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9-2001

## ***Nebraska Bird Review* Whole Issue September 2001 Volume 69 Number 3**

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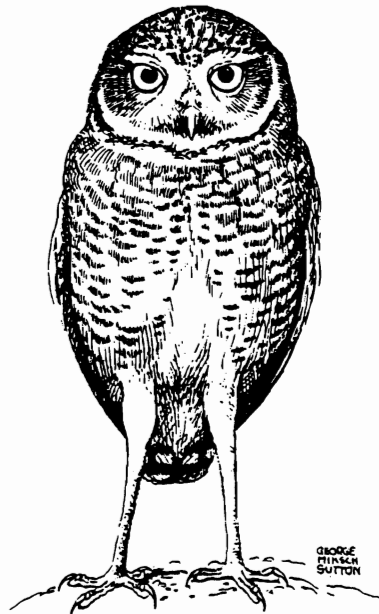
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# *The Nebraska Bird Review*

A Magazine of Ornithology of the Nebraska  
Region

Volume 69 September 2001 Number 3



Published by the  
Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc.  
Founded 1899  
SSSN 0028-1816

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## SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June and July 2001

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### INTRODUCTION

Although we sometimes think of the summer season (June-July in these reports) as the time of breeding activity, it is in reality a hodgepodge of avian activity. As observers spend more time in the field in late June and July, they find some fascinating things going on. Interpreting what is happening is dependent on figuring out ages and genders of individual birds; this analysis allows us to hazard a guess as to what these birds are doing and from where or to where they are going. Most (all?) species which breed in Nebraska start breeding prior to June, and some are on their way south before the end of July. Local breeders form the first flocks seen, often in mid- and late June. Summer also sees wandering birds of several types: ducks undergoing molt migration, young birds dispersing randomly after fledging, adults doing the same after their breeding attempts fail, and genuine migrants, both northbound in June and southbound in June and July. And, there is indeed breeding activity taking place! I encourage observers to report ages and genders of birds wherever possible.

Several observers are including in their reports dates of breeding activity, such as nests with eggs or young, or adults carrying nest material or food. There are surprisingly few data on timing of breeding of most Nebraska birds, thus this information is useful and much appreciated. In this context, we wait with anticipation the impending publication of the Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas!

This season has many items of interest and significance. Among them are Glossy Ibis in the Rainwater Basin; nesting attempt by White-faced Ibis in the Rainwater Basin; the effects of dry summer weather on the attempt and on those of other wetland species; large numbers of summering Redheads (ducks that is); breeding activity of ducks in the eastern Rainwater Basin; Steve Dinsmore's dogged and ultimately successful quest to locate summering Black Rails, probable breeding again by Sandhill Cranes in the east Rainwater Basin possibly affected by low water levels; successful nesting season by Piping Plovers at L McConaughy; a nesting of Mountain Plover in Kimball Co; Nebraska's first documented fall White-rumped Sandpiper; Red Phalarope in the Rainwater Basin; adult Pomarine

Jaeger at L McConaughy; the continuing advance of the Eurasian Collared-Dove; possible breeding or hybridization with Eurasian Collared-Dove of White-winged Dove at Kearney; a resurgence of Black-billed Cuckoos; breeding of Long-eared Owl in Knox Co; hummingbirds (including Calliope) in the Panhandle; and interesting information on the Red Crossbills on the Pine Ridge.

I want to reiterate how much I appreciate the efforts of observers in sending in their sightings. Although it takes considerable time to compile and write up the material, both on your part and mine, it is extremely interesting, and a task I enjoy. Any suggestions about content, style, etc, are welcome, as, of course, are any corrections.

### ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co; CCM: Clear Creek Marshes, Keith and Garden Cos; Cem: Cemetery; CLNWR: Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge; CPBS: Cedar Point Biological Station, Keith Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Reservoir, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave State Park, Nemaha and Richardson Cos; LM: Lake McConaughy, Keith Co; LO: Lake Ogallala, Keith Co; m.ob.: many observers; MRET: Missouri River Ecology Trail, Neale Woods, Washington Co; NC: Nature Center; NM: National Monument; Res: Reservoir; RWB: Rainwater Basin, mainly Phelps, Clay, Fillmore, York, Hamilton Cos; SL: Sewage Lagoon; SP: State Park.

### GAZETTEER

Calamus Res: Loup and Garfield Cos; Kiowa Springs: Scotts Bluff Co; Kissinger Basin: Clay Co, Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co; Oliver Res: Kimball Co; Ponca SP: Dixon Co; Rowe Sanctuary: Buffalo Co; Sininger Basin: York Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Wildcat Hills: Scotts Bluff and Banner Cos; Wind Springs Ranch: southern Sioux Co.

### OBSERVERS CITED

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; B: Nebraska Birdline; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; CEJ: Clyde E. Johnson, Omaha; CF: Carol Falk, Nebraska City; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; DD: Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; DP: Don Paseka, Ames; EB: Elliott

Bedows, Bellevue; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; GW: Gertrude Wood, Elmwood; HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell; JB: John Brennehan, Omaha; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JP: Jan Paseka, Ames; KL: Kathy Larson, Mitchell; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City; LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue; LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MUS: Moni Usasz, Lincoln; PD: Phyllis Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; PS: Phil Swanson, Omaha; PT: Paul Tebbel, Kearney; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; RW: Rick Wright, Princeton, NJ; SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Fort Collins, CO; SV: Steve Van Sickle, Yankton; TEL: Thomas E. Labeledz, Lincoln; TH: Thomas Hoffman, Omaha; TJ: Todd Jensen, Rapid City, SD; WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma; WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland; WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

Linda R. Brown, Lincoln; John Dinan, Lincoln; Carlos Grandes, Geneva; Jim Meyer, Omaha; Mark Orsag, Crete; Neva Pruess, Lincoln; Rick Schmid, Omaha; Leona Weed, Alliance.

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Pacific Loon: A first-alternate bird was spotted at LO between 3 and 23 June (SJD, TJ, BP, LP), now an "expected" summer occurrence in western Nebraska (SJD). This sighting represents the 7th summer record, all from western Nebraska, since 1979.

Common Loon: The usual scattering of summering birds was noted in western Nebraska, including an alternate adult seen at LO on 9 July (SJD) and 2-3 molting adults found at L Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, between 29 June and 22 July (SJD), apparent failed breeders. Single birds were located at LO on 1 June (MUs) and on 29 June (SJD), and another was discovered at Enders Res, Chase Co, on 10 June (MB).

Pied-billed Grebe: This year was the "best breeding year ever" in the east RWB (JGJ). The bird spotted at Alma East SF on 15 June (GH, WH) was unexpected, but 27 were found at a known breeding locality, FL, on 29 July (LR, RH). This species may breed anywhere if conditions allow.

Eared Grebe: 1-2 were noted through the period at LO (SJD), but no breeding activity was mentioned; breeding has not been reported away from the Sandhills since 1915. Intriguing, however, were the 6 found in the east RWB as late as 16 June (JGJ).

Western Grebe: The low point at LM was 51 birds counted on 3 June (SJD), probably indicative of size of the breeding population there. Assuming equal numbers of adults and immatures, there could be 10-15 breeding pairs present. Numbers had risen to 1,544 by 28 July (SJD);

LM hosts tens of thousand of grebes at the peak of fall migration. A good count was 437 tallied at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, on 21 July (SJD).

**Clark's Grebe:** This species is becoming rather numerous, either because reporters take time to look for them, or because they are increasing in numbers, probably both. No breeding was noted, but birds were present throughout the period at LM and LO, where as many as 36 were counted on 29 June, 17 of these at LO (SJD). This total denotes the highest single-day count to date for this species. Some 16 additional birds were found at other Panhandle and Sandhills sites (m.ob.), as well as at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, where 6 apparent migrants or failed breeders were found on 21 July (SJD).

**American White Pelican:** Numbers of summering birds noted at LM decreased from 1,429 on 3 June to a low of 310 on 9 July and rose to 1,018 by 28 July (SJD). The low count of 310 is a record high mid-summer count. Easterly, midsummer reports included 14 spotted at Sinninger Basin between 24 June and 1 July (JGJ); 40 seen flying over North Bend, Dodge Co, on 27 June (DP, JP); 10 found at Niobrara Marsh, Knox Co, on 28 June (MB); and 2 located at BOL on 23 June (LE).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Adults on nests were reported at CLNWR, with 9 reported on 3 June (SJD); and at the west end of HCR, a healthy 73 were tallied on 10 June (GH, WH). At CLNWR goose platforms are used by the cormorants (KL). Casual in midsummer in the south and east, 20 were found at BOL on 23 June, declining to 5 on 8 July (LE).

**American Bittern:** As many as 3 were noted at Harvard Marsh from 15 June to 20 July (JGJ, WRS, SJD); and singles were noted elsewhere in the east RWB between 24 June and 28 July (JGJ). Although not documented since at least 1960, nesting probably occurs on occasion in the east RWB. One bird was spotted at FL on 20 July (SJD). Migrants appear after mid-August.

**Least Bittern:** The only reports were of one seen at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, between 2 and 23 June (B, LE) and another heard at L Yankton, Cedar Co, on 29 June (SV). Reports are few in recent years as far north as Cedar Co.

**Great Blue Heron:** Routine reports.

**Great Egret:** Numbers are lowest in mid-June, although 4 were spotted at Kissinger Basin on 15 June (JGJ), and 5 were identified at HCR the same day (WRS). Visitors and migrants congregate at favored sites beginning in mid-July, and numbers peak in July-August; the best count reached 51 at HCR on 26 July (GH, WH). Unexpected for the date and as far west was one located at LM on 17 June (SJD).

