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## Spring Field Report, March-May, 1994

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SPRING FIELD REPORT, MARCH - MAY, 1994

Compiled by

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INTRODUCTION

The amount of work reporters put into their reports is tremendous. Putting the information into a readable format which preserves it for future use is a challenge, but always interesting. Reporters can report on their own forms if preferred; some do now, often because of computerized record-keeping systems. I [Ross Silcock] enter the data into my computer, and so almost anything is fine, as long as I can read it. It is not necessary to list every species, although it is difficult to know whether your dates of arrival, high counts, etc. are significant until compared with the others submitted. Perhaps the best way to save time and work reporting is to plan your system so that it is simple to report when the time comes.

NOTABLE EVENTS

There are several highlights among the data presented below. A long list of rarities included Eurasian Wigeon, Oldsquaw, Gyrfalcon, King Rail, Snowy Plover, Red Knot, Ruff (first NE record), Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Clark's Nutcracker, Cape May Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler (specimen in Lancaster County), Hooded Warbler, and Henslow's Sparrow.

American Bittern is doing well in the Sandhills, as is Black-crowned Night-Heron, and especially Black-necked Stilt. White-faced Ibis was also numerous, although it is not resident. Trumpeter Swan is present in the Sandhills in good numbers also, with several breeding pairs noted. This year Cinnamon Teal was also present in good numbers. That these species are doing well speaks for the good condition of Sandhills waterbird habitats.

In the Rainwater Basin, Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose migrate through in very large numbers, apparently increasing in recent years. Excellent counts of migrant waterfowl were received from Scotts Bluff County, thanks to NWR personnel via Alice Kenitz.

Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, and Bald Eagle numbers were up, the latter nesting again in the state. Of interest was a possible nesting attempt by Sharp-shinned Hawks in Saunders County, although no nest was found. Red-shouldered Hawk nested successfully at Fontenelle Forest, fledging 4 young.

Perhaps the most amazing inland concentration of rare gulls anywhere continued into March, while very valuable and complete data on shorebird migration was provided by Joel Jorgensen, who found 29 species, and by Lanny Randolph and Robin Harding, who found one that Jorgensen missed, Black-bellied Plover!

An apparent new nest site for Least Tern was found in Sarpy County, while Chuck-will's-widow appears to be extending its range northward.

Lark Bunting numbers were way down, with only a few reaching northeast NE, and flocks few and far between in the west.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Initials refer to observers; a list follows this report.  
\* = documented; m.ob. = many observers; n,s,e,w = north, south, east, west; borrow pond = excavated pond usually formed during

construction of a freeway or highway; AFB = Air Force Base; CLNWR = Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Garden Co.; CRP = Conservation Reserve Program; FF = Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co.; fide = second-hand report; NE = Nebraska; NNF = Nebraska National Forest; NPNWR = North Platte National Wildlife Refuge, Scotts Bluff Co.; SHP = State Historical Park; SP = State Park; SRA = State Recreation Area; SWMA = State Wildlife Management Area; UNSM = University of Nebraska State Museum; WPA = Waterfowl Production Area; (see Winter) = NBR 62 (1) 1994, pp. 51-63.

**Common Loon:** Earliest were singles 1 Apr in Sarpy (KCR) and Douglas (NR) Cos. Latest in e NE was 1 at Gavin's Point dam, Cedar Co. on 30 Apr (JJo). Later reports were from w NE, where 3 were still present at Winters Creek L., Scotts Bluff Co. 28 May (SSC).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Earliest was 1 at Funk WPA, Phelps Co., 10 Mar (JoJ). High was a good count of 100 there on 30 Apr (LR,RH).

**Horned Grebe:** Migrants appeared statewide; earliest was 1 at Crystal Cove, Dakota Co., 26 Mar (BFH), and last was at NPNWR 21 Apr (fide AKe). Peak was 4 in Dixon Co. 17 Apr (JJo). Uncommon in the Sandhills was 1 at Palmer L., Sheridan Co., 9 Apr (RCR,DJR).

**Eared Grebe:** Earliest were 4 on an I-80 borrow pond in Lincoln Co. 17 Mar (BP,LP). High counts were 75 at CLNWR 4 May (LMA) and 60 at Funk WPA on 30 Apr (LR,RH).

**Western Grebe:** Earliest were 8 on L. Minatare, Scotts Bluff Co., 20 Apr (fide AKe) and high count was 56 at NPNWR 3 May (LMA). Easterly reports were 1 at Brazile Creek SWMA 22 May (JJo) and 3 at Ayr L., Adams Co., on 4 May (JoJ), and unexpectedly far e, 1 at Base L. on 23 Apr (RCG).

**American White Pelican:** Unusually early were 3 at the w end of L. McConaughy, Keith Co., on 13 Mar (RCR,DJR) and 14 Mar (PL). Could these have been wintering birds from Sutherland Reservoir? (see Winter). High count was 1000 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 19 Apr (LR,RH). A late bird, possibly injured, was at DeSoto NWR 29 May (JoJ), and 3 were still at Branched Oak L., Lancaster Co., on 21 May (LEi).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Earliest was 1 at Medicine Creek Res., Frontier Co., on 20 Mar (LR,RH). High count was 410 there on 16 Apr (LR,RH).

**American Bittern:** This was considered a "banner year for this species; more were seen in NE than in any previous year", with 7 at various Sandhills locations 6-13 May (RCR). This species is still fairly common in the Sandhills. Very early was 1 at CLNWR 5 Apr (LMA), while high count was 6 there on 4 May (LMA). The only e reports were from Arbor L., Lancaster Co., 7 May (LEi), and Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA, Saunders Co., 14 Ma (TEL,JGu).

**Great Blue Heron:** High counts were 30 on 5 May at CLNWR (LMA) and 15 in Scotts Bluff County on 28 May (AKe); 11 hardy birds were roosting on ice at Snyder's Bend, Dakota Co., 12 Mar (BFH). Few are found in e NE after mid-May; 2 at Funk WPA on 5 May (JoJ) were the latest.

**Great Egret:** Earliest were 2 at Ceresco, Saunders Co., 2 Apr (NR), latest were 2 at Arbor L. on 7 May (LEi), and high counts were 3 at Waco WPA, Clay Co., on both 2 and 5 May (JoJ). The only report from w NE, where migrants are rare, was of 1 at Bovee's Fish Farm near Mitchell, Scotts Bluff Co., on 21 Apr (ECT).

**Snowy Egret:** Only 3 reports were received of this rare migrant: 3 were at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 23 Apr (LR,RH), where 1 was present 3 days prior (BJR); another was at the Wayne, Wayne Co., sewage lagoons 30 Apr (JJo).

**Little Blue Heron:** The only reports of this rare spring migrant may have been of the same bird; sightings were from FF, Sarpy Co., 25

Apr (JAl) and 10 May (BP,LP).

**Cattle Egret:** Rather early was 1 at Willow Creek SP 4 Apr (JJo). High count was 15 w of Talmage, Otoe Co., on 24 Apr (MBi). Last was in Otoe Co. 22 May (LF,CF). The only w report was of 4 at L. Minatare 15 Apr (AKe).

**Green-backed Heron:** Earliest was in Cass Co. 28 Apr (Gwo), and furthest w was 1 at Spikerush WMA, York Co., on 19 May (RCR). This species is rare in w NE.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** This species was "never as common in some 20 years in the Sandhills as this spring" (RCR), with a record count of 19 in the Lakeside-Antioch area 7 May (RCR,DJR). At Funk WPA 11 were counted 5 May (LR,RH). Rather early were 2 at Holdrege, Phelps Co., 1 Apr (RCR,DJR).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** The only report was from perhaps the only regular location in the state, FF, where 1 was seen 11 May (BP,LP,RCG).

**White-faced Ibis:** Notable high counts were 17 in the South Platte R. valley, Deuel Co., 28 Apr, the most seen by the observer at one time in NE (RCR), and 15 at Pawnee L, Lancaster Co., 7 May (LEi). Earliest were 4 at Funk WPA 18 Apr (JoJ) and last was 1 near Lakeside on 17 May (RCR).

**Trumpeter Swan:** First spring migrants were noted on 4 Mar, when 13 birds were located as follows: 1 at Smith L., Sheridan Co., 3 about 32 miles s of Rushville, Sheridan Co., 2 at Whitman, Grant Co., 5 at Swan L., Arthur Co., and 2 about 10 miles e of Arthur, Arthur Co. (RCR). At Hyannis, Grant Co., 2 appeared 31 Mar, and a high count of 6 were there 30 Apr (RCR), while 2 were at a nesting site w of Merriman, Cherry Co., 12 Apr (RCR). At CLNWR 1 was present 25 May (LMA). These reports generally outline the breeding range in NE. No information was received regarding departure of birds wintering below Kingsley Dam (see Winter).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** The center of abundance for migrants is the Rainwater Basin in s-central NE, where numbers peaked at 100,000 at Funk WPA 12 Mar (JoJ). By 15 May, only 10 were present (LR,RH). East or w of this area, numbers decline dramatically, although RCR and DJR noted that this species is becoming more common each spring further w. A careful count in n Perkins Co. 12 Mar yielded a surprising 2141 birds (RCR,DJR) on a rather early date. Earliest were 45 on the Platte R. in Saunders Co. on 5 Mar (THo), and also in Phelps Co. the same day (LR,RH). Latest were 2 at Springer WMA, Hamilton Co., 18 May (RCR).

**Snow Goose:** Following a recent trend, largest numbers of migrants are passing through the Rainwater Basin rather than the Missouri R. valley. Peak count was estimated at 400,000 (LR,RH) and 300,000 (JoJ) in Phelps Co. 12 Mar, while the highest Missouri R. valley count was only 3000 in Dixon Co. 13 Mar (JJo). It was considered a below average year in w NE also (RCR), with high counts 850 at L. Minatare on 8 Mar (fide AKe), 400 at the e end of L. McConaughy on 5 Mar (RCR,MB), and 400 over Alliance, Box Butte Co., on 9 Apr (RCR,DJR). Earliest were in Cass Co. 2 Mar (Gwo), and latest were 6 still present at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH).

**Ross' Goose:** A few can be found amongst most flocks of Snow Geese, such as 8 with a large flock at Cochran's L., Scotts Bluff Co., 19 Mar (RCR,DJR), although the 30+ counted on the edge of a large flock at Funk WPA 14 Mar were considered only part of "possibly hundreds" present (JoJ). Earliest were 12 at Funk WPA 8 Mar (JoJ) and last was 1 in Dodge Co. 10 Apr (BP,LP); dates of occurrence coincide with those of Snow Goose.

