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## Summer Field Report, June–July 2012

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## SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2012

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### INTRODUCTION

This summer most of Nebraska was very dry, with "Exceptional Drought" everywhere but the extreme southeast, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's Drought Monitor (<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>). Although no really striking effects were noted, several bits of evidence attested to the difficult conditions. Wetlands dried up in most cases in the Rainwater Basin, reflected by a lack of Great Egrets, Cattle Egrets, and Black-necked Stilts, and there were no stilt nests reported. However, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons surprisingly staged an incursion, perhaps continuing to disperse northward from their customary haunts in the almost equally dry Kansas and Oklahoma. Cliff Swallow colonies may have been a casualty of dried up wetlands also; flocking began about a month earlier than usual. A significant incursion of Red Crossbills and early arrival of Red-breasted Nuthatches indicated problems in their usual pinewoods habitats in the Pine Ridge and Rocky Mountains (recordings from Kansas (Jon King, pers. comm.) suggested that most if not all of the crossbills were Type 2 Ponderosa Pine specialists). Red Crossbills moved eastward to cover the state in July, the first such summer incursion in about 20 years.

Other significant observations involved nesting of 3 raptor species: both Broad-winged Hawk and Mississippi Kite nested in North Platte, and Ospreys again attempted to nest in the Panhandle but continue to be thwarted by severe weather. Black-billed Cuckoo is becoming rare; only one was reported. On the other hand, Chuck-will's-widow is doing well, expanding northwestward and increasing in numbers, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are being reported more often westward; photos are supporting the identification of these westerly birds.

It was a quiet summer for summer resident passerines; no significant trends or phenomena were noted, except for the pinewoods residents mentioned above. Similarly, rarities were almost non-existent; Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and an easterly Broad-tailed Hummingbird were about it.

### ABBREVIATIONS

ad: adult

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City

BBS: Breeding Bird Survey

BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co

Cem: Cemetery  
Co(s): County(ies)  
fem: female  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co  
ICSP: Indian Cave State Park, Richardson/Nemaha Cos  
imm: immature  
juv: juvenile  
L: Lake  
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co  
LO: L Ogallala (includes contiguous Keystone L), Keith Co  
m. ob.: many observers  
NC: Nature Center  
NM: National Monument  
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge  
PRSP: Platte River SP, Cass Co  
PSP: Ponca SP, Dixon Co  
Res: Reservoir  
RWB: Rainwater Basin, including parts of Phelps, Hamilton, York, Clay, Fillmore,  
and Thayer Cos  
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co  
SHP: State Historical Park  
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)  
SP: State Park  
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area  
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln  
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area

#### GAZETTEER

Jack Sinn: Memorial WMA, Lancaster and Saunders Cos  
Pine Ridge: escarpment in Sioux, Dawes, and Sheridan Cos  
Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central Nebraska  
Wildcat Hills: escarpment in Scotts Bluff, Banner, and Morrill Cos

#### OBSERVERS

AB: Ann Brogie, Creighton  
AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff  
AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering  
AP: Andrew Pierson, Scottsbluff  
ARy: Al Reyer, Bellevue  
AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney  
B&KG: Bob & Kathi Gerten, Burwell  
BF: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City

CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue  
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala  
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames  
DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk  
DL: Dan Leger, Lincoln  
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn  
GW: Gabe Wilson, Ogallala  
HA: Henry Armknecht, Osborne, KS  
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell  
JC: John Carlini, Lincoln  
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward  
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln  
JLC: Jill Liske-Clark, Grand Island  
JLL: Jeanine L. Lackey, Doniphan  
JM: John Murphy, Kearney  
JO: Jim Ochsner, Ogallala  
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha  
JRi: Juanita Rice, Fairmont  
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell  
KG: Keith Geluso, Kearney  
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln  
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney  
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue  
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney  
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln  
LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City  
LR: Lanny Randolph, Minden  
LS: Larry Snyder, Kimball  
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton  
MS: Mindy Spatz, McCook  
MSS: Mary Sue Shoemaker, North Platte  
NF: Nancy Fish, Superior  
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha  
RH: Robin Harding, Minden  
RM: Robert Manning, Omaha  
RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha  
RSt: Ruth Stearns, Lincoln  
SM: Steve Morris, Grand Island  
SQ: Susan Quinn, Nebraska City  
SS: Shari Schwartz, Lincoln  
TCG: T.C. Gannon, Lincoln  
TEL: Thomas E. Labeledz, Lincoln  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady  
VC: Virginia Clark, North Platte  
WF: William Flack, Kearney

WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** Two appeared at a remote southeast Cherry Co pond 1 Jun, but then disappeared; one reappeared there 4-9 Jun (MSS). This is Nebraska's 14th record, all but 3 since 2000.
- Greater White-fronted Goose:** A seemingly healthy straggler was at Kenesaw SL 16 Jun (LR, RH); reports are few mid-May to late Sep.
- Snow Goose:** The usual stragglers were reported, all singles; one injured bird spent Jul at Jack Sinn (LE, RM). Others were in Nemaha Co 11 Jun (LF, SQ) and Hall Co 10 May, the latter also injured (LR, RH).
- Ross's Goose:** Rare in mid-summer, an injured bird was in Hall Co 10 Jun (LR, RH), only the 3rd mid-summer record.
- Cackling Goose:** Yet another summer straggling goose in Hall Co was a Cackler 10 Jun (LR, RH); this is only the 6th mid-summer record.
- Canada Goose:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Trumpeter Swan:** The nest site near Ravenna was occupied again this year; 4 young were in the nest 4 Jun (LR, RH).
- Wood Duck:** Jack Sinn is a favored post-fledging gathering place; 194 Wood Ducks of all ages were there 15 Jul, including 33 "fuzzies" (LE).
- Gadwall:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Sandhills breeder, rare elsewhere in summer.
- American Wigeon:** This species is rare away from the western Sandhills in summer, but a pair was in Hayes Co 19 Jun (TJW) and a male was in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ).
- Mallard:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Blue-winged Teal:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Cinnamon Teal:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western summer resident.
- Northern Shoveler:** Males generally leave the nesting site to molt nearby in late Jun and Jul; a flock of 29 in an Interstate 80 pond near North Platte contained 9 molting males and 20 females and juveniles (TJW).
- Northern Pintail:** A fem with a brood was at Kissinger WMA, Clay Co, 30 Jun (JGJ); the species is uncommon as a breeder in the RWB.
- Green-winged Teal:** One in Clay Co 30 Jun (JGJ) may have been an early molt migrant. Breeding is rare away from the western Sandhills.
- Canvasback:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Sandhills summer resident.
- Redhead:** One at LO 10 Jul (JGJ) was likely an early arrival from nearby breeding areas in the western Sandhills.
- Bufflehead:** A surprise was one in Dawes Co 20 Jul (RM); most of the 21 reports for mid-Jun through mid-Aug are from the west.
- Hooded Merganser:** One at McKelvie National Forest, Cherry Co, 18 Jul (RM) was westerly.

- Common Merganser:** LO regularly hosts a few molt migrants in late summer; 3 were there 27 Jul (TJW). Two females near Norden Bridge, Keya Paha and Brown Cos, 19 Jun (CNK) were at a location where breeding occurred in 2007.
- Ruddy Duck:** A male was at BOL 21 Jul (LE), likely an early migrant, although this species is an occasional breeder south and east of the Sandhills.
- Northern Bobwhite:** This species occurs throughout the North Platte Valley; one was in Scotts Bluff Co 19 Jun (AD). Near the northern edge of the species range were birds in Brown and Keya Paha Cos 19 Jun (CNK) and Holt Co 7 Jul (DSt).
- Gray Partridge:** Two ads and 6 young in Holt Co 7 Jul were the observer's first there for several years (DSt); most recent reports of this species are from Cedar, Knox, and Antelope Cos.
- Ring-necked Pheasant:** "Good numbers" were reported in Sherman Co 3 Jun (CNK).
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** One in Holt Co 7 Jul (DSt) was easterly; there are occasional reports as far east as Dixon Co.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Populations exist in small areas of Sandhills-like grassland just south of the Platte River in central Nebraska from Hall Co southwest to Phelps Co. Three were seen 5 miles east of Denman and 2 miles south of the Platte River 22 Jul (LR, RH).
- Wild Turkey:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Common Loon:** At least 1-2 birds, usually imm non-breeders, frequent the LM area most summers; 1-2 were there 10-29 Jul (JGJ, TJW).
- Pied-billed Grebe:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Red-necked Grebe:** Nebraska's first Jul record for this species was of an alternate-plumaged bird at LM 10 Jul (JGJ), intriguing in that a similar bird, likely the same individual, was there 22 May (see Spring Report).
- Eared Grebe:** Reports were routine for this common Sandhills summer resident.
- Western Grebe:** Reports were routine for this fairly common western Sandhills summer resident.
- Clark's Grebe:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western Sandhills summer resident.
- Double-crested Cormorant:** Mid-summer sightings in the southeast are rare; 2 were in Lancaster Co 14 Jul (LE).
- American White Pelican:** Reports were routine for this abundant migrant and uncommon summer visitor.
- American Bittern:** This species may breed anywhere in the state given suitable conditions, although rarely away from the Sandhills; one in Clay Co 30 Jun (JGJ) may have been optimistic, given the hot, dry summer.
- Least Bittern:** None were reported; this is an uncommon summer resident given suitable conditions, mostly in the southeast.
- Great Blue Heron:** Best tally reported was the 85 at Jack Sinn 22 Jul (CNK).