**Snowy Egret:** Only 14 were found, with 12 of them located at HCR on 30 July (GH, WH). The others were singles noted at Kiowa Springs on 29 June (SJD) and in the east RWB on 15 July (JGJ).

**Little Blue Heron:** Apparently only two were found: an adult spotted at Kissinger Basin between 15 and 28 July (JGJ, SJD) and a "calico" bird discovered near Ashland for 2 weeks up until 31 July (WM).

**Cattle Egret:** More than usual were noted in June, the usual low point for numbers, including as many as 47 found at Kissinger Basin on 15 June (WRS) and 38 located in scattered flocks in the east RWB on 24 June (JGJ). The best counts totaled 230 at Alma on 14 July (GH, WH) and 135 in the east RWB on 15 July (JGJ). At the Alma roost, numbers increased steadily from 6 on 10 June to the peak of 230 (GH, WH); this observation suggests that the RWB birds may have been early migrants, possibly from a failed colony. None was found west of FL.

**Green Heron:** Surprisingly far west was the one discovered east of McGrew, Scotts Bluff Co, on 15 June (AK); there are no breeding records this far west. Others were found west to HCR on 19 June and 8 July (GH, WH) and in Buffalo Co on 23 June and 21 July (LR, RH), both regular locations.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Nest building was observed at Kissinger Basin on 24 June, but the attempt was later abandoned (JGJ). Other large concentrations at likely breeding locations included 59 tallied at FL on 20 July (SJD), a little early for fall migration, and 22 of all ages except juveniles located at Harvard Marsh on 15 July (WRS).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A "fresh juvenile" was identified at Harvard Marsh on 1 July (JGJ), a date early enough to be suggestive of fledging nearby. Post-breeding wanderers appeared in good numbers in the RWB area, beginning with 3 juveniles seen at FL and another juvenile spotted at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD); 2 birds were located in the east RWB on 28 July (JGJ). Singles were found at Kenesaw Basin, Adams Co, on 21 July (LR, RH) and at FL on 29 July, the latter a juvenile (LR, RH).

**Glossy Ibis:** A major influx of White-faced Ibis in the east RWB (see that species in the following report) brought with it as many as 3 adult Glossy Ibises; 2-3 were reported at Harvard Marsh on 14 July (JGJ; details), only the 2nd state record, and 1-2 were seen there through 20 July (WRS, SJD; details).

**White-faced Ibis:** This summer was amazing for this species, with about 130 reported, and, most amazingly, a nesting attempt by a group of about 75 found at Kissinger Basin (JGJ). Jorgensen risked "death by snapping turtle" to confirm the presence of 25 nests at Kissinger Basin on 24 June, after seeing 12-16 birds "acting suspiciously" there on 16 June. The day before, a group of birds had also been "acting suspiciously" there, with birds hovering and dropping slowly down onto the other birds, as though to copulate; but any consummation was just out of view of the observer (WRS). Unfortunately, although 34+ nesting birds were "doing fine" between 1 and 7 July (JGJ), the nesting attempt was abandoned by 14 July, presumably due to rapidly dropping water levels (JGJ). The birds apparently moved to Harvard Marsh, where as many as 78 were present from 15 to 20 July (WRS, JGJ, SJD). Peak count in the east RWB reached 98 on 15 July (JGJ). Nesting may also have occurred in an area of long grass north of CLNWR, where birds were seen carrying food

on 24 June (CNK). Good numbers were noted at various locations in southern Sheridan Co between 9 June and 11 July (AK, WM, RW), with best count hitting 16 near Lakeside on 29 June (WM). The 5 that appeared at FL on 29 July (LR, RH, listed as "dark ibises") were fall migrants.

**Turkey Vulture:** The only non-routine report was of one observed circling above jetskiers at Calamus Res on 9 June, "anticipating that one of them would kill himself at any moment" (LR, RH).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** The usual stragglers summered in the east RWB; up to 3 were noted between 2 June and 20 July (JGJ, SJD).

**Snow Goose:** As many as 90 were still in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ), but the best count subsequently was 8, tallied on 24 June (JGJ). Stragglers are expected through the summer in the RWB but not at either LM/LO, where 4 were still present on 3 June--and where 1-2 remained throughout the period (SJD)--or in Lincoln Co, where 4 were seen on 7 June (MB).

**Ross's Goose:** Late spring stragglers were the 2 spotted in the east RWB on 2 June, one of which remained until 15 June (JGJ). There are no July records for this species.

**Canada Goose:** Small migratory forms of Canada Geese are not expected in summer; however, 2 were found in the east RWB from 27 May to 2 June (JGJ). And the single reported at LM on 28 July (SJD) may have been a very early fall migrant, the first July record of a small form. Surprisingly, few large Canada Geese, presumably nesting forms, occur in the RWB; the best count reached 21 there on 1 July (JGJ).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The usual scattered birds were noted in the western Sandhills: a pair with 3+ young were seen east of Hyannis, Grant Co, on 17 June (SJD), and 2-3 adults were spotted at CLNWR between 16 and 23 June (SJD, TJ).

**Wood Duck:** Females with small downies were noted from 3 June in Omaha (CEJ) to 8 July in Lincoln (LE). A hen with young 3/4 grown seen at Verdon Lake, Richardson Co, 10 June, was suggestive of an early hatch (WRS).

**Gadwall:** Routine reports.

**American Wigeon:** A hen discovered with 10 young at Kissinger Basin on 1 July (JGJ), the first known breeding record for the RWB, was probably a casual breeder away from the western Sandhills. There have been a few summer reports from FL in recent years, suggesting that breeding might occur there as well; 2 were seen there on 20 July (SJD). Singles identified at Kiowa Springs on 29 June (SJD) and at LM on 9 July (SJD) were unexpected, as were the 2 spotted at Oliver Res on 16 June (SJD).

**Mallard:** A brood hatched on 27 July in Scotts Bluff Co (KL) was rather late. As many as 472 were counted at LM by on 9 July (SJD); eclipse males gather in groups at this time of year.



**Blue-winged Teal:** Routine reports.

**Cinnamon Teal:** Easternmost and late for the location (breeding is unknown in the RWB) was a male spotted at Hultine Basin, Clay Co, on 15 June (WRS). Good numbers were reported from the western Sandhills and Panhandle, with the most noted at Kiowa Springs, including 5 counted on 16 June (SJD). The male of a pair found at CLNWR on 18 June was a hybrid (KL).

**Northern Shoveler:** Although breeding may occur statewide, few reports are received away from the Sandhills. Broods were seen at Kissinger Basin on 15 July (JGJ) and at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD); and the species may have bred at Alma South SL, where 1-2 were present through 8 July (GH, WH); no brood was seen, however. A single was spotted at Youngson Basin, Kearney Co, on 15 July (LR, RH).

**Northern Pintail:** Breeding distribution is similar to that of the Northern Shoveler; while usually a rare breeder in the east RWB, 2 broods were noted there on 1 July (JGJ).

**Green-winged Teal:** Mid-summer records away from the limited breeding range in the western Sandhills are few; fall migrants usually do not appear until mid-August. Thus of interest were 15 found in the east RWB on 15 June and the "several" discovered there on 1 July (JGJ).

**Canvasback:** Late spring sightings may be of non-breeding yearlings. Probably in this category were the 3 seen at Alma East SL on 2 June (GH, WH) and the 1-3 summering at LO; 3 were found there on 29 June, and 2 remained there through 28 July (SJD). Three birds seen south of Gordon on 24 June (CNK) fell within the Sandhills breeding range.

**Redhead:** Surprisingly large numbers lingered into summer in the east RWB. The peak reached 90 on 15 June, and 54 still remained there as late as 1 July (JGJ); although most were males (JGJ, WRS), a hen and brood were spotted at Sinninger Basin on 1 July (JGJ). Breeding probably occurs annually in the east RWB, but it is rarely reported. Three birds summered at the Alma South SL, where 36 were still present as late as 15 June (GH, WH). Summering occurred also at LO, where the 48 birds seen on 17 June declined to 8 by 21 July (SJD); and 12 were found at LM on 9 July (SJD). Counts of 8 at North Platte SL on 1 July and 17 at Scottsbluff SL on 21 July also indicated high summering numbers (SJD).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Rare in summer anywhere in the state, the first summer records for the east RWB were single males found at Kissinger and Sinninger Basins on 15 June (JGJ).

**Lesser Scaup:** Very late were singles identified at Alma South SL on 15 June (GH, WH) and at BOL on 9 June, a male (LE). A male and female reported at Twin Lakes, Seward Co, on 8 July (LE) may have been failed breeders on the move.

**Hooded Merganser:** Adult males in breeding plumage are rarely encountered in summer; most reports are of female/immature types, presumably prebreeders, although adult male breeding plumage is held

only until June (see Sibley's Guide to Birds). As many as 6 females/immatures were found in the east RWB on 15 June (JGJ), and 4 had arrived at LO by 21 July (SJD). Of interest were singles identified as females (but not aged) at CLNWR on 16 June and at LM on 9 July (SJD).

**Common Merganser:** A small group of 6 to 13 birds summered at LO (SJD), as has become the norm.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** A single female summered at LO; it was accompanied by a 1st alternate male on 3 June (SJD).

**Ruddy Duck:** A "bright male" identified at Alma South SL on 22 June (GH, WH) was suggestive of breeding; and broods were found at Smith Basin, Clay Co, and at Sinniger Basin on 15 July (JGJ). Another east RWB brood was discovered at Kissinger Basin on 20 July (SJD). Breeding is probably regular in the east RWB, although rarely reported. The one spotted at BOL on 9 June (LE) was likely a late migrant.

