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Summer Field Report, June-July 1995

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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, JUNE-JULY 1995

Compiled by

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INTRODUCTION

This was an interesting summer, with a few rarities, further information on species that are restricted or rare in NE in summer, and a couple of additional observations, which involve a little speculation on my part.

Perhaps the best of the rarities was a Neotropic Cormorant at Valentine NWR, while the apparent presence of a Black Rail population at Crescent L NWR is intriguing. Unexpected also were 2 Pacific Loons at L. McConaughy.

Isolated populations or just plain rare summer birds in NE provided interest, with updates on Mississippi Kite at Ogallala, Red-shouldered Hawk at Fontenelle Forest, Acadian Flycatcher at Indian Cave SP, Yellow-throated Warbler at Fontenelle Forest, Louisiana Waterthrush at Indian Cave SP, Northern Cardinal at Scottsbluff, Cassin's and Brewer's Sparrows at Kilpatrick L, Henslow's Sparrow at Burchard L, and Swamp Sparrow in the Rainwater Basin.

Personal speculations involve the possibility of a molt site for Common Merganser at North Platte NWR and a note on Myiarchus flycatchers in the NE panhandle.

ABBREVIATIONS, GAZETTEER

Initials in parentheses refer to observers; a list follows this report.

*=documented; CLNWR= Crescent Lake NWR; FFNC= Fontenelle Forest Nature Center; LM= L. McConaughy; NE= Nebraska; NM = National Monument; NPNWR= North Platte NWR; NWR= National Wildlife Refuge; Res= Reservoir; SHP= State Historical Park; SL= sewage lagoons; SP= State Park; SRA= State Recreation Area; WMA= Wildlife Management Area; WPA= Waterfowl Production Area.

Arbor Day Farm, Otoe; Arbor L WMA, Lancaster; Ayr L, Adams; Basswood Ridge WMA, Dakota; Branched Oak SRA/WMA, Lancaster; Burchard L WMA, Pawnee; Calamus Res SRA, Loup; Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff; CLNWR, Garden; DeSoto Bend NWR, Washington; Facus Springs, Morrill; FFNC, Sarpy; Fort Kearny SHP, Kearney; Fort Robinson SP, Dawes/Sioux; Funk Lagoon WPA, Phelps; Glenvil Basin WPA, Clay; Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson; James Ranch, Sioux; Kilpatrick L, Box Butte; L. McConaughy, Keith; Medicine Creek Res SRA, Frontier; Nine Mile Prairie, Lancaster; Niobrara Valley Preserve, Brown/Keya Paha/Rock; Oak Glen WMA, Seward; Oliver Res SRA, Kimball; Pawnee L SRA, Lancaster; Pine Glen WMA, Brown; Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo; Rulo Bluffs Preserve, Richardson; Sacramento-Wilcox WMA, Phelps; Schramm Park SRA, Sarpy; Scotts Bluff NM, Scotts Bluff; State Line Island, Scotts Bluff; Theesen Lagoon WPA, Clay; Valentine NWR, Cherry; Wagon Train L SRA, Lancaster; Walgren L SRA, Sheridan; Wehrspann L, Sarpy; Yankee Hill WMA, Lancaster.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Pacific Loon : Most unexpected were 2 at LM on 14 Jun; one was a breeding-plumaged adult, the other in non-breeding plumage (*BP,LP). This species is probably casual in the panhandle, as it was recorded each fall 1979-82 at NPNWR by Zeillemaker during his residence there. There are only about 9 records for NE in all,

including 1 other summer record, a breeding-plumaged bird at Box Butte Res. 19 Jul 1979 (Rosché 1982: Birds of Northwestern Nebraska and Southwestern South Dakota).

Common Loon: As is usual in w NE, summering were 3 at NPNWR on 5 Jun (LKO).

Pied-billed Grebe: Best count was 45 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (MFr). Nesting occurred at DeSoto Bend NWR, although the outcome was unknown (JoJ); this species nests only in small numbers in e NE.

Horned Grebe: A single was at NPNWR on 5 Jun (LKO); this species does not nest in NE, suggesting that this was a late migrant.

Eared Grebe: Best count was 38 at CLNWR on 26 Jul (LMA), while 20 were at Funk Lagoon WPA on 4 Jun (LRA,RHA), the most easterly reported.

Western Grebe: Best count was 29 at NPNWR on 5 Jun; only 5 were there 5 Jul (LKO). None were reported e of the panhandle. Several adults with half-grown young were on the Bingham pond, 1 mi e of Bingham, 25 Jun (WRS). None were reported e of the panhandle.

American White Pelican: The usual small groups of summering non-breeders in the Sandhills were noted; best count was 38 at CLNWR on 20 Jul (MFr), and at least 1 was noted at Valentine NWR (JGu). On the edge of the Sandhills in the Loup drainage, 17 were at Calamus Res SRA on 2 Jul (LRA,RHA), and 1 was at Medicine Creek Res SRA 5 Jul (LRA). Unusual in midsummer were 6-9 at Branched Oak SRA/WMA 17-24 Jun (LEi,JoJ).

Double-crested Cormorant: Best count was 66 at CLNWR on 17 Jun (MFr). Nesting occurs at scattered locations in n and w NE, but the only report of such was on a BBS in s Rock County on 13 Jun (NR), a rather easterly location. Reports of nesting locations are welcomed. Scattered birds occur over most of the state, but are unusual in the se, where 2 were at Wagontrain L SRA on 8 Jul (LEi) and 2 at Pawnee L SRA 1 Jul (LEi).

Neotropic Cormorant: The 3rd NE record was an adult at Valentine NWR 19 Jul (*JGu). In recent years there have been several records of this species in northwest Missouri and in Kansas, suggesting that it will be reported more often in NE.

American Bittern: This species appears to be doing well at CLNWR, where 6 were counted 7 (LMA) and 17 (MFr) Jun, while another was at Funk Lagoon WPA 4 Jun (LRA,RHA), within the probable breeding range in NE.

