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## 1998 (Tenth) Report of the NOU Records Committee

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# **1998 (Tenth) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Compiled by Mark A. Brogie (NOURC Chairperson)

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The functions and methods of the NOU Records Committee are described in its bylaws (NOU Records Committee 1986). The committee's purpose is to provide a procedure for documenting unusual bird sightings and to establish a list of all documented birds for Nebraska. THE OFFICIAL LIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA was first published in 1988 (NOU Records Committee 1988) and has been appended eight times (Mollhoff 1989, Grenon 1990, 1991, Gubanyi 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, Brogie 1997, Brogie 1998). An update of THE OFFICIAL LIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA was last published in 1997 (NOU Records Committee 1997).

This report includes all accounts submitted during the calendar year of 1998, covering 108 records with accession numbers 761-868. All records mentioned here will be available to interested persons at the NOU archives at the University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE. Interested parties should contact the current NOU Librarian, whose address can be found in the latest issue of The Nebraska Bird Review.

## **State List**

The Forty-first supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU, 1997) contains many taxonomic changes affecting North American birds. The following summarizes all revisions by the AOU in regards to changes in scientific names, and changes in assignments to family and order of species to the most recent published "THE OFFICIAL LIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA" (NBR 65: 3-16). It does not

include changes in species sequence, as these will be made on the next published Official Checklist of Nebraska Birds.

With this report, the following changes are made to "THE OFFICIAL LIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA":

#### Changes in Frequency of Occurrence:

1. Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) - Accidental to Casual
2. Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) - Accidental to Casual
3. Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) - Casual to Regular
4. Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*) - Casual to Regular
5. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) - Casual to Regular
6. Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) - Casual to Regular
7. Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) - Accidental to Casual

#### Changes in Firmness of Data:

1. Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) - Regular, 1-P to Regular, 1-S.  
UNSM # ZM-17601.
2. Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) - Accidental, III to Accidental, 1-P.
3. Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) - Accidental, III to Accidental, 1-P.

#### 1998 Additions to State List

No new species were added to the Official List of the Birds of Nebraska in this report. The total as of the end of 1998 stands at 434 species.

#### Criteria for Accepted Records

In order for a record to be accepted, a minimum of six votes in favor are required with no more than one dissenting vote (NOU Records Committee 1986). Records in the following classes listed as accepted:

- I-S - a diagnostic, labeled specimen exists
- I-P - a diagnostic, labeled photograph or slide exists
- I-R - a diagnostic, labeled recording exists
- II - three or more independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist
- III - one or two independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist

Each account of an accepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and initial(s) of observers.

#### Pre-1998 Records Reviewed For First Time and Accepted

##### Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; JG) at Twin Lakes, Seward Co., on 9 November 1997.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; JS) at Pawnee SRA, Lancaster Co., on 16 November 1997.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; JS) at Branched Oak Lake, Lancaster Co., on 29 November 1997.

Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; DE) at Winter's Creek Lake, Scotts Bluff Co., on 21 September 1997.
2. A single bird was observed (Class III; DE) at Oliver Reservoir, Kimball Co., on 21 September 1997.

Raven species (*Corvus* sp.).

1. A raven was observed (Class III; JD) north of Parks, Dundy Co., on 29 March 1997. Although the documentation was for Chihuahuan Raven (*Corvus cryptoleucus*), several Committee members felt that Common Raven was also a possibility; thus the record was accepted as Raven species.

Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; JG) on the Branched Oak Christmas Bird Count, Lancaster Co., on 20 December 1997.

## 1998 Accepted Records

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*).

1. A single bird in basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 8 May 1998.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*).

1. A single bird in basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on several dates--2, 3, 14, and 15 January 1998.

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*).

1. One written report by initial observer (Class III; SD) and a photograph (Class I-P; MB) arrived of a presumed first-alternate plumaged bird observed at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., from 8 August to 18 October 1998.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*).

1. Two individuals both in basic plumage were observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 3 and 4 January 1998.

Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*).

1. A single bird was observed at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 2 January 1998 and at least three more were seen at the same location on 3 January 1998 (Class III; SD).
2. One adult was observed (Class III; RH) at Funk WPA, Phelps Co., 14 June, 1998. The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

**Neotropic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*).

1. A single first-alternate bird was observed (Class III; SD) at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln Co., on 2 May 1998.

