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Fall Field Report, August-November 2001

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FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2001

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INTRODUCTION

This Fall Report offers something for everybody. Leading off are significant breeding reports of Ruddy Duck in the Rainwater Basin and Snowy Plover at L McConaughy. As observers bird more regularly in late July to early August we are finding that many species begin to move earlier than often realized. There were many reports of birds such as failed breeders, molt migrants, and early-fledged juveniles wandering about. Some of these prove tough identification challenges, too. Early birds were mostly water-related; Eared Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, and Osprey, but also Prairie Falcon in the east, and Rusty Blackbird too. Some birds are not supposed to show up in summer, but Red-breasted Merganser did, for the first time.

A few birds that are not really rarities showed up in places where they are indeed rare: this fall we had Broad-winged Hawks westward, Gray Partridge possibly establishing in the Panhandle, and a Clark's Nutcracker at Scotts Bluff National Monument.

In recent years, we have been collecting high counts, and these have provided fascinating data regarding peak migration timing. Record or near-record high counts for this fall include 140 White-faced Ibis; 25 Merlins; 222 Sanderlings; 271 Least Sandpipers; and 800 Long-billed Dowitchers (both at this fall's hotspot, Johnson Basin); 91 Forster's Terns; 16 Least Terns; 50+ Orange-crowned Warblers; 70+ Yellow Warblers; 45 Common Yellowthroats; and 600 House Finches.

Many birders like the challenge of finding rare birds; there were a few this fall. Leading this group was the amazing first-state-record Costa's Hummingbird found at Lexington; photos were placed on the web for all to see. Close runners-up included another hummingbird, Calliope, with the 4th and 5th state records; 3rd state record White Ibis; 2nd and 3rd Harlequin Duck; 4th Long-tailed Jaeger; and 3rd Black-throated Grey Warbler (1st for fall). The 2nd documented fall record was obtained for White-rumped Sandpiper. Several eastern warblers were spotted in the west, including Bay-breasted (only one Panhandle record, but this fall one was seen at L McConaughy); Hooded (first fall Panhandle record, but 11th overall for the Panhandle); 4th overall Panhandle Philadelphia Vireo; 3rd Chestnut-sided Warbler; 6th Magnolia Warbler; and 5th Blackburnian Warbler. Other birds of interest rarely reported were Snowy Owl, Sprague's Pipit, and Smith's Longspur.

Of undetermined status as a species, but of great interest, was the report of Ruffed Grouse spotted in the southeast. Also of great interest was

Steve Dinsmore's mist-netting work in the Panhandle with *Empidonax* flycatchers. Steve is giving us some concrete information on just which empids move through the Panhandle in fall.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co; CCM: Clear Creek Marshes, Keith/Garden Cos; Cem: Cemetery; CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; Co(s): County(ies); CPBS: Cedar Point Biological Station, Keith Co; FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos; L: Lake; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co; MRET: Missouri River Ecology Trail, Neale Woods, Washington Co; NC: Nature Center; NM: National Monument; NNE: Nebraska National Forest, Thomas Co; NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co; Res: Reservoir; RWB: Rainwater Basin, including parts of Phelps, Hamilton, York, Clay, Fillmore, and Thayer Cos; SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; UNL: University of Nebraska, Lincoln; WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Calamus Res: Loup/Garfield Cos; Cunningham L: Omaha, Douglas Co; DeSoto NWR: Washington Co; Gavin's Point Dam: Cedar Co; Johnson Basin: Phelps Co; Kissinger Basin: Fillmore Co; L Alice: Scotts Bluff Co; Niobrara Marsh: Knox Co; Oliver Res: Kimball Co; Platte River SP: Cass Co; Sininger Basin: York Co; Summit L: Burt Co; Sutherland Res: Lincoln Co; Wehrspann L: Sarpy Co; Wildcat Hills: Scotts Bluff/Banner/Morrill Cos; Wilderness Park: Lincoln, Lancaster Co.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; B: Nebraska Birdline; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; CN: Colleen Noecker, Albion; CF: Carol Falk, Nebraska City; CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; DD: Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; DM: Don Maas, Omaha; DN: Don Noecker, Albion; DP: Don Paseka, Ames; EA: Elizabeth Allen, Omaha; EB: Elliott Bedows, Omaha; EC: Elaine Crafton, Weston, MO; EL: Eric Liknes, Vermillion, SD; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; GJ: Gerry Jorgensen, Blair; GW: Gertrude Wood, York; HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell; JAS: James A. Sedgwick, Fort Collins, CO; JE: Joe