**Canada Goose:** Largest flocks of migrants occur in the Rainwater Basin, where peak count was 100,000 on 12 Mar at Funk WPA (JoJ).

Missouri R. valley counts were far smaller, the highest - 500 - both in Cass Co. 15 Mar (Gwo) and Dixon Co. 13 Mar (JJo). The first migrants appeared 5 Mar with flocks of 100 in Dakota Co. (BFH) and 35 in Saunders Co. (THo). The wintering flock of over 1000 was still at Alice L., Scotts Bluff Co., on 2 Mar (fide AKe).

**Wood Duck:** Earliest was 1 in Saunders Co. 5 Mar (THo), while early in the w were 3 at Dock L., Grant Co., 31 Mar (RCR,DJR). This species was scarce in the w this spring, after its rapid buildup in recent years (RCR). Perhaps they were at L. Minatare, where 80 were counted 17 May (fide AKe).

**Green-winged Teal:** Early migrants are difficult to detect due to wintering birds, although first migrants in Dakota Co. appeared 12 Mar (BFH). Peak counts included 326 at L. Alice 6 Apr (fide AKe) and 300 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 5 Apr (JoJ).

**American Black Duck:** Surprisingly, the only report was of the first migrants at Snyder's Bend on 12 Mar (BFH). This species is rare away from the Missouri R. valley.

**Mallard:** Peak count reported was only 2568 at L. Alice on 22 Mar (fide AKe). High Missouri R. valley count was only 200 in Cass Co. on 16 Mar (Gwo).

**Northern Pintail:** Peak counts were 609 at L. Alice on 8 Mar (fide AKe) and 600 at Funk WPA on 14 Mar (JoJ). High Missouri R. valley count was only 25 in Cass Co. 6 Mar (Gwo).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Earliest was in Cass Co. 6 Mar (Gwo) and high counts were 180 at CLNWR on 4 May (LMa) and 60 at Fahrenholz Ponds 23 Apr (JJo). The species arrived in high numbers much earlier in the season than is usual in the w (RCR).

**Cinnamon Teal:** Unusually good numbers occurred in w NE this spring, although arrival was later than usual (RCR). High counts were 7 as far e as Funk WPA on 28 Mar (JoJ), and 5 in the Lakeside-Antioch area from 9 Apr through the period (RCR,DJR). Earliest were the 6 at Funk WPA 17 Mar (JoJ), and furthest e was 1 in York Co. 3 Apr (NR).

**Northern Shoveler:** Earliest were 3 at Base L. on 5 Mar (BP,LP) and peak counts were an amazing 1000 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa), followed by 161 at Winters Creek L. on 20 Apr (fide AKe). Missouri R. valley counts were small, the best only 28 in Dixon Co. on 4 Apr (JJo). Obviously, most migrants passed through w NE this spring.

**Gadwall:** Like the preceding, best counts were from w NE: 1500 were at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa) and 225 were at Facus Springs, Morrill Co., on 19 Mar (RCR,DJR). No count higher than the 14 in Dixon Co. on 21 Mar (JJo) was received from e NE.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** There are fewer than 15 reports of this species for NE, and so the two (plus a hybrid) received this year were unexpected. Earliest was a male just n of Johnson WPA, Phelps Co., on 10 Mar (JoJ), and the other was on the Gering sewage lagoons 5 Apr (AKe). For good measure, a photo was received of a hybrid with American Wigeon at Funk WPA 6-7 Apr (JoJ). This species now appears to be a casual migrant through NE.

**American Wigeon:** Another species with highest numbers in the w, peaks were 1200 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa) and 759 at Winters Creek L. on 8 Mar (fide AKe). High e count was 75 at Willow Creek SP on 4 Apr (JJo). No reports were received from e NE later than 7 May in Lancaster Co. (LEi) and 5 May at Funk WPA (JoJ).

**Canvasback:** Migrants appeared in late Feb (see Winter), and peak counts were rather low, with 130 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa), 104 at Winters Creek L. on 6 Apr (fide AKe), and, from the Missouri R. valley, 40 at Base L. on 5 Mar (BP,LP). Latest away from breeding areas was 1 at Funk WPA 18 Apr (JoJ).

- Redhead:** Peak count was 4640 at Winters Creek L. on 8 Mar (fide AKe), a total far lower than the 15-20,000 found there in past years (RCR). Elsewhere, high count was 285 at Funk WPA on 12 Mar (LR,RH). Latest away from breeding areas was at Wagon Train L., Lancaster Co., on 9 Apr (PK,KK).
- Ring-necked Duck:** Highest numbers were 1450 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMA) and 468 at Winters Creek L. on 2 Mar (fide AKe). A count of 115 near Crawford, Dawes Co., on 16 Apr (RCR,DJR) was considered "unusually large" for the area. Counts from the e were low, with 43 on Base L. on 1 Mar (BP,LP) and 35 on the Wayne sewage lagoons 27 Mar (JJo). Late was 1 at West Point, Cuming Co., on 29 May (LEi).
- Greater Scaup:** The only report of this uncommon, often overlooked, migrant was of 2 at Funk WPA on 8 Mar (JoJ).
- Lesser Scaup:** Peak counts were from w NE, where an amazing 2300 were at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMA) and 657 were at Winters Creek L. on 6 Apr (fide AKe). Best e counts were 100 on the Wayne sewage lagoons 27 Mar (JJo) and 50 on Base L. 15 Mar (KCR). Very late was 1 at West Point, Cuming Co., on 29 May (LEi).
- Oldsquaw:** The only report, of a female below Kingsley Dam 5 Mar (RCR,MB), the 23rd known report for the area (RCR), was probably the same bird present since 21 Feb (see Winter).
- Common Goldeneye:** High count was from the e, where 200 were on Base L. 5 Mar (KCR). Best from the w was 72 at Winters Creek L. on 8 Mar (fide AKe). Late was a female on Keystone L., Keith Co., on 29 Apr (RCR).
- Bufflehead:** Migrants arrived in late Feb (see Winter), and peak counts were 47 at Winters Creek L. 3 May (fide AKe) and 30 on the Missouri R. in Dixon Co. 4 Apr (JJo). There were no May reports away from the panhandle.
- Hooded Merganser:** Small numbers were reported statewide, although 2 females near Lakeside 23 Apr were unexpected for the Sandhills (RCR). Migrants arrived at Funk WPA 10 Mar (JoJ) and in Dakota (BFH) and Saunders (THo) Cos. 12 Mar, while one at FF 31 May (BP,LP) is indicative of nesting there.
- Common Merganser:** High counts occur during winter (see Winter), but for the Spring period good counts were 627 on L. Alice 22 Mar (fide AKe), and, in e NE, 41 at Snyder's Bend 14 Mar (BFH). There were 30 at Gavin's Point Dam as late as 30 Apr (JJo), but the last were a male and 2 females at Smith L. on 7 May (RCR).
- Red-breasted Merganser:** This species migrates primarily through the Missouri R. valley, where most reports originated. Earliest there was in Cass Co. 9 Mar (Gwo) and last were 10 on Cunningham L., Douglas Co., on 11 Apr (BP,LP). High count was 27 on Yankton L., Cedar Co., on 4 Apr (JJo). The few reports elsewhere, where it is very uncommon, included 6 below Kingsley Dam 12 Mar (RCR,DJR), a female above Kingsley Dam 29 Apr (RCR), 2 females at Lewellen, Garden Co. on 29 Apr (RCR), and a very late bird at CLNWR on 25 May (LMA).
- Ruddy Duck:** Earliest was at Branched Oak L. on 6 Mar (LEi), and high counts were 72 on Winters Creek L. 3 May (fide AKe) and 40 at CLNWR on 4 May (LMA).
- Turkey Vulture:** Very early was 1 in Lancaster Co. 25 Mar (LEi). High count was 12 near Gering 7 Apr (AKe).
- Osprey:** This species was seen often and in all parts of the state this spring; earliest was in Saunders Co. 2 Apr (THo) and latest were singles at Fahrenholz Pond (JJo) and Funk WPA (LR,RH) on 14 May. High counts were of 3 both at Niobrara 30 Apr (JJo) and the Kingsley Dam area 29 Apr (RCR).
- Bald Eagle:** Record high numbers remained into the spring period around Kingsley Dam; 225 were still there 5 Mar (RCR,MB), and

- 110-115 were scattered around L. McConaughy 13 Mar (RCR,DJR). Elsewhere high counts were 56 at LaPlatte 8 Apr (BP,LP), also the last non-breeders reported, and 20 there on 9 Mar (BP,LP). A nest at NPNWR had 2 chicks before the end of the period (fide AKe).
- Northern Harrier:** High count was 8 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa); 2 were still there 25 May (LMa), possibly potential breeders. Last away from known breeding areas was 1 at Funk WPA 15 May (LR,RH); this date may be indicative of nesting.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Singles were widely distributed; latest was at Branched Oak Res. 16 Apr (PK,KK), except for 1 in Bellevue 28 May (RCG), but read on! Since this species is a very rare breeder in NE, with documented records only from the Pine Ridge, the presence of 2 acting territorially near the Platte R. in n Saunders Co. through the spring period and until at least 25 Jun (THo) was of interest. Johnsgard (1979: Birds of the Great Plains) suggested that breeding might occur in the Missouri R. floodplain.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Also widely reported without multiple counts; latest were at Base L. 9 May (RCG), Wyuka Cemetery, Lancaster Co., 7 May (LEi), and Whitney L., Dawes Co., 5 May (RCR), probably all late migrants, although 1 on the Niobrara Golf Course 21 May (LR,RH) may have been on nesting territory. Egg dates for this species are mostly in May.
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** The only known nesting pair in NE was carrying nesting material at FF on 1 Mar (BP,LP); 4 young were fledged 6 Jun (RCG). This site fledged 3 young on 15 Jun 1992 but no nest was located in 1993 (RCG). The only other report, without details, was from Cass Co. on 4 May (Gwo).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** Primarily a Missouri R. valley migrant, this was a poor year, with fewer than 10 singles reported. Earliest was 16 Apr in Cass (Gwo) and Saunders (THo) Cos., and latest in Otoe (LF,CF) and Sarpy (BP,LP) Cos. 7 May. Rare in western NE, and generally seen only after storms, RCR considered this a "banner year", with 5 birds seen: 1 over Chadron 24 Apr (RCR,DJR), 2 at Gordon, Sheridan Co. on 6 May (RCR), and 2 at Smith L. on 7 May (RCR,DJR).
- Swainson's Hawk:** Earliest was 1 in Hall Co. on 2 Apr (BJR). High count was an excellent 50+ in Clay Co. 21 Apr (JoJ), while highest counts in the e were only 4, both in Dixon Co. 16 Apr (JJo) and Sarpy Co. 17 Apr (BP,LP). Last away from breeding areas were 2 at Funk WPA 5 May (JoJ). Early in w NE was 1 near Antioch on 9 Apr (RCR,DJR).
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Earliest migrants were near Hay Springs, Sheridan Co., on 11 Mar (RCR) and in n Perkins Co. 12 Mar (RCR,DJR). Reports from the e edge of the winter range were of 1 at Funk Marsh 6-8 Apr (JoJ,BJR), and another at Massey WPA, Clay Co., on 3 Apr (BJR).
- Rough-legged Hawk:** Of only about 8 spring reports, latest was 1 at Lawn Church, Sioux Co., on 19 Apr (RCR,DJR); last in the e was 1 at Newcastle, Dixon Co., on 4 Apr (JJo).
- Golden Eagle:** There were only 3 reports: an immature was unexpected in the Sandhills near Lakeside 20 May (RCR,DR,WRS); most are within the breeding range at this time. More usual were singles at CLNWR 15 Mar (LMa) and near Gering 14 May (AKe).
- American Kestrel:** High count was only 12 in Garden Co. 15 Mar (LMa). The nest box program using I-80 signs between Omaha and Lincoln has been very successful. This year at least 43 fledglings were banded from 32 boxes; the high was 73 in 1992 (RCG).
- Merlin:** Reports were received of 8 birds statewide. Earliest was at Funk WPA 17 Mar (JoJ), and latest a "very late" bird 29 Apr near