**Least Bittern** (*Ixobrychus exilis*).

1. An after-hatching year female was captured, banded (RG), and photographed (Class I-P; RCK) near Bellevue, Sarpy Co., on 5 August 1998. The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

**Bean Goose** (*Anser fabalis*).

1. A single individual among a flock of about 4,000 Greater White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) was observed (Class III; SD) at Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co., on 4 April 1998. On the basis of bill shape, the observer concluded the bird was of the subspecies *A. f. middendorffi*. Individuals of this eastern Siberian race are almost never kept in captivity (Bray et al. 1986). This is the second documented record for Bean Goose in Nebraska.

**Brant** (*Branta bernicla*).

1. A single individual of the eastern subspecies *B. b. bernicla* was observed (Class III; RH) among a large flock of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in Kearney Co., on 22 February 1998.

**Tundra Swan** (*Cygnus columbianus*).

1. Up to three immatures were observed (Class III; SD) below Keystone Dam, Keith Co., on several dates--on 14 and 15 January, and on 7 February 1998. The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

**Eurasian Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*).

1. One adult male was observed (Class III; DH) south of Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co., on 28 March 1998.
2. One alternate adult male was observed (Class III; SD) at Clear Creek marshes, Keith Co., on 2 May 1998.

**Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*).

1. Two sets of photographs (Class I-P; MB, BJR) and a written report reached the committee (Class III; BP, LP) of a single adult male observed at the Wild Rose Ranch, Hall Co., on 4 April 1998. This constitutes the second documented record for Garganey in Nebraska.

**Black Scoter** (*Melanitta nigra*).

1. A single female or immature was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., between 1 and 4 January 1998, most probably one of two birds reported in same location on 7 and 18 December 1997.
2. A single female or immature was photographed (Class I-P; MB) above Gavin's Pt. Dam, Cedar Co., on 26 November 1998.

**Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*).

1. One adult female was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 3 and 4 January 1998.

2. One adult male and one adult female were observed at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 14 January 1998. On 15 January 1998 this pair was still present in the same location and another adult female was observed above the dam on Lake McConaughy (Class III; SD).
3. Two adult males and two adult females were observed at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998 where one female had been observed the day before (Class III; SD). The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*).

1. One adult light-phase bird was observed (Class III; MB) along the Missouri River near Niobrara, Knox Co., on 3 October 1998. This report represents the first NOURC documentation for this species in eastern Nebraska.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*).

1. Two individuals were first observed on 18 July 1998, and one individual was still present on 30 August 1998, south of Bellevue, Sarpy County. On 31 July 1998, one adult with seven chicks was seen. (Class III; RCK).

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*).

1. A single adult male observed (Class III; MB) near Niobrara, Knox Co., on 9 May 1998. This sighting represents the northern-most Nebraska record and one of the very few documentations of this species north of the Platte River.
2. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; JJ) near Green Acres WPA, Clay Co., on 25 April 1998.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; LB) near Kimball, Kimball Co., on 16 May 1998.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; JJ) at Weiss WPA, Fillmore Co., on 9 May 1998.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*).

1. A single juvenile was observed (Class III; JJ) at Sinninger WPA, York Co., on 30 August 1998. This observation represents the first NOURC fall record for this species in Nebraska.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*).

1. A single molting adult was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 20 August 1998.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*).

1. An adult breeding female was observed (Class III; MB) and photographed south of Creighton in Antelope Co., on 10 April 1998. Photographs were not diagnostic by themselves.
2. A juvenile was photographed (Class I-P; JJ) at Kirkpatrick Basin WMA, York Co., on 27 September 1998.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*).

1. A single adult of the subspecies *L. g. griseus* was observed (Class III; JJ) north of Bradshaw, York Co. on 3 May 1998. This observation represents the first NOURC record for this eastern subspecies in Nebraska.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*).

1. Two juvenile/first winter birds were observed (Class III; JJ) at Lake Babcock, Platte Co., on 13 September 1998.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*).

1. A single juvenile was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 3 October 1998. This report constitutes the second documented record for Long-tailed Jaeger in Nebraska.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*).