**Osprey:** An intriguing sighting was the one located in eastern Keith Co on 11 June (Rodger Knaggs fide SJD), possibly a late-migrating immature. Breeding is not currently known to occur in Nebraska.

**Mississippi Kite:** At Ogallala, 1-3 adults were reported between 9 and 28 July (SJD). Unexpected sightings away from Ogallala were singles identified at Imperial, Chase Co, on 7 June (MB) and about 25 miles away at Grant, Perkins Co, on 9 July (SV).

**Bald Eagle:** The productive nest at L Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, again fledged 3 young this year: the adults were working on a new nest on 5 February as the old one had fallen down; the female was incubating on 19 February; young were being fed on 30 March; the first chick fledged between 7 and 11 June, and all 3 were flying by 22 June (Lucy Koenig fide AK). The nest at Calamus Res had a juvenile in it on 9 June (LR, RH). Two birds seen at Nebraska City on 12 July (LF, CF) were probably from the active nest (2 chicks this year) just across the river in Fremont Co, Iowa. Other sightings included one (unaged) found in southeastern Cherry Co on 23 June (CNK) and an immature located at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, on 21 July (WRS, SJD).

**Northern Harrier:** All reports came from likely breeding locations in northern and western Nebraska, except for a male spotted in the east RWB on 1 July (JGJ); breeding probably occurs in the east RWB each year.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The one seen in Knox Co on 8 June (SV) may have been a late-migrating immature; but the one identified at Wildcat Hills NC harassing the feeder birds on 19 July (AK) may be part of a very small breeding population in the area; this sighting marks the 5th Wildcat Hills record since 1995. Singles located in northwestern Adams Co on 21 July (LR, RH) and at Rowe Sanctuary on 28 July (possibly the same bird? LR, RH) represent 2 of only 5 late July reports in central Nebraska since 1977; all are probably early migrants rather than local breeders.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Routine reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Routine reports.

Swainson's Hawk: Easternmost was one seen in Dodge Co on 2 June (DP, JP), rather near the southeastern edge of the breeding range.

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports. .

Ferruginous Hawk: Routine reports.

Golden Eagle: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: This species is a casual, possibly regular, breeder on the Pine Ridge; one of the very few summer reports of this small population was of a male seen at Gilbert-Baker Area, Sioux Co, on 12 July (RW). As many as 10 nests were found by Nebraska Game and Parks personnel in 1991.

Prairie Falcon: The one located at LM/LO on 28 July (SJD) was a little far east for that date; while breeding has occurred as far east as Keith Co (the last in 1979), this sighting was likely of a young bird or failed breeder.

Peregrine Falcon: The one found in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ) was record late for a spring migrant.

Chukar: Bravely trying to establish a population, albeit in atypical habitat, was one discovered on a nest at a housing area near 90th and Harrison in Omaha on 24 July (B). This bird was certainly a released or escaped bird, as was a pair spotted south of Harvard Marsh on 21 July (MB). There is no established population in the state.

Gray Partridge: The only report was of one located in extreme northeastern Antelope Co on 4 July (MB); currently this species is at a low ebb and seems to be restricted to the area from Thurston Co west, north of the Elkhorn River, to Keya Paha Co. Does anyone have any additional information?

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: At the eastern edge of the range, one was seen northwest of Creighton on 6 June (MB).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Routine reports.

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: Westerly reports from the North Platte River Valley, where it is fairly common, included sightings south of Morrill on 18 June (AK) and near Chimney Rock on 19 July (KL). An adult with 6 very small young was seen near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, on 21 July (LR, RH).

Black Rail: Persistent searching by Dinsmore at Panhandle marshes during the period paid off with a bird calling from a fairly extensive sedge area at Facus Springs at 4 am on 9 July (SJD). This finding, along with several probable sightings at CLNWR in recent years, is suggestive of small populations in marshes in the west. See you there at 4 am!

Virginia Rail: The only reports came from the Panhandle, with the best count reaching 4 at Facus Springs on 9 July (SJD).

Sora: Reports of birds identified in Cass and Lancaster Cos from 2 to 3 June (GW, LE) were likely late migrants, although breeding cannot be ruled out. Apart from 2 located at Facus Springs on 9 July (SJD), all

other reports originated in the east RWB, and especially at Harvard Marsh, where as many as 9 were counted on 20 July (SJD). Some of these may have been either early migrants or possibly failed breeders from dried-up habitat elsewhere, as fewer (1-5) remained there between 24 June to 17 July (m.ob.). Breeding has not been documented recently in the RWB, but the numbers of Soras (Sorae?) identified there in recent years are highly suggestive, although most reports occur from late July onwards.

**Common Moorhen:** The only report was of an adult spotted at Kissinger Basin on 20 July (SJD); no others were reported there, suggesting that it may have moved there from other dried-up habitat. Although nesting probably occurs in the east RWB, the only prior record came from Weis Lagoon, Fillmore Co, in 1985 (Garthright); a juvenile noted in Clay Co on 30 August 1998 also may have fledged locally.

**American Coot:** This species illustrated the risks of breeding in shallow wetlands, as perhaps do the preceding Sora and Common Moorhen reports. At least 30 nest mounds were seen at Harvard Marsh on 15 June (WRS), but the marsh was drying out by 1 July (JGJ) and predated nests (scattered eggshells) at mounds on dry land were commonly seen there on 15 July (WRS). Most of the coots had gone, presumably to appear elsewhere as "early migrants"! Elsewhere in the east RWB, however, it was "the best breeding year ever" for coots (JGJ). Young were noted in Sheridan Co on 9 June (AK).

**Sandhill Crane:** A pair remained at Krause Basin, Fillmore Co, through 1 July, when they were thought to be "acting weird"; but only one remained there on 15 July (JGJ). One was heard at Harvard Marsh between 15 and 17 July, possibly having moved over from Krause Basin as conditions deteriorated (WRS, B).

**Black-bellied Plover:** The two identified on 2 June were record late for the east RWB (JGJ); this report represents only the 7th June record for the state.

**Snowy Plover:** The only report was of an adult female spotted at LM on 21 July (SJD; photos).

**Semipalmated Plover:** Fall migrants arrived on 21 July, with 3 reported at LM; 9 were seen there on 28 July (SJD). The only other report was of one located near Ponca SP on 22 July (BFH).

**Piping Plover:** The breeding season at LM was very successful, with 43 nests tallied (Rodger Knaggs fide SJD). A record count of 62 was made at LM on 21 July, including a highly encouraging 49 immatures (SJD). Near Ponca SP a pair with 2-3 young was noted on 22 July (BFH), and at least one was present there on 10 and on 29 June (SV). The only other report was of 4 identified at Camp Maha on the Platte River in Sarpy Co on 17 July (B).

**Killdeer:** The peak count in the east RWB reached 325 on 14 July (JGJ) and 147 at LM on 9 July (SJD). July aggregations probably consist of

local breeders and their fledged young; true migrants pass through in late September to early October.

**Mountain Plover:** A nest with 2 eggs was found in southwestern Kimball Co on 16 Jun; 4 adults were observed in the area (SJD). On 24 June, 3 adults were present, one of which was incubating the eggs (Michael Forsberg fide SJD); and on 9 July, 2 adults and 2 one-day-old young were present (SJD). This report represents the 8th modern nest record, all in Kimball Co.

**Black-necked Stilt:** A few were seen at several of the usual spots in southern Sheridan Co between 9 and 16 June (AK, SJD), and 6 appeared at two unexpected locations near Imperial, Chase Co, on 10 June (MB).

**American Avocet:** The best count totaled 95 west of Antioch, Sheridan Co, on 29 June (WM). A pair with 4 young were identified southeast of Bayard, Morrill Co, on 30 June (PD, DD). The peak count in the east RWB was 14 (in one flock) noted on 1 July, with 1-5 seen between 7 and 29 July (m.ob.) There are not many RWB records, and only one of breeding.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** This species goes north earlier on average than Lesser Yellowlegs and returns earlier in the fall. First were the 7 spotted at Facus Springs and the 2 found at LM on 29 June (SJD). An excellent count for fall was 41 tallied at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** A few were rather late this spring, including one seen at LO on 3 June (SJD), 3 located in Dakota Co on 2 June (BFH), and 3 identified in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ)--the latter sighting was record late for the east RWB (JGJ). First fall migrants were the 20 found at LM on 29 June (SJD), and the best count reached a fall record 641 at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** An excellent count of 30 was reached in the east RWB on 28 July (JGJ).

**Willet:** This species is an early fall migrant and rare in the east in fall; the one spotted in the east RWB on 15 June (JGJ) was therefore unexpected at that date and in that location. It may have been a failed breeder. Also early at a location where breeding does not occur were as many as 18 identified at LM on 17 June (SJD), again suggestive of wandering failed breeders. The 23 counted at Facus Springs and LM/LO on 29 June (SJD) represent an excellent fall total.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** A record fall count totaled 61 at LO on 28 July (SJD), probably regional breeders staging prior to moving south. Another excellent count was 30 at Ponca SP on 22 July (BFH). An adult with 3 chicks was found in southeastern Otoe Co on 30 June (LF, CF), about normal timing for this species. An indication of the initiation of fall migration was the single seen at Alma, Harlan Co, on 18 July, where none had been seen since May (GH, WH).

**Upland Sandpiper:** A nest with 3 eggs found in southwestern Dixon Co on 21 June (JJ) was rather late for this species. The Hannon Area, in southwestern Hall Co, must have good habitat for this species, as 29 were

counted there on 16 June in a small portion of the Area (LR, RH). Migration was underway by late July, as expected; 35 were counted in the east RWB on 28 July (JGJ).

