



Joseph A. Grzybowski
W. Ross Silcock

The summer season incorporates the tail end of spring migration, the commencement of "fall" migration, and a wealth of fascinating new information about breeding distributions. In addition, the Region enjoys post-nesting Gulf vagrants, wandering species and shorebirds, and other species whose migrational status is unclear. Temporally odd records of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Black-throated Green Warblers, and Northern Waterthrush this season lead one to wonder whether early warming on northern breeding grounds is allowing single-brooded species to begin fall migration extraordinarily early. Such questions might also be posed of early movements by mid-latitude species such as Western Kingbird or southern species like White Ibis.

While western Nebraska continued to be plagued with drought, Oklahoma was inundated by terrible floods this spring and summer. Records of Soras and Wilson's Phalaropes this season suggest that some species moved southward quickly, to take advantage of abundant water. The longer-term westward spread of southeastern species, in part a result of fire suppression's effect on woodlands, continues to be apparent, as does the more general spread of southern taxa northward.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); Hackberry (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (plays in s.-cen. and se. Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa, OK).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS:

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, such as the one at Red Slough 26 Jun (DA, GK), are now expected, but one was much farther afield in Cowley, KS 17 Jul (LW). Far more unexpected was the Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Quivira 25 Jun (MG, AM, TS), among few ever reported Regionally. Arctic geese at low latitudes this summer included a Greater White-fronted Goose in Clay, NE 17 Jun (JGJ), 20 Snow Geese in Clay, NE 2 Jun (PD), with one at McConaughy 10 Jun (SJD), and a Ross's Goose, also at McConaughy, 9 Jun (SJD). Among less-expected summer waterfowl vagrants were 4 Gadwalls and a Green-winged Teal at the Salt Plains 18 Jun (JWA, JC), with 2 and one of these species, respectively, at Hackberry 7 Jul (VF). Somewhat more surprising were reports of Cinnamon Teal: one at Cheyenne Bottoms 3 Jun (RW), one at Hackberry 1 Jul (L&MT), one in Phelps, NE 3 Jul (KS), and 3 in Kingfisher, OK 21 Jul (JAG, JWA). The token Mottled Duck for the summer season in cen. Kansas was one at Quivira 26 Jun (MG, AM, TS). Perhaps increasing in frequency as a summer straggler, Ring-necked Ducks were noted at Red Slough 10 Jul (DA) and in Clay, NE 22 Jul (JGJ). Also of note was a female Bufflehead at Cheyenne Bottoms 21 Jul (SS).

A Red-necked Grebe in basic plumage at McConaughy 10 Jun (SJD), only the 2nd Jun record for Nebraska, was most surprising. Cheyenne Bottoms provided residence for 75-100 pairs of Eared Grebes (TM), with one noted s. to Kingfisher, OK 21 Jul (JWA, JAG). The largest count of Western Grebes at McConaughy was 1198 on 10 Jun, accompanied by 23 Clark's (SJD); peripheral Westerns included one in York, NE 8 Jun (JGJ) and one in Cimarron, OK 28-29 Jun (DW). Vagrant Common Loons were noted s. to Tulsa 3 & 16 Jun (BC) and at Hackberry 1 Jul (L&MT). Routinely vagrant, two Neotropic Cormorant pairs nested at Cheyenne Bottoms this season (SS, RW). Anhingas nest at Red Slough, but still noteworthy are the 43 noted there 9 Jun (BH).