Least Bittern: This species is elusive in NE; while it may breed in small numbers throughout e NE and possibly as far w as CLNWR (Johnsgard 1979: Birds of the Great Plains), reports are few. Thus of interest was 1 at the nw corner of Pawnee L SRA on 30 Jul (LEi). There is a good cattail marsh at this location.

Great Blue Heron: Best count was 34 at CLNWR on 25 Jun (MFr). A fall influx was detected in Lancaster County, where singles were seen during the summer but 11 appeared 30 Jul (LEi).

Great Egret: Rare in NE in summer, especially in w NE, singles were seen in Scotts Bluff County 22 (AKE) and 24 (WRS) Jun, while 1 was at FFNC on 16 Jun (BP,LP); these were the only reports.

Snowy Egret: The only report was of 1 near Oshkosh on 24 Jul (LMA).

Little Blue Heron: The only reports were of an adult at Gleason WPA on 4 Jun (LRA,RHA), a rare spring sighting, and an immature at Funk Lagoon WPA 30 Jul (LRA,RHA).

Cattle Egret: Reports statewide throughout the period noted a total of about 150 birds; best counts were 43 at Funk Lagoon WPA on 22 Jul (LRA,RHA) and 39 at CLNWR on 13 Jul (LMA). No nesting attempts were reported.

Green Heron: The 3 reports were from se NE; best count 3 birds in n Saunders County on 17 Jun (THo).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: As expected, reports were from Sandhills

locations, with best count 13 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (LMa), although an immature was at Funk Lagoon WPA on 22 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: None were reported.

White-faced Ibis: Nesting is rare, and so reports are presumed migrants; last in spring was 1 in Sheridan County 14 Jun (BP,LP), while first in fall were 2 at CLNWR on 26 Jul (LMa). Unexpected in mid-summer were 2 at Funk Lagoon WPA 9 Jul (LRa,RHa). No more than 2 were reported at once.

Trumpeter Swan: A single was at CLNWR on 17 Jun (MFr); no evidence of nesting was noted. Five were counted along highway 61 in sw Cherry County 15 Jun (NR), while nesting birds were reported in n Grant County at Whitman (BP,LP) and just w of Hyannis at mile marker 142 (BP,LP,WRS). The w Sandhills appears to be the center of the breeding range in NE.

Snow Goose: The usual few summer stragglers were seen; 4 were at LaPlatte on 3 Jun (BP,LP), and singles were in Hall County 12 Jun (BP,LP) and at NPNWR on 5 Jun (LKO).

Canada Goose: This species is now common throughout in summer, breeding at most locations, but especially so in w NE; best count was 784 at NPNWR on 19 Jun (LKO).

Wood Duck: This species is also a common breeder virtually statewide; best count was an excellent 98 at NPNWR on 17 Jul (LKO), while 5 broods were at Arbor L WMA on 30 Jul (LEi).

Green-winged Teal: Nesting is rare in NE; none was noted this season. The only reports were of 2-7 at CLNWR, during the period (LMa,MFr) and a male 2 mi e of Funk Lagoon WPA on 9 Jul (LRa,RHa), an unexpected summer location.

Mallard: Peak counts at CLNWR and NPNWR were 83 (MFr) and 53 (LKO) on 12 Jul and 19 Jun respectively.

Northern Pintail: Best count was a modest 14 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa); this species may breed almost anywhere in the state.

Blue-winged Teal: There was a large difference in peak counts from CLNWR and NPNWR, the former 96 on 7 Jun (LMa) and the latter only 2 on 5 Jun (LKO). The difference may be a result of the habitat surrounding these refuges: Johnsgard (1979 op. cit.) suggested that this species prefers shallow lakes and ponds surrounded by native prairie.

Cinnamon Teal: All reports were from the panhandle, as expected, with best count 8 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa). Two males in the alkaline marshes at Facus Springs on 24 Jun (WRS) were at a known breeding location. Other reports were of 2 at Kilpatrick L on 16 Jun (NR) and 1 at Whitman on 14 Jun (NR).

Northern Shoveler: Best count was a modest 27 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa).

Gadwall: Best count was 41 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (MFr); reports were from the panhandle except for reports from c NE 11 and 16 Jun (LRa,RHa).

American Wigeon: Rather rare as a breeder in NE, the only reports were of 1 bird at Kilpatrick L on 16 Jun (NR), and "some" late migrants at Funk Lagoon WPA on 4 Jun (LRa,RHa).

Canvasback: Best count was 25 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (MFr). It nests in small numbers elsewhere in the Sandhills; interestingly, and compare with Blue-winged Teal, none were reported from NPNWR. There were, however, 2 at Facus Springs on 24 Jun (WRS).

Redhead: Best count was 45 at CLNWR on 17 Jun (MFr); this species nests in similar habitat to Canvasback in the Sandhills, but of interest were 6 rather late at Funk Lagoon WPA on 4 Jun (LRa,RHa), 12 rather early at the same place 9 Jul (LRa,RHa), and 8 at Theesen Lagoon WPA on 16 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Ring-necked Duck: 1-2 were at CLNWR throughout the period (MFr,LMa). This species is not known to nest in NE.

Lesser Scaup: Breeding is only occasional in the Sandhills, and so the numbers reported suggest a large number of non-breeders summering in NE: 26 were at CLNWR on 17 Jun and 12 Jul (MFr), and 20 were at Gering SL on 24 Jun (WRS). To the e and s, unexpected were a single male was on flooded farmland at Basswood Ridge WMA 10 Jun (BFH), and 3 at Funk Lagoon WPA 4 Jun (LRa,RHa).

Bufflehead: Not known to breed in NE, this species occurs as a non-breeding straggler in summer. Up to 4 were at CLNWR during the period (LMa,MFr), and a female was at Basswood Ridge WMA 10 Jun (BFH).