- Keystone, Keith Co., (RCR). This species is a low-density winter visitor in NE, but becomes more evident during migration periods.
- Peregrine Falcon:** No fewer than 9 were reported, from all parts of the state; its recovery is comparable to that of the Bald Eagle. It is essentially a rather late spring migrant through NE. Earliest was 1 at LaPlatte 14 Apr (BP,LP), and last was an immature s of Whitman on 17 May (RCR).
- Gyr Falcon:** A belated report was from Joe Shown, an experienced falconer, who trapped and released an immature female near the Lincoln-Logan County line s of Stapleton on 4 Jan (fide WWY). This species is probably regular in the Sandhills in very low numbers; it should be looked for in areas where grouse and prairie-chickens concentrate.
- Prairie Falcon:** Surprisingly, only 3 birds were reported, all from Scotts Bluff Co.; 1 was there 27 Mar (LMa) and 2 were near Gering 24 Apr (AKe). Apparently e wintering birds return early to breeding areas.
- Gray Partridge:** This species is at a low ebb. The only reports were of singles from the heart of its NE range in Dixon Co. 13 Mar and 26 May (JJo).
- Ring-necked Pheasant:** Two good counts were received from opposite ends of the state: 75 in Dixon Co. 10 Mar (JJo) and 70 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa). Populations are apparently healthy.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** The few reports included 3 from eastern outposts. A single was in ne Stanton Co. 6 Mar (WRS), 1 was at Buckskin L., Dixon Co. (?), on 4 Mar (JJo), and a flock of 19 was s of Atlanta, Harlan Co., on 3 Apr, an area not considered to harbor large numbers of this species (RCR,DJR).
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** The only report was of 14 at CLNWR on 4 May (LMa). Perhaps no news is good news!
- Wild Turkey:** Scattered reports were received statewide, including a high count of 20 in Saunders Co. on 1 Apr (THo); unusual was a hen which hatched 13 chicks against the side of Melba Wigg's house near Greta, Sarpy Co. 18 May (fide RCG).
- Northern Bobwhite:** Although most numerous in the se, this species occurs statewide except for the Sandhills. Westernmost were 2 in Scotts Bluff Co. 7 May (AKe), and high count was 15 in Dixon Co. 1 Apr (JJo).
- King Rail:** The only report was of one on the hiking trail at Wehrspann L., Sarpy Co., on 14 May (NR). This species is regular in NE, but rare, with records from the e half of the state, w to the L. McConaughy area.
- Virginia Rail:** Probably fairly common statewide as a migrant but not often looked for, spring arrivals were led by 1 at FF 26 Apr (JAl).
- Sora:** Earliest was 1 at Branched Oak L. 10 Apr (LEi), a rather early date; best count was 20 at Arbor L. on 7 May (LEi).
- American Coot:** Earliest were 1 in Frontier Co. on 5 Mar (LR,RH) and 10 at Branched Oak L. on 6 Mar (LEi). Peak counts were from w NE: 950 were at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa), while 541 were at Winters Creek L. on 6 Apr (fide AKe).
- Sandhill Crane:** No peak counts from the c Platte R. valley were received, but peak count from w NE was 450 at Little L. Alice on 2 Apr (LMa); earliest there were 6 on 22 Mar (fide AKe). Latest were 3 still present at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH).
- Whooping Crane:** Only report was of 3 in Phelps and Kearney Cos. 4-14 Apr (LR,RH,JoJ).
- Black-bellied Plover:** Only 12 widely spaced birds were detected this spring; one observer (JoJ), who found 29 shorebird species in the Rainwater Basin, missed this species. However, RCR found more in western NE than in most years, including 3 s of Gordon on



- 6 May, 2 near Crawford on 14 May (RCR,DJR), and 1 in n Perkins Co. on 17 May. A few were detected in the e, including 3 at Springer WMA on 18 May (RCR), and 1 in the Rainwater Basin as late as 26 May (MCl).
- American Golden-Plover:** Few were reported, all in the e half of the state. Earliest were 11 nw of Shickley, Clay Co., on 18 Apr (JoJ), also the highest count along with 11 at Funk WPA on 24 Apr (LR,RH), and latest was 1 at Spikerush WMA, York Co., on 19 May (RCR).
- Snowy Plover:** A single bird was a very rare find at Funk WPA 2 May (JoJ). This species is casual in NE, with reports in recent years mainly from L. McConaughy and other locations in w NE.
- Semipalmated Plover:** Earliest was 1 at Theesen WPA, Clay Co., on 15 Apr (JoJ). Excellent peak counts were 77 at Sandpiper WPA, Clay Co., on 3 May (JoJ) and 46 at Waco WPA, York Co. on 3 May (JoJ). Latest was 1 at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH). None were detected in w NE.
- Piping Plover:** Earliest was 1 ne of Harvard, Clay Co., on 21 Apr (JoJ); peak count was 6 at Funk WPA 5 May (BCa,GCa); latest migrants were 4 in Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo), although there were 3 territorial birds at L. McConaughy 20 May (RCR,DR,WRS).
- Killdeer:** High counts of 56 at CLNWR 4 May (Lma) and 47 in the Rainwater Basin 27 Apr (MCl) probably are resident birds; peak migration probably is in late Mar. First arrivals were on the Platte R. in n Saunders Co. (THo) and in extreme e Frontier Co. (LR,RH) on 5 Mar.
- Black-necked Stilt:** This species made a sudden and explosive increase in the region (RCR); first were 12 in the Lakeside-Antioch area on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). An unusually high count and perhaps the highest known for the state was 27 in 3 loose colonies in the Lakeside-Antioch area on 7 May; about 6 of these pairs were in the area at the end of May (RCR). Another pair, the female with eggs, was near Crawford on 28 May (RCR,DJR).
- American Avocet:** Earliest was 1 at L. Alice 22 Mar (fide AKe). Best migrant count was 31 at Base L. on 15 Apr (BP,LP). About 100 were scattered over breeding areas in the Lakeside-Antioch area 23 Apr (RCR,DJR), and 32 were at CLNWR 4 May (Lma). May birds are generally on breeding range, and so 3 in the Rainwater Basin 26 May (MCl) and 5 at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH) were of interest; a few probably breed there. Also of interest was 1 at Niobrara on 21 May (JJo), and another "far from its usual w NE habitat" at Oliver Res., Kimball Co., on 27 Apr (RCR).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Earliest was 1 at Funk WPA on 28 Mar (JoJ); peak counts were 50 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 20 Apr (BJR,WRS), 20 at Ceresco on 9 May (BP,LP), and 17 at Lakeside-Antioch on 9 Apr (RCR); latest were at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH).
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** Earliest were 12 at Funk WPA 3 Apr (JoJ); peak counts were 40+ there 29 Apr (JoJ), 28 in Sheridan Co. on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR), and 20 at Ceresco on 9 May (BP,LP); last was a late bird near Crawford on 28 May (RCR,DJR).
- Solitary Sandpiper:** No more than 2 were reported together, as expected (well-named?); earliest were 2 at Mitchell (ECT) and another in Saunders Co. (THo) on 23 Apr and latest were in Otoe (LF,CF) and Sarpy (BP,LP) Cos. on 9 May.
- Willet:** Earliest were 2 at North L. Basin WMA, Seward Co., on 15 Apr (JoJ). In the Lakeside-Antioch area on 23 Apr, 44 were counted (RCR,DJR), while 21 were tallied in the Rainwater Basin 27 Apr (MCl). "Slightly misplaced" was 1 at Oliver Res. on 27 Apr (RCR).