**Long-billed Curlew:** This species forms flocks prior to migration as early as late June; a flock of 37 spotted in southeastern Sheridan Co on 16 June seemed too early, however, and may have included failed breeders (SJD, WRS). A flock located north of CLNWR on 24 June (CNK) was perhaps more the norm, but probably also included failed breeders.

**Marbled Godwit:** Another early-migrating species, the 4 found at LM on 17 June (SJD) were early but not unexpectedly so. Generally rare in fall, even in the west, numbers at LM peaked at 17 on 21 July (SJD), a good count. Only casual east of LM in fall, the 2 seen near Holdrege, Phelps Co, on 20 July (GH,WH) denote only the 15th fall record east of the Panhandle and Keith Co.

**Sanderling:** The one spotted in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ) was record late there; and the 79 tallied at LM on 3 June (SDJ) represent a rather amazing count for the late date. Previous latest spring dates include 3, 3, and 4 June.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** The one identified in alternate plumage at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH) was rather late, but not unprecedented. First in fall was one seen at LM on 29 June (SJD), the 2nd earliest ever. A record fall total of 462 was made at LM on 28 July (SJD).

**Western Sandpiper:** Only one was reported away from LM: one was spotted at HCR on 18 July (GH, WH). At LM, 4 molting adults appeared on 9 July, another 6 were counted on 21 July, and 25 adults, including 2 still in alternate plumage, were found there on 28 July (SJD).

**Least Sandpiper:** The one noted at LO on 3 June (SJD) was rather late. First for fall was one seen in Lincoln on 8 July (LE), and the best count totaled 68 at LM on 21 July (SJD).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** The last for spring was one spotted at Kiowa Springs on 15 June (SJD), a rather late date. As many as 501 still remained in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ). Apparently Nebraska's first documented fall record was an adult "seen well and heard" at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD). This species is at best casual in fall on the Great Plains west of the Mississippi River; I have been unable to locate either specimens or photos from any states neighboring Nebraska.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Rather late were 7 found at LM/LO on 3 June (SJD). Rather early were 28 birds located at LM on 9 July (SJD), and the best count reached 1,180 at LM on 28 July (SJD).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** A few often linger very late in spring; 2 found in the east RWB on 24 June (JGJ) were the 5th report in the period between 17 and 30 June. These are probably yearling birds which drop out of migration. The first fall migrants were 7 identified in the east RWB on 15 July (JGJ). Rare westward, 2 were found at LM on 21 July and also on 28 July (SJD).

**Dunlin:** Rather late were singles located in the east RWB on 2 June (JGJ) in Dakota Co on 2 June (BFH), and in Lancaster Co on 3 June (LE). No others were reported; fall early dates occur in September.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Last for spring were 5 seen at Alma on 2 June (GH, WH) and 7 spotted in the east RWB the same day (JGJ). The first for fall were 2 located at LM on 9 July, where the peak reached 316 on 28 July (SJD), an excellent fall count.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** The only report was of 5 identified in the east RWB on 28 July (JGJ).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** A few adults were reported at about the expected arrival time for this species, mid-July. In the east RWB, 8 were counted on 15 July (JGJ): 3 were found at Theesen Basin, Clay Co, the same day (WRS); one was located at Harvard Marsh on 17 July (B); and 5 were spotted there on 20 July (SJD).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** The two located in the east RWB on 15 July (JGJ) were the earliest on record there and the earliest documented for fall for the state. Generally Long-bills arrive in late July. 30 were seen at Harvard Marsh on 20 July (SJD); 42 adults were spotted at LM on 21 July (SJD); and 30 were found in the east RWB on 28 July (JGJ).

**Common Snipe:** The singles spotted at Kiowa Springs on 16 June (SJD) and on 18 June (AK) as well as the one found near Scottsbluff on 17 July (PD, DD) were probably local breeders; but the one identified in the east RWB on 1 July and again on 15 July (JGJ) was unexpected. Although there are a few breeding records from southeastern Nebraska, none is documented for the east RWB. Migrants apparently had arrived in the east RWB by late July, as 8 were discovered there on 28 July (JGJ).

**American Woodcock:** The only report came from Cedar Co on 29 June (SV).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** This species may breed casually in the southeast; a male was seen at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, throughout the summer, where 2 birds were present on 2 June; but no breeding evidence was noted (LE). Another bird was spotted in Lancaster Co at a different location on 9 June (LE), a late date for a migrant. Breeding probably occurs most years in the east RWB--this year courtship flying was seen at Hultine Basin, Clay Co, on 15 June (WRS); a juvenile was seen on 7 July (CG); and 22 juveniles along with 2 males were located at Theesen Basin, Clay Co, on 15 July (WRS). Three broods were found at the west end of LM on 29 June (SJD), and another brood was located at Facus Springs the same day (SJD).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** The only report was of a molting adult spotted at Kiowa Springs on 22 July (SJD), a rather early date; there are few July records.

**Red Phalarope:** A bird in basic plumage was seen at North Hultine Basin, Clay Co, on 15 June (WRS; details), the 10th documented record and 2nd for spring. Among other features, the identification was supported by rather extensive yellowish coloration in the lower

mandible. This bird is probably a late spring migrant; records from surrounding states extend into June.

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A light morph adult was identified at LM on 21 July (SJD, WRS; details). This sighting fits a pattern emerging in Nebraska of adults occurring very early in the fall; this report represents the third record of an adult in the period between 30 June and 29 August, while there are no records of immatures prior to 8 September.

**Franklin's Gull:** The summer's low count at LM totaled 16 on 17 June (SJD). Most summering birds are immatures that do not complete migration. The first alternate-plumaged bird to arrive in fall was identified at HCR on 10 July; by 28 July, 25 mixed-aged birds were present (GH, WH). The best count was 500+ located in a flooded field near Bayard, Morrill Co, on 1 July (KL).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Immatures of this species also summer in Nebraska; 70 were located at LM on 29 June (SJD), and a few were noted elsewhere. A good count for the date was the 150 tallied near Bayard on 1 July (KL).

**California Gull:** As is usual, all reports came from LM. In contrast with the other expected summering gulls (Franklin's, Ring-billed, Herring), most California Gulls seen in mid-summer are adults rather than immatures, and probably are failed breeders. The low count was a single found on 17 June (SJD), but numbers had increased to 51 by 28 July (SJD).

**Herring Gull:** The only report away from LM was of a worn 1st alternate bird discovered at Oliver Res on 15 June (SJD). Some 9 birds spent at least part of June through July at LM, a good showing for this species; maxima by age group were 4 1st alternate, 2 2nd alternate, 2 3rd alternate, and a fresh juvenile first noted on 28 July (SJD). Mid-summer records for this species are not numerous, and there is none for adults.

**Caspian Tern:** Numbers of this species were very good for a summer period. About 20 were reported, with the best count of 7 at LO on 8 June (SJD). At LO, the 3 birds present on 29 June (SJD) were presumably non-breeders, as most June-July birds probably are; this status is reminiscent of that of Herring Gull at the same location. Rather late migrants were seen at BOL on 9 June (LE), at Twin Lakes, Lancaster Co, on 3 June (LE), and in Cedar Co on 1 June (SV). A fall migrant appeared near Ponca SP on 22 July (BFH), the only one reported for fall away from the LO area.

**Common Tern:** Only 2 were reported: an adult spotted at LM on 3 June (SJD; details) was rather late (most later spring sightings are of "yearlings") and a sighting without details made in Cedar Co the same day (SV).

**Forster's Tern:** Reports are fewest between 10 June and 11 July. This summer 2-5 were identified at LM during this period (SJD); 3 were spotted at Kiowa Springs on 16 June (SJD); and 2 appeared at BOL as early as 4 July, increasing to 12 on 8 July (LE), apparently early fall



migrants. Numbers increased at LM to 41 by 22 July, including 2 fresh juveniles (WRS).

**Least Tern:** Reports originated in the usual breeding locations; perhaps most significant, 2, which may have been migrants, were found at Rowe Sanctuary on 14 July (LR,RH). At LM there were 6 nests for the year (Rodger Knaggs fide SJD).

**Black Tern:** A few non-breeding birds are found in mid-summer (mid-June through early July) around the state, presumably immatures; of 8 birds spotted in the east RWB on 24 June, 6 were one year old (JGJ). A single was identified at LM on 29 June (SJD). The first to return in Lancaster Co was one spotted at Pawnee L on 4 July (LE). Juveniles were found at Harvard Marsh by 15 July (WRS).

**Rock Dove:** Routine reports.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** At the close of this summer period, it can be stated that this species has essentially colonized the towns of the Panhandle (SJD) and has established persistent breeding colonies at a few other locations, notably Kearney and Elmwood. At Elmwood, at least 2 pairs nested, and second broods were also noted (GW). The Elmwood birds are easy to find in evenings near the city park (GW). There have, however, been few reports from larger cities; one was seen in Omaha on 9 July (B), only the 2nd report from that city. The one seen at Minden on 12 June (LB) represents the second reported there.

**White-winged Dove:** One apparently returned to Kearney for the 3rd consecutive summer (it was not noted in winter; LB), and may have bred; 3 White-winged Doves were seen at the Roger Newcomb feeder on 25 July, two of which were smaller, possibly young (Roger Newcomb fide LR, RH). However, only one adult has been seen in the vicinity at any one time so far. Are hybrids possible between this species and Eurasian Collared-Dove?