Hooded Merganser: The only reports were of 2 females 2 mi e of Funk Lagoon WPA on 9 Jul (LRa,RHa) and 2 females in n Kearney County 5 Jun (LRa,RHa); these reports, especially the latter, are suggestive of breeding, but to date no nesting has been reported for NE. Broods should be looked for in July.

Common Merganser: Again this year there was an excellent mid-July count at NPNWR, of 169 on 17 Jul (LKo). These birds were not there in June, as only 1 was counted 4 Jun (LMa). Although no information was provided on the gender of these birds, they are probably molting males from populations nw of NE, the closest sources; Kortright (1976: Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America) stated that about 7500 Common Mergansers breed in Wyoming. Palmer (1976: Handbook of North American Birds) stated that "mature and non-breeding males begin leaving [breeding areas] in June and few remain as late as mid-July ... Most ... probably have a fairly short molt migration". Thus it seems NPNWR may be a molt site for this species.

Ruddy Duck: Best count was 100 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (MFr); breeding s and e of the Sandhills and outside the Rainwater Basin is rare, and so 2 at Branched Oak WMA/SRA on 24 Jun (JoJ) were unexpected; no indication of breeding was noted, however.

Osprey: Unusual in mid-summer, and not known to breed in NE, 1 was at Calamus Res 2 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Mississippi Kite: This species appeared again at Ogallala, with 1-2 seen 11-12 Jun (BP,LP,JGu). This is the northernmost US nesting site for this species.

Bald Eagle: Summer residency continued at both NPNWR, where 1-2 were present (LKo) and at CLNWR, where 3-4 were present (MFr). An adult was tending a ready-to-fly immature at a nest at Calamus Res 2 Jul (LRa,RHa). A single was seen in Scotts Bluff County 2 Jun (LMa).

Northern Harrier: Easterly reports include birds in Cass County 1 Jun and 28 Jul (GWO,KDG) and another in sw Dixon County 16 Jul (JJo). There is little suitable breeding habitat for this species in e NE.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: A single bird was noted in n Saunders County, a location where breeding occurred in 1994 (NBR 62:131). Other singles were in Dixon County 29 Jul (JJo), probably a migrant, and in Carter Canyon 11 Jun (LMa), possibly nesting, but no evidence was noted.

Cooper's Hawk: No nesting evidence was provided, but singles were reported from DeSoto Bend NWR, an adult male on 31 Jul, (JoJ) to Fort Robinson SP on 25 Jun (LMa). Others were n of Seward 17 Jun (JGu) and n of Long Pine on 13 Jun (NR). This species is more often seen in summer than the preceding.

Red-shouldered Hawk: At least one summered in FFNC (WRS), although no nesting evidence came to hand.

Broad-winged Hawk: A few probably nest in the Missouri valley each year, although nesting evidence is scarce. This year, 3 were heard calling at Indian Cave SP 2 Jun (JGu), and at FFNC another was calling 27 May (WRS) in an area where 2-3 fledglings were heard 5

Jul (BP,LP).

Swainson's Hawk: At the ne extremity of the NE range were 1-3 in Wayne County during the period (JJo). This species is regular in summer se to the Rainwater Basin (LRa,RHa).

Ferruginous Hawk: An indication (perhaps of interest only to easterners!) that this species is not uncommon in the panhandle were the 3 on a BBS route s of Kimball on 24 Jun (WRS).

Golden Eagle: Reports were from the usual panhandle summer range.

American Kestrel: Best count was 10 s Redington on 22 Jul (LMa), a time when fledged birds are still with parents in family groups.

Prairie Falcon: The only reports were of singles at NPNWR on 3 Jun (LMa) and in c Sioux County 25 Jun (WRS). This species occurs in summer only near the w edge of the panhandle.

Gray Partridge: Joel Jorgensen provided interesting information on this species' occurrence in the c Missouri valley: it was regular n of Blair in the mid and late 1980s, after appearing there around 1980; best counts were around 20 in winter flocks. Since 1990 it has been seen only once, in 1994 near Kennard. There have been no sightings s of Blair, where the Missouri bottoms are more populated and vegetated.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Best count was 70 in Cheyenne and Morrill Counties 15 Jun (LMa).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: A BBS route mostly in s Rock County yielded 10 on 13 Jun (NR); the only other report was of 1 at the Ainsworth airport 17 Jun (LRa,RHa).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: An easterly report was of 2 n of Pine Glen WMA on 13 Jun (NR). This species occurs in small numbers e to Knox County in n NE.

Northern Bobwhite: At the w edge of its NE range, 1 was near Broadwater on 15 Jun (LMa). They are not established in Wyoming, where cold winters control their survival (Scott 1993: Birder's Guide to Wyoming).

Black Rail: Following the report of this species in spring at CLNWR, it was again reported there this summer. Water levels were high, flooding cattails and reaching the edge of surrounding meadow. It was at the meadow edge that sightings were made 31 May at Gimlet L, and 19 Jun at both Perrin L and Upper Harrison L (Bob Behrends, pers. comm. to WRS, MFr). For completeness, an additional sighting, including a description of a "very small bird in flight away from the observer with spotting on its back" was made about 20 yards outside the cattails 15 Aug at Boyd Pond (LMa, pers. comm. to WRS), and another was seen 6 Sep on the w side of Goose L (Bob Behrends, pers. comm. to WRS). Hopefully, the apparent existence of a population of this species at CLNWR can be further investigated in 1996.

Virginia Rail: Reports were from the panhandle, where best count was 13 at CLNWR on 11 Jul (LMa), and of a single at Funk Lagoon WPA on 9 Jul (LRa,RHa). Breeding is likely at the latter location.

Sora: Reports were from CLNWR, where best count was 8 on 11 Jul (LMa), and Funk Lagoon WPA, where 2 were heard 9 Jul (LRa,RHa). Summer reports, including specific locations, of rails in the e half on NE would be welcome.