- Spotted Sandpiper:** Earliest was 1 at Funk WPA 25 Apr (JoJ); in general large numbers do not migrate together, and so groups of 4 at Gering sewage lagoons 6 May (AKe) and 3 at Kiowa WMA, Scottsbluff Co., on 27 Apr (RCR) indicate peak migration.
- Upland Sandpiper:** Earliest were 11 s of Funk WPA, Phelps Co., on 25 Ap (JoJ), also a good count. High count was 12 at CLNWR 4 May (LMa).
- Long-billed Curlew:** Earliest were singles at CLNWR 4 Apr (LMa) and s of Hay Springs on 6 Apr (DJR); high count of migrants was 32 at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa), and the same number was recorded in Sheridan Co. sandhills 9 Apr (RCR,DJR). None were reported e of Sheridan and Garden Cos.
- Hudsonian Godwit:** Earliest was 1 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 14 Apr (JoJ); peak count was 85 there on 20 Apr (BJR,WRS), while the best e count was only 14 at Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA on 15 May (JGu); last were 6 rather late birds in the Rainwater Basin 26 May (MCl). None were reported w of Phelps Co.
- Marbled Godwit:** There were few reports of this early spring migrant; RCR reported only one sighting, of 1 at Keystone L. on 29 Apr. Earliest was 1 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 10 Apr (LR,RH); peak count was 21 at NPNWR on 21 Apr (LMa); last were 5 at Funk WPA on 4 May (JoJ). The only e report was of 7 at Snyder's Bend on 16 Apr (BFH).
- Ruddy Turnstone:** Only 3 reports were received, including a very good count of 18 birds on Platte River sandbars near Schramm SRA 24 May (JMo). There were 2 at Funk WPA 5 May (JoJ), and another there 15 May (LR,RH). This species may be more common than reports indicate, as its habitat of sandy or rocky bars is often overlooked; it also tends to be a late spring migrant.
- Red Knot:** The only report of this at best casual species was of 1 bird n of Dixon, Dixon Co., on 30 Apr (JJo). This is a rather early date for this species, for which there are fewer than 20 NE reports. No further details were provided.
- Sanderling:** Also possibly under-reported due to its preference for sandy lake shores rather than mudflats, few reports were received; earliest were 2 at Funk WPA on 29 Apr (JoJ); best count was only 5, at Funk WPA on 30 Apr (LR,RH); latest was at Halsey Div., NNF, on 15-17 May (RCG). Westerly were 2 at Winters Creek L. on 3 May (fide AKe).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Earliest were 35+ at Funk WPA on 14 Apr (JoJ); peak count was an amazing 1000 at Sandpiper WPA on 3 May (JoJ); last were 25 at DeSoto NWR on 29 May (JoJ). The only w report was of 12 at Lakeside-Antioch on 7 May (RCR).
- Western Sandpiper:** This species is an uncommon low-density migrant, primarily in c and w NE in spring. The few reports received involved single birds, although 2 were at Springer WMA on 18 and 20 May (RCR,DR,WRS). Earliest was 1 at Sandpiper WMA 3 May (JoJ) and last was another in the Rainwater Basin 26 May (MCl). An e report without details was from Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo).
- Least Sandpiper:** Earliest were 3 at Kiowa WMA on 27 Apr (RCR); peak count was 300 at Sandpiper WMA on 3 May (JoJ); last were in Cass Co. (Gwo) and at Funk WPA (LR,RH) on 15 May.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** This is probably our latest-migrating shorebird. Earliest were 55 at Funk WPA on 23 Apr (LR,RH); peak count was 150 at Springer WMA on 18 and 20 May (RCR,DR,WRS); latest were 7 at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH).
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Earliest were 35 at Theesen WPA (JoJ) and 4 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA (BP,LP) on 18 Mar, a rather early date even for this early arriver. Peak count was an excellent 400 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 20 Apr (BJR,WRS), and last were in Cass Co. (Gwo) and at Halsey Div., NNF, (RCG) on 15 May.

- pectoral Sandpiper:** Also an early arriver, first was a very early single at Theesen WPA on 18 Mar (JoJ). Peak count was 75 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 20 Apr (BJR,WRS), and last were 15 in the Rainwater Basin on 26 May (MCl). RCR found none in the w, an unusual situation.
- Dunlin:** Earliest was a rather early bird at Theesen WPA 8 Apr (JoJ). Peak count for this low-density migrant was only 10, at Waco WPA on 2 May (JoJ), while last was 1 on the Platte R. at Schramm SRA on 24 May (BP,LP). None were found in the w.
- stilt Sandpiper:** Numbers were unimpressive this spring (RCR); peak count was only 24 at Sandpiper WPA on 3 May (JoJ). Earliest was 1 at Funk WPA 18 Apr (JoJ) and last were a "mere" 19 in the Lakeside-Antioch area 17 May (RCR).
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Surprisingly, none were reported from the narrow spring migration corridor centered on the Rainwater Basin area, despite close coverage this spring.
- Ruff:** Nebraska's first record, this was a beautiful red-plumaged male at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 19 Apr, photographed by JoJ. This bird was not present the next morning, however.
- short-billed Dowitcher:** This species is probably a regular migrant only in the e half of the state; any documented records are of interest. The expected race in NE is hendersoni, which closely resembles Long-billed Dowitcher in breeding plumage. All reports but two were from Missouri R. valley locations; earliest were 3 in Dixon Co. on 30 Apr (JJo) and last was in Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo). None were described. The only other reports were rather far w and earlier than expected for this species: 1 was photographed 28 Apr at Funk WPA (JoJ), and at least 2 were carefully observed and identified based on very broad buffy tertial edgings at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 19 Apr (BJR,WRS).
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Numbers this spring were outstanding. A very early 25 were at Theesen WPA on 18 Mar (JoJ); peak counts were excellent totals of 500 at both Funk WPA 28 Apr and Sandpiper WPA 3 May (JoJ); latest was at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH). A high count of 150 in the Lakeside-Antioch sandhills 7 May was unexpected (RCR,DJR).
- Common Snipe:** Earliest was 1 n of Axtell, Kearney Co., on 26 Mar (LR,RH); the first migrants were noted in Dakota Co. 3 Apr (BFH). High count was 20 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA 20 Apr (BJR,WRS). Last in the e was a rather late bird at Jack Sinn Memorial WMA 14 May (TEL). In the w, winnowing males were first noted s of Rushville 9 Apr (RCR,DJR), 2-3 males were at the Meadows Ranch in Cheyenne Co. 28 Apr (RCR), and 3 winnowing males were in Sheridan Co. 7 May (RCR,DJR).
- American Woodcock:** Earliest report this spring was of 1 at Snyder's Bend 12 Mar (BFH). A fledgling was photographed at Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA on 14 May (JGu). Furthest w were 2 on the Hike-Bike Trail in Buffalo County 2 Apr (BCa,GCa) through 5 May (LR,RH); this has become perhaps the most w regular location in the state for this species.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** Earliest were 19 at Theesen WPA on 15 Apr (JoJ); peak counts occur, however, in w NE, but "generally creep downward every year" (RCR), with this year's best 2000 at Alkali L., Grant Co., on 30 Apr (RCR) and 800 at CLNWR on 4 May (Lma); latest were 2 at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH), probably breeders.
- Red-necked Phalarope:** While occasionally common in w and c NE as a migrant, this year the only report was of 3 near Crawford on 14 May (RCR,DJR).
- Franklin's Gull:** Migrants arrived in late March, the earliest at Branched Oak L. on 20 Mar (PK,KK); RCR pointed out that wintering birds, virtually unheard of until recently, may have accounted

for at least 1 of the 1-3 around Kingsley Dam 12-14 Mar (RCR,DJR,PL). Peak counts were 500 both in Dixon Co. on 13 Apr (JJo) and Clay Co. 21 Apr (JoJ). Migrants were still straggling through at the end of the period, with 8 in Dixon Co. 30 May (JJo).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** This species has a narrow spring migration period in NE; earliest was 1 at Funk WPA 3 Apr (JoJ), and latest a large concentration of 175 at Kingsley Dam 29 Apr, all of which had departed the next day (RCR).

**Ring-billed Gull:** The incredible concentration which assembled at Kingsley Dam in late Feb (see Winter) remained until mid Mar, when 19,000 were estimated on 14 Mar (PL). A later count of 900 at Cochrane L. on 1 Apr was of interest (AKe), and 2 were still at Funk WPA on 15 May (LR,RH). Highest Missouri R. valley count was 80 at Base L. on 11 Apr (RCG).

**California Gull:** In recent years this species has become common in late summer and fall at L. McConaughy, but spring numbers are low. The only reports were of 2 adults at Keystone L. and 12 adults at Arthur Bay on L. McConaughy on 29 Apr (RCR).

**Herring Gull:** Alongside the incredible concentration of Ring-billed Gulls at Kingsley Dam, the 600 Herring Gulls seemed few, but this is still a very good count for NE (PL). Last were 3 immatures there on 29 Apr (RCR). Very few were reported elsewhere; this species is not common in spring.

**Thayer's Gull:** In addition to the single immature found at Kingsley Dam in late Feb (see Winter), another immature and an adult were there 14 Mar (PL\*). One immature was still present on 4 Apr (RCR,DJR). There are still fewer than 10 records for NE.

**Iceland Gull:** At least 1 was present at Kingsley Dam in late Feb (see Winter), but 2 first-winter birds were there 5 Mar (RCR\*,MB) and 1 on 12 Mar (RCR\*,DJR). These are only the 5th and 6th NE Iceland Gulls.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** One of the 2 adults present in late Feb (see Winter) remained until 14 Mar (PL\*,RCR,MB). These birds provided only the 3rd NE record.

**Glaucous Gull:** Nebraska's best ever concentration of this species by far was at least 11 (8 first-winter and 3 adult birds were counted at one time) at Kingsley Dam 14 Mar (PL). These birds had been present since late Feb (see Winter); an adult was still there 4 Apr (RCR,DJR).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** Nebraska's 3rd record (probably 2nd individual) was a first-year bird at Kingsley Dam in late Feb (see Winter); this bird was accompanied by a second-winter bird 14 Mar (PL\*), an amazing occurrence for the Great Plains, and probably the best record of an almost unbelievable gull spectacle.

**Caspian Tern:** Surprisingly, none were reported; this species is a regular, though uncommon, spring migrant through NE.

**Common Tern:** This species is an uncommon spring migrant; the only report was of 2 at CLNWR on 4 May (LMA).

**Forster's Tern:** Earliest was 1 at Snyder's Bend on 16 Apr (BFH), and peak counts were 35 at CLNWR on 25 May (LMA), likely potential local breeders, and 25 at Gavin's Point Dam on 30 Apr (JJo).

