

SA Something was afoot with Brewer's Sparrows in the Pacific Northwest this summer, because a widespread irruption of the birds occurred outside of their sagebrush desert breeding range. In mid-Jun, reports began to trickle in from n. Idaho, in *Kootenai*, *Latah*, and *Nez Perce*, where the sparrows were discovered defending territories in clearcut forests, riparian areas, and weedy patches. Estimates of Brewer's Sparrow populations at these sites were from "a few" to about a dozen birds, and the birds apparently persisted at these locations throughout the summer. Unfortunately, there were no reports of confirmed nesting, but a sparrow seen carrying food in *Latah* provided circumstantial evidence of breeding. A prevailing theory for this phenomenon was that Brewer's Sparrows found unsuitable conditions in sagebrush desert areas in late spring, causing them to seek open, brushy habitats elsewhere. Lending credence to this explanation were several Idaho B.B.S. reports from sagebrush desert areas, which reported unusually few Brewer's Sparrows.

tana, Ovenbirds were detected at Red Lodge 7 Jun (BJ) and s. of Bozeman 29 Jun (LAH). The warbler of the season was Idaho's 5th Hooded Warbler in *Owyhee* 11 Jun (ph., †GSA).

Lark Sparrow breeding was confirmed in Idaho's Latilong 4, when a pair with fledglings was observed in *Nez Perce* 28 Jun (TG). Idaho Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, rare but regular, were recorded near Sun Valley 2 Jun (BHp), in

Kootenai 7-8 Jul (J&HS), and at Island Park 27 Jul (CW). Not to be outdone, Montana reported a pair near Bozeman 18 Jun (IS). A Common Grackle was found in *Ada*, ID 6 Jun (HK), where they are not annual. The only Great-tailed Grackle sighting was at A.F.R. 15 Jul (CT). An observation of Lesser Goldfinches with young in Bellevue, ID 22 Jun (KC) established a first breeding record in Latilong 19.

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Great Basin



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Temperatures this summer were exceedingly high throughout much of the Great Basin, with average daily June and July temperatures setting record highs in both northern and southern Utah. In addition to the heat, it was also abnormally dry, with very little measurable precipitation through mid-July. These conditions contributed to chronic wildfires and one of the most intense fire seasons on record, both in number of wildfires and total acres burned. Thunderstorms in late July provided some much-needed relief. As usual, these conditions limited summer birding activity in the Region; however, intrepid observers still managed many noteworthy sightings. Highlights included Prothonotary and Hooded Warblers in Nevada and a Scarlet Tanager and possibly Utah's first confirmed Painted Bunting at Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge.

Abbreviations: Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, *Davis*, UT); Bear R. (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, *Box Elder*, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., *Clark*, NV); Farmington Bay (Farmington Bay W.M.A., *Davis*, UT); Fish Springs (Fish Springs N.W.R., *Juab*, 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 TERNS

One of the most unusual sightings of the season was of a wayward first-summer Pacific Loon, first observed 16 Jul at Panguitch L., *Garfield*, UT (RF, KC). The bird remained at this seldom-birded high-elevation site through at least 25 Jul (ph. TA). Also unusual but a bit more expected were basic-plumaged Common Loons summering at Enterprise (JK, KW) and Kolob Reservoirs, *Washington*, UT (RF, KC).

Common Black-Hawks are only found regularly in the Region in the sw. corner of Utah, and this summer there were at least three pairs nesting along the Beaver Dam Wash and one pair nesting along the Santa Clara R., *Washington*, UT (LT, RF et al.); one of the nesting pairs along the Beaver Dam Wash successfully fledged 2 young hawks. Red-shoul-

dered Hawk sightings are increasing in the Region, and ads. were observed at Fernley, *Lyon*, NV (21 Jul; DS), Fish Springs (24-31 Jul; MMI, RL, AR), and Bishop Springs, *Millard*, UT (31 Jul; ph. RF). Zone-tailed Hawks were observed again this summer in the Kolob Meadows/Lava Pt. area of Zion (25 Jun-25 Aug; ph., †TA, RF); however, nesting has not been confirmed.

A flock of 7 Whimbrels made a nice surprise 2 Jun at Panguitch L., *Garfield*, UT (JK, KW). Surprisingly, another Whimbrel was reported 2 Jun at Huntington S.P., *Emery*, UT (PJ, SC). Three White-rumped Sandpipers were found 3 Jun at Deseret Ranch, *Rich*, UT (†MS, ph. DW), and another was photographed 21 Jul at Antelope Island (p.a., TA). There are only six previous accepted White-rumped Sandpiper records in Utah. A juv. Stilt Sandpiper and a Common Tern were among the highlights observed on a 16 Jun tour of Deseret Ranch, *Rich*, UT (MS et al.). Least Terns were observed at the Glendale G.C., *Salt Lake*, UT (23 Jun; ph. TA) and at Mason Valley W.M.A., *Lyon*, NV (20 Jul; †JRy, PM).

DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS

A White-winged Dove visiting a Salt Lake residence, *Salt Lake*, UT 24 Jun (BH) was n. of expected range. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo observed 16 Jun at the confluence of the Delores R. and Colorado R., *Grand*, UT (TA) was the only one reported in the Region. A Greater

Roadrunner was photographed 20 Jun (TA) at Indian Peaks W.M.A., Beaver, UT, a most unusual location for this species. A probable Elf Owl was heard calling 17 Jul along the Beaver Dam Wash, Washington, UT (p.a., TA). A Black Swift was observed 22 Jun (LT) in Stout Canyon, Kane, UT. The timing and location of this observation are very intriguing, as this species has only been confirmed breeding in a few locations in n. Utah.

A Broad-billed Hummingbird was reported with limited details 28 Jul in the Soapstone Basin, Wasatch, UT (p.a., AB). A female Costa's Hummingbird was out of place visiting a feeder 27 Jul in Park City, Summit, UT (K&DH). A male Ladder-backed Woodpecker was a surprising find 9 Jun in pinyon-juniper habitat, Pine Valley, Beaver, UT (LG).

A Least Flycatcher was observed 6 Jun along the Beaver Dam Wash, Washington, UT (RF). Reports of this species are increasing in the Region, either due to an actual increase in occurrence, observers becoming more adept at identifying them—or perhaps observers thinking they are becoming more adept at identifying this tricky species. Eastern Kingbirds turned up at two surprising Clark, NV locations: Corn Cr. (10 Jun; GS, J&MC) and Warm Springs, Moapa (14-15 Jul; BL). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was reported 11 Jul along I-84, Summit, UT (p.a., DGr). Perhaps an early harbinger of a significant fall movement, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches showed up 29 Jul at a Fernley residence, Lyon, NV (DS).

A female Varied Thrush on 10 Jun was an unexpected traveler along the Mirror Lake Hwy., Summit, UT (J&KB). There were several reports of wayward Gray Catbirds in early Jun, including individuals at Blackrock, Millard, UT (1 Jun; RF), Panguitch L., Garfield, UT (2 Jun; JK, KW), Porter Springs, Pershing, NV (2 Jun; F&GP, D&JM), and Leidy Cr., Dyer, Esmeralda, NV (2 Jun; GS).

There were a few nice e. warblers reported in the first half of Jun, including a male Chestnut-sided Warbler photographed 8 Jun at Lucin, Box Elder, UT (ph., †KE, JRe), a Black-and-white Warbler at Corn Cr. (9 Jun; RSa), and an American Redstart at Sage Hen Rd., Dyer, Esmeralda, NV (2-3 Jun; GS). A female Prothonotary Warbler was a nice find 12 Jun at the Torrance Ranch, Beatty, Nye, NV (ph. GS), and an Ovenbird was observed 2 Jun at the Circle L Ranch, Dyer, Esmeralda, NV (GS). Following several Hooded Warbler sightings during the spring period, a singing



One of several vagrant eastern warblers observed in the Great Basin region in early June 2007, this female Prothonotary Warbler was a remarkable find 12 June at the Torrance Ranch, near Beatty, Nye County, Nevada. Photograph by Greg Scyphers.

male was photographed 2-3 Jun at Lida, Esmeralda, NV (GS). A pair of Painted Redstarts was observed building a nest 9 Jun along the Riverside Walk in Zion Canyon, Zion (ph., †S&SG); nesting was also confirmed at this location in summer 2006. A male Summer Tanager was photographed 3 Jun at Garr Ranch, Antelope I. (CD), and Utah's 5th confirmed Scarlet Tanager was found at Fish Springs 24-25 Jul (†MMi, RL; ph., †CN).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A singing male White-throated Sparrow was an unexpected summer visitor at Mirror L., Summit, UT (10 Jul; MS). Surprisingly, the only Rose-breasted Grosbeak reported during the season was observed 2 Jun at Indian Peaks W.M.A., Beaver, UT (TA). Indigo Buntings were observed in Clark, Esmeralda, and Nye, NV and Garfield, San Juan, and Washington, UT. One of the highlights of the season was a male Painted Bunting that showed up at remote Fish Springs in w. Utah. The stunning bunting was found 24 Jul (†MMi, ph. RL, AR) and remained through at least 8 Aug, drawing birders and photographers from throughout Utah (†CN, ph. PH, LG, m.ob.). As there was no evidence of banding or abnormal feather wear, this may be Utah's first confirmed Painted Bunting record (p.a.).

The only Bobolink report was a male observed 4 Jun at Mena, Mineral, NV (RSt, DGh). A possible Eastern Meadowlark was photographed 7 Jun near Blanding, San Juan,

UT (†TA). Unfortunately, the bird remained silent, and due to similarities between the meadowlarks, the U.B.R.C. did not accept this possible first state record. A female Bronzed Cowbird, photographed 2-3 Jul at Central Washington, UT (LT), supplied Utah's 5th documented record. Several Scott's Orioles were observed 25 Jun n. of expected range near Vernal, Uintah, UT (BM). White-winged Crossbills, rarely reported in the Region, were observed near Mirror L., Summit, UT (10-22 Jun; J&KB, m.ob.) and at the Monte Cristo Campground, Rich, UT (10 Jul; KP).

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