**Mourning Dove:** An excellent count totaled 300 in Dawson Co on 29 July (LR, RH). Flocks form in July prior to southward movement.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** More were reported than usual; some observers suggested that the good numbers of both cuckoo species this summer resulted from a high caterpillar population. About 12 (cuckoos!) were reported; the best count was 3 tallied in southwestern Dixon Co on 19 July (JJ), possibly a family group. None was reported west of Rowe Sanctuary.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** At Spring Creek Prairie, Denton, 2 to 3 pairs were found on 30 June (KP), and the 8+ counted at BOL 8 July were the "most in the last 10 years" (LE).

**Barn Owl:** Only one was found, on 28 July, at the regular breeding location near CCM; there was no nesting this year (SJD). No others were reported.

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Routine reports.

**Great Horned Owl:** Routine reports.

**Burrowing Owl:** Adults with chicks were spotted in Morrill Co on 18 June (KL); and 2 adults with a juvenile were located near O'Neill, Holt Co, on 8 July (JJ).

**Barred Owl:** Routine reports.

**Long-eared Owl:** Breeding was confirmed for Knox Co, apparently for the first time, when 2 begging young were seen at Niobrara SP on 14 July (MB). One was flushed from cedars at CLNWR on 15 June (SJD). Nesting has not yet been documented in Garden Co.

**Short-eared Owl:** None was reported.

**Common Nighthawk:** Routine reports.

**Common Poorwill:** The only reports were of singles noted south of Gering on 29 June and again on 23 July (AK).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** In recent years, there have been few reports from the Missouri Valley, but the population at Wolf L, Saunders Co, continues, with 3 heard there on 26 May (TH). The westernmost known site for the species, the Paul Tebbel yard in extreme southern Buffalo Co, had one calling on 24 June; this site is typical Platte River riparian woodland with mature cedar, mulberry, cottonwood, and green ash (PT).

**Whip-poor-will:** The only report was of one spotted in Cass Co on 16 June (GW).

**Chimney Swift:** Routine reports.

**White-throated Swift:** A good count of 10 was made on 16 June at Scottsbluff NM (SJD). The summering population at this location seems to be about 5 to 10 pairs.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Following a report of a male seen at Alma last summer (GH, WH), video was seen of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds which have been seen at the Cash residence in Alma since 1990; while young have been seen, no nest has been found to date (fide GH, WH). This location is the westernmost breeding site known in Nebraska. Elsewhere, summering birds were reported in the Missouri Valley, mostly in the northeast (JJ, BFH, TEL), but also in Cass Co (GW)--and near the probable western edge of the usual breeding range were a male and female that regularly visited a Lincoln feeder through 11 July (TEL). The westernmost spring records (presumably migrants) are both at CPBS; one of them was an adult male seen there on 3 June (SJD). Also rather far west for the species was one identified in the Gerten yard in Kearney on 6 June (fide LR, RH).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** Two birds located in a Mitchell yard on 30 July (KL; details) fit the description of this species. (Further sightings will be reported in the Fall Report). With the good numbers of Calliopes and a few Black-chinned Hummingbirds in western Kansas in fall 2000 (and again in 2001), one might expect these species to appear more often in western Nebraska; but I wonder whether birds migrating southeastward along the east edge of the Rocky Mountains may not move onto the plains (heading for Texas and Louisiana?) until they pass the

Laramie Mountains or the Fort Collins area; either "jumping-off" point would have these hummingbirds missing Nebraska.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: None was reported (see Fall, however).

Rufous Hummingbird: Adult males are rarely reported, possibly because they pass through earlier than observers start looking; one was discovered rather far east at an Alma feeder on or about 7 July (GH, WH; details). This sighting becomes the earliest fall record for the state, although they move through the Black Hills of South Dakota starting in late June. There were 4 other sightings, all from the Panhandle: a female seen at Wind Springs Ranch on 16 July (HKH), also a rather early record; a possible juvenile noted at Mitchell on 22 July (KL); a female spotted at Kimball on 28 July (SJD); and an immature male noted at Bushnell on 28 July (SJD).

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: The Deadhorse Burn, immediately west of Chadron SP, Dawes Co, was once a regular location but has been less reliable recently; one bird was seen "flycatching forlornly among the few stumps still standing" on 12 July (RW). No others were reported.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Uncommon in the southwestern Panhandle, one was spotted at Oliver Res on 21 July (SJD).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: The individual survives east of McGrew; it was seen there on 25 June (AK), rather far west of the usual range. Hopefully it will find a mate and propagate its range-expanding genes.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A woodpecker thought to be this species by at least one of the observers was glimpsed briefly as it flew overhead at Spring Creek Prairie, Denton, on 30 June; this area would represent an unusual location at this date. There is a Sarpy Co report without details on 1 July 1993, but no other Nebraska reports between 9 June and 18 September.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Pileated Woodpecker: None were reported.

Western Wood-Pewee: The eastern extent of the range in the Niobrara Valley is not well-documented, but there are a few records from the Valentine area, where one was heard on 13 July (BP, JP).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: A pair with 2 young was seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 13 July (LF, CF), about normal timing for young.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: While there are 9 previous reports as far west as Keith Co, including two banded at CPBS, the one seen and heard at CLNWR on 3 June (SJD) denotes the first record for the Panhandle.

Acadian Flycatcher: This species continues to summer at 2 locations at opposite ends of the Missouri Valley. A pair returned to the same rather northerly site occupied since 1998 at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, on 16 June (BFH). A pair was also spotted along Trail 9 at ICSP on 10

June (WRS), and "a few" were noted along Trail 5 there on 17 June (PS).

Alder Flycatcher: One identified itself by calling "feebeeo" at CPBS on 3 June (SJD), where, however, banders (Brown et al) have considered it a common migrant in spring. Another was heard calling near Niobrara on 5 June (MB). This species tends to be a late migrant.

Willow Flycatcher: Rowe Sanctuary hosts a good population; 4-6 were found there throughout the period (LR, RH). Good numbers were also noted along the Verdigris River, with 7 identified there on 5 June and along the North Loup River in Blaine Co, with 9 found calling there on 26 June (MB). Reports were statewide in small numbers, about normal.

Least Flycatcher: Banding dates at CPBS extend only to 3 June (Brown et al), and so the one located singing there on 17 June (SJD) may have been attempting to breed. The species has been reported there in summer previously, and occasionally at other locations in northern and western Nebraska. The one identified singing at CLNWR on 3 June (SJD) may have been a late migrant. Fall migrants appeared on schedule in late July: one was seen at Fort Kearny, Kearney Co, on 21 July (LR, RH), and another was spotted singing in Dodge Co on 25 July (DP, JP).

Cordilleran Flycatcher: Now rather numerous in Sowbelly Canyon, 3 to 5 were located there on 12 July, and at least one was heard there on 31 July (RW). Perhaps the easternmost site to date for this apparently expanding species was one identified singing strongly in Deadhorse Canyon, Dawes Co, on 17 June (WRS); there is, however, a report from 2 July 1987 from Dawes Co without a specific location mentioned.

Eastern Phoebe: An adult with 3 young was spotted at ADF on 1 June (LF, CF), an expected date. This species breeds only in small numbers in Pine Ridge canyons; one was seen in Sowbelly Canyon on 12 July (RW).

Say's Phoebe: Routine reports.

Great Crested Flycatcher: The report without details of 10 to 12 birds found at Alliance on 1 July is surprising, as there are very few records west of Keith Co other than in the Pine Ridge.

Cassin's Kingbird: An excellent count totaled 9 in southwestern Kimball Co on 16 June (SJD). The two birds spotted at Wind Springs Ranch on 30 July (HKH) were in atypical breeding habitat and may have been migrants. This species is rarely reported far from Ponderosa Pine parkland except in migration; there are few data on the onset of fall migration.

Western Kingbird: An excellent count of fall birds beginning to coalesce into migrant groups reached 148 in Keith Co on 28 July (SJD). Numbers appeared to be up in the east as indicated by "many" on the observers' farm in Dodge Co on 25 July (DP, JP), and the first for Spring Creek Prairie, Denton, on 22 June (KP).

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** The only report of this casual summer visitor was of one blown rather far west, south of Alliance in Morrill Co, on 9 June (AK).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Adults feeding fledged young were seen from 10 June to 28 July (WRS, KL, CNK, BFH). An adult was seen to fledge 3 young by enticing them out of the nest with a frog (KL), and a brood of 6 was seen in Dixon Co on 28 July (BFH), a rather late date and a rather large brood.

**Bell's Vireo:** The best counts included 11 at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH) and 8 at Swanson Res, Hitchcock Co, on 15 June (WRS).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** There are only a few reports from the Niobrara Valley west of Niobrara; one was reported southeast of Valentine on 13 July (B; no details). Two identified singing south of Niobrara on 5 June (MB) also were westerly.

**Plumbeous Vireo:** Routine reports.

**Warbling Vireo:** Routine reports.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** There were several Panhandle reports, where this species is least numerous, although still regular in small numbers in summer.

**Blue Jay:** An unusual concentration for the date was the 25 tallied in the observers' yard near Gibbon on 2 June (LR, RH). These were possibly late migrants.

**Pinyon Jay:** None was reported.

**Black-billed Magpie:** A pair was spotted at a site in Thurston Co on 12 June where they had been present 1 to 2 years (BFH). Also easterly was one seen in central Dodge Co on 14 July (DP, JP). Most counties in the northeast except Burt and Washington seem to have a few magpies, but the only report south of the Platte River and east of Grand Island was of one located in southern Lancaster Co on 3 June (LE), where reports have been annual in recent years.

**American Crow:** Routine reports.

**Horned Lark:** An apparent family group of 7 seen in Dawson Co as late as 6 July (LR, RH) was probably a second brood; Cary believed that 2 broods were raised each year in Antelope Co around 1900, but modern agricultural practices are likely to cause havoc with second broods.