Fontaine, Fort Collins, CO; JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JJD: James J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA; JK: Jon Kozak, Kearney; JM: John Murphy, Kearney; JP: Jan Paseka, Ames; KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue; KL: Kathy Larson, Mitchell; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney; LC: Linda Coulter, Ames; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City; LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue; LR: Larry Randolph, Gibbon; LRB: Linda R. Brown, Lincoln; LW: Leona Weed, Alliance; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MU: Mark Urwiller, Kearney; PD: Phyllis Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; PW: Peter Wickham, Cedar Rapids, IA; RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; RR: Ron Rogers, Rockport, MO; RW: Rick Wright, Princeton, NJ; SF: Steve Finley, Omaha; SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Starkville, MS; SV: Steve Van Sickle, Vermillion, SD; TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln; TH: Thomas Hoffman, Omaha; TJ: Todd Jensen, Rapid City, SD; TR: Tommie Rogers, Rockport, MO; WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma; WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland; WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Pacific Loon: The only report was of a juvenile found at Oliver Res on 20 October (JF), a rather early date.

Common Loon: Summering birds are expected in western Nebraska; such birds included one noted at L Alice between 9 August and 14 September (SJD); a basic-plumaged bird spotted at LM on 20 August (SJD); and one found at Sutherland Res on 31 August (TEL). In the east, arrival seemed late: the observers' first were singles seen in Cedar and Knox Cos on 6 November (SV) and at Cunningham L on 28 November (JGJ); no others were reported.

Pied-billed Grebe: The best count reached 53 at Cunningham L on 8 September (WRS). One was still found at Verdon L, Richardson Co, at the end of the period (LF, CF).

Horned Grebe: One spotted in basic plumage at Johnson Basin on 26 August (LR, RH) provided the earliest fall date so far; 4 were discovered there by 9 September (LR, RH). Also rather early were 3 seen at Summit L on 8 September (B). The only others reported were one noted at BOL on 7 October (LE), 6 seen there on 15 November (LE), and one identified at FL on 14 October (LR, RH).

Red-necked Grebe: This species is being detected more often in recent years, almost all in fall; two were reported. An alternate adult was spotted at L Alice on 15 August and had started to molt; the bird remained until 15 September (SJD, TEL, JF). A single winter (basic) adult was also found at Johnson Basin on 26 August (LR, RH). These are record early fall dates, and represent the 17th and 18th fall records.

Eared Grebe: Rather early were 2 spotted at Johnson Basin on 26 August (LR, RH). Rather late was one discovered at an easterly location, PL, on 25 November (LE). Few were reported.

Western Grebe: Uncommon in the east, one was spotted near Valley, Douglas Co, on 26 October (MB); two were noted at BOL on 25 November (LE); and another was found at Wehrspann L between 27 and 29 November (JGJ, SF, BP, LP). The fall buildup at LM is quite a spectacle. The sudden increase in numbers after mid-July--from 150 to 5,300 by 20 August--was considered "astonishing" (SJD), as was the peak count of 29,500 reached on 19 September (SJD). This count represents the 3rd-highest fall count at LM. "Hundreds" were also spotted at Sutherland Res on 31 August (TEL).

Clark's Grebe: An excellent count totaled 18 at LM on 19 September (SJD); the record fall count is 22. The only other reports were of singles found at L Alice on 15 August (SJD) and at LO on 1 October (LR, RH).

American White Pelican: Flocks of 200 spotted at HCR on 4 August (GH, WH) and of 1,600 found at LM on 9 August (SJD) were rather early for such numbers; migration is usually just getting underway by late July. The peak at LM totaled 1,643 on 20 August (SJD), 2nd-best ever for fall, after the 2,100 tallied there in 1998.