- Great Egret:** Numbers were not great, with only about 30 reported in all, likely due to a lack of water; best counts were 13-14 in Clay Co 30 Jun-14 Jul (JGJ, LR, RH).
- Snowy Egret:** The only report was of 2 in Clay Co 30 Jun-14 Jul (JGJ, LR, RH).
- Little Blue Heron:** This species is a rare late summer visitor; the only report was of one "most likely" this species in Clay Co 25 Jul (SM).
- Cattle Egret:** Like Great Egret, numbers were low due to lack of suitable water conditions, even for this semi-upland species; the only reports were of one near Wood River 20 Jun (JLC) and 5 in Dodge Co 3 Jul (D&JP).
- Green Heron:** The 8 at Jack Sinn 21 Jul (JGJ) was an excellent count, tying the high for late summer.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Sandhills breeder.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** This species staged a mini-invasion in late Jul, with even a few northerly sightings. It favored Jack Sinn in late Jul; 1-4 were there 16 Jul (2 juvs, JGJ) through 29 Jul (3 juvs, RM). One ad was present 18-24 Jul (LE, RSt, JGJ, CNK, DL). Northerly sightings included an imm in Antelope Co 23-26 Jul, a county first for the veteran observers (MB, AB), and an ad and 2 juvs in South Sioux City 27 Jul-1 Aug (BFH). Continuing the invasion reports was an imm in Dodge Co 25 Jul (D&JP). Apparently these northerly sightings were of birds undergoing their normal late summer dispersal but overflying usually-suitable areas in the RWB which were dry this year.
- White-faced Ibis:** Up to 5 in Clay Co 30 Jun-1 Jul (JGJ, LR, RH) were unusual in mid-summer, although numbers had built to 28 by 14 Jul (JGJ); there are few reports away from breeding areas in mid-late Jun.
- Turkey Vulture:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Osprey:** The pair nesting on a platform erected by the power company near Riverside Park, Scottsbluff, had 2 young in the nest 19 Jun, but a severe hail storm appeared to have ended the attempt. One of the ads looked "beat-up" later the same day, and only one ad was there 8 Jul (KD). The platform near Keystone was occupied 19 Jun (fide GW). So far, severe weather at both sites appears to have precluded successful fledging of young during the last 2-3 years.
- Mississippi Kite:** At least 2 birds had been present in North Platte since around 10 May (TJW); 5 ads were overhead 30 Jun and a nest was found the same day, with an incubating ad present 1 Jul (TJW). Three birds were at the nest 24 Jul (RM). At McCook 3 birds were present all summer through at least 28 Jul although no nest was found (MS photo; fide JGJ). These are the 6th and 7th sites where nesting has apparently occurred in the state, all but Ogallala since 2003. The other sites are Ogallala 1991-2012, Red Cloud 2004-2006 (young fledged), Benkelman 2010-2011 (no nest found but birds present "a few years"), Imperial 2011 (nesting pair), and Scottsbluff 2011 (copulation, but no nest found).

- Bald Eagle:** A measure of the increasing presence of this species in summer was the count of 26 birds in about 30 miles along the Platte River between Columbus and North Bend 27 Jun (JGJ).
- Northern Harrier:** None were reported for this rare, locally uncommon, statewide summer resident.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Reports were routine for this uncommon but increasing statewide summer resident.
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** None were reported; this species maintains only a tenuous hold in its minimal Nebraska breeding range.
- Broad-winged Hawk:** The nesting Broad-winged Hawks in North Platte, first noted in 2008, returned after an absence of reports in 2011; a pair was at the nest site 18 Jun this summer (TJW, photo *NBR* Vol. 80 No. 1, p. 22), but on 15 Jul two young fell out of the nest. One died and the other was taken to a rehabilitator (TJW). The species is regularly reported in the lower Missouri River Valley each summer, where breeding apparently occurs, but only in single-digit numbers; one was at Brownville 9 Jun (JR) and an ad was over Omaha 10 Jul (JR).
- Swainson's Hawk:** This species is rare in southeast Nebraska, including the RWB, in summer; 2 singles, possibly migrants, were in Kearney Co 3 Jun (LR, RH), a banded bird (band unreadable) was photographed near Lincoln 7 Jul (WF), and another was over Lincoln 19 Jul (LE).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Panhandle summer resident.
- Golden Eagle:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Panhandle summer resident.
- Virginia Rail:** Reports were routine for this fairly common summer resident, most numerous in the Sandhills.
- Sora:** Fall migrants arrive in late Jul; at least one was reported at Jack Sinn 21-22 Jul (LE, DL, CNK).
- American Coot:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Sandhill Crane:** Apparently the pair at Kiowa WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, lost their 2012 chick; no young birds were seen with the ads 8 Jul (KD). A surprise was one in Dakota Co 25-28 Jul (fide BFH); in recent years such sightings indicate breeding attempts, but habitat in the area did not appear suitable for nesting (BFH).
- Black-bellied Plover:** None were reported; earliest fall migrants arrive at the end of Jul.
- American Golden-Plover:** Reports of ads in Jul are rare, as most fall migrants in the interior are juvs. Singles, both molting, were in Stanton and Madison Cos 26 Jul (MB). There are no records of Pacific Golden-Plover for Nebraska, and so a report of an alternate-plumaged golden-plover accompanying 3 Mountain Plovers in Kimball Co on the unusual date of 11 Jun (LS) was intriguing, but un-photographed (fide JGJ). This is only the 8th Jun record of a golden-plover for Nebraska.