**Least Tern:** For the third consecutive year this species nested along Papio Creek adjacent to Willow Lakes Golf Course at Offutt AFB, Sarpy Co., where 4 adults and 3 young were present (RCK fide RCG); 2 adults were seen nearby at a small lake s of Base L., but there was no indication of nesting there (RCK fide RCG). Up to 2 birds were on the Platte R. at Schramm SRA 18-24 May (RCR,BP,LP); this is a regular location for this species, as are the Niobrara

- area, where singles were seen 21- 22 May (LR,RH,JJo), Cass Co., where another was seen 15 May (Gwo), and n Saunders Co., where 1 was seen 6 May (THo).
- Black Tern:** Earliest was 1 at Funk WPA on 23 Apr (LR,RH), and peak counts were 75 on Alkali L. on 13 May (RCR) and 45 at CLNWR on 25 May (LMa), probably local breeding populations, as were a rather southerly 40 at Funk WPA as late as 30 May (LR,RH).
- Mourning Dove:** Considered first spring migrants locally were singles at S. Sioux City on 1 Apr (BFH) and at CLNWR on 4 Apr (LMa); 1 in Kearney Co. on 12 Mar (LR,RH) may have wintered. A good spring count was 63 in Scotts Bluff Co. 28 May (LMa). Large flocks are more likely in fall.
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** Earliest was 1 at FF on 14 May (BP,LP); there were only 4 other birds reported, all from the Missouri R. valley.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Also a late arriver in NE, first was in FF 15 May (KCR). None were further w in May than Knox Co., where 1 was seen 21 May (JJo), and the Harlan Co. Dam on 29 May (LR,RH).
- Common Barn-Owl:** At an expected location were 2 at CLNWR 4-5 May (LMa), but about a month early was a report without details from Cass Co. 16 Mar (Gwo), possibly a bird which overwintered. Attempts at wintering are usually unsuccessful this far n.
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** A pair were nesting in a Wood Duck box in Seward Co. by 12 Mar (PK,KK), and a healthy population exists as far w as the Winters Creek L. area, where 5 were counted 3 May (fide AKe).
- Snowy Owl:** After the appearance of a few birds in ne NE this winter, stragglers were seen in Cass Co. on 4 Mar (Gwo) and s of Pilger, Stanton Co., on 5 Mar (JJo).
- Burrowing Owl:** RCR noted that this species was rather scarce and uncommon this year; earliest were 6 near Alliance, Box Butte Co., on 9 Apr (RCR,DJR). The only other reports were of 8 e of Scottsbluff on 26 May (AKe), and up to 5 at an established colony 1 mile w of Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH).
- Long-eared Owl:** Last seen in Dakota Co. was 1 on 12 Mar (BFH); departure dates are not often reported.
- Short-eared Owl:** Surprisingly, none were reported this spring.
- Common Nighthawk:** Earliest were in the e, although rather early, in Bellevue 6 May (RCG). No large flocks were reported. Arrival is later in the w, where earliest were 2 at CLNWR on 25 May (LMa) and 5 near Agate, Sioux Co., on 28 May (RCR,DJR).
- Common Poorwill:** Earliest were near Gering on 8 May (AKe). Several were calling at the Halsey Div., NNF, on 18-19 May (RCG). Unusually far e, although not unprecedented, was 1 near Gretna in May (Melba Wigg fide RCG).
- Chuck-will's-widow:** Individuals arrived at n outposts in mid May; furthest n was 1 described as "an extralimital breeder" at Willis, Dakota Co., on 14 May (BFH), and 1 was heard 2 miles se of Blair, Washington Co., on 19 May (JoJ).
- Whip-poor-will:** Earliest of few reports were 5 at Willis, Dakota Co. on 14 May (BFH). Rarely reported, a nest with 1 egg was found at Schramm SRA 19 May (JMo). This species is found primarily in drier woodland in the Missouri R. valley, but has a spotty distribution; it is absent from even the drier upland areas of FF.
- Chimney Swift:** Earliest were in Cass Co. 18 Apr (Gwo). At Chadron, arrival was later than usual, 3 on 3 May being the first (RCR,DJR), although 1 was in Scottsbluff 22 Apr (LMa).
- White-throated Swift:** This species seems less common in recent years, notably in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co., where none were found 21 May (WRS,DR), but 10-12 were at the Scottsbluff National

- Monument, Scotts Bluff Co., 2-28 May (AKe, LMa).
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Surprisingly, none were reported.
- Lewis' Woodpecker:** None had arrived at the regular location adjacent to Chadron SP by 20 May (WRS, RCR, DR).
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Most leave NE in winter. Earliest was 1 in FF 23 Apr (KCR), and in c and w NE earliest were singles in Buffalo Co. 1 May (LR, RH) and in Scotts Bluff Co. 12 May; 2 were as far n as Merriman on 13 May (RCR). Best count was only 10 in FF on 31 May (KCR).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** No reports were received from the w edge of the range in the panhandle.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The only report of this uncommon e NE migrant was of 2 in a Bellevue yard 1-19 Mar (KCR); at least 1 wintered there (see Winter).
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** The only report of this uncommon and late eastern NE migrant was of 1 in Dixon Co. 22 May (JJo).
- Western Wood-Pewee:** The 3 reports were from the panhandle; earliest was in Chadron on 21 May (RCR, DJR).
- Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Earliest was rather early in Cass Co. 4 May (Gwo), followed by another in Otoe Co. on 13 May (LF, CF); none was reported w of Seward Co. before the end of the period.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** The only reports of this rare e NE migrant were of singles at Cedar Island area, Sarpy Co., on 10 May (KCR) and at FF the same day (RCG), a rather early date for this species. No further details were provided for either sighting.
- Acadian Flycatcher:** This flycatcher is at the n edge of its range in NE and is rare here; a late arriver, the only reports were of 1 somewhat out of range in Lancaster Co. 31 May (JGu) and 2 singing on Trail 9 in Indian Cave SP on 31 May (JGu).
- Alder Flycatcher:** Four reports were received of this uncommonly identified migrant, all in the Missouri R. valley and west to Schramm SRA; earliest was 1 on 21 May at Schramm SRA (JoJ).
- Willow Flycatcher:** The only reports were of singles at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA 15 May and Funk WPA 30 May (LR, RH), and 3 at DeSoto NWR on 29 May (JoJ). A very early bird in n Saunders Co. 30 Apr was identified as "Willow/Alder" (THo).
- Least Flycatcher:** This species migrates statewide; earliest were 1 far to the w at NPNWR 6 May (LMa) and 4 in n Saunders Co. the same day (THo). High count was a healthy 17 at FF 10 May (BP, LP). Rather late was 1 banded at Offutt AFB 30 May (RCG).
- Cordilleran Flycatcher:** This species should occur as a low-density migrant in the panhandle; there were 2 reports, 1 on 6 May at NPNWR (LMa) and another, listed as a "Western" Flycatcher, near Morrill on 12 May (ECT). This species arrives in the Black Hills by 15 May (Peterson: A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Black Hills).
- Eastern Phoebe:** Earliest was at Medicine Creek Res. on 20 Mar (LR, RH). Furthest w for the period was 1 near Miller, Buffalo Co., on 1 Apr (RCR, DJR).
- Say's Phoebe:** Earliest were singles near Rushville and Smith L. on 9 Apr (RCR, DJR); the species was unusually common this spring (RCR). Peak count was 14 scattered in Dawes Co. on 5 May (RCR). Rather far e were singles in Dixon Co. 14 May (JJo) and Phelps Co. 15 May (LR, RH); these reports ndicate the e edge of the spring migration corridor.
- Great Crested Flycatcher:** Earliest was in Cass Co. 4 May (Gwo); earliest in the w, where it is uncommon, was at Chadron SP 14 May (RCR, DJR).
- Western Kingbird:** Earliest was in the w, at Goldeneye WMA, Deuel Co., on 28 Apr (RCR), while earliest in the c and e were singles in Buffalo Co. on 4 May (LR, RH) and Dixon Co. 12 May (JJo). High

- count, excellent for the e, was 37 in Dixon Co. 22 May (JJo).
- Eastern Kingbird:** Earliest for this species was also in the w; 1 was at Morrill on 2 May (AKe). Earliest in the e were 3 at Stagecoach L. on 7 May (LEi). High count was 45 in Dixon Co. 21 May (JJo).
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** This casual NE species appeared at Schramm SRA, a single on 22 May (JMo). There are only about 25 spring records.
- Horned Lark:** Probably late migrants were 200 in Dixon Co. 5 Mar (JJo). Most local breeders are on territory by Mar.
- Purple Martin:** Earliest were at S. Sioux City on 14 Mar (BFH), while high spring count was 40 at Bellevue on 31 May (KCR). A martin house at Ogallala, Keith Co., possibly the westernmost known colony in NE, had 7 birds on 18 May (RCR). All other reports were from the Missouri R. valley.
- Tree Swallow:** Earliest were at Wagon Train L. (PK,KK) and n Saunders Co. (THo) on 9 Apr, while in the w 2 were at Cottonwood L. near Merriman on 12 Apr (RCR). Nest boxes have extended the nesting range virtually statewide.
- Violet-Green Swallow:** There were 3 reports, all, as expected, from the panhandle. Oliver Res. hosted 1-2 migrants 27 Apr (RCR); 2 migrants were at Big Springs, Deuel Co., on 28 Apr (RCR); 3 were at Chadron SP on 14 May (RCR,DJR).
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Earliest were 12 at Medicine Creek Res. on 16 Apr (LR,RH); in the e 7 were in Dixon Co. on 17 Apr (JJo), and in the w 6 were at NPNWR on 21 Apr (LMa).
- Bank Swallow:** Earliest were 25 at Bellevue on 28 Apr (RCG), and in the w 1 was at Kiowa WMA on 27 Apr (RCR). A nest site along the Missouri R. in Sarpy Co. had 100 birds on 31 May (KCR).
- Cliff Swallow:** Earliest was a very early bird at Blue Hole SWMA, Buffalo Co., on 26 Mar (LR,RH), while in the w, where earliest were 15-20 were around L. McConaughy on 29 Apr (RCR), the species arrived in numbers far later than usual, as often hundreds are present by 18 Apr (RCR). In the e no early dates were reported, but a high count of 1000 birds was made on the Niobrara R. at Pishelville Bridge, Knox Co., on 21 May (JJo).
- Barn Swallow:** Birds arrived at about the same time statewide; in the e at Pawnee L. (PK,KK) and in Dixon Co. (JJo) on 16 Apr and in the w at Morrill on 13 Apr (ECT).
- Blue Jay:** Good numbers occur statewide; 10 were as far w as Morrill on 13 May (ECT).
- Pinyon Jay:** Surprisingly, none were reported; this species tends to be secretive in spring.
- Clark's Nutcracker:** The 2 near L. Minatare (see Winter) were still present on 31 Mar when the observers moved to town (AKe). Further information on these birds would be welcome.
- Black-billed Magpie:** Easternmost reports were from Dixon Co., where 5 were present 4 Apr (JJo), and in the Republican R. valley in e Webster Co., where 2 were seen 2 Apr (RCR). This species is absent only from se NE.
- American Crow:** One was carrying nesting materials in S. Sioux City on 25 Mar (BFH).
- Tufted Titmouse:** No reports were received of birds outside the lower Missouri R. valley.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** After a winter of good numbers, it remained fairly common in spring on the Pine Ridge with a high count of 7 at Chadron SP on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). Smith L. pine plantings still had 5 on 7 May (RCR). The last in the e were at Arbor Lodge SP, Otoe Co., on 7 May (LF,CF), while 2 wintering at a Bellevue feeder departed 25 Apr (BP,LP).
- Pygmy Nuthatch:** The only report was of 3 in the Wildcat Hills,