Double-crested Cormorant: Unexpected in the southeast was a breeding-plumaged adult seen at BOL on 5 August (WRS, TR, RR); this bird must have been a failed breeder, as no breeding colonies are known in this part of the state. The four birds found at BOL on 11 August (LE) were also rather early; migrants are first noted from mid-August on. As many as 186 were discovered at L Alice by 24 August (SJD), and the best count totaled 800 at HCR on 7 October (GH, WH). One was still found at Niobrara Marsh on 23 November (MB); and 3 remained at HCR on 30 November (GH, WH).

Anhinga: A report of one spotted at Walnut Creek L, Sarpy Co, on 30 August (no details) could not be confirmed.

American Bittern: Singles were seen in the east RWB on 11 August and again on 3 September (JGJ), where breeding probably occurs. Another was reported in Brown Co on 29 September (fide NOU).

Least Bittern: None was reported.

Great Blue Heron: A juvenile with a downy neck was seen at Burchard L, Pawnee Co, on 18 August (WRS). The best count totaled 160 at HCR on 20 September (SJD), a record fall count.

Great Egret: Less common westward, 3 were identified at LM on 20 August (SJD), and 2 to 3 were seen there between 14 and 19 September (SJD, JF); one was noted as far west as Kimball Co on 1 August (RW), where the species is only casual in late summer and fall. Numbers were low in the east RWB (JGJ), but an excellent count of 122 was made at HCR on 20 September (SJD). Two birds were found rather late: the one seen at Niobrara Marsh on 28 October (MB) was the 2nd-latest ever, and

the other, spotted at HCR on 23 October (GH, WH), was the 4th-latest ever.

Snowy Egret: Also rare westward, one was spotted at LM between 14 and 19 September (SJD, JF). HCR is a regular place for late summer birds to linger; 1 to 9 were found there through 7 October (GH, WH, SJD), with the peak of 9 reached on 20 September (SJD). Five were found in the east RWB on 11 August (JGJ), and 4 were spotted at Kissinger Basin on 31 August (JGJ). The only other reports were of one seen at FL on 11 August (JK, JM) and a flyover reported in Phelps Co on 12 August (LR, RH).

Little Blue Heron: An excellent showing was the 7 immatures counted at FL on 12 August (LR, RH). An immature was noted at Kissinger Basin on 2 September (LR, RH). An immature was spotted at FF on 9 September (BP, LP), and another immature that was seen at BOL on 7 October (LE; details) represents the 3rd-latest ever for the species.

Cattle Egret: The best counts were rather low: 15 in Phelps Co on 12 August (LR, RH) and 13 in the east RWB on 11 August (JGJ). Only about 45 were reported in all. Rather westerly were 5 identified in the LO/LM area on 15 September (SJD, JF).

Green Heron: Routine reports.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Routine reports.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: In recent years, most reports have come from southcentral Nebraska. This fall, immatures were discovered at Harvard Marsh on 11 August (JGJ), and 1 to 2 juveniles were seen at Johnson Basin on 19 August (MU photo, LR, RH).

White Ibis: A first fall-plumaged bird was found at FL on 9 August (Jeff Drahota, fide LB) but was not seen there subsequently. It was probably the same bird spotted at Johnson Basin between 12 and 19 August (JK, JM, MU photo, LR, RH). This sighting represents only the 5th record for the state, and the 3rd documented.

White-faced Ibis: This species was present in outstanding numbers this fall, about 140 in all. The best count totaled 82 at Kissinger Basin on 31 August (JGJ), a record fall count. Reports after 1 September were usually of "*Plegadis ibis* sp."; but such birds are included here, as there are only a handful of records of Glossy Ibis. After August, separation of White-faced from Glossy is very difficult in the field. None was reported east of the RWB.

Turkey Vulture: Peak counts usually occur in early September, but surprising was the "several hundred" noted over HCR on 17 August (Mark Humpert, Brooke Levy, fide LB); other high counts included 65 recorded at both Summit L on 25 August (JGJ) and at Platte River SP on 9 September (CNK). The latter count was from an observation tower and apparently did not require the assistance of a Red-tailed Hawk spotter, as previously used by the observer at FF.

Greater White-fronted Goose: The first migrants were 50 seen at Johnson Basin on 7 October (LR, RH) and a single noted at HCR the same

day (GH, WH). The best count totaled 115 near Gibbon on 21 October (LR, RH); this number is a good fall count, as large fall concentrations are rare.

