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NOTES

DESOTO NWR. Our Independent Science Research class at Laurel-Concord High School, led by Ed Brogie, took a field trip to DeSoto NWR 3 November 1984. We spotted two species listed as "rare" on the NWR checklist: Western Grebe and Lesser Golden-Plover; and one not listed for fall: Water Pipit.

--- Paul L. Pearson, RR 2, Box 63, Wakefield, Nebraska 68784

CLAY COUNTY. Here are some observations Joe Gabig, Ross Lock, and I made 22 September 1984 at Harvard Marsh, just west of the town of Harvard. Skies were cloudy, temperature was approximately 50-55° F., winds were fairly calm. We were at the southeast side of the basin, looking mostly northwest. Light conditions were very poor, making identification difficult, except for the obvious species. All birds recorded were observed while we were standing near the pickup at one location, between 1830 and 1920. A few small flocks of 15-25 dark geese were observed, and White-fronts were heard calling at times. Some Snow Geese were observed at the main water area .5 mile to the northwest. A local observer reported 200 Snows using the basin. There were scattered small flocks of Blue-winged Teal and other dabblers. There was one flock of 20-25 American Avocets, and single Common Snipe were observed flushing from vegetation. One group of four and two other singles of White-faced Ibis were seen, as were numerous flocks of 1-20 Yellowlegs sp.. Groups of 2-10 White Pelicans were observed off and on. Singles and small groups (4-5 birds) of American Bitterns were observed, and later a flock of about 60 was observed drifting over the marsh. Two Great Blue Herons were also in this flock. Numerous flights of unidentified waterfowl were observed arriving at the marsh. Besides the waves of birds coming into the marsh the sky was dotted with hundreds (thousands?) of birds

that appeared as specks to the unaided eye. These birds were soaring on long, pointed wings, and resembled a flock of swallows feeding high in the sky. They were much larger than swallows, however, but the poor light conditions and the distance between us just didn't allow identification.

--- John J. Dinan, Box 75, Ceresco, Nebraska 68017

(Ruth Green suggests that the "specks" were migrating Common Nighthawks)

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION MIDWINTER EAGLE SURVEY The NWF survey was initiated in January 1979 as a means of monitoring the nation's wintering eagle population. Nebraska incorporates Game and Parks' surveys (aerial and conservation officer counts) with bird club and other conservation groups' counts and reports an edited number as a statewide total. In 1985, 73 counties were included in coverage by 88 survey participants. I might explain that not all observations reported to me are necessarily included in the totals. Several areas are surveyed by more than one group over the two week period, so I must edit observations to minimize duplicate reporting and to allow for possible local movements by the eagles.

Nebraska's NWF survey Bald Eagle totals from 1979 to 1985 are:

Year	Adults	Immatures	Unknown Age	Total
1979	132	51	11	194
1980	288	154	0	442
1981	306	147	0	453
1982	254	138	1	393
1983	286	147	13	446
1984	296	86	6	388
1985	475	238	33	746

--- Greg Wingfield, Nebraska Game and Parks' Commission
Route 4, Box 36, North Platte, Nebraska 69101

The 1985 count was listed by 57 sites. (River sites are stretches of the river.) In condensed form it is:

Location	No. of Sites	Bald Eagles				Golden Eagles		Unknown Species	Total
		Adults	Im-matures	Unknown Age	Adults	Im-matures			
North Platte R.	6	65	41	11	6	1	-	124	
Platte River	9	120	30	9	-	-	-	159	
South Platte R.	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Republican R.	3	52	66	-	-	-	-	118	
Middle Loup R.	2	8	1	-	2	-	-	11	
Loup River	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	
Snake River	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	
Niobrara R.	5	33	3	-	6	-	6	48	
Missouri R.	2	61	13	-	1	-	-	75	
Sheridan Co.	5	4	-	-	3	1	-	8	
Chase Co.	2	6	7	-	2	1	-	16	
Sutherland Reservoir	1	89	72	12	-	-	-	173	
Strunk Res.	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	5	
Miscellaneous	18	13	3	1	10	-	2	29	
Total	57	475	238	33	30	3	8	787	

MINDEN NOTES. On 23 September 1984 my cousin, Robert Spicknall, and I saw three or four groups of White Pelicans, about 400 birds, in the air east of Minden. We saw Great Blue Herons from 10 August to 1 September. We saw about a dozen Cattle Egrets 10 August, and a few were still at the same lagoon 16 August. Robert saw a Turkey Vulture in Adams Co. 9 September. I saw a kettle of Swainson's Hawks on 25 August. Robert heard Sandhill Cranes in Adams Co. 20 October, and I saw some in Kearney Co. 24 October. I heard a Yellow-billed Cuckoo 25 August. I flushed Grasshopper Sparrows on 1 and 9 September. On 27 October we saw some Lapland Longspurs, and

then about 200 of what I feel sure were Smith's Longspurs -- we had the light in our favor in checking them. Mrs. Mike Bunger reported three House Finches at her feeder from mid-August to mid-September, and I was told of a totally white sparrow -- no black feathers -- in with a flock of House Sparrows near the Post Office.