American Coot: Best count was 110 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (MFr), while at NPNWR the high was only 11, on 5 Jun (LKO); perhaps the others were hidden in the cattails! Numerous broods were seen in the Rainwater Basin (LRa,RHa).

Semipalmated Plover: Last in spring were 3 at Funk Lagoon WPA on 4 Jun (LRa,RHa), while earliest in fall were 3 at Wehrspann L on 25 Jul (BP,LP); this date is one of the earliest ever. Best count was 5 at the same place 26 Jul (BP,LP).

Piping Plover: The beleaguered birds at LM were successful despite

the high water and resulting close proximity to humans and their vehicles; a fenced colony in the middle of a parking area fledged several young (WRS,SJD). The only other report was from Cass County 15 Jun without details (GWO,KDG), but presumably along the Platte River.

Killdeer: Post-breeding flocks were forming by the end of the period; 139 were counted in Lancaster County 30 Jul, including 50 at 1 location (LEi). Other high counts were 80 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (LMa) and 50 at NPNWR on 19 Jun (LKO).

Mountain Plover: The only report was a single adult seen 24 Jun feeding on washed-out fallow ground after a rainstorm about 6 mi s of Kimball (WRS).

Black-necked Stilt: The reliable ponds at mile marker 106 on highway 2 had 1-2 birds 11-25 Jun (JGu,BP,LP,WRS) while 2 were reported w of Antioch 15 Jun (NR). The colony at mile marker 106 has been present since at least 1988.

American Avocet: Reports were from the panhandle, even though the species is most common in summer in the Sandhills, and Rainwater Basin; best count was 48 at NPNWR 6 Jun, although only 10 were there 19 Jun (LKO). Probably part of the small breeding population in the Rainwater Basin were 3 at Funk Lagoon WPA 9 Jul (RHa,LRa), although 3 near Hartwell 29 Jul (LRa,RHa) were likely migrants.

Greater Yellowlegs: Very early were 2 along the Niobrara River in Sioux County 1 Jul (LMa,AKe fide NR). This may be the earliest fall date for NE. Also very early was 1 at CLNWR 12 Jul (MFr). Best count to this point in the migration was 11 at CLNWR on 26 Jul (LMa).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Apparently the earliest ever in fall was 1 at Yankee Hill WMA on 1 Jul (LEi), followed by 3 at NPNWR on 3 Jul (LKO). Also very early were 9 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (LMa,MFr). Best count was an estimated 100 at Theesen Lagoon WPA on 16 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Solitary Sandpiper: These birds were widely reported, with a good count of 20 in Lancaster County 30 Jul (LEi). Earliest were also record early on 1 Jul, 5 on the Niobrara River in Sioux County (LMa,AKe fide NR), followed at a still rather early date by 1 near Gibbon 12 Jul (LRa,RHa). Last for spring were 2 at NPNWR on 5 Jun (LKO).

Willet: Most easterly reports of this Sandhills breeder were of 6 se of Valentine 14 Jun (NR), and 2 on the Rock-Brown County line 16 Jun (LRa,RHa), while best count was 14 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa).

Spotted Sandpiper: Best count of this virtually statewide breeder was 9 in various locations in Lancaster County on 30 Jul (LEi).

Upland Sandpiper: Another statewide breeder, best counts were made on Sandhills BBS routes, where 15-22 were counted on 3 routes 14-16 Jun (NR). Easterly locations were Dixon (JJo), Cass (GWO,KDG), and Pawnee (BFH) Counties.

Long-billed Curlew: Best counts were 13 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa) and 14 assembled on the Thedford Golf Course 14 Jun (BP,LP). The latter is of interest in that none were reported after a 1 Jul sighting in Sioux County (LMa), suggesting early departure of breeding birds. None were seen along Highway 2 on 25 Jun (WRS).

Marbled Godwit: Only 1 migrant was reported, on 12 Jul at CLNWR (LMa), a rather early fall date; fall records are far scarcer than spring records.

Sanderling: Generally an uncommon migrant, only 1 report was received, of 1 at Arbor L WMA on 30 Jul (LEi).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Probably a record early date was provided by 1 at Branched Oak SRA/WMA on 1 Jul (LEi). Best counts were 38 in Lancaster County 30 Jul (LEi) and 30 at Wehrspann L 25 Jul (BP,LP).

Western Sandpiper: Last in spring was 1 near Funk Lagoon WPA on 4

Jun (LRa,RHa). The 3 fall reports spanned the state: 13 were at CLNWR 26 Jul (LMa), 2 were 2 mi e of Funk Lagoon WPA on 30 Jul (LRa,RHa), and 5 were at Jack Sinn WMA on 23 Jul (WRS). This species is probably more common in fall in e NE than in spring and more common in w NE in general.

Least Sandpiper: Rather early were 4 at CLNWR on 12 Jul (LMa). Best count was 15 at Gering SL on 28 Jul (AKe). This is a common statewide migrant.

Baird's Sandpiper: Rather early and best counts were 10 at CLNWR on 12 Jul LMa) and 12 at Gering SL on 17 Jul (AKe). Also a common statewide migrant, although July numbers were much lower than last year.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Earliest were 2 at Theesen Lagoon WPA on 16 Jul (LRa,RHa), while best count was 17 at Jack Sinn WMA on 26 Jul (NR). None were reported in w NE, where the species is far less common.

Stilt Sandpiper: Last in spring was a rather late bird at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa). First in fall was 1 at Funk Lagoon WPA on 22 Jul (LRa,RHa), while best count was 11 near Hartwell on 29 Jul (LRa,RHa). These numbers are lower than last spring also.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Rather early were 4 at CLNWR on 12 Jul; another was there 26 Jul (LMa). Other reports were of 1 at Wehrspann L 25-26 Jul (BP,LP), and up to 8 near Hartwell on 29-30 Jul (LRa,RHa). Most do not arrive until August.