Snow Goose: The usual scattered summering birds were noted, most as expected in the RWB, but a white morph which remained at LM/LO through 19 September was unusual (SJD). The first big influx was 3,000 tallied in Clay Co on 28 October (JGJ), and the best count reached 200,000 at DeSoto NWR on 30 November (DM).

Ross's Goose: Routine reports.

Canada Goose: Fall concentrations can appear early, but they are not necessarily early migrants; the 12 which appeared at HCR on 8 August, increasing to 42 on 10 August (GH, WH), were probably area birds flocking (assuming none was small races). An indication of migrants arriving is the presence of small races; "hundreds" had arrived in Cherry Co by 20 October (RG). Summering birds in the east RWB were all "bigs"; 19 were counted on 11 August (JGJ), but a small bird, identified as a *hutchinsii* ("Richardson's Goose"), summered at LM and remained at least through 19 September (SJD, JJD). There are no other summer records of small races.

Trumpeter Swan: Routine reports.

Wood Duck: Two were still found at Verdon L, Richardson Co, on 30 November (LF, CF).

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: Routine reports.

American Black Duck: None was reported; usually a few are found in November at DeSoto NWR, but few Mallards had arrived by the end of the period (See the following description.).

Mallard: The only concentration was 2,000 to 3,000 reported at DeSoto NWR on 30 November (DM); fall numbers are usually much larger, but the birds arrive only when weather conditions dictate, not the case through November.

Blue-winged Teal: Early movement, possibly area birds flocking, was evident at Alma on 4 August, when 18 arrived on the East SL, the first seen since June (GH, WH). The best counts were mediocre: 458 at LO on 19 September (SJD) and 300 at Tekamah SL on 25 August (JGJ).

Cinnamon Teal: None was reported, possibly because males molt into eclipse in early August and are inconspicuous prior to leaving in August to September.

Northern Shoveler: The best count reached 1,500 at North Platte SL on 9 November (JGJ). A good count for the date was the 200 totaled at DeSoto NWR on 30 November (DM).

Northern Pintail: Concentrations are far smaller in fall than in spring; the best counts of 350 were both made at single east RWB locations, one with no hunting allowed, on 18 September and again on 20 October (JGJ). The 240 tallied at Kissinger Basin on 3 September (JGJ) represents a good count for the rather early date.

Green-winged Teal: A good count for the beginning of migration was the 118 recorded at Oliver Res on 9 August (SJD). The best count was 2,023 made at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF).

Canvasback: The 1 to 2 birds present through July at LO remained at least until 19 September (SJD); this sighting is only the 10th summer record away from the breeding range. In common with other diving ducks, few were reported, as fine weather conditions this fall delayed the arrival of many duck species.

Redhead: The two birds spotted at Alma East SL between 4 and 18 August (GH, WH) and one noted at Johnson Basin on 13 August (MU) were probably early fall migrants; the four seen at Oliver Res on 15 August were considered migrants by the observer (SJD). Few were reported.

Ring-necked Duck: A female found at L Alice on 24 August (SJD) was probably an early fall migrant; this species is only casual in summer. No large concentrations were reported.

Greater Scaup: None was reported; early dates occur in late October.

Lesser Scaup: Rare in summer, the one identified at Johnson Basin on 13 August (MU) was probably an early migrant. The best count totaled only 100, at BOL on 1 November (LE).

Harlequin Duck: There were exciting developments with this species: an adult male in alternate plumage was seen at Willow Creek L, Pierce Co, on 21 November by a Nebraska Game and Parks biologist and avid duck hunter (Scott Wessel, fide EB, MB). This sighting would have been the 2nd documented record except that a Harlequin Duck hanging on the wall of Scott Wessel's office in Pierce turns out to be the bird (also an alternate male) which was collected at Calamus Res on 6 November 1992 and for which little information had previously been available (see "Birds of Nebraska"). Thus there are now 3 documented Nebraska records, along with 4 undocumented reports.

Surf Scoter: The only report was of a female/immature seen at the Niobrara SL on 6 November (MB).

White-winged Scoter: None was reported. Arrival dates occur in late October.

Black Scoter: The only report was of one located at LO on 9 November, "about the only bird there" (JGJ), a rather different situation from the last two years.

Bufflehead: The best count among the few reported was the 145 tallied at Wehrspann L on 29 November (BP, LP).

