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Fall Field Report, August to November, 1999

W. Ross Silcock

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, silcock@rosssilcock.com

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FALL FIELD REPORT, August to November, 1999

compiled by W. Ross Silcock
P.O. Box 57, Tabor, IA 51653
silcock@sidney.heartland.net

INTRODUCTION

This season, partly due to the departure of my co-writer Joel Jorgensen, and partly due to mental aging, I have shortened the species accounts by including only data that add to our current knowledge base. I will not routinely list early and late dates and peak counts for each species unless they are significant; readers should refer to past issues of NBR for guidelines as to what are early or late dates and high counts. Observers are, however, urged to report early and late dates and high counts of all migrant species; it is difficult to know if a sighting is significant until all the reports are pooled in my computer

In general, most observers thought this a fairly routine fall, although the Panhandle continued to be a source of significant new information, thanks to consistent coverage by Steven Dinsmore. Similar coverage of the Rainwater Basin by Joel Jorgensen also has enhanced our knowledge considerably. Every report is valuable: very few of the large list of observers fail to have at least one of their sightings included in the report.

There were no new species added to the state list this fall, but this year was amazing in that respect, with 7 new species (some awaiting approval by the Records Committee) bringing the total state list to a very respectable 441 species. Rarest this fall was the pair of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in the Rainwater Basin, a second documented state record. Also very rare were a 7th state record White-winged Dove and 8th state record Lesser Goldfinch. Other interesting finds included a Brant of the western race, 3 Pomarine Jaegers, the first documented central Nebraska Blue-headed Vireo, a Mountain Chickadee, a Varied Thrush, another report of Baird's Sparrow, the first Bullock's Oriole for fall east of the Panhandle, and a White-winged Crossbill.

Some rather amazing counts were made: 35,000 Western Grebes (considered conservative by the experienced observer!), a total of about 300 Great Egrets, 6000 and 4200 Blue-winged Teal, 1492 Ruddy Ducks (no estimating there!), 12,000 Cliff Swallows, 16 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and good numbers of Purple Finches for a change.

Interesting range expansions were noted for Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Chipping Sparrow, while the continued presence of Pileated Woodpeckers at Fontenelle Forest adds to the uniqueness of that area in terms of species which breed there and nowhere else that we know about: Red-shouldered Hawk and Yellow-throated Warbler are others.

In the "huh?" department, check out Virginia Rail and Budgerigar (maybe the next addition to the state list?)

ABBREVIATIONS

ADE: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BOL: Branched Oak Res, Lancaster Co; Cem: Cemetery; Co(s): County (ies); CLNWR: Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge,

Garden Co; FE: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; NC: Nature Center; NM: National Monument; NNE: Nebraska National Forest; NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union; NPNWR: North Platte NWR; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; Res: Reservoir; RWB: Rainwater Basin (area of natural basins in south-central Nebraska); SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; SRA: State Recreation Area; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area.

GAZETTEER

Arbor L: County Refuge, Lancaster Co; Arbor Lodge SHP: Nebraska City; Ayr L: private basin Adams Co; Calamus Res: SRA and WMA, Loup-Garfield Cos; Clear Creek Marshes: WMA, Keith-Garden Cos; Crane Meadows NC: Hall Co; Cracker Barrel Marsh: private marsh Lincoln; Crystal Cove L: SRA, South Sioux City; DeSoto NWR: Washington Co; Gavin's Point Dam: forms Lewis and Clark L, Knox-Cedar Cos; Gleason Basin: WPA, Kearney Co; Hansen Marsh: WPA, Clay Co; Indian Cave SP: Richardson-Nemaha Cos; Jack Sinn Marsh: WMA, Lancaster-Saunders Cos; Johnson Basin: WPA, Phelps Co; Johnson Res: SRA, Gosper-Phelps Cos; Kingsley Dam: forms L McConaughy, Keith Co; Kiowa Springs: WMA, Scotts Bluff Co; Kirkpatrick Basin: WMA, York Co; Kissinger Basin: WMA, Clay Co; L Alice: part of NPNWR, Scotts Bluff Co; L Minatare: SRA, Scotts Bluff Co; L Ogallala: borrow lake below Kingsley Dam, Keith Co; L Yankton: borrow lake below Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar Co; Little Salt Creek Fork Marsh: county refuge, Lancaster Co; Merritt Res: SRA, Cherry Co; Neale Woods: public access private reserve, Washington and Douglas Cos; North Harvard Basin: private basin 2 miles northwest of Harvard; North Hultine Basin: WPA, Clay Co; Olive Creek Res: SRA, Lancaster Co; Oliver Res: SRA, Kimball Co; Pawnee L: SRA, Lancaster Co; (Lillian Annette) Rowe Sanctuary: Buffalo Co; Sandpiper Basin: WMA, Fillmore Co; Schramm SP: Sarpy Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Spikerush Basin: WMA, York Co; Standing Bear L: Omaha; Sutherland Res: SRA, Lincoln Co; Valentine NWR: Cherry Co; Wagontrain L: SRA, Lancaster Co; Walnut Creek L: SRA, Sarpy Co; Wehrspann L: Omaha; Winters Creek L: part of NPNWR, Scotts Bluff Co; Wolf L: private area Saunders Co.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; B: Nebraska Birdline; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; CEJ: Clyde E. Johnson, Omaha; CF: Carol Falk, Nebraska City; CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; DP: Don Paseka, Ames; EA: Elizabeth Allen, Omaha; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; GW: Gertrude Wood, Elmwood; JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JM: Jim Meyer, Omaha; JP: Janis Paseka, Ames; JS: John Sullivan, Lincoln; JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha; JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha; KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney; LBR: Larry Bradstreet, Garden City, KS; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City; LP: Loren Padelford,

Bellevue; **LR**: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; **LRB**: Linda R. Brown, Lincoln; **MB**: Mark Brogie, Creighton; **MO**: Mark Orsag, Crete; **MU**: Mark Urwiller, Kearney; **MUs**: Moni Usasz, Lincoln; **NP**: Neva Pruess, Lincoln; **NR**: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha; **PK**: Paul Kaufman, Milford; **RG**: Ruth Green, Bellevue; **RH**: Robin Harding, Gibbon; **RK**: Ray Korpi, Portland, OR; **SH**: Susan Herrick, Lincoln; **SJD**: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Fort Collins, CO; **TH**: Thomas Hoffman, Omaha; **WH**: Wanda Hoge, Alma; **WRS**: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA; **ZU**: Zee Uridil, Chadron.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Pacific Loon: Rather early for this regular fall migrant was the bird spotted in first basic plumage at L Alice on 16 October (SJD); and the 2 immatures seen at Johnson Res on 24 October (LR, RH) were also a little early. At least 9 more were reported, all first basic birds in the expected period between 6 and 23 November (SJD, LR, RH), including 3 identified at L Minatare on 13 and 18 November (SJD). Almost as many Pacifics were reported as Commons!

Common Loon: The best count totaled 8 at BOL on 14 November (JGJ). As many as 4 (1 alternate, 3 first basic; SJD) were summering at L Ogallala (see Summer Report), with 3 present on 16 August (NP, B).

Pied-billed Grebe: Few were reported; the best count reached 36 at Winters Creek L on 23 November (SJD).

Horned Grebe: The best count tallied an excellent 133 on 6 November at L Minatare (SJD), the 3rd best ever; 46 still remained on 23 November (SJD).

Red-necked Grebe: An immature was found at L Ogallala on 6 and 19 November (SJD), only the 12th documented fall record.

Eared Grebe: An amazing record count was 487 in the west Panhandle, including 271 counted at Gering SL on 16 October (SJD); the previous best count totaled 69. Rather early were 6 birds found at Standing Bear L on 16 September (B), and rather late were singles discovered in Cass Co on 27 November (GW) and near Alda on 29 November (B).