- Semipalmated Plover:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide fall migrant.
- Piping Plover:** Reports were routine for this uncommon localized summer resident.
- Killdeer:** The 565 at Jack Sinn 15 Jul (LE) was 4th-best fall count on record for this early fall migrant; top 3 are 700-1000.
- Mountain Plover:** Reports were routine for this uncommon southern Panhandle summer resident.
- Black-necked Stilt:** Reports were few, as might be expected with poor water conditions. Two were on nests at Bittern's Call WMA, Dawson Co, 2 Jun (CNK), and 2 in Clay Co 30 Jun did not appear to be nesting (JGJ).
- American Avocet:** Good numbers of fall migrants were reported eastward beginning 14 Jul, with best count 19 in Lancaster Co 21 Jul (JGJ, LE) and a total of around 40 in all (JGJ, LE, RSt, CNK, RM, MB). Rare in late Jun-early Jul in the east, one was at Whitehead Marsh, Lincoln, 23 Jun (JS, SS) and 5 were in Clay Co 1 Jul (LR, RH).
- Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide summer resident.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** First migrants arrive as early as late Jun; 2 were in Clay Co 1 Jul (LR, RH). Best count was an impressive 35 in Antelope Co 25 Jul (MB); high counts are 38-62.
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Fall migrants arrive in late Jun; 8 were counted along the Platte River between Columbus and North Bend 27 Jun (JGJ). Earliest arrivals of fall migrants are 9, 10, 10 Jun.
- Willet:** This species also is an early fall migrant, although rare eastward, and so one along the Platte River between Columbus and North Bend 27 Jun (JGJ) was unexpected and rather early. Earliest fall dates for migrants are 23, 24, 26 Jun.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** This species generally arrives a bit later in fall than Greater Yellowlegs, with earliest dates 16, 17, 19 Jun. Thus, one at Wellfleet WMA, Lincoln Co., 19 Jun (TJW) was rather early. As many as 44 had arrived in Clay Co by 14 Jul (JGJ).
- Upland Sandpiper:** Migration is underway by late Jul; 87 were in a single mowed hayfield in Madison Co 25 Jul, and the total for the day in Madison and nearby counties was 123 (MB). High fall counts are 178-247. A nest with 4 eggs was found in Dodge Co 24 Jun (D&JP), a little late for this species.
- Long-billed Curlew:** Numbers were thought to be "way up" in the Sandhills (CNK); 14 were in Lincoln Co 4 Jun (MSS). Ads with a small chick were in Sherman Co 3 Jun (CNK). Only the 2nd fall record for the east were the 2 birds along the Platte River between Columbus and North Bend 27 Jun (JGJ), likely failed breeders.
- Marbled Godwit:** This species is a rare fall migrant, essentially restricted to the west. The only report was of one in Dawes Co 19 Jul (RM).
- Sanderling:** Two in Sheridan Co 5 Jun (CNK) were rather late spring migrants.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Last in spring was an injured bird on the Saunders-Douglas line 7 Jun (JGJ), and first for fall were 13 in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ); these are typical dates for each season.

- Western Sandpiper:** None were reported; this fairly common fall migrant usually arrives in mid-Jul.
- Least Sandpiper:** One along the Platte River between Columbus and North Bend 27 Jun (JGJ) was rather early; earliest fall dates are 18, 19, 19 Jun.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this abundant late-migrating spring migrant.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Rather late was one in Sheridan Co 5 Jun (CNK), while rather early were 3 in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ).
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** Best count was 371 at Jack Sinn 15 Jul (LE); high fall counts are 800-1200.
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide fall migrant.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Tying the earliest on record for fall was one in Nance Co 17 Jul (JLL).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** Two at Jack Sinn 12 Jul (LE) were rather early. Ads arrive first, followed usually some time later, beginning in mid-Aug, by juvs. There have been no previous documented records of juvs in Jul, but 2 "very bright juvs" were in Antelope Co 23 Jul, and one of these, or a different juv, was there 26 Jul (MB).
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide fall migrant.
- Wilson's Snipe:** Breeding has occurred at Jack Sinn on occasion; 1-2 were there through the Jun-Jul period (LE), although no evidence of breeding was reported.
- American Woodcock:** The only report was of one flushed at Dead Timber WMA, Dodge Co, a known summering location, 27 Jul (RS).
- Wilson's Phalarope:** Breeding occurs on occasion in the RWB; a territorial fem was in Clay Co 12 Jun (LB). One at Jack Sinn 31 Jul (LE) was likely a migrant.
- Franklin's Gull:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide early fall migrant.
- Ring-billed Gull:** Only the 3rd record of a Jul ad in the RWB was the one in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ). Most summer birds are non-breeding imms.
- California Gull:** The only report was of an ad at LM 27 Jul (TJW), where numbers begin to build after mid-Jul.
- Herring Gull:** Two birds at LM 27 Jul (TJW) were rather early; this is an uncommon summer visitor, with numbers building from late Jul.
- Least Tern:** Reports were routine for this localized central-eastern summer resident.
- Caspian Tern:** The only report of this uncommon late spring and early fall migrant was of one rather early at BOL 13 Jul (LE).
- Black Tern:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide late spring and early fall migrant.
- Common Tern:** None were reported; spring migration often lasts well into Jun.
- Forster's Tern:** Reports were routine for this localized summer resident and fairly common fall migrant.
- Rock Pigeon:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Fall flocking resulted in the sudden appearance of 46 birds in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 21 Jul, where only 4-6 had summered (AD).