Common Goldeneye: The first to arrive were noted in Cedar and Knox Cos on 29 November (SV) as well as 7 spotted at Wehrspann L the same day (BP, LP). Five were found at Alma South SL on 30 November (GH, WH); no others were reported.

Hooded Merganser: This species is rare in the Panhandle in summer; a single was identified at L Alice on 24 August (SJD). Also westerly and likely non-breeders or fall dispersers were the 4 seen at LO on 20 August

(SJD, JJD) and the one found at LM on 15 September (SJD). The best count reached 35 at Wehrspann L on 29 November (BP, LP).

Common Merganser: The usual buildup of presumed molt migrants was noted at L Alice: up to 82 were found there between 9 and 24 August (SJD). The first migrants were noted in Grant Co on 17 October (RG), a rather early date, and at Cunningham L, where 12 were found on 28 November (JGJ). By 30 November, at least 3,000 had arrived at HCR (GH, WH).

Red-breasted Merganser: A female located at LO between 9 and 20 August (SJD) was presumably the same bird present in mid-summer. This sighting marks the first summer record for the state. Few were reported elsewhere: 2 males in basic plumage were seen at LO on 1 October (LR, RH), and 6 were found at BOL on 18 November (JGJ).

Ruddy Duck: Although not often noted breeding in the east RWB, a second brood for the season was seen at Sinninger Basin on 11 August (JGJ). A single located at Alma East SL on 18 August (GH, WH) may have been either an early migrant or failed breeder. The best count was only 55, tallied at HCR on 7 November (GH, WH).

Osprey: Two birds, apparently not cohabitating, located in the LM area on 9 August (SJD) were the earliest ever for fall; one wonders if Ospreys will eventually nest in the area. Almost as early was one spotted near Fremont on 16 August (DP, JP). The best count totaled 8 at LM on 19 September (SJD). The latest was one seen in Morrill Co on 15 November (PD, DD); the latest fall dates occur between 18 and 21 November.

Mississippi Kite: At least 4 adults were seen at the expected locations in Ogallala between 20 and 31 August (SJD, JJD, BP, LP). In recent falls, usually in September, sightings of this species have increased; presumably they represent fall dispersers returning southward. Most are immatures, but an adult was identified at NNF on 29 September (CNK), a rather late date.

Bald Eagle: Sightings of both adults and immatures around the state in summer are becoming fairly routine as this species nests in more locations and ranges widely for food. Although birds were found some distance from known breeding sites, there are still few such reports. Immatures (same bird?) were located at LM on 9 and on 20 August (SJD, JJD). Probably early migrants, however, were the 2 immatures seen from the Platte River SP observation tower on 9 September (CNK). No large numbers occurred before the end of the period; the best count reached 12 at DeSoto NWR on 30 November (DM). Lucy Koenig (fide AK) provided some interesting nesting phenology data on the birds nesting at L Alice. The adults were seen working on a new nest on 5 February as the old one had fallen out of the tree; incubation was underway by 19 February, and young were being fed on 30 March. The first chick was fledged between 7 and 11 June; and all 3 fledglings were spotted flying by 22 June. This site has had good success over the last 10 years or so.

Northern Harrier: An immature seen in York Co on 19 August (JGJ) was suggestive of local breeding.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Routine reports.

Cooper's Hawk: A good count away from a hawkwatch was the 3 found in the east RWB on 18 September (JGJ).

Northern Goshawk: The only report was of one located along the Platte River near Ogallala on 12 October (GJ).

Red-shouldered Hawk: The only report was of one spotted at the regular location, FF, on 11 October (B).

Broad-winged Hawk: About 5 birds were reported, a pretty meager showing, all in the period from 8 to 30 September. 3 of the 5, however, were identified at surprising westerly locations. An adult was found at LO on 19 September (SJD); and 2 adults, including one dark morph, were spotted at NNF on 29 September (CNK, mob.).

Swainson's Hawk: An excellent count of migrants was the 1000+ that flew over Seward in 4 large kettles of 200 to 300 birds each over a 20-minute period on 2 October; only a single non-Swainson's Hawk was noted, a Red-tail (JG). Other groups of several hundred were reported as "probably Swainson's" over Goehner and Alvo on 1 October (fide KP).