Common Snipe: This species breeds at scattered locations in w and n NE, although as of 1979 it was considered rare (Johnsgard, op.cit.). One was winnowing at Facus Springs 25 Jun (WRS), and others were reported from CLNWR 15 Jul (MFr), 4 birds s of Morrill on 22 Jun (AKe), at Kilpatrick L on 8 Jul (LMa), and on up to 3 on 3 BBS routes in Loup, Brown, and w Cherry Cos (NR).

American Woodcock: The only report was of 1 at Arbor Day Farm 25 Jul (LLF); although the species nests along the Missouri valley, none were seen at this location earlier in the season (LLF).

Wilson's Phalarope: Breeding may occur over most of NE except the se quarter, although no reports were received e or s of Brown and Rock Counties (NR,LRa,RHa) and CLNWR, where 14 were counted 7 Jun (LMa). Migrants had arrived at the latter location in force by 26 Jul, when 514 were seen (LMa), although first group, of 26, arrived 18 Jul (MFr). The only e NE report was of 2 migrants in Sarpy Co. 26 Jul (LP,BP).

Franklin's Gull: Straggling non-breeders were in Cass Co. 11 Jun (Gwo,KDG) and at Branched Oak SRA/WMA on 1 Jul (LEi). Two birds at CLNWRS 12 Jul (MFR) may also have been stragglers, although nesting is possible there. Migrants arrived in late Jul, with 1 at Theesen Lagoon WPA on 16 Jul (LRa,RHa), and, best count, 685 near Oshkosh on 24 Jul (LMa).

Ring-billed Gull: Straggling non-breeders are often seen, virtually anywhere; best counts were 27 at Branched Oak SRA/WMA on 30 Jul (LEi) and 22 at NPNWR 17 Jul (LKO).

California Gull: Mid-summer is usually the low point for numbers of this species; 1 was at Kingsley Dam 5 Jul (LLF) for the only report.

Herring Gull: Rather rare in midsummer, none were reported.

Forster's Tern: Rather late spring migrants were 3 at Burchard L WMA on 6 Jun (BP,LP). Probably breeding regularly at CLNWR, up to 19 were there during the summer (MFr,LMa). Fall migrants appeared at Valentine NWR 19 Jun (JGu) and in Buffalo Co. on 20 Jun (LRa,RHa).

Least Tern: Breeding at regular locations were a small group just above Kingsley Dam (LLF) and at least 3 nesting at a sand and gravel operation near the flooding and bar-less Platte River in n Saunders Co. (THo). The provenance of 1 in Cass Co. 18 Jun

(GWO,KDG) is unknown. Of interest were 3 at the Kent Diversion Dam in se Loup Co. 18 Jun (LRa,RHa), an area little studied with respect to this species.

Black Tern: Numbers were rather low at CLNWR in midsummer; only 6 were noted 25 Jun (MFr). Migrants in spring and fall were 27 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa) and 30 there 26 Jul (LMa). Migrants appeared in Lancaster Co. with 7 there on 30 Jul (LEi).

Black-billed Cuckoo: This species breeds statewide, albeit in small numbers; reports were received from all sections. In the panhandle, where it is uncommon, 1 was at CLNWR 12 Jul (LMa), and reports came from Richardson (BFH), Otoe (LLF), and Cass (GWO,KDG) Cos., where it is also uncommon.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Also a statewide breeder, but in somewhat greater numbers than Black-billed, reports were also statewide, including singles at CLNWR through the period (MFr) and in Cheyenne Co. 15 Jun (LMa), locations where it is uncommon.

Common Barn-Owl: A healthy population exists at CLNWR, where no fewer than 11 were counted 6 Jun (MFr); 5 were there 27 Jul (LMa). There were no other reports, however.

Eastern Screech-Owl: This species is least common in the panhandle, but occurs wherever habitat suits; 4 were at CLNWR 11 Jul (LMa).

Barred Owl: Probably at the w edge of its range except for birds in the Platte valley. 1 was at Oak Glen WMA on 25 Jun (JGu). What are the w limits in the Platte valley?

Short-eared Owl: The only report was from a presumed breeding area, a single in Garden Co. 28 Jun (LMa).

Chuck-will's-widow: Of interest was the continuing presence at the n extreme of the NE range at Willis, where 1 was found 14 Jun (BFH). Another was at Indian Cave SP 29 Jun (BP,LP).

Whip-poor-will: Rather northerly were 2 near Willis 14 Jun (BFH), while best count was 9 on Trail 9 at Indian Cave SP on 13 Jul (JGu). A westerly report was from Oak Glen WMA 25 Jun (JGu). These reports outline the current NE range.

Chimney Swift: Westerly reports from the North Platte valley and c Panhandle, where the species has become established since about 1970, were from Gering 1 Jun (AKe), and Alliance, where 4 were seen 25 Jul (LMa).

White-throated Swift: All reports were from Scotts Bluff and Dawes Cos., within the usual range, with best count 6 at Scotts Bluff NM 1 Jun (AKe).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: All reports were from the expected range, along the Missouri valley.

Red-headed Woodpecker: A report from a location where the species is still noteworthy was of 1 at James Ranch on 9 Jun and 3 Jul (SLe).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Last for spring was at FF on 2 Jun (BP,LP).

Western Wood-Pewee: Reports were from the usual w Panhandle range, although 1 at CLNWR 7 Jun (LMa) is in an area where expansion has been relatively recent.

Acadian Flycatcher: For the second consecutive summer, up to 3 (JGu,BP,LP,NR,JoJ) were on Trail 9 at Indian Cave SP at least through 26 Jun (BFH). There are fewer than 10 summer reports since the 1960s.

Willow Flycatcher: All reports were from e NE; singles were at Indian Cave SP 11 Jun (JoJ), Arbor L WMA 17 Jun (LEi), and in Dixon Co. 20 Jun (JJo). A bird identified as "Empid sp." in n Saunders Co. 11 Jun (THo) was likely this species also.

Least Flycatcher: Last for spring were 2 at FF 2 Jun (BP,LP) and 1 there 3 Jun (BP,LP).