Western Grebe: Considered a conservative count by the observer, 35,000 were estimated at LM on 26 September (SJD), far higher than the previous best of 20,000+, also at LM. Fish numbers must be very high there to sustain so many birds; as Steven J. Dinsmore stated, "In the early 1990s it was hard to find more than a few hundred before September, but more than a thousand now spend the summer there." The only eastern report was of one spotted at Wehrspann L on 10 November (JWH).

Clark's Grebe: The best count totaled 11 at LM on 26 September (SJD). Away from the LM area, 2 were identified at L Alice on 15 August (SJD), and 1 to 3 were seen at L Minatare between 26 September and 18 November (SJD).

American White Pelican: Unusual in summer in the south, one was identified at HCR on 3 August (GH, WH). Migrants can appear early, such as the 14 seen flying over Gibbon on 9 August (LR, RH). The best count registered 465 in Sarpy Co on 27 September (BP, LP).

Double-crested Cormorant: A new high count was the 5000+ ("could be up to 10,000") tallied at HCR between 5 and 16 October (GH, WH). Obviously this place represents a preferred staging area for this species, as is LM for Western Grebes. An estimated 2000 still remained there on 7 November (LR, RH). The 80 counted at HCR on 30 August (GH, WH) likely derived from the breeding colony at the west end

of the lake. A good total of 591 was counted at L Minatare on 16 October (SJD). Four were still found at BOL on 28 November (B).

American Bittern: Although breeding has not been documented recently in the RWB, it probably does occur. Suggestive reports were of 1 to 2 birds spotted at North Hultine Basin on 22 and again on 26 August (JS, WRS, DP, JP).

Least Bittern: Second latest on record was one seen at Walnut Creek L on 4 October (B); most depart by mid-September. A few probably breed in the Rainwater Basin; suggestive of this possibility was the bird discovered there on 7 August (JGJ).

Great Blue Heron: The best count totaled 85 in the east RWB on 1 August (JGJ).

Great Egret: Remarkable numbers were reported, including an almost-record count of 130 tallied at HCR on 24 September (GH, WH). The previous best count reached 130, also at HCR. 52 were counted in the east RWB on 29 August (JGJ). In all, about 300 were reported. The westernmost report was of a single found at Winters Creek L 3 Sep (SJD), where it is rare.

Snowy Egret: One was spotted rather late at Alma on 6 October (GH, WH); there are few October reports. The farthest west was one noted at Winters Creek L from 3 to 4 September (SJD).

Little Blue Heron: Few were reported: 2 immatures were seen at FL 1 on August (LR, RH); up to 3 were counted in the east RWB between 7 and 29 Aug (JGJ); and one was discovered at Arbor L on 14 August (LE).

Cattle Egret: The best count totaled 26 northwest of FL on 16 August (SJD). In the west, where it is rare, 2 were spotted at Oliver Res on 20 September (SJD), the only report west of FL. The last were 19 seen at Plattsmouth on 20 October (B).

Green Heron: The singles found at HCR between 1 August and 21 September were unexpected (GH, WH). Away from the southeast, lack of habitat restricts numbers. While it occurs almost statewide, this bird is rare or absent in the Panhandle.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Reports were routine, except for one sighted at the Bushnell Cem on 2 October (SJD); did it know it was at the dead center of town?

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: The only reports were of immatures seen at Arbor L on 1 and 14 Aug (LE).

White-faced Ibis: Most were conservatively reported as "immature Plegadis sp." or "dark ibis" or "Plegadis sp.," as separation of White-faced and Glossy verges on impossible in the fall. While it is a fair bet that most, if not all, are indeed White-faced, we have been surprised before! The best counts totaled 31 in the east RWB on 25 September (JGJ) and 14 counted at Oliver Res on 4 September (SJD). Rather late was one spotted in the east RWB on 10 October (JGJ).

Turkey Vulture: The best count registered 100 birds at Lincoln on 1 October (MUs), apparently peak migration. Most depart by mid-October, and there are only 11 reports after 31 October, including one seen in Cass Co on 5 November (GW).

Greater White-fronted Goose: The singles reported at HCR on 27 August (GH, WH) and at FL on 11 September (LR, RH) were probably summer stragglers. The first migrants noted were 300 seen flying south over the east RWB on 10 October; in itself that is a good fall count, and the observer (JGJ) suspected that thousands went over during the day. It is believed that most indeed overfly the state in fall without stopping. Rare in the Panhandle in fall, singles were found at L Alice on 13 November (SJD) and on L Minatare on 23 November (SJD).

Snow Goose: The first large count of migrants arrived about on schedule, 1000 in small flocks spotted flying over Neale Woods on 14 November (B). Several thousand were seen at DeSoto NWR on 21 November (EA), and 1200 were counted at HCR on 24 November (GH, WH). Very early for migrants, however, were the 95 spotted flying south over Seward Co on 9 September (JG). Uncommon in the west in fall, a small flock was found at L Minatare on 13 November (AK). The usual summer stragglers were reported.

Ross's Goose: The 12 birds seen at Sutherland Res on 19 November (SJD) and the 2 found at Kiowa Springs on 23 November (SJD) mark only the 6th and 7th fall Panhandle reports. These were the only reports.

Canada Goose: Probably local breeders beginning fall flocking, the 22 that arrived at HCR on 22 August were the first to arrive; that number increased to 70 on 27 August (GH, WH). No large concentrations were reported prior to the end of the period.

Brant: One of the Pacific Coast subspecies, *nigricans*, was spotted at L Minatare on 23 November (SJD). This sighting represents the 5th documented fall record for Brant and only the second state record for *nigricans*, although there is an undocumented report of a "Black Brant" shot in 1960-61, also at Kingsley Dam. Most of the 3 spring and five fall records are of the Atlantic Coast subspecies *bernicla*.

Trumpeter Swan: The only reports were of 2 adults found at Goose L, CLNWR, on 6 (SJD) and 13 (JG) November; 4 birds seen at L Ogallala on 28 October (Rodger Knaggs, fide SJD); and 2 adults with one cygnet discovered at Valentine NWR on 9 October (LR, RH).

Tundra Swan: Although a rare regular fall migrant, none was reported.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: The two adults first seen at North Harvard Basin on 2 August (JGJ) were again found there on 3 August (GC, BC) but not relocated until 21 August, this time at North Hultine Basin (JS, WRS), where they were seen by many observers through 28 August. This sighting represents the second documented record for NE, the first a bird shot at Hansen Marsh on 29 October 1989 (specimen at UNSM). An undocumented report identifies 6 found near Ong on 15 April 1990 (Nebraska Game and Parks files).

Wood Duck: Very late were 2 downy young with an adult female reported at HCR on 2 August (GH, WH) and a female with downy young at Little Salt Creek Fork Marsh on 14 August (LE). Downy young are rarely seen after mid-July. Rather late so far west were the 2 birds identified at Kiowa Springs on 23 November (SJD).

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: Routine reports.

American Black Duck: The only report, without details, was of one found rather early and rather far west in Brown Co on 9 October (fide LR). There are few reports away from the Missouri River Valley, most in November.

Mallard: Reports were routine, although it is hard to figure how 10,000 Mallards could fit into Kiowa Springs on 23 November (SJD)!

Mallard x Northern Pintail: A male was seen at Scottsbluff SL on 18 and on 23 November (SJD).

Blue-winged Teal: Two excellent tallies arrived. This species is common in late summer and fall in the RWB, but JGJ finally counted them, arriving at 4200 on 22 August. Not to be outdone, 6,000 were estimated present at FL on 19 September

(LR, RH). The last was a rather late single found in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ). Both counts topped the previous high.