--- Harold Turner, Box 333, Minden, Nebraska 68959

WHOOPIING CRANES. The Pierre, S. D., office of the Fish and Wildlife Service reported three confirmed sightings of Whooping Cranes in Nebraska in the 1984 fall migration. Four adults and a young were sighted in Logan Co., 13½ miles north and 5 miles east of Stapleton on 28-29 October; two were seen flying 10½ miles north and 1 mile east of Minden, Buffalo Co., on 28 October; and two adults and one young were 2 miles east and 6 miles north of Gibbon, Buffalo Co., 31 October to 1 November.

The 11 April record of two birds in Kearney Co., reported as "highly probable" (NBR 52:46), is now classified as confirmed.

The Whooping Crane Conservation Association's *Grus Americana*, 24:3, reports: Based on the best information available there were about 150 Whooping Cranes in the wild and 44 in captivity at one time in mid-1985. It is very difficult to make an accurate count of the Rocky Mountain population because of the vast geographical area into which they have dispersed.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER. A Mountain Plover was observed 8 May 1985 by Scheil Zendehe and me northwest of Bushnell, Kimball County, Nebraska, at the locality described by Richard C. Rosche in the June/August 1982 issue of *Birding*. The bird was seen at about 5:30 PM MDT, in flight and perched on a newly plowed field. The Mountain Plover was smaller than the Killdeer present at an artificial lake in a pasture nearby, and showed a much less conspicuous wing stripe in flight. On the ground, it showed tawny brown upperparts with a small dark area on the crown, and white underparts with a small buffy diffusion on the sides of the breast. The bill was dark and the eye large; there was a broad whitish eyeline. As the bird flew from the bare field back into the pasture, we noted the brown tail with a dark area at the tip. The only vocalizations we heard were a series of hoarse calls given in flight. The legs and feet were grayish-pink.

--- Rick Wright, 11530 Westwood Lane, #33, Omaha, Nebraska 68144

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS. Ten Short-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus griseus*) of the race *hendersoni* were identified by Soheil Zendehe and me on 14 May 1985, in a flooded field about 1.5 km. east of LaPlatte, Sarpy County, Nebraska. The weather was rainy, but the light soft enough to permit good evaluation of colors; there was no glare. The birds were observed through scopes at a distance of approximately 30 m. Although no Long-billed Dowitchers were present in the flock (which contained, in addition to the Short-billed Dowitchers, 30 Stilt Sandpipers, 8 Lesser Golden-Plovers, 7 Ruddy Turnstones, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Semipalmated Plover, and numerous Least, Semipalmated, and White-rumped Sandpipers), we had closely observed flocks of Long-bills in western Nebraska two days earlier; thus we did have basis for comparison, if indirect.

Our first impression of the Dowitchers were that they were quite light above, pale below, and short-billed (some members of the flock were also rather long-billed). Closer inspection showed that the feathers of the back and scapulars were broadly edged in orange and white, giving the upper surface a bright golden glow, unlike the dark (even blackish) upperparts of Long-billed Dowitchers. The throat, neck, and breast were peach colored, again seemingly lighter than the orange-red colors of Long-billed Dowitchers; this comparison is very difficult, however, without the birds together. The bellies and undertail areas of the birds were patchy white and pink, typical for the *hendersoni* Short-bill. The throat, jugulum, and breast of these birds were unmarked, and the sides of the neck were lightly spotted; the flanks were barred. This general sparseness of markings beneath contrasts with Long-billed Dowitcher, which is typically more heavily barred on the neck, breast, and sides. The tail pattern was unobserved. The birds were generally very quiet, although a few three-noted, Yellowlegs-like calls were heard; these were unequivocally the calls of Short-billed Dowitchers, with which we are

both familiar (the eastern race *griseus*). We had also heard the peep-peep calls of the Long-billed Dowitcher only two days before.

The general paleness of the birds, the short bills of some of the flock, and the light markings underneath point strongly to the conclusion that there were indeed Short-billed Dowitchers; the calls are unmistakable, and confirm the identification.