Eastern Phoebe: Breeding birds had departed nesting sites by 30 Jul in Lancaster Co. (LEi).

Say's Phoebe: An easterly report was of a single near Bladen on 8 Jul (LRa,RHa); this species is absent only from se NE in summer.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Unexpected were 2 at State Line Island 6 Jun (ECT,AKe); no details were provided for what appears to be only the second report for Scotts Bluff Co. The w edge of the regular range in the Platte valley is the Keith County area. It should also be pointed out that observers be aware of the possibility of Ash-throated Flycatcher occurring in the Panhandle; there are several ne Colorado plains records (Andrews and Righter 1992, Colorado Birds) and a single NE record of 1 seen by Rosché and Rosché near Chadron 29 Aug 1987 (NBR 57:45).

Cassin's Kingbird: Best count was 6 on 22 Jul in canyons s of Redington (LMa), perhaps the most regular location in the state; this species is not hard to find in remote Panhandle canyons with scattered pines.

Purple Martin: Perhaps the westernmost breeding location in the state, 5 were at Ogallala 24 Jul (LMa).

Tree Swallow: Now breeding virtually statewide, westerly reports included 4-5 at CLNWR throughout (MFr,LMa) and 2 at mile marker 142 on Highway 2 ij Grant Co. on 25 Jun (WRS). Best count was 25 at Wagon Train L SRA on 8 Jul (LEi).

Violet-green Swallow: Reports were from Sioux (LMa,WRS) and Scotts Bluff (AKe) Cos., as expected, but no more than singles were reported.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Best count was 20 in n Lancaster Co. 1 and 8 Jul (LEi). Fledglings were noted at James Ranch 10 Jul (SLe).

Bank Swallow: This species breeds statewide. Best counts were 40 at Branched Oak WMA/SRA on 1 Jul (LEi) and 35 at CLNWR 26 Jul (LMa), the latter likely migrants.

Cliff Swallow: Best count for this abundant statewide breeder was 702 on a BBS route in the Broadwater area 15 Jun (LMa), while 500 migrants were at Ayr L on 22 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Barn Swallow: Best count was of migrants at CLNWR, where 705 were counted 26 Jul (LMa).

Blue Jay: Possibly least common in the w Sandhills, 1 was at CLNWR 6 and 25 Jun (MFr).

Pinyon Jay: The only reports of this species, which is inconspicuous in summer, were of 4 at Fort Robinson SP on 25 Jun (LMa) and at least 1 at the James Ranch feeders 10-23 Jul (SLe).

Black-billed Magpie: Perhaps the southeasternmost regular summer location is Fort Kearny SHP, where a few were seen 24 Jun (LRa,RHa). There is a small colony near Prague, also. Are there resident birds se of these locations?

Tufted Titmouse: At the e edge of the range was 1 at the Saltillo Road entrance to Wilderness Park in Lincoln (LEi).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Reports were from known or probable breeding localities: 6 were at Carter Canyon 11 Jun (LMa), at least 1 was at the Niobrara Valley Preserve in Keya Paha Co. 18 Jun (LRa,RHa), and singles were noted at Pine Glen WMA and nearby in ne Brown Co. 13-14 Jun (NR).

Carolina Wren: Reports were from se NE, no further n and w than singles at Wilderness Park 17 Jun and 1 Jul (LEi).

Sedge Wren: This enigmatic species was widely noted this summer, although it is difficult to pin down just when this species' summer occurs. It tends to disappear after spring migration, although this year up to 3 were present through the period at Arbor L WMA (LEi). Other mid-summer reports were of 1 in Sarpy Co. 3 Jun (BP,LP), at least 1 at Nine Mile Prairie 1 Jul (NR), and 1 at Wehrspann L 5 Jul (BP,LP). As is usual, larger numbers appear in late Jul and tend to remain through August. Such groups included 11 at Rowe Sanctuary on

20 Jul (LRa,RHa), and at least 6 at Jack Sinn WMA on 23 and 26 Jul (WRS,NR). A single was near Gibbon 29-30 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Marsh Wren: Excellent numbers were at CLNWR, with 110 counted 26 Jul (LMA) and 52 on 14 Jun (MFr). Unexpectedly far se for the date, 1 was at Arbor L WMA 1 Jul (LEi) and another at Glenvil Basin WPA 16 Jul (LRa,RHa); this species is not numerous in se NE in summer.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: At the same place as last year, 1 rather agitated bird was far to the w in limber pines in Kimball Co. 24 Jun; only 1 bird was found on each occasion (WRS). The nearest breeding populations appear to be in c Kansas (Thompson and Ely 1992, Birds in Kansas) and the Colorado foothills (Andrews and Righter, op. cit.)

Eastern Bluebird: Belying their name, 2 were at feeders after a 4-inch snow far to the w at James Ranch on 9 Jun (SLe). Best count was of 31, 9 adults and 22 young, in Dixon Co. 30 Jun (JJo). Predators allowed only 1-2 successes in 11 boxes in Otoe Co. (LLF).

Townsend's Solitaire: Rare in mid-summer, 1 was in Sioux Co. 1 Jul (LMA). There are very few nesting reports.

Swainson's Thrush: A report without details was of 1 at an unexpected location, CLNWR, 22 Jun (MFr). This species has occurred well into June in nw NE, but this is one of the latest dates ever.

Wood Thrush: The reports were from the Missouri valley, n to Thurston Co., where a pair was at Ashford Scout Camp in Thurston Co. 9 Jul (BFH), and w to Lancaster Co., where 2 were at Wilderness Park 17 Jun (LEi). Except for the Niobrara valley, these reports appear to define the currently much-reduced summer range in NE.

Gray Catbird: Not numerous westwardly, 1 was at CLNWR 28 Jun (LMA).