- Scotts Bluff Co., on 16 Apr (AKe).
- Brown Creeper:** Last migrant was 1 in Lancaster Co. 2 Apr (LEi). One seen investigating loose bark on a dead tree in FF 25 May (BP,LP) was at the only known regular nesting location in NE.
- Rock Wren:** Earliest in the w were near Gering on 28 Apr (AKe) and at L. McConaughy on 29 Apr (RCR). At least 1 was at Ashfall SHP on 21 May (MBi), and another was at Niobrara SP the same day (LR,RH). Unusually far e, and rather early, were 2 perching in rock piles all day 17 Apr in the observer's yard in Seward Co. (PK,KK).
- Carolina Wren:** Reports were n and w to Hormel Park in Fremont, Dodge Co., where 1 was seen 26 May (JGu), and ne of Kearney, Buffalo Co., on 15 May (LR,RH), historically a rather extensive range for this species in NE.
- House Wren:** Earliest was in Buffalo Co. 16 Apr (LR,RH), and in the w 1 at Chadron on 24 Apr (RCR,DJR). One banded in a Bellevue yard in 1992 was recaptured there 18 Apr (RCG).
- Winter Wren:** The only reports were of 1-2 in FF 13-21 Apr (BP,LP,JAl). These were probably migrants rather than wintering birds.
- Sedge Wren:** Earliest were at Arbor Lodge Farm on 9 May (LF,CF). Other reports were also from the se, at Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA on 14 May (TEL,JGu) and in Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo).
- Marsh Wren:** Earliest were 2 at Smith L. on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR); 14 were at CLNWR as early as 4 May (LMa). In the e arrival was somewhat later, with 2 at Arbor Lodge Farm on 7 May (LF,CF). This differential might be expected if these (eastern and western) populations are indeed different species, as has been suggested recently (Kroodsma: NBR 56:40-42, 1988).
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Latest was 1 at FF on 14 May (JoJ). This is one of the latest dates on record for this species.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Earliest in the e was 1 at FF 4 Apr (BP,LP), and in the w at Chadron SP on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR); high count was only 8 at FF on 22 Apr (BP,LP); latest was 1 at Cedar Island on 14 May (KCR).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Earliest was 1 at FF on 24 Apr (BP,LP); high count was 7 there on 14 May (BP,LP). The only reports away from the lower Missouri R. valley were of 1 at Wilderness Park on 14 May (LEi), where it is uncommon, and another in n Saunders Co. on 30 Apr, where it was the first seen since 1982 (THo). Nesting had occurred there in 1981 and 1982 (THo).
- Eastern Bluebird:** This species was reported as early as 5 Mar in Seward Co. (PK,KK), possibly wintering birds; earliest in the w were 2 at Roscoe, Keith Co., on 12 Mar (RCR,DJR). Best count was 15 in Dixon Co. on 4 Apr (JJo). Rather far w were a pair at the w end of Box Butte Res. on 14 May (RCR,DJR) and 1 near Morrill 12 and 28 May (ECT).
- Mountain Bluebird:** This species leaves the Pine Ridge breeding range in winter; earliest returnees were about 30 north of Hay Springs on 11 Mar (RCR), while a flock of 10 was near Whitney on 24 Mar (RCR). Probably migrants were 65 at CLNWR on 16 Mar (LMa) and 30 near Gering 8 Mar (AKe). Four were at Roscoe on 18 Mar (BP,LP) and at the e edge of the wintering range near Eustis, Frontier Co., on 20 Mar (LR,RH).
- Townsend's Solitaire:** Last departing wintering birds were at Smith L. 9 Apr (RCR,DJR) and Whitney on 16 Apr (RCR). One was very late and e of the usual winter range at Brownsville, Nemaha Co., on 28 May (LF,CF).
- Veery:** This was a good spring for this uncommon migrant; 8 were reported, all from the lower Missouri R. valley. Earliest was at FF on 22 Apr (BP,LP), one of the earliest ever. A total of 3, 2



- singing, were at Hummel Park, Washington Co., on 30 May (BP,LP), also the last reported.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** Fewer were reported than Veeries, an unusual circumstance. Earliest was at Bellevue 3 May (RCG), while 1 at Wyuka Cemetery, Lincoln (city) on 7 May (LEi), was the furthest w. Last was in Bellevue 16 May (BP,LP).
- Swainson's Thrush:** Good numbers were found in the e, notably the 16 at FF on 14 May (BP,LP) and 12 there on 9 May (BP,LP). Further w the flight was generally poor, with little weather to force the birds down (RCR). Earliest in the e for this statewide migrant was at FF 1 May (LEi), and in the w at Box Butte Res. 5 May (RCR). Last in the e was at FF 25 May (BP,LP) and in the w in Scotts Bluff Co. 28 May (AKe).
- Hermit Thrush:** The only report was of 1 in a Bellevue yard 1 Mar (BP,LP); this bird probably wintered nearby (see Winter). Most migrants pass through in early April, but none were detected.
- Wood Thrush:** This species appears to be declining. Only 6 reports were received, with 1 banded in Pioneer Park the first seen by the bander since 1980 in Lancaster Co. (MBO). Earliest of 4 Missouri R. valley reports was 1 at FF on 1 May (RCG), while another was heard in n Saunders Co. 6 May (THo).
- American Robin:** Best count was 400 at Offutt AFB 15 Apr (RCG). It was "abundant" in n Saunders Co. in the period 12 Mar-2 Apr (THo), indicating peak migration.
- Gray Catbird:** Earliest was in n Saunders Co. on 6 May (THo). Uncommon in the northwest, 1 at Box Butte Res. 22 May was the observers' lone sighting for the season (RCR,DJR). Another was far west in Scotts Bluff Co. 28 May (LMa).
- Northern Mockingbird:** Scattered birds were found statewide, as expected, although there was not much of a movement into the w (RCR), where the earliest was at Brule, Keith Co., on 28 Apr (RCR). Most surprising was a report of a nesting pair with young at the very early date of 9 May s of Gering (AKe).
- Brown Thrasher:** Earliest in the e was in Cass Co. 14 Apr (Gwo), and in the w 1 was near Big Springs on 28 Apr (RCR).
- American Pipit:** The only report from the e was of singles at Fahrenholz Pond 10 Apr and 1 May (JJo). In the w, unusually early was 1 at Kiowa WMA on 19 Mar (RCR,DJR). RCR noted that most spring birds in the w are seen as a result of storms forcing them down; such was the case 27-29 Apr when pipits were scattered in low numbers throughout the area following a snowstorm 26 Apr; highest count was 13 at Oliver Res. on 27 Apr (RCR).
- Cedar Waxwing:** This species is present year round, but numbers are lowest in late spring and early summer. High counts were 200 in n Saunders Co. on 12 Mar and 16 Apr (THo).
- Northern Shrike:** Latest, and furthest e, was 1 at Johnson WPA, Phelps Co., on 12 Mar (LR,RH). These birds depart before Loggerheads arrive, except in the se where a few Loggerheads winter.
- Loggerhead Shrike:** There were no winter reports. Earliest were 1 in Frontier Co. on 20 Mar (LR,RH), and in the w another at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa).
- Bell's Vireo:** Earliest was on the Niobrara R. s of Merriman on 13 May (RCR), followed by another at Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA on 14 May (TEL,JGu).
- Solitary Vireo:** All reports were from the lower Missouri R. valley. Earliest was at Bellevue on 7 May (KCR), and last was in Cass Co. on 15 May (Gwo).
- Yellow-throated Vireo:** All reports were from the Missouri R. valley, n to Thurston Co., where a pair was seen 14 May (BFH). Earliest was at FF on 1 May (LEi).

- Warbling Vireo:** Earliest in the e were at Base L. (KCR) and FF (LEi) on 1 May, and in the w 5 were s of Merriman on 13 May (RCR).
- Philadelphia Vireo:** The only reports of this rare migrant were of singles at FF on 11 May (RCG) and Arbor Lodge Farm on 15 May (LF,CF).
- Red-eyed Vireo:** Earliest was 1 at FF 2 May (RCG) while in the w 1 was at Chadron SP on 14 May (RCR,DJR).
- Blue-winged Warbler:** The only report of this rare spring overshoot migrant was of 1 near Schramm SRA on 9 May (JMo).
- Golden-winged Warbler:** Although this species has become more regular in recent years, a rather surprising 4 reports were received, all within a 4-day period. Singles were at Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos., on 8 May (fide BP,LP); at FF on 9 May (JAl) and 11 May (BP,LP); and near Schramm SRA on 9 May (JMo).
- Tennessee Warbler:** Earliest was in Cass Co. 4 May (Gwo); high count was 14 in FF on 14 May (BP,LP); last was in Omaha on 26 May (BP,LP). In the w, where the species does not occur every year (RCR), 1 was s of Merriman on 13 May (RCR).
- Orange-crowned Warbler:** Earliest of this statewide migrant were singles at FF 21 Apr (BP,LP), Chadron SP 23 Apr (RCR,DJR), and Smith L. 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). High count was 5 at Smith L. on 7 May (RCR,DJR). Last was in Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo).
- Nashville Warbler:** All reports were, as expected, from e NE, the earliest in FF 1 May (LEi). High count was only 3 there on 9 and 10 May (BP,LP). Last was in Bellevue 17 May (BP,LP).
- Northern Parula:** Earliest were in FF, where the species summers, on 18 Apr (BP,LP). High count was 5 there 24 Apr (BP,LP). Reports from w NE are unusual, and so 2 were of note: a female was in pine plantings at Smith L. on 7 May (RCR,DJR), and 1 was at CLNWR on 25 May (Lma).
- Yellow Warbler:** Earliest in the e was at Niobrara on 30 Apr (JJo), in the c 1 in Buffalo Co. on 5 May (LR,RH), and in the w 4 birds at NPNWR (Lma) and 1 s of Gordon (RCR) on 6 May.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Only 7 birds were reported, all in a very narrow migration window 12-19 May, and all in the Missouri R. valley except for 1 which hit a window on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Campus 16 May and is now UNSM specimen 17036 (TEL).
- Magnolia Warbler:** Of nine birds reported, 8 were in e NE in the period 14-18 May, including 4 at Schramm SRA on 15 May (BP,LP). The ninth, one of the latest ever, was in Neale Woods on 29 May (JBr).
- Cape May Warbler:** The only report of this rare migrant was from Neale Woods on 11 May (JBr fide RCG). There are only about 30 spring records for NE.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Earliest were 2 at FF on 15 Apr (BP,LP), and in the w the first was 1 at Chadron on 17 Apr (RCR,DJR). A good count of 50 was made at FF 9 May (BP,LP). It would be of interest to note subspecies for migrants.
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** Only 5 were reported, all in Lancaster and Sarpy Cos. in the period 10-21 May. Earliest was at FF on 10 May (JAl), and latest at Schramm SRA 21 May (JoJ).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Only 4 were reported, in Sarpy and Lancaster Cos. 10-16 May. Earliest was at FF on 10 May (BP,LP), and last was at Schramm SRA on 16 May (BP,LP).
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** The small breeding population at FF arrived rather early, on 18 Apr (BP,LP). No more than 2 were seen at any one time, suggesting a tenuous hold at the nw edge of the species' range.
- Palm Warbler:** Although only 11 were reported, this is a good