--- Rick Wright, 11530 Westwood Lane, #33, Omaha, Nebraska 68144

SNOWY OWL. I spotted a Snowy Owl today (26 December 1984) atop a telephone pole along the road on a hill, surrounded by pastureland.

--- Galen Wittrock, RR 2, Lodgepole, Nebraska 69149

BURROWING OWL. On 23 October 1984 I spotted a Burrowing Owl in Wayne Co. It stayed around for about three days, allowing many other birders to see it.

--- Paul L. Pearson, RR 2, Box 63, Wakefield, Nebraska 68784.

THREE GOATSUCKERS AT BOHEMIA PRAIRIE. Bohemia Prairie Wildlife Management Area, 5 miles south and 4 miles west of Niobrara, Knox County, was visited from 15 to 17 June 1984 to go birding. During this time an unusual occurrence of three species of Goatsuckers was noted. There were four Common Nighthawks counted flying above the prairie in the evening, and during the night a Common Poorwill was heard calling at the same time that two Whip-poor-wills were also heard. A pair of one of the two later species was also flushed from a rock outcrop one day. This is the first time I've heard of these three species being present at the same site. It was interesting to note that the breeding ranges given in *Birds of the Great Plains* does not indicate any overlap.

Vegetation in the area that would influence the bird's presence was comprised of three different plant communities. Northern floodplain woodland, with willow, cottonwood, and elm, is found along tributary streams and the Niobrara River, which is a little more than half a mile north of the area. Eastern deciduous woodland grows on the sideslopes of the hills, with bur oak the most common component, and also eastern redcedar. Most of the wildlife land is upland with mixed grass prairie. The several codominant grass species are little bluestem, needle-and-thread, blue and side-oats grama, and wheatgrasses. Big bluestem and switchgrass would be more common along the bottoms. A rugged area, with rock outcrops, prairie, and woods, occurs along a small creek in the northwest corner of Bohemia Prairie.

This occurrence shows how the habitat present in the Niobrara Valley contributes to species from the east and the west being present in the same locality.

--- Jim Ducey, 910 North 49th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68132.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE. Ed Brogie and Lyle George had a Townsend's Solitaire in the Wayne cemetery 18 November 1984. Ed and I found it again in the same place (large group of cedars) on 22 November. This is a county record.

--- Mark Brogie, Box 316, Creighton, Nebraska 68729

On 25 November I spotted a Townsend's Solitaire flying from the road into a grove of trees. The next day one was on our farm, about two miles south of where I spotted it the day before. On 1 December I saw one on our farm, but I haven't seen it since.

--- Galen Wittrock, RR 2, Lodgepole, Nebraska 69149

BOHEMIAN WAXWING. On 18 November 1984 my brother, Ed, my wife, Ellen, and I saw a single Bohemian Waxwing in with a flock of Cedar Waxwings in front of the Wayne High School. We were within 20 feet of it several times. My first one for the state (what a beautiful bird!).

--- Mark Brogie, Box 316, Creighton, Nebraska 68729

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER. Ed Brogie and I had a Black-throated Green Warbler at the cemetery in Wayne, 18 November 1984. This is a first record for Wayne Co. and a very late date. It was foraging in white pines, and we observed it for several minutes.

--- Mark Brogie, Box 316, Creighton, Nebraska 68729

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH. On 15 June 1983 Betty Grennon and I banded a Northern Waterthrush in Fontenelle Forest. Since it is most unusual for waterthrushes to even be here at that time of year, and also because we knew there were Louisiana Waterthrushes in the Forest at that time, we very carefully measured, photographed, and checked every field mark. The astounding thing about this bird was that it was a female with a very active brood patch. When I sent this record to the banding lab, naturally it was questioned, as it should have been. I sent pictures of the bird, and after a considerable length of time and study by officials in the Bird Banding Laboratory, I was notified that this record was accepted and the slides are now a part of the library collection.

--- Ruth C. Green, 506 W. 31st Avenue, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005

WILSON'S WARBLERS. Seventeen miles south of Alliance, just south of the Morrill-Box Butte line, is a rest stop on US 385. It has prairie grasslands, marshes, and groves of Russian olives, firs, chokecherries, and some sort of scruffy, berry-bearing bush I've neglected to try to identify.

On 31 August 1984 I saw at least 20 individuals of what I took to be Wilson's Warblers. In the five years of visiting this stop this is the first one that more than two or three could be spotted. I was surprised that they usually flew about in a loose flock. The birds were uniformly yellow below, darker above, head yellow except for a black cap (not a mask as in the Yellowthroat) that was lighter in those I identified as female or juvenile individuals, no streaks in the breast plumage, nor any other field marks that I could discern other than the cap. I didn't identify this warbler the first time I spotted it, but noted what I could about its behaviour and fieldmarks. The next time I spotted them I had a field guide (*National Geographic*) with me to compare with the living birds. Because they were present during the summer I wondered if they nested. When I saw this large flock they were exploiting the ripening sunflowers, as were the Pine Siskins and Red-winged Blackbirds.