Northern Mockingbird: As is usual, individuals popped up almost anywhere, including singles near Gering 10 Jun and early Aug (AKE). It is probably most numerous in the tree-dotted prairie areas of Johnson and Pawnee Cos.; 3 were found along back roads in Johnson Co. 6 Jun (NR). Nesting apparently occurred in Lancaster Co., where 2 adults and an immature were seen 8 Jul near Little Salt Fork Marsh (LEi).

Cedar Waxwing: Reports were numerous through the period from most reporting locations, although the only evidence of nesting was of a pair making an attempt at Raymond Cemetery in Lancaster Co. 17 Jun (LEi). Best counts were 20 in Scottsbluff on 10 Jun (AKE) and 10 at FFNC 2 Jun (BP,LP).

Loggerhead Shrike: This species breeds statewide, in good numbers in most areas, including a BBS count of 11 in Box Butte Co. on 16 Jun (LMA).

Bell's Vireo: Reports were from most parts of the breeding range, which extends to the e edge of the panhandle.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Reports were only from the Missouri valley, n to Thurston Co., where 1 was singing at Ashford Scout Camp 8 Jul (BFH).

Red-eyed Vireo: No reports were received from w parts of the range; breeding occurs throughout the major river valleys, including the Loup drainage, except for the panhandle. Summer reports outside these areas are welcome.

Northern Parula: Numbers continue to be impressive in se NE; at least 6 were at Indian Cave SP on 2 Jun (JGu), it was "quite common" there 11 and 24 Jun (JoJ). It was reported n to FFNC, where 2 were singing 16 Jun (BP,LP).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: A spring report far to the w, where it represents only the 9th panhandle record, all in spring, was of 1 at Walgren L SRA on 29 May (Isolde Cutshall fide NR).

Yellow-throated Warbler: At least 1 was singing at FFNC 1 Jun (BP,LP).

Cerulean Warbler: This rare se NE summerer continued its summer

presence this year, with 1 at FFNC on 1 Jun (BP,LP), and 2 on Trail 9 at Indian Cave SP 6 Jun (BP,LP,NR).

Black-and-white Warbler: A regular nester in the Niobrara valley, 1 was in ne Brown Co. 14 Jun (NR). However, there have been no summer reports from the Missouri valley since 1988, and so significant was the presence of 2 singing at FFNC 21 Jul (Roland Barth fide BP,LP).

American Redstart: This species is fairly common as a breeder in the Missouri valley; best counts were of 5 males, 1 carrying food, at Indian Cave SP on 26 Jun (BFH), and 4 singing at Ashford Scout Camp in Thurston Co. on 9 Jul (BFH). It also occurs regularly on the Pine Ridge, where 4 were at Fort Robinson SP 25 Jun (LMa).

Prothonotary Warbler: A pair carrying nesting material was seen at FFNC 1 Jun (BP,LP), an attempt to continue the small breeding population there.

Ovenbird: Apparently very common in the Niobrara valley, an impressive 200 were noted in the Niobrara Valley Preserve in Brown Co. 17 Jun (LRa,RHa). Other reports were from the summer range in the Pine Ridge and Missouri valley; this species breeds only along the e and n edges of NE.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Very rare as a breeder in NE, 1 was carrying food at Indian Cave SP on 26 Jun (BFH), while another (or the same?) was heard from the Trail 9 parking lot there 6 Jun (BP,LP).

Kentucky Warbler: Apparently nesting birds were noted in Indian Cave SP, where at least 3 were noted 2 Jun (JGu), 1 was singing 24 Jun (JoJ), and another was on Trail 5 on 30 Jun (BP,LP). Another was at FFNC 2 Jun (BP,LP). Numbers of summering birds have increased in recent years.

Mourning Warbler: An Oporornis warbler, thought to be this species, was in the St. Deroin area of Indian Cave SP 11 Jun (JGu), a not unprecedented date; all-time latest in spring is 12 Jun.

Common Yellowthroat: Best counts were 34 at CLNWR on 7 Jun (LMa) and 18 on a BBS route in ne Brown Co. 14 Jun (NR).

Summer Tanager: This species probably occurs in most of extreme se NE, although most reports in recent years are from Schramm Park SRA at the nw edge of the range. This summer 1 was at Indian Cave SP 30 Jun (BP,LP) and another was at Rulo Bluffs Preserve 2 Jun (JGu).

Scarlet Tanager: Reports were from the entire Missouri valley, as expected, with best count 3 males at Basswood Ridge WMA 10 Jun (BFH). Breeding occurs also in the Niobrara valley, where 1 was e of Valentine in Cherry Co. 19 Jul (JGu), at the w edge of the breeding range.

Western Tanager: A single was out of breeding habitat at a grove just n of Exit 1 on I-80 in Kimball Co. 11 Jun (JGu); it was apparently a late migrant.

Northern Cardinal: The small westernmost outpost in Scotts Bluff Co. persists, although the 2 males and 1 female were not detected nesting (AKe).

Black-headed Grosbeak: Near the e edge of the range, a male was 13 mi n of Curtis on 5 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Blue Grosbeak: Best counts were 7 s of Morrill on 22 Jun (AKe) and 6 in Dixon Co. on 16 Jul (JJo); this species occurs statewide.

Lazuli Bunting: Reports were from the rather limited breeding range in the panhandle; 4 were reported from Scotts Bluff Co. on 1 Jun (AKe) and 11 Jun (LMa), and fledglings appeared at James Ranch 14 Jul (SLe).

Dickcissel: Unexpectedly early as far w was 1 w of Alliance 16 Jun (NR); most arrive later if at all, such as singles (same bird?) at CLNWR 11 (LMa) and 21 (MFr) Jul.

Rufous-sided Towhee: Pure "eastern" types are restricted to se NE, while "spotted" birds breed over most of the state. Easterly

reports of the latter were from the Gibbon area 22 and 29 Jul (LRa,RHa). Observers should note which types occur in summer in their areas.

Cassin's Sparrow: The only report of this very local species was of 2 on 16 Jun at the sagelands s and w of Kilpatrick L (NR). This regular location (Rosché 1994, Birding 26:416) may be the northernmost in this species' range.