**Purple Martin:** An apparent second brood was fledged at Alma as late as 22 July; it "took a village," as birds from other "houses" helped with the late brood (GH, WH). Also a bit late were 2 young with adults identified at Geneva on 7 July (CG). Westernmost were 2 spotted at Ogallala on 9 July (SJD), probably the westernmost breeding site in the Platte Valley.

**Tree Swallow:** Adults and 3 young were found at Alma South SL on 20 June (GH, WH). Flocks were forming by early July; 120 were counted at BOL on 4 July (LE).

**Violet-green Swallow:** Reports came, as expected, from the Panhandle. The best count was 10 tallied south of Gering on 22 July (AK), likely migrants.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** The only large number reported was the 100+ counted in Knox Co on 8 July (JJ).

**Bank Swallow:** Good counts included 200 at Ponca SP on 22 July (BFH) and 100 at BOL on 14 July (LE). All were probably migrants, as this species leaves colonies early.

**Cliff Swallow:** An excellent count reached 3,000+ in Kearney Co on 21 July (LR, RH). Large concentrations occur in central Nebraska in late July.

**Barn Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Routine reports.

**Tufted Titmouse:** Routine reports.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Singles spotted at expected summer locations in Scotts Bluff and Sioux Cos between 16 June and 12 July (SJD, KL, AK, RW) were not surprising, but one discovered at Oliver Res on 16 June (SJD) was out of place, probably a late migrant.

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** As expected, the birds located at Valentine and at Swanson Res, Hitchcock Co, in mid-June were of the eastern subspecies (WRS), which breeds westward throughout the Republican Valley and westward along the Niobrara Valley to an undetermined extent. The western subspecies occupies Ponderosa Pine woodland. The distribution of these vocally-divergent taxa in the central Niobrara Valley would be an interesting study.

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** Almost routine were reports of 1 to 2 birds identified at Wildcat Hills NC between 15 June and 21 July (SJD, KL, AK). This species is currently a breeding resident in the area.

**Brown Creeper:** The only report was of one seen in Sowbelly Canyon on 12 July (RW), where, while the species is considered to be a rare resident, breeding has not yet been confirmed.

**Rock Wren:** The easternmost reports came from the LM area, where as many as 6 were found on 9 July (SJD).

**Carolina Wren:** Numbers were reduced from last summer, notably around Lincoln, where the only sighting was of one noted in the city from 24 June through 15 July (LE). Surprisingly far west were 2 spotted in the Gerten yard in Kearney on 6 June (fide LR, RH), presumably the same birds as those reported there in March; these signify the furthest west records to date apart from one found at LM in August 2000. Few others were reported.

**House Wren:** Smart enough to migrate south in winter, numbers of this species were good; 50 were located in Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 4 July (LE).

**Sedge Wren:** Numbers are usually lowest in June; this year none was reported for that month. Fall birds begin to return in July, sometimes in numbers, but only one was reported, that in central Dodge Co on 18 July (DP, JP). This report may indicate that breeding success to our north was good, with a few unemployed birds wandering south early to "set up shop" in Nebraska.

Marsh Wren: Routine reports.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Uncommon in the northeast, singles were identified in Thurston Co on 12 June (BFH) and again at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, on 16 June (BFH).

Eastern Bluebird: Probably the lowest numbers found anywhere in the state occur in the southern Panhandle, where 2 were spotted at Bushnell Cem on 3 June (SJD). The small breeding population (5 birds, including a juvenile on 7 Jul) in the nest boxes at Wildcat Hills NC was observed to be occupying only boxes facing northward, while Mountain Bluebirds used boxes facing southward (KL). Even I refuse to speculate on the reason. At least 59 had fledged from nest boxes at ADF by 31 July (LF, CF).

Mountain Bluebird: See preceding comments under Eastern Bluebird. Nine birds were present at Wildcat Hills NC on 7 July (KL, AK).

Veery: A surprise was the one seen singing after being tracked through nettles at MRET, on 7 June (JB), probably a late migrant. Although there are several June through July records for the Missouri Valley, there is no documentation either of breeding or of birds remaining for any length of time. Veeries breed, however, as close as central Iowa.

Swainson's Thrush: The last migrants pass through the west; all reports originated from there, including as many as 5 spotted at Wind Springs Ranch on 2 June (HKH), and singles noted at CPBS and CLNWR on 3 June (SJD).

Hermit Thrush: The three birds seen at Wind Springs Ranch on 2 June 2001 (HKH) were typical of late-migrating Hermit Thrushes in the west. They were probably the Rocky Mountain subspecies *auduboni*, which passes through the Panhandle in spring and fall at about the same time as Swainson's Thrushes, notably later in spring and earlier in fall than eastern Hermit Thrushes, subspecies *faxoni*.

Wood Thrush: At the western edge of the Missouri Valley range, at locations where habitat becomes spotty, singles were identified in central Dodge Co on 16 July (DP, JP) and west of Blair, Washington Co, on 7 July (JGJ), the latter considered a "surprise."

American Robin: Large numbers were found at Calamus Res on 9 June, with 150 estimated (LR, RH). The 32 counted at ADF on 12 July (LF, CF) represent an early fall flock; flocking generally begins mid-July.

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: The summer strongholds for this species are the southern Panhandle and in extreme southeastern Nebraska. Three birds were spotted in southwestern Kimball Co on 3 June (SJD), and 3 were identified between Dawson, Richardson Co, and Pawnee City, Pawnee Co, on 10 June (WRS).

Sage Thrasher: Although migration gets underway early for this species--with peak numbers occurring in August--the singles noted in southwestern Kimball Co on 28 July (SJD) and at Wind Springs Ranch on 30 July (HKH) were rather early.

**Brown Thrasher:** Routine reports.

**European Starling:** The flock of 75 juveniles found in Nemaha Co on 24 June (WRS) marks the earliest such flock on record (not that the database is that extensive!).

**Cedar Waxwing:** This species was widely reported in small numbers, and probably breeds statewide; but a flock of 55 seen flycatching at Johnson L, Gosper Co, on 6 July (LR, RH) was a surprise. This occurrence may indicate that there are quite high numbers of Cedar Waxwings scattered about in the summer, often overlooked unless attracted to such a food source. A pair was spotted gathering nest material in Dodge Co on 7 June (BP, LP).

**Northern Parula:** Routine reports.

**Yellow Warbler:** An excellent count was the 40 tallied at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** "Audubon's" Warblers were reported from Wildcat Hills NC on 16 June (SJD) and on 7 July in the Banner Co section of the Wildcat Hills (KL) and along Stage Hill Road in the Scotts Bluff Co section on 7 July (AK). Breeding has not been documented in the Wildcat Hills, and there are fewer than 10 mid-summer records.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** None was reported.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** A male seen at CLNWR on 3 June (SJD) was a little late and a little far west, although the species occurs regularly in small numbers as far west as the Panhandle in spring.

**Cerulean Warbler:** Like the Acadian Flycatcher, this southern species can be expected in summer at this time only at ICSP and at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, at opposite ends of the Missouri Valley. A male and a second bird were spotted at Ashford Scout Camp on 16 June (BFH); and a singing male was noted circling around the perimeter of its territory at Trail 9, ICSP, on 24 June (WRS).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Reports came from expected locations in the Pine Ridge (RW, WRS).

**American Redstart:** Reports from the usual range indicated good numbers: 5+ in Monroe and Sowbelly Canyons on 1 June, including a female building a nest at Coffee Park, Sowbelly Canyon (MUs); and 7 at Valentine Fish Hatchery on 17 June (WRS). The two pairs spotted in northwestern Scotts Bluff Co on 1 June were considered "unusual" (AK); only one pair was found there on 31 July (AK). This sighting denotes only the 2nd summer report from Scotts Bluff Co since the 1970s. A female seen at CPBS on 3 June (SJD) was likely a late migrant; there is only one previous mid-summer record there.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** None was reported.

**Ovenbird:** Routine reports.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** A very vocal pair identified on Trail 5 at ICSP on 10 and again on 24 June (WRS, PS) probably had fledglings, but a lengthy look failed to locate any.



**Kentucky Warbler:** A very territorial pair was found along Trail 5 at ICSP on both 17 and 24 June (WRS, PS), but breeding could not be confirmed.

**Common Yellowthroat:** Routine reports.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** There were only 2 reports east of LO. Chats breed throughout most of the Loup drainage (except for the eastern edge), and so the 3 located in the Gracie Creek area at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH) were perhaps not unexpected; but the one seen south of Niobrara, Knox Co, was in a location where none has been seen in recent years (MB). Good counts included the 5 found along Stage Hill Road, Wildcat Hills, on 7 July (AK, KL) and the 3 tallied at Rock Creek L, Dundy Co, on 12 June (BP, LP).

**Summer Tanager:** A female spotted at CLNWR on 3 June (SJD; details) denotes only the 4th spring record for the Panhandle. Six were reported at ICSP on 28 July (B); numbers have been good there for the last 2 to 3 years.

**Scarlet Tanager:** A good single-location count totaled 4 at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, on 16 June (BFH). None was reported away from the Missouri Valley.

**Western Tanager:** The one located in Sowbelly Canyon was feeding a cowbird chick on 12 July (RW).

**Spotted Towhee:** Reports from near Gibbon of one spotted on 20 July (LR, RH) and from the Basswood Area, Dakota Co, on 4 June (BFH) defined the eastward extent of summer occurrence. An excellent count was the 30 tallied near Gallagher Canyon, Dawson Co, on 6 July (LR, RH).