Cinnamon Teal: One identified east of Gering SL on 20 September (SJD) was rather late; this bird, two reported at Scottsbluff SL on 3 September (SJD), and an immature male found east of Gering SL on 2 September (SJD) denote only the 20th to the 22nd reports for September or later; perhaps Cinnamon Teal are overlooked (not by SJD!) in eclipse plumage and migrate as soon as they regain flight.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: The presence of 6 "small juveniles" at FL on 1 August provides what appears to be a rather late date for this age of young. A count of 170 in the east RWB on 22 August (JGJ) hinted at the size of the breeding population there, or may indicate molt migrants (see Green-winged Teal).

Green-winged Teal: There is only one nesting record south of the Platte River, and so the 90 birds counted in the east RWB on 22 August (JGJ) are almost certainly molt migrants. Many species of duck migrate immediately after the young become independent (drakes often while the female is incubating) to a secure location, usually in the direction of fall migration where they molt their flight feathers and change into eclipse plumage.

Canvasback: An excellent count totaled 515 at CLNWR on 6 November (SJD).

Redhead: The best count totaled 500 at Johnson Res on 24 October (LR, RH). Few others were reported. A male spotted at Alma SL on 21 August (GH, WH) may indicate breeding nearby; 3 Redheads were found at the same location in late July 1998.

Ring-necked Duck: Good counts included 260 found at Winters Creek L on 16 October (SJD) and the 125 reported at BOL on 27 November (LE).

Greater Scaup: The only reports of this rare late fall migrant were of 11 spotted at L Ogallala on 6 November (SJD) and 27 located there on 19 November (SJD).

Lesser Scaup: The two found at Kirkpatrick Basin on 7 August (JGJ) provided one of the few summer records in that area; and the two seen at Ayr L in July presumably were different birds (JGJ; see Summer Report).

Surf Scoter: The only reports listed 2 female/immature types spotted at BOL on 19 October (JS) and 2, also females/immatures, found at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD).

White-winged Scoter: The only report was of one discovered at Wagontrain L rather early on 30 October (LE). Formerly it was thought that this scoter was the most common in NE and that Black Scoter was the rarest; in recent years, however, fewer White-wings have been reported than Black.

Black Scoter: The only reports were of 2 female/immature types spotted at L Minatare 16 October (SJD), a rather early date, and of 2 of the same plumage type seen at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD).

Oldsquaw: The earliest dates are usually in November, but none was reported.

Bufflehead: Routine reports.

Common Goldeneye: The first arrivals reached NE a little later than usual; 3 were located at Johnson Res on 16 November (GH, WH).

Barrow's Goldeneye: The only report identified an adult male at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD). This sighting represents the 12th record of this species at this

location, and is the earliest. Other November reports along the North Platte come from Scotts Bluff Co.

Hooded Merganser: Record counts from the Panhandle, where this species was thought to be rather rare, registered 112 at L Alice on 6 November, up from 18 counted there on 16 October (SJD) and 81 at NPNWR on 13 November (SJD).

Common Merganser: Few were reported, even in November. The 49 counted at L Alice on 15 August (SJD) were presumably molt migrants, but the 700 tallied there on 6 November (SJD) had to consist of "real" migrants. The one bird seen at Oliver Res on 21 August (MB) may have arrived there also as a molt migrant, but the lone female spotted at BOL on 1 August (LE) is hard to explain; the latter is one of a very few summer records in the east. The best count reached 850 at L Minatare on 23 November (SJD), not great for this month.

Red-breasted Merganser: Only 3 were reported: singles found at Pawnee L on 14 November (JS), BOL on 20 November (BP, LP), and L Yankton 27 November (B).

Ruddy Duck: Singles and pairs were reported in central NE from 19 August (GH, WH) through 19 September (JK, SK, LR, RH); breeding may occur there, especially in the RWB. A pair spotted at Alma SL on 25 September (GH, WH) was suggestive of breeding also, although migrants begin to appear in late September. Good numbers did not appear until 16 October, with 1,492 counted at L Minatare (SJD), a near-record high count.

Osprey: The one seen at Oliver Res on 28 August (BP, LP) was rather early. And the best count was 5 seen at L Ogallala on 26 September (SJD), a good total. Rather late was one that still lingered at Crystal Cove L on 7 November (BFH).

Mississippi Kite: None was reported, neither from the regular location at Ogallala, nor elsewhere.

Bald Eagle: An immature located at L Minatare on 1 August (MB), and an adult and immature seen there on 3 September (SJD) may have been from the local breeding "population" of one nesting pair. The first migrants do not usually arrive until late September; this year's first was an immature spotted in the east RWB on 26 September (JGJ); and 2 other immatures were noted in October, one each at BOL (JS, BP, LP) and HCR (GH, WH).

Northern Harrier: Singles discovered at Kissinger Basin on 1 August (B) and at BOL (LE) may have been local breeders, as migrants first appear in late August. The one found at North Hultine Basin on 27 August (RH) may have been either. Migrants were clearly present in the west Panhandle on 16 October, when 34 were counted, 29 of them in Scotts Bluff Co (SJD).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: A good count was 6 found at Neale Woods on 14 November (BP, LP).

Northern Goshawk: The first to arrive was an adult spotted at ADF on 31 October (LF, CF), about the same time as an immature found in Buffalo Co (GL). The only other report was of an adult bird seen at Gavin's Point Dam on 27 November (BFH).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Routine reports--all came from the regular breeding location at FF (BP, LP).

Broad-winged Hawk: As expected, all reports came in September, the farthest west being one spotted over Seward on 24 September (JG).

Swainson's Hawk: The last to leave was a dark morph carefully studied in Cass Co on 26 October (GW).

Red-tailed Hawk: The appearance of dark birds is a good sign that migration is underway. The first arrivals were 2 hawks spotted in Harlan Co on 7 November (GH, WH). A very pale bird, possibly a "Kridler's" Red-tailed Hawk, was identified in Harlan Co on 6 November, and possibly the same bird was seen again on 15 November (GH, WH). Occasional pale birds do, however, breed in NE. Migration was well underway by 14 November, when 40 were spotted at Neale Woods (BP, LP).

Ferruginous Hawk: Two immatures were seen in Clay Co on 14 November (JGJ), the farthest east that regular wintering occurs. Singles were reported without details at Plattsmouth on 20 October and in Cass Co on 28 November. There are no documented fall records in eastern NE other than that of an injured immature found near Osceola in early September 1997.

Rough-legged Hawk: The earliest was rather early, spotted at Neale Woods on 1 October (B), and next a month later at ADF on 3 November (LR, CF).

Golden Eagle: Easterly reports included singles found in southeastern Washington Co on 26 October, the observer's first for the county (JGJ), and in Seward Co on 17 November (JG).

American Kestrel: The best count totaled 78 in the south Panhandle, including 47 counted in Scotts Bluff Co, on 20 September, (SJD), a record fall tally.

Merlin: This species is being reported far more often in recent years; this year registered about 26 birds. The earliest included one spotted at North Hultine Basin on 26 August (DP, JP) and another noted at Merritt Res on 28 August (JS), the latter a female or immature. The best counts were 4 seen as far east as the east RWB on 26 September (JGJ) and 3 found at a more expected location, the west Panhandle, on 16 October (SJD). All identified to subspecies were *richardsonii*.

Prairie Falcon: The farthest east reported included singles identified at Rowe Sanctuary on 14 November (MU), spotted in eastern Kearney Co on 21 November (LR, RH), and located in the east RWB on 13 November (JGJ).

Peregrine Falcon: Surprisingly, based on the numerous reports in recent years, only two were reported, a juvenile discovered at L Alice on 20 September (SJD) and an unaged bird noted at Seward the same day (JG).

Gray Partridge: None was reported; this species seems to be at a cyclical population low.

Ring-necked Pheasant: The best count totaled 50+ near Wakefield (JJ).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Two seen near Gleason Basin on 11 September (LR, RH) were in a prairie remnant known for hosting this species, but a female spotted near Olive Creek Res on 5 August (MO) was unexpected at that date. Individuals appear southeast of the breeding range in late fall, but not usually in August. Perhaps it was from a stocked group or had escaped from a game farm.