--- Doug Thomas, 1035 Mississippi Avenue, Alliance, Nebraska 69301

(Wilson's Warblers are primarily insectivorous; perhaps they were getting bugs rather than seeds from the sunflowers. --- Editor)

HENSLOW'S SPARROW. On 6 May 1985, at approximately 8 AM CDT, Scheil Zende and I observed a singing Henslow's Sparrow at Burchard Lake Special Use Area, Pawnee County, Nebraska. The bird was seen in excellent light at distances of about 3 meters for 45 minutes; there was ample opportunity for the taking of field notes and photographs as the bird sang from the stems of last year's grasses and, particularly, a short thorny shrub.

The bird was first located by its song, a "tse-lick" given with a wing flutter; at times, especially when we were very close, the song was distinctly three-syllabled, "t-tse-lick". The bird was not shy as it sang, permitting us to note all salient marks for identification. The general impression at a distance was of a flat-headed, large-billed, short-tailed sparrow. At closer range, the bill was seen to be a dull horn color, the culmen somewhat darker. The tarsi and toes were grayish-pink. The face and nape were olive-green, the latter finely streaked at the center. There was no apparent eye-ring, although the lower eyelid may have been pale. A faint black line ran under the auriculars back from the base of the lower mandible; the auriculars themselves were marked by a small, discrete, triangular black spot. The crown had two blackish stripes, bordering on a central stripe of white fading to buff. The throat was white, bordered by a very faint whisker; the area between this whisker and the auricular streak was pale buff. The flanks were also buff, and finely streaked. The breast was crossed by a necklace of streaks, heaviest toward the sides. There was a barely perceptible bit of buffy yellow in the breast band, the ground color of which was otherwise buffy gray. The wing was short, when folded extending only to the rump. The primaries were brown, the secondaries and greater coverts rust. The yellow at the bend of the wing was not visible. The scapulars were streaked in chestnut, black, and white. The rump and upper tail-coverts were chestnut, streaked with black.

The song and plumage characters of this bird identified it conclusively as Henslow's Sparrow. The olive head, rusty wings, and whisker and line below the ear (giving the impression of a double whisker) are unique to the

species; we are familiar with all other sharp-tailed grass sparrows but Baird's, which has a different head pattern and a distinctive song. An examination of specimens at UNSM later that day confirmed our identification.

--- *Rick Wright, 11530 Westwood Lane, #33, Omaha, Nebraska 68144*

CARDINAL IN DAWES COUNTY. Dr. Jim Hansen, who lives across the highway from Doris Gates' property, reported seeing a male Cardinal in his backyard 4 June 1984. This is the first sighting of a Cardinal in the area that I know of since Doris Gates saw three in the State Park in the early 1950's. The Evening Grosbeaks were still at my feeders 24 April.

--- *Marjorie Blinde, 834 King Street, Chadron, Nebraska 69337*

LAPLAND LONGSPURS. I stopped by Crescent Lake NWR, Garden County, 24 October 1984, and I saw thousands of Lapland Longspurs.

--- *Ruth C. Green, 506 W. 31st Avenue, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005*

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES. Mark and Ed Brogie, of Laurel, were attending the same science teachers' meeting in Chadron on 25-27 October 1984, that I was. While there, they decided to get in a little birding, so they headed for Gilbert Baker Park. Just one mile north of Harrison they found one of the rarest birds to come to Nebraska -- 50 to 60 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches feeding on sunflowers along the highway. Now these were the Hepburn's race that breed on the Arctic tundra of Alaska or in the high northwestern mountains, not the Brown-capped of the Colorado tundra that comes into the Scottsbluff area every winter. They really were the gray-crowned Gray-crowns! I was pretty excited about finding these birds the next day so I, too, headed west. I had only to go 15.7 miles west of Fort Robinson when I saw a tremendous flock of Rosy-Finches along Highway 20. I estimated at least 500 birds, and off in the distance there were about 1500 more.

--- *Ruth C. Green, 506 W. 31st Avenue, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005*

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL. I have had a male White-winged Crossbill at our feeder for about six weeks. Yesterday (28 March 1985) the female was also there.

--- *Lucille Davis, 113 West State Street, Atkinson, Nebraska 68713*

CORRECTION TO MARCH ISSUE. The March issue of *The Nebraska Bird Review* is mismarked Number 4. This should be changed to Number 1.