Up to 9 American Bitterns were located in the Rainwater Basin (JGJ, JG, KS, G&WH), but more unusual for being southerly were up to 6 noted at Red Slough through the season (DA). Least Bitterns, very local breeders, were noted in Seward, NE (up to 3; JG) and at Red Slough (DA, BH et al.), with one in Washington, OK 14 Jun (MP). Fewer Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets were noted in Nebraska this summer; the top counts were of only 6 Greats in Harlan 18 Jul (G&WH) and one Snowy at McConaughy 10 Jun (SJD). A breeding outpost for Cattle Egrets this sea-

son was Crescent Lake N.W.R., Garden, NE (WM). Red Slough accumulated an impressive 30,000 Cattle Egrets and 3000 Little Blue Herons 24 Jul, with 1760 White Ibis counted there 18 Jul (DA); however, only 1-3 Tricolored Herons were noted there this season (DA). Continuing a string of sightings in the e. Rainwater Basin was one Glossy Ibis with 68 White-faced Ibis at Harvard Marsh, Clay, NE 2 Jun (PD). Other Glossies were noted at Quivira 9 Jun (SS) and Cheyenne Bottoms 29 Jul (T&SM). Five White-faced Ibis, rarer to the e., lingered at Red Slough through 5 Jun (JM, MD). A Glossy Ibis x White-faced Ibis hybrid was seen 26 Jul at the Salt Plains (JWA). The first Wood Storks to appear at Red Slough were the 7 on 19 Jun (Tst, DA).

Ospreys lingering on the Southern Plains included singles in Keith, NE 9-10 Jun (SJD), Dodge, NE 10 Jun (JGJ), and Douglas, NE 11 Jul (JGJ). A Mississippi Kite at Kearney, Buffalo, NE 15 Jun (MU) was away from the two known Nebraska breeding sites. Nebraska Game and Parks reported a record 45 Bald Eagle nests in the state this year; the total for 2005 was 37 (JGJ). A dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk, not a resident subspecies, was a surprise find 24 Jul in Sarpy, NE (RG). Nebraska panhandle hawk surveys tallied 100+ nests of Swainson's Hawk, most in Kimball, 30+ nests of Ferruginous Hawk, and 30+ nests of Golden Eagle (BB).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

After the heavy May and Jun rains, unexpected railid "appearances" included 5 Soras at Hackberry 28 Jun (MJ) and 3 in Kingfisher, OK 21 Jul (JAG, JWA). Virginia Rails with 2 chicks were found in Lakeside 5 Jul (LR, RH), with another ad. and 3 chicks in Seward, NE 12 Jul (CNK). The single Purple Gallinule outpost, Red Slough, held at least 3 ads. and 6 imms. 1 Jul (DA). Always noteworthy when they appear, Common Moorhens were seen in Douglas, KS 10 Jun (KS), with up to 24 (including several broods) at Red Slough in Jul (DA). The exceptional Sandhill Crane pair again nesting in Morrill, NE had 2 chicks 22 Jun (D&RK, KD, AK). Four Sandhills were also noted in Buffalo, NE 3 Jun (D&JP), with 3 in Cherry, NE 19 Jul (PR).

Summer shorebird sagas always provide some extralimital breeders, lingerers, late and early migrants, plus the "who knows?" subset. Lingerers were an American Golden-Plover in the e. Rainwater Basin 3 Jun (JGJ), Hudsonian Godwit in Sarpy, NE 1 Jun (CNK), Sanderling in Sarpy, NE 3 Jun (L&BP), with 6 at McConaughy also 3 Jun (SJD), a Stilt Sandpiper in Seward, NE 8 Jun

(JG), 37 White-rumped Sandpipers at the Salt Plains 18 Jun (JWA, JC), and a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Quivira 9 Jun (SS). About 150 Semipalmated Sandpipers were still in the e. Rainwater Basin 3 Jun (JGJ), and 70+ were at Quivira 9 Jun (SS). Earlier than normal were a Semipalmated Plover 7 Jul in Seward, NE (JG), Lesser Yellowlegs in Morrill, NE 23 Jun (KD), Ruddy Turnstone 21 Jul in Kingfisher, OK (JWA, JAG), an exceptional Buff-breasted Sandpiper 19 Jul in Seward, NE (MB), and 20 Short-billed Dowitchers at Quivira 21 Jun (SS). Summering or who-knows were 2 Black-bellied Plovers, a Semipalmated Plover, and a Stilt Sandpiper at the Salt Plains 18 Jun (JWA, JC), a Wilson's Snipe in Lancaster, NE 9 Jun and 28 Jul (LE), and another snipe in Kingfisher, OK 21 Jul (JWA, JAG).