Wild Turkey: The best count reached 40 in Sowbelly Canyon on 13 November (JG).

Northern Bobwhite: Westerly, but not unexpected in the west North Platte Valley, was one identified at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 13 November (SJD).

Virginia Rail: Half-grown downy young were seen at Valentine NWR on 29 August (JS), a rather late date for downy young. Suggestive of breeding in the east RWB were 1 to 2 noted there between 15 and 22 August (JGJ), although migrants are on the move at about that time. A lucky bird found hanging upside down in a Scotts Bluff Co fruit tree on 30 October was rescued, revived in a dog carrier, and successfully released (fide AK).

Sora: Although there are no documented reports of breeding in the RWB, it seems likely that it occurs; as many as 17 were reported in the east RWB during August (JGJ, LB), although no breeding evidence was forthcoming. Singles spotted at Crystal Cove L on 8 August (BFH) and Cracker Barrel Marsh on 1 August (LE) were indicative of breeding.

American Coot: The best count tallied 3,000 at Winters Creek L on 16 October (SJD).

Sandhill Crane: This species is spread almost statewide (except for the extreme east) in fall migration, and large concentrations are not usually noted. An excellent fall count, however, of 2,416 was made at L Alice on 16 October. (SJD). The last noted were 2 flocks sighted over Chadron on 23 and 24 November (ZU).

Whooping Crane: Rather far west of its usual migration corridor, a single bird with Sandhill Cranes was seen on 17 October flying over by two observers at different locations in Scotts Bluff Co within 10 minutes of each other (fide AK).

Black-bellied Plover: Rather late were 3 birds spotted in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ). Few were reported.

American Golden-Plover: A record high fall count totaled 116 in the east RWB on 25 September; all were gone the next day (JGJ). This species is far less numerous in fall than in spring. Adults are rare in fall; the one seen at Kissinger Basin from 1 to 7 August was injured (JGJ, LR, RH). The last were 3 discovered rather late in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ).

Semipalmated Plover: Rather late was one identified east of Kenesaw on 11 October (LR, RH).

Killdeer: A record count of 456 was made in the east RWB on 10 October (JGJ); "hundreds" were spotted there on 15 August (LB).

American Avocet: The three seen at L Ogallala on 16 and 24 August (SJD) and one spotted at Cracker Barrel Marsh between 14 August and 4 September (LE) were early migrants; but the 2 to 4 birds found in the east RWB from 15 to 29 August (JGJ) may have been part of the small breeding population there. The one located in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ) was the 3rd latest ever.

Greater Yellowlegs: An excellent count, the 2nd highest for fall, was the 50 totaled in the east RWB on 25 September (JGJ). The five that still remained there on 14 November (JGJ) were rather late.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Routine reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: The 16 seen near the Gering SL on 3 September (SJD) constituted the 2nd best fall count ever for this well-named species.

Willet: Rather uncommon in fall, the total of 6 found in the east RWB on 1 August (B) was actually a good count. Only 11 others were reported (LR, RH); east to BOL, 2 were seen on 4 September (LE).

Spotted Sandpiper: The 3rd best fall count was 12 at the Scottsbluff SL on 3 September (SJD). Maybe this species and Solitary Sandpiper have different requirements in sewage lagoons!

Upland Sandpiper: Excellent counts included 45 in the east RWB, 38 in a single alfalfa field, on 22 August (JGJ), and 30 in Kearney Co the same day (LR, RH). Although this species likes alfalfa fields, the 2 found wading at Kissinger Basin on 7 August (JGJ) belied their name.

Long-billed Curlew: A good count registered 31 in the Panhandle, including 20 at L Alice, on 15 August (SJD).

Marbled Godwit: The only report was of 7 spotted at FL on 1 Aug (LR, RH); this sighting represents only the 12th fall report east of the Panhandle.

Ruddy Turnstone: Only the 10th fall record ever was of a single juvenile found east of Gering SL between 3 and 4 September (SJD). Four of the reports are of adults in the period from 19 to 31 July, and the other of 6 juveniles in the period between 15 August to 9 September.

Sanderling: The best count totaled a moderate 13 at Calamus Res on 25 September (MB, DH).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: The latest fall date ever with details was one seen in the east RWB on 10 October (JGJ), while another located at BOL on 2 October (LE) was rather late. Observers should document October Semipalmated Sandpipers, as little data is available on late fall dates. The best count registered 98 in the east RWB on 7 August (JGJ).

Western Sandpiper: Small numbers were reported statewide, probably typical for this species in fall. The best count totaled 9, all juveniles, at Scottsbluff SL on 3 September (SJD). The last was a juvenile identified there on 20 September (SJD). The best count in the east RWB was 6, also juveniles, on 29 August (JGJ). And the last adults were 2 spotted in molt at Scottsbluff SL on 15 August (SJD).

Least Sandpiper: Third latest ever were 2 found west of Mitchell on 13 November (SJD), and the one located in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ) was also rather late. The best counts were very good: 120 at FL on 1 August (LR, RH) and 107 in the east RWB on 10 October (JGJ).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Two were reported (without details) at Olive Creek Res on 5 August. This report marks the 34th undocumented fall report of this species which migrates along the eastern seaboard in fall. We are not aware of any documented records in the interior US in fall.

Baird's Sandpiper: While considered virtually absent all fall in the east RWB, with the best count a miserable 7 on 26 September (JGJ), they must have stayed in the west, where 428 were spotted at L Minatare on 2 September (SJD), by far the best count. Rather late were 2 reported in the east RWB on 7 November, a juvenile as expected on that date, but accompanied by an extremely late but injured adult (JGJ).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Rather late were 7 spotted in the east RWB on November (JGJ), and a good count was 188 tallied there on 29 August (JGJ).

Dunlin: A casual migrant in fall, none was found until 7 November, when 6 were seen in the east RWB (JGJ). Although a little past the usual migration peak in late October, this date is not too surprising, as adults of this species delay migration until molt is complete and migrate with the juveniles. The only others reported were 1 to 2 at BOL between 12 and 14 November (JS, JGJ).

Stilt Sandpiper: The last one to leave was rather late in the east RWB on 24 October (JGJ). The best count was 153 at Scottsbluff SL on 3 September (SJD).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Considered "difficult to find this fall" (JGJ), the best count in the east RWB totaled 32 on 1 August (B). The last was spotted in Seward Co on 30 August (B).

Short-billed Dowitcher: A typical fall migration for this species, with a high count of 12 juveniles at the Scottsbluff SL on 3 September, also the latest (SJD), and a total of about 28 birds reported. The earliest were 9 reported at FL on 1 August "in breeding plumage" (LR, RH). See Long-billed Dowitcher.

Long-billed Dowitcher: The best count totaled 61 west of Mitchell on 16 October (SD), a second-highest ever for fall in the east RWB; and the last were 2 seen there rather late on 7 November (JGJ). There is little hard data on relative abundance of the dowitcher species in late July and early August; observers should try to count dowitchers by species in late July to early August. At FL on 1 August, the observers (LR, RH) found 1 Long-billed, 9 Short-billed, and 12 unidentified to species.

Common Snipe: Migrants appear in non-breeding locations by late August, and so the 2 located in the east RWB on 1 August (JGJ) may indicate breeding. The best count totaled an excellent 47 at Kiowa Springs on 2 October (SJD).

American Woodcock: Five migrants were detected in the east between 17 October and 10 November (B), but the one found at the CLNWR Headquarters on 6 November (SJD) was extraordinary. This sighting is the first Panhandle record for fall, although there are 5 records for the northeastern Colorado plains in the period between 5 July and 30 November.

Wilson's Phalarope: Although breeding in the RWB is likely, the 2 basic-plumaged birds spotted at FL on 1 August (LR, RH) were probably migrants, the earliest of which can appear in mid-July.

Red-necked Phalarope: A few were reported, none east of the east RWB; and the best count totaled 5 there on 25 September (JGJ).