**Eastern Towhee:** One which looked like a pure Eastern Towhee was found at Enders Res, Chase Co, on 9 June (MB); this report and a fall record from Perkins Co represent the westernmost records for the state. The two birds noted in southwestern Adams Co on 15 July (LR, RH) were at the western edge of the usual summer range. Observers should examine birds at the western edge of the range for hybrid characters. Small numbers were observed at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, for the period, probably about as far west as the species is fairly common every year. Two fledglings were seen being fed by adults at ICSP on 24 June (WRS).

**Cassin's Sparrow:** Reports came from within the expected summer range in the southwest and southern Panhandle. The best count reached 4 birds 3.5 miles east of Benkelman, Dundy Co, on 10 June (MB); and 2 were found near Enders Res, Chase Co, on 10 and 12 June (MB). Not often reported from the southern Panhandle, one was spotted in southwestern Kimball Co on 16 June (SJD).

**Chipping Sparrow:** Rare in and south of the Platte Valley west of Buffalo Co (except for Scotts Bluff Co, where it is common), a few summered around Alma but "no sign of nesting" was detected (GH, WH). Breeding was first noted there in 1999, but there are no records farther west. Three young were reported about to fledge in southwestern Dixon Co on 10 June (JJ).

**Brewer's Sparrow:** This species was present on Wind Springs Ranch during a windmill check on 30 July (HKH); most Sioux Co reports are from grasslands near the Colorado line.

**Field Sparrow:** Excellent numbers for a somewhat westerly location were the 35+ counted along less than one mile of dirt road near Gallagher Canyon, Dawson Co, on 6 July (LR, RH).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Away from northern and eastern Nebraska, Vesper Sparrows are rare in summer. Thus, two birds identified in 2000 and another in Clay Co on 2 June hinted at "infiltration" of the east RWB (JGJ). A count of 6 tabulated in Holt Co on 8 July (JJ) was more the norm; but only one was found for the period in Lancaster Co, that on 21 July (LE). Late July sightings, however, may be of early migrants.

**Lark Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Lark Bunting:** Furthest east were 1 to 2 birds located northeast of O'Neill, Holt Co, on 8 July (JJ) and one spotted in Hitchcock Co on 15 June (WRS). The O'Neill location--where Chestnut-collared Longspurs also occur--is near the eastern extent of suitable native grassland habitat for these species. Few were reported.

**Savannah Sparrow:** The one seen at LM on 28 July (SJD) was probably an early migrant; breeding anywhere in Nebraska is uncommon and local at best. No others were reported.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Good counts included 11 at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH) and 19 south of Gordon on 24 June (CNK). This species is doing well in most of Nebraska.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** The only reports came from Spring Creek Prairie, Denton, where an excellent total of 5 were present on 30 June (KP); one was spotted there on 17 July (B). In recent years, this species has been found regularly in southeastern Nebraska wherever native grassland in the correct successional stage can be found (some rank growth from previous years usually must be present, and so grassland burnt in the last 1 to 2 years is suboptimal).

**Song Sparrow:** This species has become a common breeder in the RWB in the 1990s; 10 were found at Sacramento-Wilcox Basin, Phelps Co, on 7 July (LR, RH). A newly-fledged bird was seen in the east RWB on 24 June (JGJ); the latter possibly marks the first documented breeding record for the east RWB.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Two were found at FL on 29 July (LR, RH), a known breeding location; but the one spotted at Sacramento-Wilcox Basin, Phelps Co, on 7 July (LR, RH) was indicative of a possible new colony. As many as 7 seen at the west end of LM on 17 June (SJD) continued the sightings from there a year ago.

**Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** The only report was of a territorial pair found in Deadhorse Canyon, Dawes Co, on 17 June (WRS). Although Ducey (1988) lists nesting in Dawes Co between 1963-67, the eastern edge of the breeding range is uncertain.

**McCown's Longspur:** Routine reports.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** The easternmost known breeding population is 5 miles east and 2 to 4 miles north of O'Neill; 9+ were located there on 8 July (JJ).

**Northern Cardinal:** Nests with hatchlings were noted on 23 June at BOL (LE) and on 14 July at ADF (LF, CF).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** The two seen at LO on 3 June (SJD) were presumably migrants; the 2 to 4 identified in the observers' yard near Gibbon throughout the period (LR, RH) are probably at the western edge of the summer range in the Platte Valley. The 2 or more found at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH) were probably late migrants; there are few reports of summering in the upper Loup River drainage. A fledgling was spotted being fed by a female at ICSP on 24 June (WRS).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** At the eastern edge of the range, a male noted on 18 June was the only sighting near Gibbon (LR, RH). This area is about where the ranges of the Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks meet.

**Blue Grosbeak:** Routine reports.

**Lazuli Bunting:** A single bird spotted 3 miles east and a half mile south of Niobrara between 5 June and 3 July (MB) was quite far east of the expected summer range, which extends to the Niobrara Valley Preserve in Brown, Rock, and Keya Paha Cos. The single found at LM on 17 June (SJD) was also a little east of the regular range.

**Indigo Bunting:** This species is regular in Scotts Bluff Co, although pure birds are rare; one was seen at Stage Hill Rd, Wildcat Hills, on 7 July (AK).

**Dickcissel:** Good counts reached 60+ in one small portion of Hannon Basin, southwestern Hall Co, on 16 June (LR, RH) and 48 along 9 miles of back roads between Dawson and Pawnee City on 10 June (WRS). Rare in the Panhandle, the one found at Oliver Res on 22 July (SJD) denotes only the 2nd record south of the Platte River. Six seen at the west end of LM on 29 June (SJD) were almost in the Panhandle; Dickcissels are rare this far west in the Platte Valley.

**Bobolink:** A good population summered at Rowe Sanctuary; 17 were spotted there on 21 July (LR, RH). There are only a few reports from the extreme southeast: one was observed in Cass Co on 1 June (GW). A few summer each year in Lancaster Co; a male was spotted at Spring Creek Prairie, Denton, on 30 June (KP).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Routine reports.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Surprisingly uncommon in the east RWB, one was located at Harvard Marsh on 15 June (JGJ). Less surprising was the one found at CLNWR on 23 June (TJ); there is a good population distributed locally throughout the Sandhills.

**Western Meadowlark:** Uncommon in the 4 counties of the extreme southeast, only one Western was heard in grasslands between Dawson and Pawnee City on 10 June; Easterns were abundant in the same area (WRS).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Summering birds were reported statewide, which is normal, assuming adequate water conditions.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** The one spotted at CLNWR on 18 June (KL) was one of very few June to July reports away from the breeding range, currently restricted to the northwestern Panhandle, southeast to Morrill Co.

**Common Grackle:** Routine reports.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** This species was widely reported in good numbers and breeding in its stronghold south of the Platte River and from Phelps Co east; it was a "banner year" in the east RWB (JGJ). The only reports outside this area came from Scotts Bluff Co, where 3 to 4 birds were seen at Kiowa Springs between 14 and 29 June (SJD); a calling male identified near Imperial on 10 and on 13 June (MB); and a male seen near Lakeside on 11 July (RW).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Routine reports.

**Orchard Oriole:** Excellent counts included 32 registered at LO/LM on 3 June (SJD) and 26 tallied near Gallagher Canyon, Dawson Co, on 6 July (LR, RH). Nest building was observed underway at Calamus Res on 9 June (LR, RH), and fledglings were seen being fed on 8 July at BOL (LE).

**Baltimore Oriole:** A pure-looking adult male paired with an apparent introgressant female spotted at Box Butte Res, Dawes Co, on 17 June (WRS) is only about the 8th summer record for the Panhandle. One identified as a "young male" in Scotts Bluff Co on 28 July may have been the 9th; although in the absence of details, it is also likely to have been an introgressant. A hybrid was found at LO on 3 June (SJD).

**Bullock's Oriole:** The one spotted south of Gordon, Sheridan Co, on 24 June (CNK) was located at the eastern edge of the summer range.

**House Finch:** Routine reports.

**Red Crossbill:** A large flock of up to 61 frequented the Wildcat Hills NC feeders between 15 June and 7 July (SJD, KL, AK, TJ), declining to 16 on 21 July, including 2 fresh juveniles (SJD). Breeding has not yet been documented in the Wildcat Hills; juveniles seen there may have hatched locally but have all been capable of flight. A single bird spotted at Bushnell on 22 July (SJD) was probably feeling lonely; on the other hand, the 2 females found near Taylor on 21 June (B) and the 2 identified in Keya Paha Co along the Niobrara River on 26 June (MB) at least had company. Wandering in summer is not unusual in this species; breeding, when it occurs, is often completed by February-March. An interesting analysis was made in Sowbelly Canyon of crossbills there on 9 June (EB); two types were apparently present, large-billed resembling Type 6 of Sibley and a smaller-billed form closer to Type 2 of Sibley, although still one of the larger-billed types. Two distinct vocalizations were heard (EB). The subspecies traditionally accepted as breeding in Ponderosa Pines in northwestern Nebraska is *benti*, a large-billed form; some authors have suggested that *minor*, a small-billed subspecies, breeds in northwestern Nebraska also, but current understanding is that *minor* is

restricted to the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. Of course, by 9 June any Red Crossbill form could have moved a long way; there are specimens of *minor* taken in Nebraska. Stay tuned as information expands on the notoriously complex taxonomy of this (these?) species!

White-winged Crossbill: An adult male was found at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders from 15 to 23 June (SJD, TJ); this sighting denotes only the 2nd documented summer record and 5th overall. Such birds are probably post-breeding wanderers, or, in the case of this summer's adult male, a failed breeder.

Pine Siskin: Only one was reported at Wildcat Hills NC, that on 7 July (KL, AK); usually numbers are higher there in summer. A surprise was one identified in southwestern Kimball Co feeding on the ground with a flock of Lark Buntings (RW; no date).