- showing for this uncommon migrant, including a high count of 5 at FF on 25 Apr (BP,LP), and 1 at Box Butte Res. on 5 May (RCR), only about the 6th spring panhandle report. An early-migrating species, the first was at FF on 22 Apr (BP,LP), and last was at Arbor Lodge Farm 9 May (LF,CF).
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** This species is very rare in spring in NE, and so the 2 reports were unexpected: singles were in Wyuka Cemetery on 11 May (LEi) and in Wilderness Park 14 May (LEi), for only the 5th and 6th spring reports since 1981. It is much more common in fall, the opposite of the next species.
- Blackpoll Warbler:** An occasionally rather common spring migrant, this was a good year, including a high count of 8 on 14 May at FF (BP,LP). Earliest was a male far to the w, where the species is an uncommon migrant, at Smith L. on 7 May (RCR,DJR), and last was 1 at Schramm SRA on 16 May (BP,LP).
- Cerulean Warbler:** Another of the local breeders at FF, although arriving later than others, the first was there 8 May (BP,LP). Unusual were 2 at Ponca SP, Dixon Co., on 20 May (BP,LP), and a new location was Hummel Park, where 1 was present 30 May (BP,LP).
- Black-and-White Warbler:** Earliest were singles 1 at FF on 21 Apr (BP,LP) and Smith L. 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). High count was 10 at FF on 9 May (BP,LP). None were reported after 16 May, when 1 was at FF (BP,LP).
- American Redstart:** Earliest were at FF on 7 May (LR,RH), and in the w near Merriman on 13 May (RCR).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** Currently breeding at FF, earliest was 1 there 21 Apr (BP,LP). High count was 6 there on 11 May (BP,LP). There was only one report elsewhere, in Cass Co. 15 May (GWO).
- Worm-eating Warbler:** Becoming casual in recent years, with reports in 4 of the last 10, albeit only singing males, this year there were 2: 1 first recorded at Schramm SRA on 2 May (JMo) sang persistently throughout the period (BP,LP), and another was at Neale Woods 9 May (JAl,JBr fide RCG).
- Ovenbird:** Earliest in the e was at FF on 1 May (LEi), and in the w 5 were at Chadron SP on 14 May (RCR,DJR). Best count in the e was 6 at FF on 14 May (BP,LP). Unexpected was 1 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH).
- Northern Waterthrush:** Large numbers were evident this spring; high count was 20 at FF on 9 May (BP,LP) and 10 May (RCG). Very early was 1 there on 13 Apr (BP,LP), and latest was 1 at Schramm SRA on 15 May (BP,LP). In the w 2 were at Box Butte Res. 14 May and another was there 22 May (RCR,DJR).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** A few appear each year at FF; this year's first was rather late on 12 May (BP,LP). Such a late arrival suggests a spring overshoot rather than a bird returning to a breeding territory. The only report away from FF was in Cass Co. 15 May (GWO).
- Kentucky Warbler:** Four reports from different locations in Douglas and Sarpy Cos. indicate an increasing population. Pairs were at Hummel Park 30 May (BP,LP) and Schramm SRA on 23 May (BP,LP, JGu), while singles were at Fontenelle Forest 14 May (BP,LP,JoJ) and Neale Woods on 30 May (BP,LP).
- Connecticut Warbler:** One was banded 27 May on the Herzinger farm northeast of Beemer, Cuming Co. (MBO); there are only about 30 spring reports for NE.
- Mourning Warbler:** Earliest were 3, also high count, at FF on 14 May (BP,LP,JoJ) and latest was 1 at Neale Woods 29 May (JBr).
- MacGillivray's Warbler:** A surprising although not unprecedented (NBR 55:41) report for e NE was of 1 which hit a window on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Campus 10 May and is now UNSM 17033 (TEL).

- Common Yellowthroat:** Earliest was at Base L. on 30 Apr (RCG), while in the w 1 was at Box Butte Res. on 5 May (RCR). High count was 20 at FF on 8 May (KCR).
- Hooded Warbler:** This species has been appearing more frequently in recent years, with 3 reported this year. Totally unexpected was 1 ne of Scottsbluff on 28 May (SSc); curiously, the only NE specimen was also from the panhandle, collected by a cat at Chadron (NBR 51:95). Two others were reported: the first ever banded by the observer was at Pioneer Park 19 May (MBO), and 1 was at Schramm SRA on 19 May (JMo).
- Wilson's Warbler:** All reports except for 1 at Halsey Div., NNF, on 15-17 May (RCG) were from the Missouri R. valley in the narrow period 7-15 May; this was a poor year with only about 10 birds reported. Earliest was at FF on 7 May (LR,RH), and last were in Cass Co. 15 May (Gwo) and at Halsey Div. (above).
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Typical of recent years, this species was unreported from e NE, where it is now very rare. Earliest was near Merriman on 13 May (RCR), and furthest e was 1 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH).
- Summer Tanager:** The only reports were of 1 at Schramm SRA on 15 May and 3 there the next day, including 2 males and a female (BP,LP), and a pair there on 23 May (JGu). This may be the only regular location for this species in the state.
- Scarlet Tanager:** Reports were from the lower Missouri R. valley except for the earliest, 1 at Kearney, Buffalo Co., on 5 May (Epa fide NR) and 8 May (LR,RH); this species is rare that far w in the Platte R. valley, even as a migrant. Best count was of 2 pairs at Schramm SRA on 15 May (BP,LP) and 23 May (JGu).
- Western Tanager:** Earliest was s of Gering on 6 May (AKe), the 3rd earliest spring arrival date ever for NE. Also early, and far out of range, was 1 at Indian Cave SP on 8 May, reported without details by a visiting birder (fide BP,LP). Earliest on the Pine Ridge was 1 at Chadron SP 14 May (RCR,DJR).
- Northern Cardinal:** The only w report was of 3 apparent residents near Scottsbluff (AKe), where the species is uncommon.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Earliest was a female at a Bellevue feeder on 24 Apr (BP,LP), the 2nd earliest ever for NE. Next were 3 in a Bellevue yard 1 May (KCR). High count was only 9 in Knox Co. on 21 May (JJo). None were reported w of Knox Co.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Earliest was 1 at Chadron on 5 May (DJR). Furthest e were 2 at Harlan Co. Res., probably the most easterly regular breeding location for the state, on 29 May (LR,RH).
- Blue Grosbeak:** Earliest in the e was in Cass Co. 10 May (Gwo), while in the w 1 was at the Gering Cemetery on 13 May (AKe). Best count was 3 in Dixon Co. on 23 May (JJo). This species occurs statewide in small numbers.
- Lazuli Bunting:** Earliest was 1 s of Gering on 6 May (AKe), and high count was 6 in the same area later in May (AKe). At the e edge of the migration corridor were 3 near Axtell on 14 May and another in Phelps Co. 15 May (LR,RH).
- Indigo Bunting:** Earliest were 1 at Arbor Lodge Farm on 10 May (LF,CF) and 3 at FF the same day (RCG). High count was 11 in Knox Co. on 21 May (JJo). Not unexpected in the panhandle, although uncommon, was 1 near Gering 28 May (AKe).
- Dickcissel:** Earliest was at Base L. on 28 Apr (RCG), while best count was 15 in Dixon Co. on 21 May (JJo). This species had penetrated w as far as Phelps Co. by 14 May, when 1 was at Funk WPA (LR,RH). This species usually does not reach the w until June, if at all (RCR).
- Green-tailed Towhee:** Only one report of this rare but probably regular spring migrant was received: 1 visited a Morrill yard