Pomarine Jaeger: As observers understand the movements and identification of jaegers, more are reported (and identified) in NE. Generally, Pomarine seems to be the latest of the 3 jaeger species to pass through NE, and so a light phase adult spotted at Merritt Res on 28 and 29 August (JS) was very early. One even earlier, however, had been photographed at Gavin's Point Dam on 30 June 1990 (MB), also a light phase adult. At LM 1 to 3 juveniles, 2 dark, one intermediate, were noted between 18 and 19 November (SJD). These 2 records represent the 6th and 7th documented records for fall.

Franklin's Gull: Routine reports.

Bonaparte's Gull: The one molting gull found at L Minatare from 2 to 3 September (SJD) was rather early, perhaps a failed breeder. The best count reached 250 at Alma SL on 3 November (GH, WH).

Ring-billed Gull: Two excellent counts totaled 3,000 at L Alice on 6 November (SJD) and 3,000 at a feedlot near Alma on 28 November (GH, WH).

California Gull: Numbers gradually build up at large western reservoirs from late August; one was discovered at L Minatare on 21 August (MB), and the "several" seen at LM on 24 August became 75 there by 6 November (SJD). Not commonly reported away from LM, adults were observed at Oliver Res on 20 September (SJD) and at L Alice on 13 November (SJD); and a 2nd basic bird appeared at Sutherland Res on 6 November (SJD).

Herring Gull: Only small numbers generally move through before December; the best count reached 7, at BOL on 14 November (JGJ). The earliest were 2 birds found at LM between 15 and 16 August, one a first alternate and the other a 3rd alternate (SJD), only the 6th documented August record for the Panhandle. There are few records prior to mid-September; most such reports from the Panhandle in the past may have actually been of California Gulls. The first adults noted were 2 spotted at L Minatare on 20 September (SJD).

Thayer's Gull: The first to arrive was a fourth basic bird identified at Sutherland Res on 6 November (SJD), and an adult, presumably a different bird.

(had molt completed itself?), was found there on 19 November (SJD). The first marks the earliest documented fall record except for an adult seen at L Ogallala on 4 October 1997 (SJD, JS, WRS).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Possibly the same first alternate-second basic bird was seen at LM on 24 August and on 26 September (SJD), representing only the 6th fall record for the state. The 6 fall birds have all been immatures, 4 of them found at BOL.

Sabine's Gull: In contrast to the larger numbers of recent falls, only one was reported, a juvenile noted at L Minatare on 3 September (SJD), also a rather early date.

Caspian Tern: Surprisingly, only one was reported, at BOL on 20 September (LE).

Common Tern: Rather late was a molting adult seen at Oliver Res on 2 October (SJD). The best count totaled 6 there on 20 September (SJD). None was reported from the east.

Forster's Tern: Routine reports.

Least Tern: None reported--late migration dates occur in mid-September.

Black Tern: Routine reports.

Rock Dove: Routine reports.

White-winged Dove: One appeared at a Lincoln feeder from 7 to 10 October (Dearald Kohles, fide JS). This sighting represents is the 7th report for NE.

Mourning Dove: Rather late for the north and Panhandle were 9 to 10 birds found at Winters Creek L on 13 November (AK) and one observed at South Sioux City on 16 November (BFH). A good count was 400 in the sandhills south of Lowell on 11 September (LR, RH).

Budgerigar: "A colorful shock to an early morning bike-rider" was one sighted northwest of Wakefield on 18 August (JJ). No doubt an escaped or released bird; another was seen in Kearney on 8 August 1991 (fide LR, RH).

Black-billed Cuckoo: The latest ever, by 6 days, was one seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 15 October (LF, CF).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Barn Owl: None reported--late dates occur in October.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: The count of 11 owls tallied in Scotts Bluff Co on 4 September (SJD) denotes the 2nd best ever.

Barred Owl: Westernmost, but within the currently-understood breeding range, was one discovered near Olive Creek Res on 13 August (MO).

Long-eared Owl: Routine reports.

Short-eared Owl: Routine Reports.

Common Nighthawk: The one seen at Alma on 20 October (GH, WH) represents the 3rd-latest ever.

Common Poorwill: One was heard calling in southwestern Kimball Co as late as 20 September (SJD), and a good count tallied 12 at NNF, Halsey, on 28 August (JS).

Chuck-will's-widow: The only reports of this rare species in NE originated from a regular site at Wolf L on 21 August and again on 12 September (TH).

Whip-poor-will: None reported--last dates occur in mid-September.

Chimney Swift: Good counts included 100 spotted at Kearney on 19 September (LR, RH) and 100 totaled in Bellevue on 5 September (BP, LP). Rather late, but not near the record of 24 October, were the 21 spotted at Alma on 6 November (GH,WH) and the 3 identified at Lincoln on 10 October (LE).

White-throated Swift: The best count reached a 2nd best ever 53 at Scotts Bluff NM on 20 September (SJD); and the 3rd latest ever were the 14 counted there on 2 October (SJD).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Although evidence of breeding was not noted, the one seen in the observer's area all summer for the second year in a row (CH) would extend the breeding range west in the Niobrara River Valley. In recent years, this bird has not been found in summer west of the confluence with the Missouri River except for 2 reports from Brown Co in 1964 and 1970. Otherwise, none was reported west of Alma, where immatures were noted on 17 and on 22 August (GH, WH).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: The only report was of a female or immature identified at Bushnell on 15 August (SJD).

Rufous Hummingbird: The only report was of a female or immature spotted at Bushnell on 15 August (SJD).

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: None reported--late dates occur in mid-September.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Rather late for the north were birds seen at the NOU meeting in Blaine and Thomas Cos on 9 October (fide JP), and a juvenile spotted in southwestern Dixon Co on 30 November (JJ) was also rather late. Occasional wintering does occur in the northeast.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Although a few wander somewhat west of the breeding range in fall and winter, the one spotted in the Kathy Larson yard near Mitchell between 2 and 13 November (fide AK) represents only the 3rd record in the Platte River Valley west of LM.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Rather early were 2 immatures located at Wehrspann L on 25 September (BP, LP). All reports came, as expected, from the east.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: The first "red-shafted" flickers were seen in southwestern Hall Co on 25 September (LR, RH), rather early, and at NNF, Halsey, on 2 October (RG).

Pileated Woodpecker: Three reports came from FF, where it seems to have become established: on 19 August (B), on 30 August (fide Craig Hensley), and on 16 November (B)--the last bird was spotted at Mill Hollow.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Second-earliest ever was the one identified in Harlan Co, somewhat westerly for this species, on 2 August (GH, WH). Only a casual migrant in the west, one was found at L Minatare on 3 September (SJD).

Western Wood-Pewee: None reported--last dates occur in mid-September.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Routine reports.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One was reported without details in Cass Co on 4 October, a late date. There are no documented NE records after mid-September.

Alder Flycatcher: One was found singing in Florence, North Omaha, on 10 August (B), and another was reported without details at ADF on 13 August (LF, CF). There are very few documented fall records.

Willow Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Least Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Eastern Phoebe: The one sighted at ADF on 19 October (LF, CF) was rather late; there are only 7 later dates. A good count totaled 5 in southeastern Washington Co on 18 September (JGJ).

Say's Phoebe: The bird reported in southwestern Dixon Co was seen on 12 August (JJ); I wonder if it has a mate? This species is very rare in fall away from the Panhandle, and so the one discovered at BOL on 20 September (LE) and the 1 to 2 noted near Kearney on 5 September (MU) were unexpected. These sightings represent only the 12th and 13th such records.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Cassin's Kingbird: Although it seems high, the 11 counted in southwestern Kimball Co on 2 September (SJD) is not a particularly high fall count for this species; the best count totaled a remarkable, twice-reached 43 birds.

Western Kingbird: A record high count reached 55 southwest of Lowell on 22 August (LR, RH).