1. One second-summer plumaged bird was observed (Class III; WRS, JS) at Keystone Lake, Keith Co., on 14 June 1998.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*).

1. One molting from juvenal to first-basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 8 September 1998.

2. A single juvenile was photographed (Class I-P; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 8 September 1998.

3. A single bird molting from juvenal to first-basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 20 September 1998. The observer stated that his bird was not as dark-mantled as either of the two juveniles seen on 8 September 1998.

4. A single bird molting from juvenal to first-basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 17 October 1998. The observer stated that this bird was not as dark-mantled as the three juveniles seen in September 1998.

5. A bird in first-basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln Co., on 1 November 1998.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*).

1. One adult in basic plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 6 February 1998 and again on 7 February 1998 at Lake Ogallala (Class III, WRS).

2. Two reports arrived of an adult in basic plumage observed (Class III: SD, WRS) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998. This bird differed in descriptor from the 6 February bird.

3. Two reports came of a first-basic Mew Gull observed (Class III: SD, WRS) at Keystone Lake, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998.

4. An adult in basic (third-basic) plumage was observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 22 February 1998.

5. An adult in basic (third-basic) plumage was observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 21 March 1998.

6. One adult in alternate plumage was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., from 18 to 19 April 1998.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*).

1. Two reports arrived of a bird in first-basic plumage observed (Class III; SD, WRS) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998.
2. Two reports came of an adult basic "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull observed (Class III: SD, WRS) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998.
3. An adult in basic (Kumlien's) plumage was observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 22 February 1998.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*).

1. An adult was observed (Class III: SD) at Keystone Lake, Keith Co., on 14 January 1998.
2. Two reports reached the committee of six birds (2-adult, 2 fourth-basic, 2 third-basic) observed (Class III; SD, WRS) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 7 February 1998.
3. Two adults and one third-basic bird were observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 22 February 1998.
4. An adult in basic plumage was observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 21 March 1998.
5. Two adults in alternate (fourth-alternate) plumage were observed (Class III: SD) at Lake Ogallala, Keith Co., on 5 April 1998.
6. A single bird was photographed (Class 1-P; JJ) at Branched Oak Lake, Lancaster Co., on 3 December 1998.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*).

1. A bird molting from first-basic to first alternate plumage was observed (Class III: SD) at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln Co., on 2 May 1998.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*).

1. One first-winter bird was observed (Class III; MB) just east of Niobrara, Knox Co., on 25 March 1998.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*).

1. A single first-winter bird was photographed (Class I-P; MB) below Gavin's Pt. Dam, Cedar Co., on 26 November 1998.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*).

1. Two juveniles were observed (Class III; DH) below Gavin's Pt. Dam, Cedar Co., on 3 October 1998.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*).

1. A 1 January 1998 report (Class III; WRS) came of the same single bird coming to a feeder in Shelton, Buffalo Co., that was reported in Brogie 1998.
2. Two birds were observed (Class III; RH) on 22 April 1998 and one bird was photographed (Class 1-P; MN) in June 1998 in Kearney, Buffalo Co. The latter observer cited nesting of this species and multiple birds present through the end of 1998. This report constitutes the second documented record for this species in Nebraska.



White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*).

1. Two photographs (Class 1-P; MN, MB) and two written reports (Class III; BP, LP, RH) reached the committee of a single bird associating with Eurasian Collared-Doves in Kearney, Buffalo Co. This bird was present from early June through the end of 1998 and represents the third documented record for this species in Nebraska.

Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*).

1. An adult male was photographed (Class 1-P; SD) at Oliver Reservoir, Kimball Co., on 27 September 1998.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; LB) in Scotts Bluff Co., on 17 May 1998.

Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P; SD) in West Lawn Cemetery, Gering, Scotts Bluff Co., on 27 September 1998. This sighting constitutes the first Panhandle record of this species in Nebraska.

Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; SD) at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., on 1 November 1998.

Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*).

1. A single male was observed (Class III; JJ) at the Bushnell Cemetery, Kimball Co., on 17 May 1998. This sighting represents the second documented record for this species in Nebraska.

Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*).

1. An adult male was observed (Class III; SD) at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., on 15 May 1998.
2. An adult male was observed (Class III; JJ) at the west end of Calamus Reservoir, Loup Co., on 19 September 1998.