- White-winged Dove:** The birds reported in Kearney in spring continued, with up to 3 present through 25 Jul (CNK, WF, fide RH).
- Mourning Dove:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Reports were routine for this statewide summer resident, common eastward, uncommon westward.
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** This species is at a low ebb; following a single report in the spring, none were reported Jun-Jul.
- Barn Owl:** The only report was of one near Jeffrey L, Lincoln Co, 1 Jul (TJW). This is an uncommon summer resident in southwest Nebraska.
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide resident.
- Great Horned Owl:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Burrowing Owl:** One on a BBS Survey route in Loup Co 19 Jun was only the 2nd on the route in 20 years (NR). The small easterly population near Hultine WPA, Clay Co, continues to thrive, with 5 fledglings accompanying 2 ads there 16 Jul (TCG). Good numbers were near Walgren L, Sheridan Co, where 17 were counted 18 Jul (RM), and near Scottsbluff, where 8 were seen 25 Jun (KD).
- Barred Owl:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern resident.
- Long-eared Owl:** None were reported; this is a rare but regular breeder statewide.
- Short-eared Owl:** None were reported; this is a rare but regular breeder statewide.
- Common Nighthawk:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Common Poorwill:** This species summers eastward along the Niobrara River Valley to Knox Co; singles were in Brown and Keya Paha Cos 19 Jun (CNK).
- Chuck-will's-widow:** The several reports were from the current range of this species, which has expanded in recent years. Westerly were an impressive 12 tallied on a survey route north of Fairbury 9 Jul, where 8 were counted in 2011 (JG), and northerly were 2 in Cedar Co 27 Jun (MB). A nest with one chick was photographed at ICSP 6 Jun (MB), only the 2nd documented nest for the state.
- Whip-poor-will:** Reports were from most of the same locations as Chuck-will's-widow, with the addition of northerly sites: singles were in Boyd and Keya Paha Cos 19 Jun (CNK) and in Boyd Co 28 Jun, where 1-4 were counted at each of 8 stops along Ponca Creek on Highway 12 (DH).
- Chimney Swift:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident, least numerous westward.
- White-throated Swift:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Westerly reports continue to accumulate. A belated nesting record involved a pair with a nest late May-early Jun 2002 at the Valentine Fish Hatchery (TJW). A fem in an Ogallala yard 2 Jun looked "heavy with eggs?" (JO); 2 were in the same yard 24 and 29 Jun (JO, CNK). A pair was in a Burwell yard May through at least mid-Jun (B&KG). A fem was in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 10-14 Jun, but a male seen there 31 May was not seen again (KD). The Seward area hosts summering birds, and the species

has nested along Plum Creek, leading the observer to conclude that nesting occurs there on a regular basis (JG). A nest was found in a Saunders Co yard 8 Jul (fide JM). In recent years fall migrants have been noted in late Jul in areas west of the traditional Missouri River Valley breeding range. A presumed migrant in a Grand Island yard 28 Jul was "much earlier than usual" (SM), and an imm male was in a Doniphan yard the same day (JLL).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** Only 2 of this rare Panhandle fall migrant were reported, both in the observer's Scotts Bluff Co yard: an imm/fem was there 1 Jul, the earliest date at that location, and a male appeared 29 Jul (KD).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** The DeLara yard in Scotts Bluff Co is the place for western hummers; the yard hosted an ad male rather early 3 Jul, a sub-ad male 8 Jul, and a fem and another sub-ad male 20 Jul (KD). Photos of a fem in Nuckolls Co 26 Jul (NF) indicate the bird was a Broad-tailed, most notably by its long tail extending beyond the primary tips and its large size relative to a male Ruby-throated in the same photos (KD, WRS); there are about 10 fall records for the eastern half of the state.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** The 6 birds reported, all ad males, were in the western Panhandle beginning 3 Jul (KD, AS); the 3 Jul date is earliest on record by a day.

**Belted Kingfisher:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.

**Lewis's Woodpecker:** The small population in the Sowbelly Canyon and Pants Butte area of Sioux Co continues for the 3rd summer; a total of 7 were found in the area 31 Jul (TJW).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common eastern resident, rare in the Panhandle.

**Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide resident.

**Northern Flicker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports were from FF and ICSP as expected; both locations host at least two pairs (WRS, JR, L&BP).

**American Kestrel:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.

**Prairie Falcon:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Panhandle summer resident.

**Peregrine Falcon:** One in Lincoln Co 29 Jul (TJW) was rather early. Fall migration timing generally coincides with that of shorebirds.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Record early for fall by one day was one at ADF 31 Jul (LF, SQ). Another in Nemaha Co 11 Jun (LF, SQ) was rather late for a spring migrant; latest dates are 14, 14, 16 Jun.

**Western Wood-Pewee:** At the eastern edge of the range along the Niobrara River Valley, singing birds were noted in Keya Paha and Brown Cos 19 Jun at

locations where Eastern Wood-Pewees were also present (CNK). Numbers are low this far east but there have been scattered summer reports east of Cherry Co in recent years.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Reports were routine for this common eastern summer resident.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** This species continues to increase in numbers in the southeast; 10 were counted at ICSP 9 Jun (JR), and 2 were at FF 2 Jun (JR). The lone bird that returned to WP in May was heard through at least 14 Jul (JGJ, TEL, TJW, LE).

**Alder Flycatcher:** None were reported; last migrants usually pass through during the first week of Jun.

**Willow Flycatcher:** Scattered reports were received from around the state (TJW, CNK), including 6 in Lancaster Co 16 Jun (KP).