Red-tailed Hawk: Of the 32 birds counted in Phelps Co on 21 October, 3 were dark forms (LR, RH); the first dark forms usually appear in early October, and provide a good indicator of the start of fall movement. A single *harlani* was spotted in Sarpy Co on 17 November (CNK).

Ferruginous Hawk: None was reported east of either Orleans, where an adult was seen on 4 November (GH, WH) or Buffalo Co, where a dark morph bird was identified on 11 November (MU). Something of an eastward drift occurs in late fall.

Rough-legged Hawk: The two birds identified as this species were found at a prairie-dog "town" west of Kearney on 7 September (no details); this date is a rather early for a fall in which no significant influx was noted. No others were reported until 21 October, a single found at Grand Island (RG); and only about 15 birds were reported in all.

Golden Eagle: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: The 30+ totaled in Scotts Bluff Co on 1 September (KL) represents a good count.

Merlin: This species continues to occur in good numbers; about 25 were reported for the period, of both expected subspecies. *Columbarius*, the northerly breeder and long-distance migrant, is darker than the prairie breeder *richardsonii*, a short-distance migrant and probably the more numerous of the two in Nebraska. A single *columbarius* was seen on 18 September in the east RWB (JGJ); 1 to 2 birds were identified on 4 occasions in Knox Co between 16 September and 10 November (MB); and a "very dark" bird was found near Atlanta on 24 November (LR, RH). Reports of *richardsonii* included an immature found at Johnson Basin on 28 October (LR, RH); a female located in Lancaster Co on 1 November (LE); and a single spotted in Creighton on 28 November (MB). Others

were not identified to subspecies. Fall migrants may appear in mid-August, although the 2 located in Dixon Co on 5 August (JJ) were a bit earlier than usual. The one photographed at Johnson Basin on 13 August (MU) had arrived at about the expected time for the species.

Prairie Falcon: The one found near Harvard on 20 October was the observer's earliest record for the east RWB region (JGJ). Easterly reports were surprisingly numerous and included one spotted in Knox Co on 23 September (MB), the 3rd-earliest ever in the east (There is a specimen for 14 August.); one identified in Douglas Co on 26 October (MB); and one found at Gavin's Point Dam on 8 November (B).

Peregrine Falcon: About 7 were reported in the period between 13 August and 7 October, about normal for this species.

Gray Partridge: There appear to be a few small populations established in central and southern Sioux Co (fide HKH); 12 were discovered in a rancher's yard there on 8 August (Vonnie Hatch, fide HKH). There may be two sources for these birds: an establishing population along the North Platte close to Nebraska in Wyoming and releases a few years ago in central and southern Sioux Co. In the usual northeast Nebraska range, one was seen in Knox Co on 29 November (SV). No others were reported.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Ruffed Grouse: An attempt was made to introduce this species at ICSP in 1968, but it was unsuccessful. More recently, releases were made in Atchison Co, Missouri, across the Missouri River from Nemaha Co, Nebraska, and a few birds may be persisting from this release (fide Scott Taylor). Of great interest, therefore, was a report with good details from a knowledgeable observer of 2 birds flushed in southern Nemaha Co on 12 August. The observer is an experienced turkey hunter but has not heard grouse drumming in the area. Of course, these birds may have been released in the area, although there is no information to confirm or disprove this possibility.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: A good sign of productivity was the discovery of 5 hens--each with 5 to 7 half-grown chick--between mile markers 158 and 160 on highway 71 north of Crawford on 19 August (KL).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Another encouraging sign for the species at SCP was the 8 birds found there on 25 October (MB). This large isolated prairie retains a small breeding population. The one bird seen on 2 November just south of Creighton in Antelope Co was considered to be at an unusual location (MB); this location sits at the eastern edge of the range north of the Platte River.

Wild Turkey: The largest flock seen to date by the observers in the area was the 55 counted near Republican City on 30 November (GH, WH).

Northern Bobwhite: The 14 almost half-grown chicks seen at SCP on 6 August (KP) were apparently fledged (no adults present).

Virginia Rail: None was reported.

Sora: Routine reports.

American Coot: Two broods of 1 to 2 week-old young noted at Kiowa Springs on 15 August were considered "very late" (SJD). Migrants had appeared at BOL by 13 October, when 385 were counted (LE).