Brewer's Sparrow: The Kilpatrick L area also hosts a sizeable population of these birds; up to 6 were counted 16 Jun-8 Jul (LMa,NR,WRS). The other well-known location is along the Wyoming border w of Harrison.

Field Sparrow: Breeding over most of the state, it is, however, rare at the w edge of its range in the Panhandle, where 1 was carefully identified in limber pines in Kimball Co. 24 Jun (WRS). It is numerous in c NE; "large numbers" were reported 17 Jun in the Niobrara Valley Preserve (LRa,RHa), 250 were in se Lincoln Co. 5 Jul (LRa,RHa), and 175 were noted in Frontier Co. 5 Jul (LRa,RHa).

Vesper Sparrow: Best count of this statewide breeder, mostly n of the Platte valley, was a modest 11 in Dixon Co. 3 Jun (JJo). Numbers are low in se NE, but 2 were in n Lancaster Co. 30 Jul (LEi).

Lark Sparrow: Breeding statewide, best count was 118 at CLNWR on 26 Jul (LMa). Less numerous in e NE, best count was only 5, in Dixon Co. 2 Jul (JJo).

Lark Bunting: Best count was 220 on a BBS route in Box Butte Co. 16 Jun (LMa). Easternmost reports, at about the e edge of the range, were of a female s of Campbell 8 Jul (LRa,RHa), and several along the Rock-Brown Cos. line 16 Jun (LRa,RHa).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Doing very well in recent years in c and w NE, excellent counts of "at least" 500 at Calamus Res SRA on 2 Jul (LRa,RHa) and 104 at CLNWR 1 Jul (MFr) were made.

Henslow's Sparrow: No reports were received from last year's Lancaster Co. sites, however up to 6 singing males were located on spring-burnt prairie on the n side of Burchard L WMA through 26 Jun (JGu,BFH, m.ob.). This area had more forbs than the area used in 1985 near the prairie-chicken blinds (BP,LP).

Swamp Sparrow: Following last year, 1-2 were again reported from Funk Lagoon WPA (LRa,RHa), apparently the southernmost regular summer site for this local NE breeder. Another regular site (Rosché 1994, Birds of the L. McConaughy Area) is the Clear Creek WMA marshes, where 2 were singing 13 Jun (BP,LP).

White-throated Sparrow: Last for spring was at Arbor Day Farm 2 Jun (LLF).

White-crowned Sparrow: Last in spring was 1 at Scotts bluff 2 Jun (LMa).

Dark-eyed Junco: The last "slate-colored" birds left James Ranch 5 Jun (SLe). The summer birds of the Pine Ridge are of the "white-winged" form, and so of interest was a report of 6 "slate-colored" birds at Gilbert-Baker WMA 28 Jul (LMa). This is very early for fall migrants, although other authors have indicated that this race may occur in summer in the Pine Ridge (Short 1961, NBR 29:2). The last "white-winged" birds left the James Ranch feeders 6 Jun (SLe), presumably to commence breeding operations nearby.

McCown's Longspur: Reports were from regular locations: 10 were in sw Kimball Co. 24 Jun (WRS), and 1 near highway 20 in Sioux Co. 4 Jul (LMa).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: It was considered "common" in Sioux and Kimball Cos. 24-25 Jun (WRS), while 8 were in Sioux Co. 1 Jul (LMa).

Bobolink: At the s edge of the summer range, 1-2 were in Otoe Co.

11 Jun (LLF), and up to 3 were at Arbor L WMA through the period (LEi). Nesting in the Rainwater Basin is undocumented, although the species breeds commonly in the c Platte valley (Lingle 1994, Birding Crane River). Birds observed in Jul in the Rainwater Basin and elsewhere s of the Platte River may not have bred locally; such flocks are often described as consisting of "immatures", but likely contain molted adult males and females as well. Adult males molt during July (Bent 1958, Life Histories ...). Plumages were not mentioned for birds near Fairfield 16 Jul (LRa,RHa) and at Rowe Sanctuary 20 Jul (LRa,RHa), although flocks of "immatures", certainly migrants, were noted at Sacramento-Wilcox WMA 29 Jul (LRa,RHa) and in Lancaster Co. 30 Jul (LEi).

Red-winged Blackbird: Flocks were forming by late Jul (JJo).

Eastern Meadowlark: Good populations occupy suitable habitat statewide; 27 were at CLNWR 1 Jul (MFr), and 5 were counted on a BBS route in Cheyenne and Morrill Cos. 15 Jun (LMa).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Least numerous in se NE, 10 summered at Arbor L WMA (LEi).

Brewer's Blackbird: More common in the n Panhandle than in the s, 1 was near Bushnell 6 Jul (LLF), and a female was feeding a young bird s of Redington 25 Jun (WRS). Breeding is unconfirmed in Kimball Co.

Great-tailed Grackle: East of the Rainwater Basin stronghold, at least 6 were at Burchard L SRA 2-6 Jun (JGu,NR,BP,LP), and up to 6 were at Arbor L WMA through the period (LEi).

Orchard Oriole: Now fairly common statewide, westerly reports were from James Ranch 17 Jul (SLe) and CLNWR, where 7 were counted 6-7 Jun (LMa,MFr).

Northern Oriole: While "Bullock's" types are limited to the Panhandle and "Baltimore" types are rare there, occurring mainly as spring migrants, most NE birds show some indication of hybridization. Pure-appearing Baltimores are rare, however, in the Panhandle in summer; 1 was at Oliver Res SRA 24 Jun (WRS).

Red Crossbill: A pair of adults with 4-5 juveniles was seen in the Keya Paha Co. portion of the Niobrara Valley Preserve 18 Jun (LRa,RHa), while a single bird was at Pine Glen WMA 13 Jun (NR). Breeding in this area has not yet been confirmed, and, because this species generally nests during the winter months, family groups may be far from the hatching area by June.

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