**Least Flycatcher:** Two at FF 2 Jun (JR) were tardy; migrants have been reported through 8 Jun at a KS banding station. This species may breed in extreme northern Nebraska, thus intriguing was an ad in Scotts Bluff Co 20 Jun (AD), although this may have been a late migrant also.

**Cordilleran Flycatcher:** One at Chadron Creek WMA, Dawes Co, 30 Jul (TJW) was at the eastern edge of the Pine Ridge summer range. No others were reported.

**Eastern Phoebe:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident, uncommon westward.

**Say's Phoebe:** One on a BBS route in Rock Co 19 Jun was a first for the observer on that route (NR) and a rare easterly record; the eastward extent of regular (essentially yearly) summering is poorly-documented.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident, uncommon in the west.

**Cassin's Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.

**Western Kingbird:** The last chick observed fledged in Lancaster Co was 19 Jul (LE), rather late.

**Eastern Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Sightings from 2 locations near Kearney were received; a male was near Lowell 3 Jun (LR, RH) with a fem nearby 10 Jun (D&JP). A male was near the Buckle store in Kearney 16-18 Jul (LB, LR, RH), likely the same individual present at the Buckle store in Apr (LR, RH).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Heightened concern for this species resulted in 29 reports (total of 72 birds), but these reports shed little light on the status of the species; BBS routes in the Sandhills and west had "normal" numbers (CNK, AP), but some long drives yielded single birds only (WM, D&JP, NR). No discernible pattern could be seen relative to location in the state, however.

**Bell's Vireo:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern summer resident.

- Plumbeous Vireo:** Reports were routine for this uncommon Panhandle summer resident.
- Warbling Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Red-eyed Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Pinyon Jay:** None were reported; this species is a secretive, low-density breeder in the Panhandle.
- Blue Jay:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Black-billed Magpie:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western and central resident, rare in the northeast.
- American Crow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Horned Lark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Purple Martin:** A colony in an Ogallala yard had 48 birds 28 Jul (fide CWH); this species only started breeding at this westerly location in 2004 and is not known to breed currently in the Panhandle.
- Tree Swallow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Violet-green Swallow:** Two at Chadron Creek WMA, Dawes Co, 29 Jul (TJW) were at the east edge of the Pine Ridge breeding range.
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Fall flocking was evident with the 85 at Jack Sinn 15 Jul (LE); this species does not usually nest in colonies.
- Bank Swallow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Cliff Swallow:** Fall flocking becomes noticeable by late Jul, and so “hundreds” in Clay Co 1 Jul (LR, RH) and 565 at Jack Sinn 12 Jul (LE) were unexpectedly early, suggesting failure of breeding colonies due to dry conditions.
- Barn Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Black-capped Chickadee:** This species re-appeared in a few western locations after long absences: since 2003 near North Platte (TJW), 2004 north of North Platte (VC), and “for a few years” in Scotts Bluff Co (AD). Recovery from population lows assumed to have resulted from West Nile Virus is proceeding, but numbers have not yet returned to prior levels.
- Tufted Titmouse:** Reports were routine for this common eastern resident.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Ads were feeding young at Gordon Cem 5 Jun (CNK) and in Keya Paha Co 19 Jun (CNK), both areas where breeding has occurred previously, although confirmed breeding records in the Pine Ridge and Niobrara River Valley are few. Fall movement began early, with one as early as 9 Jul in Lincoln Co cedars (TJW) where summering is unknown, one at a feeder in Kearney 25 Jul (JM fide LR, RH), and one about a month early in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 26 Jul (AD). These are only the 4th-6th Jul records away from breeding areas.
- White-breasted Nuthatch:** Breeding began about a week early in the Pine Ridge (WM), apparently because of the mild winter and early spring; one nest had young almost fully-feathered by 12 Jun and likely to fledge in 3-5 days (WM).
- Pygmy Nuthatch:** As with White-breasted Nuthatches in the Pine Ridge, this species also nested early, with fledged young following ads by 12 Jun (WM).