Sandhill Crane: The one spotted at Harvard Marsh on 3 September (MB) may have been the bird heard there during July (see Summer Report). The best count was 1000 over Scotts Bluff Co on 5 October (AK); no other large groups were reported. No migrants were reported prior to 5 October; a flock flew at a high altitude over Bassett that day also (CH). The three birds seen on a mudflat near Alma on 17 October "seemed out of place" (GH, WH). Easterly were 3 birds identified at Wolf L, Saunders Co, on 4 November (TH).

Whooping Crane: None was reported.

Shorebirds: Steve Dinsmore observed that numbers of shorebirds at LM were "mysteriously lower" than a year ago despite abundant habitat; the lake level (ft above sea level) dropped rapidly starting in early July to 3,235 on 1 August, reaching a low of 3,228 in mid-September, rising slowly thereafter.

Black-bellied Plover: A good count was the 16 tallied at LM on 20 August (SJD, JJD).

American Golden-Plover: Most adults migrate in fall along the Atlantic Coast, and thus interior birds tend to be juveniles, appearing in September and October; this pattern held true this fall, with all reports occurring between 15 September and 28 October. The best count was the 62 reported in the east RWB on 28 October (JGJ), a rather late appearance for a large number. Rare westward, 6 were spotted at LM 1 on 15 September (SJD, JF); a single was also noted there on 19 September (SJD).

Snowy Plover: Exciting was the discovery at LM on 10 August of a female with 3 young about 3 weeks old; this identification took place at the spot where a female had been seen in late July (SJD). This breeding record is only the 3rd for the state and 2nd for LM; the other sighting occurred on the Missouri River in northeastern Nebraska.

Semipalmated Plover: The 16 birds reported at LM between 15 and 19 September was an excellent count (SJD, JF); and the single found at Johnson Basin on 14 October (LR, RH) was rather late.

Piping Plover: Most depart rather early in fall; the 7 spotted at LM on 9 August was "way down from 2 weeks ago" (SJD), when 62 were counted on 21 July (see Summer Report). However, 13 were located at LM on 20 August (SJD, JJD); and 2 juveniles lingered there until 19 September (SJD), a rather late date. A good count was the 15 birds in a flock near Ponca SP on 19 August (BFH), presumably from the population breeding in the area.

Killdeer: An excellent count of presumed flocking postbreeders was the 161 totaled at LM on 10 August (SJD). Also an excellent count was the 250 found at Johnson Basin on 7 October (LR, RH); these likely were

true migrants. The one located at Wehrspann L on 27 November (JGJ) and 5 found at PL on 25 November (LE) were a bit tardy.

American Avocet: The 184 tallied in southwestern Sheridan Co on 14 September (SJD) was an excellent count.

Greater Yellowlegs: The singles found at Swanson Res, Hitchcock Co, on 6 November (LR, RH) and at Sinninger Basin on 9 November (JGJ) were tardy.

Lesser Yellowlegs: An excellent count reached 305 at LM on 19 September (SJD).

Solitary Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Willet: There were only 3 reports; willets are reported far less often in fall than in spring. Singles were seen at LM on 20 August (SJD, JJD), at PL on 2 September (LE), and in Cherry Co on 29 September (fide NOU), the latter a rather late date.

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Upland Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Long-billed Curlew: Only the 5th September report ever was a juvenile spotted at LM between 15 and 19 Sep (SJD, JF); most birds leave by mid-August.

Marbled Godwit: The one identified at Johnson Basin on 20 September (SJD) remained until 7 October (LR, RH), a rather late date. This sighting represents also only the 16th fall record for the species east of the Panhandle. A good fall count was the 16 tallied at LM on 9 August (SJD).

Ruddy Turnstone: Only casual in fall, a juvenile was spotted at HCR on 20 September (SJD), the 13th fall record for Nebraska. No others were reported.

Red Knot: There were two reports of this casual migrant, the 15th and 16th documented fall records. A molting adult was located at LM on 20 August (SJD, JF); and 2 juveniles were spotted there between 15 and 19 September (SJD, JF). Most recent records come from LM.