Eastern Kingbird: Another record high count was 150 near Gibbon on 23 August (LR, RH). One was spotted rather late at ADF on 27 September (LF, CF).

Northern Shrike: An immature seen near Lyman on 2 October (SJD) was rather early. Individuals were widely-reported, as far southeast as BOL, where one was identified on 20 November (LE).

Loggerhead Shrike: Routine reports.

Bell's Vireo: Rather late was the one located at ADF on 26 September (LF, CF).

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: None reported--late dates occur in mid-September.

Cassin's Vireo: The only report of this casual Panhandle migrant identified one at Oliver Res on 15 August (SJD). This sighting marks the 12th record and the earliest fall date for this newly-split species, once considered part of "Solitary Vireo".

Blue-headed Vireo: The one noted at Lilley Sandpits, Hall Co, on 25 September (LR, RH) represents the only documented record for central NE; this species migrates in fall mainly in the Missouri Valley, with reports originating west to Seward Co this fall (JG). There is only one Panhandle record.

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Philadelphia Vireo: The one seen at Neale Woods on 1 October (B) denotes the 5th latest ever. The 5 birds reported this fall were all found in the east, west to Crete, where one was noted on 10 August (MO).

Red-eyed Vireo: Farthest west was the one spotted at Wildcat Hills NC on 21 August (MB), where it is uncommon. Few were reported, although 5 were seen at FF on 5 September (BP, LP).

Blue Jay: A good count was the 45 tallied at ADF on 5 October (LF, CF).

Pinyon Jay: None reported.

Black-billed Magpie: This species slowly expands its range to the southeast; several pieces of evidence were found this fall. The one reported near Ames was the observers' first for their farm (is that fair for a yard list?) on 1 and 30 October (DP, JP); and one of very few records for the extreme southeast was the one seen in Otoe Co on 9 August (LF, F). New nest sites were discovered near Jackson and Willis in Dakota Co (BFH), and 2 were located east of BOL on 7 November (B).

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: Routine reports.

Tree Swallow: A rather early good count was the 60 totaled at Little Salt Creek Fork Marsh on 20 August (LE). Flocks form early in most swallow species.

Violet-Green Swallow: The only report was of a single bird found at Scotts Bluff NM on 15 August (SJD).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Excellent counts included the 155 registered in Otoe Co on 15 September (LF, CF) and the 100+ tallied at Indian Cave SP on 19 September (JG).

Bank Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: By far a record count (estimate!) was the 12,000 registered in the FL area on 1 August (LR, RH). While this number seems huge, the flocks there in August are indeed amazing. In the east RWB numbers were said to be "unbelievable" (JGJ).

Barn Swallow: The 3rd best count ever totaled 1,450 in Phelps and Buffalo Cos on 19 September (LR, RH). Rather late was one observed at Pawnee L on 1 November (LE).

Black-capped Chickadee: An excellent count reached 125 at Johnson Res on 24 October (LR, RH). Often thought of as sedentary, this species sometimes moves south from its breeding range in fall; perhaps this sighting provides an example, or merely an unusual aggregation of local birds.

Mountain Chickadee: Most unexpected was one sighted at Oliver Res on 1 August (MB); no others have been reported this fall.

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: This fall shaped up to be good for this species; one observer stated that they "seem to be everywhere" as of 3 November (NR). Although widely-reported, no counts reached higher than the 4 seen at Arbor Lodge SHP on 4 November (B). The first to arrive away from the breeding range was the one identified at Nebraska City on 6 August (LF, CF), a record early date; most arrive from mid-August on.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: A good count was 6 at Oak Glen Area, Seward Co, on 29 October (JG). The one seen at ADF on 3 October (LF, CF) was rather early.

Rock Wren: The only report was of 2 located in southwest Kimball Co on 26 September (SJD).

Carolina Wren: Expansion along the Republican Valley is suggested by the continuing presence of up to 3 birds discovered at HCR on 7 November (GH, WH, LR, RH). A single was noted in Seward Co on 26 September (JG), also at the western edge of the current range. No reports have arrived from this part of the state since a small population existed in the Little Blue River drainage prior to an extremely cold winter in 1977-78.

House Wren: Routine reports.

Winter Wren: An amazing 4 birds were found far to the west at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD); there are very few Panhandle (or near-Panhandle) records, most in the period between November and March. Interestingly, the one located in Dixon Co on 3 October was thought to be a western bird based on its dark color (JJ).

There are, however, no confirmed records of the western race *pacificus* for NE. The best count totaled 6 at Neale Woods on 15 October (B).

Sedge Wren: There were many reports for August, west to central NE, including 60 found in the east RWB on 7 August, where it was "abundant in larger grass tracts" (JGJ). Many of these August birds may have been breeding, but no evidence was forthcoming.

Marsh Wren: Routine reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: A good count totaled 18 at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: The two birds found in southeastern Washington Co on 11 September (JGJ) were rather early for that area of NE, while the one sighted at Sutherland Res and the 3 seen at L Ogallala on 6 November (SJD) were rather late for the west. The record high counts for fall included 51 tallied in Washington and Douglas Cos on 2 October (WRS) and the 50+ counted at BOL on 3 October (JS).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: The goings-on in the west continued; this species is expanding northward along the Colorado foothills (Alan Versaw, pers. comm.) and into the Kimball Co area. Breeding was confirmed in the Limber Pine area south of I-80 Exit 1 two 2 adults were seen feeding begging young on 22 August (JS, WRS); of course their nest could have been in nearby Wyoming! The best count reached an amazing 11 on Stage Hill Road, Wildcat Hills, on 4 September (SJD). The one reported in southwestern Kimball Co on 20 September (SJD) was rather late. And a new location was occupied by one bird found at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 3 September (SJD).

Eastern Bluebird: Good counts included the 50 registered near Fort Calhoun on 8 October (B) and, for the west, the 16 tallied in southwestern Kimball Co on 20 September (SJD).

Mountain Bluebird: A good count totaled 31 in the west Panhandle on 16 October (SJD). All reports came from Scotts Bluff Co (SJD, AK).

Townsend's Solitaire: Rather early for the location were "several" discovered at NNF, Halsey, on 10 October (JS).

Veery: None reported--migrants are rare and pass through in September.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: None reported--migrants pass through mostly in September.

Swainson's Thrush: None reported--while this situation is not all that surprising for the previous 2 species, this species is normally a common fall migrant.

Hermit Thrush: Finally, some thrushes! About 12 were reported, most significantly 2 individuals of the Rocky Mountain race *auduboni*; singles were noted at Oliver Res on 16 October (SJD) and West Lawn Cem, Gering, the same day (SJD). This race is grayer than the eastern race *faxoni*. These sightings represent only the 4th and 5th records of *auduboni*, although it is likely a regular migrant through the Panhandle. November reports are not unusual in the east; the latest was one seen at Oak Glen Area, Seward Co, on 14 November (fide JG).

Wood Thrush: None reported--most leave by early October.

American Robin: "Thousands" were spotted at FF on 6 October (BP, LP) and, 1,200 were estimated in Kearney Co on 19 September (LR, RH).

Varied Thrush: NE's first Varied Thrush for a few years was a male found at a Norfolk feeder from some time prior to 16 November through 20 November (MB,

GH, WH). Fully 24 of the total of 29 records occurred during 1972 through 1991, with only 3 (including this year's) reported since 1991.

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: A good count was 6 seen south of I-80 Exit 1 on 15 August (SJD).

Sage Thrasher: The only report was of one located at the Kimball Airport on 26 September (SJD).

Brown Thrasher: The 17 tallied southwest of Lowell on 22 August (LR, RH) was a good count.

European Starling: An excellent count of 5,000 was made near Johnson Basin on 19 September (LR, RH).