- Brown Creeper:** Single singing males were heard at Chadron Creek WMA, Dawes Co, and in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 29 Jul (TJW). This species breeds in the Pine Ridge, although confirmed reports are few.
- Rock Wren:** Two were in the Lincoln Co cedar canyons 15 Jul (TJW), where they reach the eastern extent of their summer range in the Platte River Valley.
- House Wren:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Sedge Wren:** One singing "in good habitat" in Platte Co 24 Jun (TJW) was unusual; most Sedge Wrens move through in spring and return, often to nest, mid-Jul.
- Marsh Wren:** This is a rare breeder in the southern half of the state; many "summer" reports from that area are for late Jun and Jul, and might be of birds returning from farther north and attempting to breed, as does Sedge Wren. The RWB hosted birds at Moger WPA, Clay Co, 30 Jun (JGJ) and at 4 locations in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ); one was at Jack Sinn 15 Jul (LE).
- Carolina Wren:** Outliers this summer were one in Kearney 28 Jun (KG) and another in Dodge Co 24-25 Jul (D&JP). Just as happened last year, one arrived in a Bellevue yard 28 Jun and started nesting (ARy).
- Bewick's Wren:** A pale-plumaged bird, possibly from the southwest, was in Snell Canyon, Lincoln Co, 10-15 Jul (TJW, WF); there are fewer than 10 such summer non-breeding reports.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** This species now occurs in most of the state except for the Sandhills. Northwesterly were 2 west of Crawford 29 Jul (TJW).
- Eastern Bluebird:** An impressive 90 had fledged at nest boxes at ADF by 31 Jul (LF, SQ). A flock of 19 of mixed ages in Johnson Co 13 Jun (LE) was of interest; these might have been early-fledged young with ads, although bluebirds usually produce more than one brood.
- Mountain Bluebird:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Townsend's Solitaire:** Whether this species breeds in Nebraska with any regularity is conjectural; there are a large number of Jun reports, but the only tangible evidence for some time was a nest with eggs in Sowbelly Canyon in 1986. Reports of flying juvs in the Pine Ridge in late Jul of 1979 and 1980 are suggestive, but inconclusive as to whether the birds were fledged in Nebraska. A similar record this year was of a flying juv along Pants Butte Road, Sioux Co, 31 Jul (TJW).
- Swainson's Thrush:** None were reported; usually migrants are moving through the west into early Jun.
- Wood Thrush:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern summer resident.
- American Robin:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Gray Catbird:** Numbers of breeding birds are lower westward, especially in the southern Panhandle. Uncommon but increasing in summer in the northern Panhandle, one was at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 19 Jul (RM).
- Northern Mockingbird:** The 7 in Johnson Co 13 Jun (LE) was a good count. Two in Platte Co 19 Jul were in the same place for the 3rd year running (MB).
- Sage Thrasher:** An interesting find was one a few miles south of Harrison, Sioux Co, 9 Jun (KS), likely a migrant. Although there are several Jun-Jul records

for this species, most in sagebrush areas of northern Sioux Co, there is only one documented nesting report.

**Brown Thrasher:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**European Starling:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Reports were routine for this common western and uncommon northern summer resident.

**McCown's Longspur:** The two reports were from expected locations in Sioux Co 10 Jun (WM) and Scotts Bluff Co 16 Jun (AK, HKH).

**Ovenbird:** One at Chester Island WMA, Lincoln Co, 15 Jul (TJW) continues a series of reports from there of singing males Jun-Jul from 2009 to date (TJW), although breeding has not yet been proven. This eastern county species also breeds regularly in the Niobrara River Valley; reports were from Keya Paha and Brown Cos 19 Jun (CNK).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** There is a healthy population at PRSP, where 8 were tallied 24 Jun on Stone and Decker Creeks (JC, SS); ads were feeding fledglings at PRSP 19 Jun (JC, SS). The 5 at ICSP 2 Jun (WRS) was a good tally also, and one was at ADF 1 Jul (LF, SQ). These are all known locations for this uncommon summer resident.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** None were reported; this is an uncommon summer resident in the eastern Niobrara Valley and on the Pine Ridge.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** There were no reports of this uncommon southeastern summer resident.

**Tennessee Warbler:** Last migrant reported was at FF 2 Jun (JR); latest dates are 10, 10, 11 Jun.

**Mourning Warbler:** None were reported; latest dates are 12, 13, 15 Jun.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Reports were of good numbers in the traditional locations at ICSP and PRSP, with one north to FF 10 Jun (L&BP) and one at the northern extent of recent years' reports at PSP 9 Jun (BFH, MB). Four territories were located at PRSP 19 Jun (JC, SS, RSt) and 8 were counted at ICSP 2 Jun, including a pair of ads carrying food at ICSP (WRS, WM).

**Common Yellowthroat:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**American Redstart:** This species can be abundant in early summer; 35 were at ICSP 2 Jun (WRS). Breeding occurs in the lower Niobrara River Valley; reports were from Brown and Keya Paha Cos 19 Jun (CNK). Summer reports away from the breeding range in the Missouri and Niobrara River Valleys in mid-summer are few; one was in northwest Madison Co 1 Jul (LR, RH).

**Cerulean Warbler:** None were reported for summer, despite several spring reports of singing males in the lower Missouri River Valley.

**Northern Parula:** Numbers were a bit lower than usual, best count only 4, at ICSP 9 Jun (JR). Singles were at WP 14 Jul (LE) and along the Platte River in Douglas Co 7 Jun (JGJ), both a bit westerly.