High water levels presented problems for Snowy Plovers at McConaughy, where only one was found 10 Jun (SJD); in contrast, 600 were estimated at the Salt Plains 27 Jul (JWA, RS, NS). Piping Plover numbers dropped at McConaughy, with only 41 counted there 9 Jun (SJD). Prairie Partners was able to locate an encouraging 107 Mountain Plover nests this summer in the s. Nebraska panhandle (BB). Only 2-3 Black-necked Stilts nested in Phelps, NE (KS), but numbers were good at Hackberry, where 116 were counted 7 Jul (VF). Intriguing are reports of Wilson's Phalaropes in Jun at Hackberry (TC, JAG), with two pairs (L&MT) and 8 birds (VF) noted there 1 & 7 Jul, respectively; a juv. and 2 ad Wilson's Phalaropes were also found in Cimarron, OK 30 Jun (DW).

Vagrant Laughing Gulls appeared 2 Jun in Wagoner, OK (JWA), 3 Jun in Coffey, KS (MG, AM), 11 Jun in Riley, KS (LJ), 18 Jun at the Salt Plains (2 birds; JWA, JC), and 26 Jun at Quivira (PJ, KG). Some 200 Franklin's Gulls were at the Salt Plains 18 Jun (JWA, JC). Only 17 California Gulls were noted at McConaughy 9 Jun, perhaps indicative of a downturn in numbers there (SJD); one was at Quivira 28 Jul (SS), a likely migrant. Pushing the late-spring window was a Common Tern 10 Jun at McConaughy (SJD).

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

Nebraska's 2nd breeding record for the increasingly reported White-winged Dove was established by a pair with a juv. in Lancaster 11 Jul (DL). An Inca Dove in Harvey, KS 31 Jul (MR, KB, BMA) was on the edge of this species' expanding range. Of note for a sporadically reported species, 7 Black-billed Cuckoos located in Otoe, NE 16 Jun (L&CF) may suggest a migration period extending well into Jun; others were found in Lancaster, NE 6 Jun (KP), Adams, NE 7 Jul (MB), and

Jefferson, NE 14 Jul (WRS).

On the hummingbird front, 2 Broad-tailed Hummingbirds observed in Scotts Bluff, NE 24 Jun–23 Jul suggested potential for breeding (AK). Migrant Broad-taileds were noted at another location in Scotts Bluff, NE 12–21 Jul (KD) and in Finney, KS 30 Jul (T&SSH). Proving to be regular visitors in recent years, Calliope Hummingbird was reported in Sioux, NE 7 Jul (HKH) and in Scotts Bluff, NE 13 (AK) & 22 Jul (KD). Beginning the Rufous Hummingbird migration were singles in Scotts Bluff, NE 12 Jul (KD) and Finney, KS 13 Jul (P&MR). Four Tree Swallows in Beaver, OK during Jul suggests possible breeding (DW). Normally extending migration into Jun, Alder Flycatchers were noted singing 3 & 10 Jun in Keith, NE (SJD), and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was in Coffey, KS 3 Jun (MG, AM). Willow/Alder Flycatchers were banded 4 & 23 Jun in Cherokee, OK (D&JV), the latter date somewhat late for migration. Willow Flycatchers again nested at Red Slough (DA). An early migrant Willow Flycatcher was found in Kingfisher, OK 21 Jul (JAG, JWA). A female Vermilion Flycatcher was found in Morton, KS 9 Jun (KG), a likely outlier from the isolated nesters in the mesa country of Cimarron, OK (DW). Very exciting was the discovery of an Ash-throated Flycatcher in Kimball, NE 28 Jun (WM), with subsequent breeding confirmed 15 Jul (WM, JG, MB); this represents the first Nebraska breeding record and only the 2nd state record overall. Ash-throated Flycatchers on the edge of range were at three different locations in Morton, KS 28 Jun (TC). A fledgling Western Kingbird being fed in Banner, NE 2 Jun indicated an early nesting season there (AK). At their n. limits in Nebraska, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers fledged young in Lancaster, NE 6 Jul (AR, *fide* JGJ).