- 25-29 Apr (ECT), the 3rd earliest spring arrival date ever for NE. Virtually all records are from the panhandle.
- Rufous-sided Towhee:** Earliest was 1 in n Saunders Co. 1 Apr (THo), while in the w 1 was at Chadron SP on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). Best count was 8 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 7 May (LMa). Observers should note the race of migrant and wintering towhees, either "spotted" or "eastern"; "spotted" birds in the e in spring are holdover wintering birds.
- American Tree Sparrow:** Latest were 2 in Dixon Co. on 17 Apr (JJo), while in the w 3 were in the Crawford area 16 Apr (RCR,DJR). Best count was 250 at Base L. on 5 Mar (KCR), corresponding closely with the peak count at NPNWR of 17 on 6 Mar (LMa), suggesting general departure in early Mar.
- Chipping Sparrow:** Earliest was in Cass Co. on 3 Apr (Gwo), a rather early date; in c NE 4 were at Kearney on 18 Apr (LR,RH), and, in the w, 4 were at Chadron SP on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). Best count was 35 s of Gering on 26 Apr (AKe).
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** Earliest were about 25 scattered in Deuel Co. on 28 Apr (RCR), while in the e, where fewer occur, earliest were 2 at Base L. on the same day (RCG). High count was 64 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 7 May (LMa). Last was at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 15 May (LR,RH).
- Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report was of a migrant at Oliver Res. on 27 Apr (RCR).
- Field Sparrow:** Earliest was made into a specimen, now UNSM 17039, after being found on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus 22 Mar (TEL), while another was at Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln 23 Mar (LEi). Furthest w was 1 near Keystone on 29 Apr (RCR).
- Vesper Sparrow:** An incredible fallout due to a snowstorm 26 Apr was noted by RCR in w NE; "thousands" were forced down and were abundant along roadsides for 3 days after the storm. Earliest were 3 near Red Cloud, Webster Co. on 2 Apr (RCR,DJR), and in the w 3 were in the Chadron-Whitney area 17 Apr (RCR,DJR). A good count was 46 at Medicine Creek Res. on 16 Apr (LR,RH).
- Lark Sparrow:** Earliest was in n Saunders Co. on 16 Apr (THo), and in the west 6 were at Chappell and Big Springs on 28 Apr (RCR). High count was 42 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 28 May (LMa).
- Lark Bunting:** RCR described the spring flight as the "poorest .. I've ever seen in western NE". His high count was only 175 on 5 May in Dawes Co. when previous years' high counts have been in the thousands. Furthermore, only 5 other reports were received. Easternmost were 1 ne of O'Neill, Holt Co., on 22 May (JJo), and 3 at Funk WPA on 15 May (LR,RH), while earliest were 3 at L. McConaughy on 30 Apr (RCR).
- Savannah Sparrow:** Earliest was at Branched Oak L. on 23 Mar (LEi), and in the west 4 were at CLNWR on 5 Apr (LMa). High count was 21 at Funk Marsh on 19 Apr (JoJ).
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** Earliest was in Seward Co. on 18 Apr (PK,KK), and in the w 3 were at CLNWR on 4 May (LMa).
- Henslow's Sparrow:** One of very few documented records was 1 photographed and recorded in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grassland just w of Bennett, Lancaster Co., on 25 May (JGu). Since the future of the CRP is currently being debated in Washington, reports of uncommon grassland species using the habitat, especially as it matures, may have an impact on those deciding whether to extend the CRP.
- LeConte's Sparrow:** The only report of this difficult-to-find spring migrant was of 3 nw of Pishelville on 21 May (JJo).
- Fox Sparrow:** There were few reports of this uncommon migrant, all in the narrow period 19 Mar-9 Apr; it is generally restricted to the e edge of the state. Earliest were 3 in n Saunders Co. on 19

- Mar (THo) and latest were 2 at FF on 9 Apr (BP,LP). The observers noted that 2 at Harlan County Res. on 1 Apr were the furthest w in NE they had seen this species (RCR,DJR).
- Song Sparrow:** High counts were 30 at Base L. on 26 Mar (KCR), and 15 in Dixon Co. on 17 Apr (JJo), indicating major movement, as did its abundance in n Saunders Co. 19 Mar-1 Apr (THo). Latest in the w, where breeding is very local, was 1 at Box Butte Res. on 5 May (RCR,DJR).
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Earliest was at Base L. on 26 Mar (KCR); high counts were 30 near Gering on 27 Apr (AKe) and 15 at FF on 10 May (KCR); last were 3 at Wilderness Park 17 May (LEi).
- Swamp Sparrow:** Earliest were 4 at FF on 21 Mar (BP,LP). Last was in Knox Co. on 22 May (BP,LP), an area where breeding may occur. Birds in late May should be monitored for nesting activity; of interest therefore was 1 at Funk WPA on 30 May (LR,RH). Four were at a regular breeding location at Smith L. by 7 May (RCR,DJR), while 3 were at another regular site e of North Platte on 18 and 20 May (RCR,DR,WRS); 1 was at Jack Sinn Memorial SWMA on 14 May (JGu).
- White-throated Sparrow:** Earliest, apart from wintering birds in Bellevue (see Winter), were in Seward Co. on 16 Apr (PK,KK); very late was 1 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 30 May (LMa). Of 2 which wintered in Chadron (see Winter), one remained, singing daily, until 16 Apr (RCR). Only the 2nd spring record for the L. McConaughy area was 1 at L. Ogallala on 29 Apr (RCR).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** High count was 275 in the L. McConaughy area on 29 Apr, indicating peak migration (RCR). Last was in Scotts Bluff Co. 28 May (AKe), a very late date, and in the e at 3 locations on 15 May (BP,LP,LEi).
- Harris' Sparrow:** Last was 1 at Wyuka Cemetery on 17 May (LEi); high counts were 43 at Macon Lakes WMA, Franklin Co., on 1 Apr (RCR,DJR) and 62 in Webster Co. on 2 Apr (RCR,DJR), indicating peak migration. This species is a rare migrant in the w; there were no reports w of Seward Co.
- Dark-eyed Junco:** Last, apart from a "gray-headed" bird mentioned below, were 1 at FF 24 Apr (BP,LP) and 3 at Offutt AFB the same day (RCG). High count was 120 in Dixon Co. on 4 Apr (JJo); it was abundant 12 Mar-19 Apr in n Saunders Co. (THo). Only the 3rd "Gray-headed" Junco in the observer's 25-year NE experience was at Oliver Res. on 27 Apr (RCR).
- McCown's Longspur:** The only report was of birds on territory at an expected location along the Wyoming border in Sioux Co. 21 May (WRS,DR).
- Lapland Longspur:** The only report was of 70 in Dixon Co. on 6 Mar (JJo); this date is around normal peak migration.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** A report of 25 in Dixon Co. on 6 Mar (JJo) is only the 2nd ever for the first half of Mar, and may represent a wintering flock. Wintering is extremely rare; migrants begin to arrive around 20 Mar. More usual was 1 on a roadside after a storm near Rushville on 27 Mar (RCR,DJR). Birds at known breeding areas included 7 at the e edge of the range in Holt Co. on 22 May (JJo).
- Snow Bunting:** None lingered into the Spring period.
- Bobolink:** Earliest were 2 at Arbor L. on 7 May (LEi) and another near Merriman on 13 May (RCR). As many as 30 were at CLNWR on 25 May (LMa). Reports were statewide.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** High count was 38000 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 6 Mar (LMa), presumably migrants, although such large flocks in spring are unusual.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Earliest were in Cass Co. 6 Mar (Gwo) and 3 at Arbor L. on 6 Mar (LEi), expected arrival times for spring

- migrants. As far w as Hyannis, Grant Co., 2 were found 31 Mar (RCR,DJR), and 2 were at CLNWR on 25 May (LMa). RCR noted that all the singing and calling meadowlarks at Branched Oak L. on 19 May were this species.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Earliest was 1 at Sacramento-Wilcox SWMA on 27 Mar (LR,RH) and 4 were as far n and w as CLNWR by 4 Apr (LMa). Rather late fo a non-breeding location was 1 in the marsh at FF on 14 May (BP,LP).
- Rusty Blackbird:** Only 4 reports were received, none w of Buffalo Co. (LR,RH) and all in the narrow period 21 Mar-9 Apr; earliest were 3 at FF on 21 Mar (BP,LP); high count was 35 at Willow Creek SP on 4 Apr (JJo); last was 1 in a marsh s of Clay Center, Clay Co., on 9 Apr (JoJ).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** Earliest was in Cass Co. 25 Mar (Gwo), and 15 were in the same area on 17 Apr (Gwo). Also early were 23 around Funk WPA on 5 Apr (JoJ). A few migrants are to be expected in the e. Earliest in the w were 2 at Antioch on 9 Apr (RCR,DJR). Several hundred were in Scotts Bluff Co. on 27 Apr (RCR).
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Now well established as a summer resident in the Rainwater Basin, high count was an excellent 92 at Hansen WPA, Clay Co., on 1 Apr (JoJ). A few birds appear regularly throughout the southeastern third of NE. Earliest was in Cass Co., on 7 Mar (Gwo), followed by 1 at Prairie Dog WPA, Kearney Co., on 12 Mar (JoJ). RCR noted that this species "continues to hold its own in the west but is not markedly increasing as one would have expected." A pair was at the Meadows Ranch, Cheyenne Co., on 28 Apr (RCR), and a male was near Hershey, Lincoln Co., on 18 May (RCR). Furthest n was a male at Crystal Cove, Dakota Co., on 6 Apr (BFH).
- Common Grackle:** Migrants generally appeared in March, with as many as 300 as far north as Crystal Cove by 20 Mar (BFH). Earliest in the w, where wintering birds are generally absent, were 10 in Scotts Bluff Co. on 23 Mar (AKe), and 1 at Chadron on 25 Mar (RCR).
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** One was in Cass Co. on 1 Mar (Gwo), but no others were reported until 20 Mar at Branched Oak L. (PK,KK). Earliest in the w were 4 at Morrill on 27 Apr (ECT).
- Orchard Oriole:** Earliest were 1 at FF on 10 May (KCR) and 2 at Offutt AFB the same day (RCG), while in the w singles were near Merriman (RCR) and at Riverside Park, Scotts Bluff Co., (AKe) on 13 May.
- Northern Oriole:** Unexpectedly early was 1 at NPNWR on 8 Apr (LMa). While not unprecedented in NE, such very early birds probably winter in the United States at feeders and get a head start on migration. The bird's race was not specified, but "Baltimores" do not appear until late May. Otherwise, earliest was 1 at Talmage on 26 Apr (MBi), and in the w a "Bullock's" was at Chadron on 8 May (RCR,DJR). A good count was 35 in Dixon Co. on 21 May (JJo).
- Purple Finch:** Last were 3 at Willis, Dakota Co., on 5 May (BFH), except for one of the latest ever for NE at Halsey Div., NNF, on 15-17 May (RCG); last in the west was 1 at Morrill 17 Apr (ECT).
- House Finch:** In Buffalo Co. (LR,RH) and elsewhere in NE, this species is a "town bird". Among the last sections of NE to be occupied is the western Sandhills; RCR noted that sites first occupied in 1993 were Hyannis, where 1 was seen this year on 4 Mar, and Lakeside, where another was seen 7 May. Best count was 30, both in Bellevue on 16 Mar (RCG) and in Scottsbluff on 6 Mar (LMa).
- Red Crossbill:** The only birds reported were a few scattered in the Pine Ridge; high count was only 7 at Chadron SP on 23 Apr (RCR,DJR). None appeared in the e this year.

**Common Redpoll:** Despite a good winter for this species, none lingered into the Spring period.

**Pine Siskin:** Last were singles in Knox Co. 23 May (LR,RH) and at a feeder in Nebraska City through 31 May (LF,CF). Best count was 50 in Scottsbluff on 6 Mar (LMA). Most migrants departed by mid Mar. In the w RCR noted heavy mortality; he had "never found so many dead or dying siskins".

**Evening Grosbeak:** Few were reported, all from the panhandle, where it is regular in winter. Latest was at Morrill on 13 May (ECT), and the "entire spring flight" consisted of singles on 25 Mar and 2 May, and 3 on 30 Apr, all at Chadron (RCR).

#### OBSERVERS

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