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; BW, DW) at Lake Minatare SRA, Scotts Bluff Co., on 17 May 1998.

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*).

1. An adult male was photographed (Class 1-P; SD) at Oliver Reservoir, Kimball Co. This bird was present from 29 August through 13 October 1998. This report constitutes the first documented Panhandle record of this species in Nebraska.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*).

1. An immature male was observed (Class III; SD) at the West Lawn Cemetery, Gering, Scotts Bluff Co., on 6 September 1998. This identification constitutes the first documented fall record of this species in Nebraska.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrèa* ).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; WRS) east of Kiowa Springs, Scotts Bluff Co., on 15 May 1998. This sighting constitutes the second spring Panhandle record of this species in Nebraska.

Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*).

1. An adult male was observed (Class III; SD) along Lodgepole Creek (north of Exit 1), Kimball Co., on 29 August 1998, representing the first fall record of this species for the Panhandle of Nebraska.

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*).

1. An adult male was observed (Class III; KP) at Pioneers Park, Lancaster Co., on 20 May 1998.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*).

1. A single bird observed (Class III; MB) near the Gering Cemetery, Scotts Bluff Co., on 16 May 1998.

Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*).

1. A single bird was observed (Class III; DH) near Elgin, Antelope Co., on 4 January 1998. This report represents the first documented winter record for this species in Nebraska.

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*).

1. A single bird was photographed (Class 1-P; JJ) near Bradshaw, York Co., on 26 April 1998.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*).

1. A single immature was observed (Class III; JJ) at Harlan County Reservoir, Harlan Co., on 18 December 1998. This identification represents the third documented record for this species in Nebraska.

## 1998 Records Not Finalized

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*).

1. A tape-recording of a calling bird in Knox Co., on 25 May 1986 (NBR 55: 40-41) is still under review.

## Unaccepted Records

Records in the following classes are considered unaccepted (NOU Records Committee 1986):

- IV - probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt
- V - a record with insufficient evidence to support the identification claimed
- VI - a probable released or escaped bird or mistaken identification

Each account of an unaccepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and reasons for the committee's failure to accept the record.

### Pre-1998 Unaccepted Records

#### Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*). Class IV.

1. A previously published report (NBR 48: 88-89) of a Black Rail which was observed north of Lincoln, Lancaster Co., on 22 April 1980 was reviewed by the NOURC for the first time. Although suggestive, the description in this documentation lacked sufficient details for approval.

### 1998 Unaccepted Records

#### Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*). Class IV.

1. A written report was considered of a single bird seen at Branched Oak SRA, Lancaster Co., on 26 March 1998. Although suggestive, the description in this documentation lacked sufficient details for approval.

#### Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*). Class VI.

1. A single bird was observed at Massie WPA, Clay Co., on 28 March 1998. A majority of Committee members thought this bird was unlikely to be a natural vagrant.

#### Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*). Class IV.

1. A written report was considered of a single first-basic male molting to first-alternate plumage at Moger WPA, Clay Co., 10 April, 1998. Although suggestive, the description in this documentation lacked sufficient details for approval.

#### King Rail (*Rallus elegans*).

1. A recording taken at Hormel Park, Dodge Co., on 21 May 1998 was rejected as to belonging to this species. Class IV.
2. A description of vocalizations from a bird at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co., between 8 and 9 May 1998 was not deemed adequate to identify this species. Class IV.

#### Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*). Class IV.

1. A single bird was observed at Heron Haven Wetland-Omaha, Douglas Co., on 16 June 1998. Although suggestive, the description in this documentation lacked sufficient details for approval.

#### Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*). Class IV.

1. A description of a bird (no date, no location) lacked sufficient details for approval.

#### Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*). Class IV.

1. A description of a bird seen on the Lincoln Christmas Bird Count, Lancaster Co., on 3 January 1998 lacked sufficient details for approval.

#### Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*). Class IV.

1. A description of a bird reported at Boyer's Chute, Washington Co., on 3 May 1998 lacked sufficient details for approval.

### Acknowledgments

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1998 NOU Records Committee members are Mark A. Brogie (chair), Stephen J. Dinsmore, Robin Harding, Bill Huser, Joel Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Tom Labedz, and W. Ross Silcock.

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