- Yellow Warbler:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** A bird at Bessey Division, Nebraska National Forest, 17 Jul (RM) was unidentified to subspecies (Myrtle or Audubon's). At that date and location it was likely an easterly Audubon's; if so, the report is the 12th late Jun-early Aug summer report away from the breeding range.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** The only report for summer was of 2 at FF 2 Jun (JR); the species breeds at that location.
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** Last one reported for spring was at FF 2 Jun (JR), 4th-latest of only 5 records for Jun.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Good numbers were in the lower Niobrara River Valley in Brown and Keya Paha Cos 19 Jun (CNK); the veteran observer had "never seen so many in one small area" there (CNK). Five were at Red Willow Res, Frontier Co, 2 Jun (TJW).
- Spotted Towhee:** Reports were routine for this common westerly summer resident.
- Eastern Towhee:** A fem in Hall Co 10 Jun (LR, RH) was at about the western edge of the summer range in the Platte River Valley.
- Cassin's Sparrow:** This localized summer resident occurs mostly in the Panhandle in areas with shrubs such as yucca or sage; one was about 6 miles southwest of Harrison 9 Jun (KS). This was the only report received, somewhat surprisingly following the influx of birds in 2012 that was generally attributed to drought in the US southwest. Perhaps Nebraska's drought this summer presented sub-par nesting conditions.
- Chipping Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common, virtually statewide summer resident.
- Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report was of one "on the road to Sowbelly Canyon", Sioux Co, 21 Jul (RM), near the breeding locations north of the Pine Ridge in Sioux Co.
- Field Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide (except for the Panhandle) summer resident.
- Vesper Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Lark Sparrow:** One on a Kearney Co BBS route 10 Jun (D&JP) was at the eastern edge of the summer range in southern Nebraska.
- Lark Bunting:** Reports were routine for this abundant western summer resident.
- Savannah Sparrow:** A small colony persists southwest of Hay Springs; 3 pairs were in the same place 11 Jun where they bred in 2011 (WM). This species is a rare and localized breeder in northwestern Nebraska.
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** This species is doing well in Nebraska grasslands; post fledging groups included 9 together on a fence line in Clay Co 14 Jul (JGJ), and 76 were on fence lines in 25 miles in Lincoln Co 17 Jul (TJW).
- Henslow's Sparrow:** The two reports were from SCP, a regular location: 6 were there 16 Jun (KP) and one on 21 Jun (LE).
- Song Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common northern and central-eastern summer resident.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** One in Lincoln Co 4 Jun (MSS) is only the 6th Jun report for the state. Most migrants depart by late May.

- Swamp Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this uncommon central Nebraska summer resident.
- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Summer Tanager:** Reports were from the expected southeastern Nebraska locations (m. ob.); it appears to be establishing in WP, where one was present 8 Jul (JC, SS), and a pair was there in 2011 (JC, SS).
- Scarlet Tanager:** Ads were feeding young at PSP 12 Jun (RSt); this species breeds in the east and north, west to about Brown Co. One in western Custer Co 17 Jul (TJW) was unexpected; the only similar records are of a nest in Lincoln Co in 1938 and an ad male banded in Keith Co 11 Jun 1992.
- Western Tanager:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Northern Cardinal:** Reports were routine for this common statewide (except for Panhandle) resident.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** A few phenotypically pure-looking birds occur westerly in May-Jun each year; a male was on Ogallala 1 Jun (JO), but another in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 20 Jul (RM) was later than most such records.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this common western and central summer resident.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Lazuli Bunting:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Indigo Bunting:** Reports were routine for this common statewide, uncommon Panhandle, summer resident.
- Dickcissel:** Numbers were good in the southeast; best count was a record for spring of 122 in Johnson Co 13 Jun (LE). A few were westerly, but perhaps fewer than in recent years; singles were in Scotts Bluff Co 16 Jun (HKH, AK) and 6 were there 8 Jul (KD). One was in Morrill Co 30 Jun (AK). Of interest was the observation that birds present in the cedar canyons of southeastern Lincoln Co had departed by 10 Jul as grasslands dried up, whereas birds around lowland alfalfa fields remained (TJW).
- Bobolink:** Rare in the Panhandle, one in Scotts Bluff Co 16 Jun was considered "a good bird out here" (AK, HKH); this is especially significant in that the few Panhandle records occur generally in wet years, obviously not the situation this year in the west. Numbers have increased in recent years in the southeast, but perhaps ominous, and likely related to dry conditions, was a group of 18, mostly males in "fading" plumage, as early as 25 Jun in Otoe Co (LF, SQ). Dry conditions may have resulted in failed breeding, although fledglings have been reported by the end of Jun.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common eastern, uncommon western, summer resident.

- Western Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common localized statewide summer resident.
- Brewer's Blackbird:** Like Bobolink, this species may have been affected by the very dry conditions in the west. Flocks were noted on early dates: "lots were under a pivot" in Morrill Co 30 Jun (AK) and 200 were in a mixed icterid flock in Scotts Bluff Co 8 Jul (KD).
- Common Grackle:** Reports were routine for this abundant statewide summer resident.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Orchard Oriole:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Bullock's Oriole:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Baltimore Oriole:** Numbers were good in the southeast: 25 were in Johnson Co 13 Jun (LE) and 16 were at ICSP 11 Jun (LF, SQ).
- House Finch:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide summer resident.
- Red Crossbill:** Most years a few birds are found scattered around the state in late summer and fall, but on occasion incursions can occur that are probably related to poor food supplies within the breeding range. This summer was one of these occasions, with several reports statewide. Recordings made in north-central KS (HA) showed that the birds there were Type 2, the type that occurs in Ponderosa Pine, and it is likely that the Nebraska birds were, too. Reports included a fem and 4 juvs in Dawson Co 1 Jul (TJW), 14 of mixed plumages in a Fairmont yard 8 Jul (JRi), 2 ads and 3 juvs in Kearney 11-25 Jul (JM fide LR, RH), one in Platte Co 19 Jul (MB), 2-4 at a Stanton Co feeder 24-26 Jul (MB), and 2 birds 8 miles north of Minden 30 Jul (LR, RH).
- Pine Siskin:** Ads feeding young in the Gordon Cem 5 Jun (CNK) were at the eastern edge of their Pine Ridge summer range.
- Lesser Goldfinch:** In recent years this species has become a regular summer visitor in the west; 2 green-backed males were at Wildcat Hills NC 21 Jul (RM).
- American Goldfinch:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- House Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.