American Pipit: This species was widely-reported, arrived early, stayed past closing time, and appeared in good numbers: 75+ were counted near Gibbon on 23 October (LR, RH), and 50 were numbered late in the same area on 12 November (LR, RH). The one spotted in Cass Co on 12 September (GW) was rather early, while the 50 seen near Gibbon (above), the 2 found at Oliver Res on 13 November (SJD), and the 3 identified at BOL on 13 November (JS) were all rather late.

Sprague's Pipit: The only report of this elusive species was of one bird identified on a roadside near FL on 5 September (LR, RH); this date is very early and the place very strange for a Sprague's Pipit, but most NE reports come from the central part of the state.

Cedar Waxwing: Routine reports.

Tennessee Warbler: Only 7 were reported, all as expected from the east during the period between 1 and 19 September (BP, LP, JGJ, JG, JJ).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Numbers were great and the reports statewide. The best counts included a fall record high 42 in the east RWB (!) on 27 September (JGJ), and 22 at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 2 October (SJD). One of the latter was very pale, possibly a westerly migrant of the eastern race *celata* (SJD). Most Panhandle Orange-crowned Warblers are brightly-colored with contrasting gray heads and olive backs, and are likely of the Rocky Mountain race *orestera*.

Nashville Warbler: This eastern migrant also appeared in good numbers, the 20 tallied at Wehrspann L on 20 September (BP, LP) marking a record count for fall. The 6th Panhandle report for fall was one identified at Oliver Res on 2 October, thought to be a male of the western race *ridgwayi* because of the extensive white on its underparts (SJD).

Northern Parula: None reported--late dates in the east occur in late September.

Yellow Warbler: Routine reports.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Surprisingly, the only reports were of singles found at ADF on 8 September (LF, CF) and at FF 27 September (BP, LP).

Magnolia Warbler: Only 5 were reported, all in the east between 11 and 24 September (JGJ, BP, LP, BFH).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Somewhat more common in fall than in spring, with as many records from the west as from the east, but still only a casual migrant, singles were spotted at Calamus Res on 25 September (MB, DH) and at Oliver Res on 26 September, the latter an immature female (SJD).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: An "Audubon's" seen at Wildcat Hills NC on 21 August (MB) may have been either a resident or a very early migrant. Single "Audubon's" were found near Gering and at Oliver Res on 16 October (SJD), a new late date for this form. The first "Myrtle" appeared at Neale Woods on 16

September (B). Rather late for the location was a "Myrtle" located at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD). The best count totaled 50+ at FF on 6 October (BP, LP).

Black-throated Green Warbler: Only one was reported, at Schramm SP on 5 September (MUs).

Townsend's Warbler: A regular fall migrant in small numbers in the western Panhandle, 5 were reported during the period between 24 August and 2 October (SJD), the latter a rather late date.

Blackburnian Warbler: Four were reported in the period 22 August (JGJ) through 8 October (LF, CF) in the east. The latter was rather late, but the one found at Schramm SP on 29 October represents the second-latest ever; it was banded and photographed (fide RK).

Yellow-throated Warbler: Breeding was confirmed for only the 2nd time in NE, at FF, where 2 adults were seen feeding 2 young from 6 to 9 September (BP, LP). This location is the northwestern-most breeding population of this species; probably only 1 to 2 breeding pairs occur at FF.

Palm Warbler: About 6 were reported, west to York Co (JGJ), between 18 September to 6 October (LE, JS, BA, BP, LP), a good showing for this species, which is only casual in fall. This fall's reports bring the all-time total up to only 30 or so.

Bay-breasted Warbler: The only report was of one seen at Neale Woods on 16 September (B). Normally, this species is most numerous in fall and rare in spring.

Cerulean Warbler: None reported--late dates usually occur around 1 September.

Black-and-white Warbler: Only 5 were reported between 24 August at Oliver Res (SJD) through 19 September at Indian Cave SP (JG). This migrant is statewide in fall.

American Redstart: The one spotted at ADF on 13 October (LF, CF) denotes the first ever October report for the east. Strangely, while redstarts are less common in the west than in the east in fall, the only other October dates for NE come from Scotts Bluff Co, suggesting late migrants from some western population. To the west, a single was identified at Oliver Res on 21 August (MB), and 2 were noted there on 4 September (SJD).

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Northern Waterthrush: The only report was of one identified at Oliver Res on 27 August (SJD), only the 4th fall Panhandle record. Surprisingly, none was reported from the east.

Louisiana Waterthrush: None reported--last dates usually occur in early September.

Kentucky Warbler: Just making it into the fall report was an apparent early migrant identified at Papillion on 2 August (B). This species is rarely reported in fall, although late dates occur in September.

Mourning Warbler: Only 3 were reported, in the short period from 28 August to 4 September at ADF (LF, CF) and in Lancaster Co (LE).

MacGillivray's Warbler: The only report was of one seen at Winters Creek L on 3 September (SJD).

Common Yellowthroat: Routine reports.

Wilson's Warbler: Fall migrants are more numerous in the west; a record fall count reached 41 in the southern Panhandle on 20 September (SJD). This species was widely-reported this fall.

Canada Warbler: None reported. Usually, this species is reported more often in fall than in spring, with late dates into October.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Routine reports--all came from the Panhandle.

Summer Tanager: Rarely reported away from Schramm SP, this fall singles were found at Indian Cave SP on 8 August (B) and on 19 September (JG), the latter rather late. To date, no breeding has been confirmed at Indian Cave SP.

Scarlet Tanager: Routine reports.

Western Tanager: None reported--last dates occur around 1 October.

Green-tailed Towhee: The only report, and only the 9th fall report ever, was of an adult and an immature sighted in southwestern Kimball Co on 20 September (SJD).

Spotted Towhee: The one noted near Gibbon on 7 August (LR, RH) was at the eastern edge of the summer range; migrants were found there on 8 October, when 10 were seen, (LR, RH), coinciding with the last date, 2 October (RG), when this species was reported at Halsey and its first appearance in the southeast, at Forest Lawn Cem, Omaha, on 2 October (WRS). At Halsey, Ruth Green noted that females and hatching-year birds preceded males in migration.

Eastern Towhee: Routine reports.

Cassin's Sparrow: None reported.

American Tree Sparrow: Routine reports.

Chipping Sparrow: Adults feeding begging young at Alma on 8 August (GH, WH) established the western edge of the breeding range in the Republican River Valley; and 10+ were counted between Alma and Orleans on 2 August (GH, WH). There are no breeding records west of Grand Island in the Platte Valley. Are observers aware of any, or of summering birds in that area? Banded birds at Halsey included a return 5-year old and some 3 to 4 years old (RG).

Clay-colored Sparrow: An excellent total of 65 was counted in Kearney Co on 11 September (LR, RH).

Brewer's Sparrow: An excellent count of 45 was tallied south of I-80 Exit 1 on 22 August (JS, WRS). No details were provided for a report of a sighting in Blaine Co at the NOU meeting; this site is somewhat east of the usual migration corridor.

Field Sparrow: This species is rare in the Panhandle, but 2 were found at Riverside Park, Scottsbluff, on 2 October (SJD). The one carefully studied and described at Wolf L on 27 November was thought to be an immature (TH); this date is rather late.

Vesper Sparrow: The second-best ever fall count totaled an amazing 462 in southwestern Kimball Co on 26 September (SJD).

Lark Sparrow: The 89 totaled in southwestern Kimball Co on 2 September (SJD) marks the best ever fall count.

Lark Bunting: The female seen north of FL on 5 September was a little far east (LR, RH).

Savannah Sparrow: Rather late were one sighted in Lancaster Co on 20 November (LE) and 2 located at L Alice on 18 November (SJD). A good count registered 100+ in the east RWB on 11 September (JGJ).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Baird's Sparrow: Two were documented at Clear Creek Marshes on 26 September (SJD). This sighting represents only the 3rd documented fall record, the others include a Logan Co specimen taken on 17 August 1936 and one netted and

banded at CLNWR on 15 October 1980. Reports should increase as observers gain more confidence with identification and habitat preferences of this elusive species.