Lesser Goldfinch: One was reported without details at Wildcat Hills NC on 15 July (B). There are now 11 summer records, 7 documented.

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.



































**NOU Spring Meeting Bird Count  
18 to 20 May, Camp Calvin Crest (Fremont)**

**COUNTIES**

Species	Dodge	Washington	Saunders	Douglas	Sarpy
Double-crested Cormorant	x				x
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x		x
Green Heron			x		x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x		x
Snow Goose	x				
Canada Goose	x	x	x		x
Wood Duck	x		x		x
Mallard	x		x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x		x	x
Northern Shoveler					x
Ring-necked Duck	x				
Sharp-shinned Hawk			x		
Cooper's Hawk			x		
Red-tailed Hawk	x		x	x	x
American Kestrel	x				
Ring-necked Pheasant	x	x			
Wild Turkey		x	x		x
American Coot					x
Semipalmated Plover					x
Killdeer	x	x	x	x	x
Lesser Yellowlegs	x			x	x
Spotted Sandpiper		x	x		
Hudsonian Godwit				x	x
Semipalmated Sandpiper	x				x
Western Sandpiper	x				
Least Sandpiper	x				

Species	Dodge	W a s h- ington	Saunders	Douglas	Sarpy
White-rumped Sandpiper	x			x	x
Baird's Sandpiper	x				x
Pectoral Sandpiper	x			x	
Dunlin				x	x
Stilt Sandpiper				x	x
Dowitcher sp.					x
Wilson's Phalarope					x
Franklin's Gull				x	
Ring-billed Gull	x				
Caspian Tern	x			x	
Forster's Tern	x				
Least Tern	x		x		
Black Tern	x				x
Rock Dove	x				
Mourning Dove	x	x	x		x
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		x			x
Great Horned Owl	x				
Barred Owl	x	x	x		
Common Nighthawk	x		x		
Chimney Swift	x	x	x		x
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	x	x		
Belted Kingfisher	x		x		x
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x	x		x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x		x
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x		x
Hairy Woodpecker	x		x		
Northern Flicker	x	x	x		x
Pileated Woodpecker					x
Eastern Wood-Pewee	x	x	x		x

Species	Dodge	W a s h- ington	Saunders	Douglas	Sarpy
Least Flycatcher	x	x	x		x
Eastern Phoebe	x	x			
Great Crested Flycatcher	x	x	x		x
Western Kingbird	x				x
Eastern Kingbird	x	x	x	x	x
Horned Lark	x		x		x
Purple Martin			x		x
Tree Swallow	x	x	x		x
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	x	x	x		
Bank Swallow		x			
Cliff Swallow	x	x	x	x	
Barn Swallow	x	x	x		
Blue Jay	x	x	x		x
American Crow	x	x	x		x
Black-capped Chickadee	x	x	x		x
Tufted Titmouse	x				x
White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x	x		
Brown Creeper					x
House Wren	x	x	x		x
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	x				
Eastern Bluebird	x	x	x		x
Gray-cheeked Thrush	x				
Swainson's Thrush	x				x
Wood Thrush	x	x	x		
American Robin	x	x	x		x
Gray Catbird	x	x	x		x
Brown Thrasher	x	x	x		x
Cedar Waxwing	x	x	x		x
Loggerhead Shrike	x				

Species	Dodge	W a s h- ington	Saunders	Douglas	Sarpy
Bell's Vireo		x			x
Yellow-throated Vireo	x	x			x
Warbling Vireo	x	x	x	x	x
Red-eyed Vireo	x	x	x	x	x
European Starling	x	x	x		x
Tennessee Warbler	x	x	x	x	x
Orange-crowned Warbler	x		x	x	
Yellow Warbler	x	x	x		
Bay-breasted Warbler				x	
Blackpoll Warbler	x	x		x	
Black-and-white Warbler	x			x	
American Redstart	x	x	x	x	x
Prothonotary Warbler	x	x			x
Ovenbird	x			x	
Common Yellowthroat	x	x	x	x	x
Scarlet Tanager	x	x	x		
Eastern Towhee	x	x	x		x
Spotted Towhee			x		
Chipping Sparrow	x	x	x		
Field Sparrow	x				
Vesper Sparrow	x				
Lark Sparrow	x				
Grasshopper Sparrow	x				x
Song Sparrow	x	x	x		
Northern Cardinal	x	x	x		x
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x	x	x		x
Indigo Bunting	x	x	x		x
Dickcissel	x	x	x	x	x
Bobolink	x				



Species	Dodge	W a s h- ington	Saunders	Douglas	Sarpy
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x	x	x
Eastern Meadowlark	x		x		
Western Meadowlark	x				x
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x	x			x
Common Grackle	x	x	x		x
Brown-headed Cowbird	x	x	x		x
Orchard Oriole	x	x	x		x
Baltimore Oriole	x	x	x		x
House Finch	x		x		x
American Goldfinch	x	x	x		x
House Sparrow	x	x	x		x
<b>Total Species Each County</b>	102	65	71	26	78

<b>Number of Species Identified:</b>	<b>124</b>
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## ANALYSIS OF LONG-EARED OWL (*ASIO OTUS*) PELLETS FROM EASTERN NEBRASKA

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### INTRODUCTION

A common way to determine the food habits of an owl is to analyze prey remains found within regurgitated pellets, called "owl pellets." We collected and analyzed owl pellets found under a Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) roost in eastern Nebraska as part of two grade school science fair projects. The results are presented here to add to the knowledge about the food habits of this species in Nebraska.

### MATERIALS and METHODS

We determined that a Long-eared Owl was using a dense stand of 12-year old Austrian pines as a roost 2 miles west of Blair, Nebraska in

Washington County by the presence of owl pellets and observing the bird in the windbreak. In April 1994, we collected 60 owl pellets from the site, and in November 1995, we collected an additional 12 whole pellets and many partial pellets.

The pellets were soaked in water to make dissection of them easier. Tweezers and dissecting needles were used to pull the pellets apart and separate the bones, teeth, and fur. A face mask was worn so we would not breathe any dust or mold from the pellets.

Each cranium was counted as one prey animal and was identified by using small mammal references and keys (Glass 1973, Hoffmeister and Mohr 1972, Jones 1964). Two lower jaws were matched with each skull and although these could not be identified to species, the number of extra lower jaws was recorded.

#### RESULTS and DISCUSSION

We found a total of 127 crania and 173 extra lower jaws in the pellets. Five species of animals, including four species of small mammals were identified and are listed in Table 1. Prairie vole (*Microtus orchrogaster*) was the most common species found with 50 (39.4% of the total) skulls, while Short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) was the least common with only five skulls (3.9%). Of particular interest was the presence of two unidentified small bird skulls in the pellets.

A comparison between the two separate collections of pellets, April 1994 and November 1995, is also shown in Table 1. Higher percentages of White-footed or Deer mice (*Peromyscus* sp.) and Harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys* sp.) skulls occurred in the pellets collected in April 1994, while Prairie voles made up a higher percentage of the crania found in pellets from the November 1995 collection. This difference may indicate seasonal variation in prey availability.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Rachel Epperson for letting us collect owl pellets on her property, Carol Mahan for help identifying the species of the skulls, and Brian Mahan for help in species identification and help in preparing the manuscript and table.

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**Table 1. Identification and occurrence of skulls found in Long-eared Owl Pellets from eastern Nebraska in April 1994 and November 1995. Numbers in parentheses are percent of total.**

Species	April 1994	November 1995	Totals
Prairie Vole <i>Microtus orchrogaster</i>	16 (32.7%)	34 (43.6%)	50 (39.4%)
White-footed or Deer Mouse <i>Peromyscus sp.</i>	21 (42.9%)	28 (35.9%)	48 (38.6%)
Harvest Mouse <i>Reithrodontomys sp.</i>	10 (20.4%)	9 (11.5%)	19 (15%)
Short-tailed Shrew <i>Blarina brevicauda</i>	2 (4.1%)	3 (3.8%)	5 (3.9%)
Unidentified small mammal	0 (0%)	2 (2.6%)	2 (1.6%)
Unidentified small bird	0 (0%)	2 (2.6%)	2 (1.6)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>127</b>

### A Bird on the Shoreline

My daughter tells me she doesn't believe in God.  
Her words pour onto the supper table like milk spilling.  
In measured silence  
she waits for what I will say.  
The evening news mumbles in the background,  
dog scratching at the door.  
I look out the window to September sky opening  
its dark blue skirt of night. I tell her

the Piping plovers will be leaving soon, if they haven't  
already.  
Asking her, do you remember the first time we saw them  
through binoculars,  
on the broad sandbar new McConaughy?  
You were eight or nine.  
How you were the first one to spot the bird, its  
pale sand color,  
You knew to look for the black tail spot,  
the whitish romp.  
How you loved the story of their "broken-wing" act,  
when Mother Piper, frightened,  
pretends she's crippled, leading intruders away from the nest.  
How all the way home we made its sound, *peep-lo, peep-lo*,  
laughing at our silliness,  
happy because we loved a new thing.

This bird, becoming more rare,  
like this woman-child, eyes  
gray-blue pools of shiny rain.

--Shelly Clark

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The Nebraska Bird Review (<http://rip.physics.unk.edu/NOU/>) is published quarterly by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc., as its official journal, and is sent to members not in arrears of dues. Annual subscription rates (on a calendar-year basis only): \$14.00 in the United States; \$18.00 for all foreign countries, payable in advance. Single copies are \$4.00 each, postpaid, in the United States, and \$5.00 elsewhere. Send orders for back issues to Mary Prichard, NOU Librarian, University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE 68588-0514.

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