Fish Crows extending into Kansas included 4 in Bourbon 12 Jun (MR). One of the more easterly nestings of Black-billed Magpie in some time was in Seward, NE this summer (SR), as were 2-3 birds in Adams, NE 7-14 Jul (MB, PD). Also easterly was a Rock Wren in Adams, NE 16 Jun (PD). Tardy was a Swainson's Thrush in Finney, KS 8 Jun (T&SSH). At the w. edge of the species' breeding range was a Wood Thrush in Fremont, NE 27 Jun (RE). With Black-capped Vireo numbers in the Wichita Mts., OK now exceeding 2000 pairs (JAG, VF), extralimitals may now be pushing outward; one was noted in Kiowa, OK 8 Jul (VF).

Although an occasional Blackpoll Warbler such as the one 2 Jun in Haskell, KS (MR) is within the later migration period for this species, the Black-throated Green Warbler 7 Jun in Dawes, NE was quite tardy (L&CF).

And the quite early fall migrant Black-throated Green Warbler 29 Jul in Sedgwick, KS (PG) and the Northern Waterthrush 24 Jul in Payne, OK (TO) were comparatively early. Among warblers wandering outside expected limits were a westerly Northern Parula at Jefferson, NE 3 Jun (LR, RH) and a Worm-eating Warbler in Sioux, NE 8 Jun (HKH). Within their spottily occupied distributional edges were a Hooded Warbler and Swainson's Warbler in Cherokee, OK 15 & 22 Jun, respectively (MR).

Among westerly reports for Summer Tanager was one in Jefferson, NE 30 Jun (WRS). Eastern Towhees in Jefferson, NE this summer all sang songs typical of hybrids (WRS), and Spotted Towhees were reported in Harlan, NE in early Jul (G&WH), where hybrids and Easterns have also been found previously. Perhaps of note, no Cassin's Sparrows were reported from sw. Nebraska, where some would normally be expected (*fide* WRS). Four Cassin's Sparrows and 2 Lark Buntings were easterly in Haskell, KS 2 Jun (MR). A Field Sparrow in Dawes, NE 7 Jul (LR, RH) furnished only the 3rd Panhandle record in summer. Clearly an outlier location for the species, 2 Bachman's Sparrows were located in Osage, OK 17 Jul (JL, JSi). Lark Bunting numbers were down in w. Nebraska, and one in Dixon 2 Jun (JJ) was rare so far east. Reports of Henslow's Sparrow in se. Nebraska included up to 39 singing males in Pawnee, NE 24 Jun (WRS), with 31 counted at another site nearby 19 Aug (WRS). Westerly were 2 Henslow's in Saline, NE 2 Jun (WRS). A peculiar trio of laggards included a Harris's Sparrow in Sumner, KS 8-11 Jul (LH), a White-crowned Sparrow 17 Jun in Jefferson, KS (DL), and a Dark-eyed Junco in Wyandotte, KS 6 Jun (LM). Chestnut-collared Longspur is another species affected by dry conditions in sw. Nebraska, where numbers were the lowest in several years (WRS).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at McConaughy 9 Jun (SJD) was westerly, and a Lazuli Bunting was in Keith, NE 2 Jun (JM), where reported only sporadically. A pair of Bobolinks in Scotts Bluff, NE 14 Jul (KD) provided a county first, and an unusual site was one in wheatgrass in Lincoln, NE (TJW). Red Crossbills were reported from the Pine Ridge of Nebraska, where expected (AK, *fide* WRS).

Cited observers (regional compilers in bold) NEBRASKA: Bart Bly, Mark Brogie, Kathy DeLara, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Paul Dunbar, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Larry & Carol Falk, Ruth Green, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, Glen & Wanda Hoge, Helen K. Hughson, Jan Johnson, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz,

