), Tonopah Cemetery, *Nye* (26 May; MMe, GS, D&RSe et al.), and Porter Springs, *Pershing* (29 May; ph. GS). Twelve Northern Waterthrushes were observed 1-19 May in three Nevada (*Clark*, *Esmeralda*, and *White Pine*) and three Utah

counties (*Box Elder*, *Davis*, and *Juab*). Surprisingly, 3 Hooded Warblers were found in Nevada, including an early male 15-19 Apr at Torrance Ranch, *Nye* (ph. GS, JM), a male lingering 5-14 May at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, *Clark* (ph. TC, ph. MK, DC, JB), and a female at Miller's R.A. 27-31 May (GS, D&RSe, ph. JSa). Painted Redstarts were observed again this spring in Zion Canyon, *Zion*; the first was found on 4 Apr (PR), and up to 3 singing individuals were observed

through 28 Apr (RF †TA et al.).

### SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

There were a few noteworthy sparrow sightings this spring, including a Clay-colored Sparrow lingering at Lytle 23-29 Apr (RF, LT), an ad. male Lark Bunting 12-13 May at the Arlemonte Ranch, *Esmeralda*, NV (MMe, ph. GS, RSt, DG), and Swamp Sparrows at Washoe L., *Washoe*, NV (28 Apr; H&KP) and Miller's R.A. (11 May; FP). Additional Lark Buntings were reported this May in Calao, *Juab*, UT (CG, *fide* RSt). Eight Rose-breasted Grosbeaks turned up during May in three Nevada (*Clark*, *Washoe*, and *White Pine*) and two Utah counties (*San Juan* and *Washington*). A female Painted Bunting made a brief appearance 19 May at the Dyer Pond, *Esmeralda*, NV (GS). One of biggest surprises of the season was Utah's 3rd confirmed Dickcissel record—a female photographed 20 May in the orchard at Lytle (ph., †TA).

Male Bobolinks made rare spring appearance in the s. portion of the Region 22 May at Spring Mountain S.P., *Clark*, NV (J&MC) and 26 May at Lytle (LT). A Common Grackle was a nice find 12 May at the Arlemonte Ranch, *Esmeralda*, NV (MMe, G&ES, DG, RSt). Hooded Orioles were observed n. of their expected range in Reno, *Washoe*, NV 29 Apr–11 May (JA, AG, DM) and at Miller's R.A. 26 May (D&RSe et al.). And finally, a male Lawrence's Goldfinch visited a feeder 20-31 Mar in Dammeron Valley, *Washington*, UT (ph., †BL, TA, JBi, LT); this is Utah's 4th accepted record for this species, all since 2002.

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This striking male Lawrence's Goldfinch visited a feeder in Dammeron Valley, Washington County, Utah, from 20 to 31 March 2007 (here 20 March). Lawrence's Goldfinch occurrences have been on the rise in the Great Basin in recent years with nearly annual sightings in southern Nevada. This is the fourth documented sighting in Utah, all since October, 2002. Photograph by Bob Lawson.

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