LeConte's Sparrow: An excellent count reached 40 at Kirkpatrick Basin--also the westernmost report this season--on 25 September (JGJ).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Observers who look for this species in the right habitat find it with little difficulty: as many as 16, a record fall count and latest fall date, were identified at Sandpiper Basin on 7 November (JGJ); 6 were seen at Spikerush Basin on 14 October (JG); and 5 were spotted at Little Salt Fork Marsh on 2 October (JG). Others reported included singles found at Arbor L on 26 September (LE) and at Lilley Sandpits, Hall Co, on 2 October (LR, RH); and 4 found at Jack Sinn Marsh on 3 October (JS).

Fox Sparrow: All reports came, as expected, from the east, and were fairly numerous, totaling about 25 birds.

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Many reports arrived, including one of a rather late bird photographed at L Ogallala on 19 November (SJD). Although this species is considered uncommon in the Panhandle, 8 were counted there on 20 September (SJD).

Swamp Sparrow: The 6 spotted at FL on 1 August (LR, H) were summering birds. The 30 tallied at Neale Woods on 15 October (B) set a record fall count. Uncommon in the west, a single was identified at Oliver Res on 26 September (SJD).

White-throated Sparrow: This species is rare in the Panhandle, but no fewer than 13 were reported, all by Steven Dinsmore: 2 were sighted at Winters Creek L on 20 September; one was located at Oliver Res on 2 October; and on 16 October 2 were spotted at Oliver Res, 4 at Winters Creek L, 2 at Bushnell, and one at West Lawn Cem, Gering. Interestingly, Steven Dinsmore noted that all these birds were tan-striped morphs. All young birds have tan stripes, but the head-stripes of most adults are white. Those adults that remain tan-striped are not thought to be population-specific, but occur throughout the species' range.

White-crowned Sparrow: The one spotted in Cherry Co on 10 October was identified as the eastern black-lored race *leucophrys* (LR, RH), a regular migrant through eastern NE. Cherry Co is located at the western edge of the range of *leucophrys*. Westerly birds may be of the Rocky Mountain black-lored race *oriantha*.

Harris's Sparrow: This species appeared in good numbers, including "hundreds" found in Dakota Co on 23 October (BFH) and 160 counted on 31 October at Wolf L (TH). Harris's Sparrow is rare in the west, and so the 16 identified at Sutherland Res on 6 November (SJD) were of interest.

Dark-eyed Junco: Counts of 200 near Heartwell (LR, RH) and of 130 at Wolf L (TH), both on 30 October, were near-record fall counts. There were few reports of juncos identified to subspecies; at Chadron the first "Slate-colored" did not appear until 19 November (ZU), and the only sighting of an "Oregon" occurred on 21 November (ZU).

McCown's Longspur: The only report was of 15 seen on 16 October in southwestern Kimball Co (SJD).

Lapland Longspur: The forty tallied near Minatare on 16 October (SJD) were rather early, and the "thousands" sighted in the east RWB on 7 November (JGJ) was a good count.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The only reports were of a good count of 150 at Clear Creek Marshes on 26 September and of 21 in southwestern Kimball Co the same day (SJD).

Snow Bunting: One of the last regular species to appear each year, a single just made the Fall Report; it was an adult female seen at Crane Meadows NC on 27 November (B).

Northern Cardinal: Routine reports.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Near Gibbon, where Black-headed Grosbeaks predominate in summer, a female Rose-breasted was spotted in the observers' yard on 1 August (LR, RH). Westerly migrants, rare as far west as central NE, were a "presumed Rose-breasted" found in the east RWB on 22 August (JGJ) and a first fall male identified at Lilley Sandpits, Hall Co, on 25 September (LR, RH).

Black-headed Grosbeak: A grosbeak with a buffy, unstreaked breast seen as far east as Fort Calhoun on 8 October (CH) may have been this species. The latest fall dates, and even a few winter records, occur in the east.

Blue Grosbeak: An immature was spotted rather late on 3 October in southwestern Dixon Co (JJ).

Lazuli Bunting: Routine reports.

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: Routine reports.

Bobolink: Routine reports.

Red-winged Blackbird: Some great counts (but not records) were received, including 30,000 tallied at Kiowa Springs on 16 October (SJD) and 5,000 totaled both in Phelps Co on 24 October (LR, RH) and southwest of Valentine, where the flock gleaned grain from cattle manure on 20 November (CH).

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: The best count reached 2,000 at FL on 11 September (LR, RH); and remaining late were 4 males found at Kiowa Springs on 23 November (SJD).

Rusty Blackbird: Routine reports.

Brewer's Blackbird: The best count totaled 600 near Minatare on 26 September (SJD); 475 were also tallied at Kiowa Springs on 2 October (SJD). Reports without details of large flocks from eastern NE are questionable, especially with no mention of females present; flocks of juvenile Common Grackles look remarkably like Brewer's Blackbirds.

Common Grackle: A good count reached 6,500 at Kiowa Springs on 16 October (SJD). Short-tailed molting adults are a strange sight in fall; a flock of 3,000 counted in the observers' yard (???) on 11 September contained many such birds (LR, RH).

Great-tailed Grackle: The far west group at Kiowa Springs continued, with as many as 14 males and 12 females seen there on 2 October (SJD); 2 males still remained there on 13 November (SJD). The best count elsewhere reached 64, mostly females or immatures in molt near Gibbon on 22 August (LR, RH).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Excellent counts included the "several thousand" tallied between Odessa and FL 5 Sep (MU) and the 2,000 totaled near Johnson Basin on 19 September (LR, RH).

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: A very late bird was spotted near Milford on 9 November (PK). Occasionally, individuals have attempted to winter in NE, but most leave by late September.

Bullock's Oriole: Unexpected was a group of 4 immatures or females and an adult male found at Alma on 11 August (GH, WH); the description of the latter indicated that it was a Bullock's Oriole. These birds were probably early migrants, likely a family group, but there are no other records of Bullock's Oriole seen east of the Panhandle in fall.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: The only reports were of 9 birds spotted in southwestern Sioux Co on 23 November (SJD) and 15 noted along the Henry Road in southwestern Sioux Co on 28 November (B). This location has proved consistent over the last 2 to 3 years.

Purple Finch: After a few low years, numbers were encouraging, with a good count of 40 registered at Wolf L on 27 November (TH), and 10 counted at FF between 17 and 28 November (BP, LP). In all, at least 60 were reported, all but one from the east. The exception was a single located in Sowbelly Canyon on 13 November (JG); Purple Finches are rare in the Panhandle.

House Finch: A good count reached 78 in Lancaster Co on 26 September (LE).

Red Crossbill: Post-breeding wanderers were the 2 found at Alma on 11 August (GH, WH) and the one seen at a Kearney feeder on 29 September (fide George Brown). Less surprising were a female identified at NNF, Halsey, on 8 October (LR, RH), "several" located at the Wildcat Hills NC on 21 August (MB), and 2 spotted at Scotts Bluff NM on 3 September (SJD).

White-winged Crossbill: Hopefully a portent of things to come, a male was found at Tekamah Cem on 21 November (JGJ), the only report.

Common Redpoll: Four birds appeared prior to the end of the period: 3 at Neale Woods from 6 to 7 November (B), and one at a Nebraska City feeder on 28 November (LF, CF).

Pine Siskin: Small numbers were widely reported from 14 October (BP, LP) onwards; the best count reached only 8, at BOL on 13 November (JS). The one seen at Wildcat Hills NC on 21 August (MB) may have been part of a local breeding population, although evidence for such is scanty.

Lesser Goldfinch: A singing green-backed male excited observers at Oliver Res between 21 and 27 August (MB, SJD, BP, LP). This report is the 8th in all and the 5th documented for this casual summer visitor to the Panhandle.

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

Evening Grosbeak: None reported.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.