Sanderling: The 222 totaled at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF) marks a record fall count. The one seen at Sinninger Basin on 22 September was the observer's first fall record for the east RWB (JGJ).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: The best count was a moderate 65 tallied at Johnson Basin on 19 August (LR, RH). The one bird that remained there until 14 October (LR, RH) provided a new late (documented) fall date. Also rather late were 4 seen at PL on 7 October (LE). Confusion with Western Sandpiper is possible by mid-October, even in juvenal plumage, but especially after prebasic molt.

Western Sandpiper: None was reported east of Phelps Co, although the species is said to be a statewide migrant ("Birds of Nebraska"). Birds found at LM were carefully aged: 1 to 2 adults were found there between 9 and 15 August, with one of the 9 August birds in molt; and 1 to 4 juveniles were identified there between 15 August and 19 September (SJD, JF). The earliest date for a juvenile reported in Nebraska is 13

August. Other reports were of unaged birds: 5 were seen at FL on 12 August (LR, RH); Johnson Basin had a single on 24 August (B) and 8 on 7 October (LR, RH); and Oliver Res had one on 24 August (SJD) and 3 on 1 September (TEL), all within the usual migration period.

Least Sandpiper: A record fall count was the 271 totaled at Johnson Basin on 20 September (SJD); and another excellent count was 203 at LM on 19 September (SJD). The only aged bird report was of a juvenile located near Memphis on 18 August (WRS), about the time when juveniles first appear.

White-rumped Sandpiper: There were 2 reports, one without details. Good details were provided for 5 juveniles seen at L North, Platte Co, on 9 September (DP, JP). This species is extremely rare west of the Mississippi in fall, with few documented records. I am aware of only one specimen, taken at Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas, on 29 September 1957, #B590 in the Emporia State University, Kansas, collection, and one photo, of an adult at St Louis, Missouri, in early September a few years ago. At best this species is casual in fall, with only one prior documented record for Nebraska, a sight record of an adult identified at Harvard Marsh on 20 July 2001.

Baird's Sandpiper: There are at least 3 counts of over 4,000 at LM on single fall dates, and this year the 3,976 counted there on 9 August (SJD) came close. These very high counts all occur in the period from 27 July to 22 August, suggestive of adults rather than juveniles (although the 22 August count of 4,109 may have included juveniles, which arrive mid to late August). Numbers in the east were by contrast very low, with the best count only 101 tallied in the east RWB on 28 October (JGJ); they were presumably juveniles. This pattern of high numbers of adults staging at LM early in migration and smaller numbers of juveniles following statewide has occurred in the past few years of accurate shorebird counts at LM (SJD) and in the east RWB (JGJ).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The best counts reached 245 in the east RWB on 11 August (JGJ) and 235 at LM on 19 September (SJD).

Dunlin: A late fall migrant, as adults delay migration until all birds have molted, the only reports were of 2 seen in the east RWB on 5 October (JGJ); one spotted at HCR on 22 October (GH, WH); and one noted in the east RWB on 28 October (JGJ). Most migrants pass through in the second half of October.

Stilt Sandpiper: The second- and third-best counts ever for fall totaled 740 at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF) and 632 (including 570 at Sinninger Basin alone) in the east RWB on 11 Aug (JGJ). Rather late were a single spotted in the east RWB on 28 October (JGJ) and as many as 45 located at Johnson Basin the same day (LR, RH).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Rare westward, 2 were found at LM, an adult seen on 9 August (SJD) and a juvenile identified there on 15 September (SJD, JF). The one seen in Cherry Co on 29 September (fide

NOU; no details) was rather late and westerly. Only 14 others were reported, all from the east RWB eastward.

Short-billed Dowitcher: All reports were of juveniles, the easiest age class to identify in fall; most Nebraska fall records are indeed of juveniles. A total of only 8 birds was reported, in the period from 15 August to 20 September (JGJ, SJD; details). These dates signify new early and late dates for documented juveniles. Among the 8 reported, the single seen at LM 19 September (SJD, details) was the first for the west.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Numbers were "very low" this fall at LM (SJD), but they must have gone to Johnson Basin, where a near-record 800 were found on 14 October (LR, RH). The next best count was 95+ located at Johnson Basin on both 7 and 28 October (LR, RH).

Common Snipe: The singles seen in the east RWB on 17 August (JGJ) and at Johnson Basin on 19 August (MU photo, LR, RH) were probably early migrants, although there had been a sighting or two in the east RWB during July (see Summer Report). Breeding could occur at either location. The best count was only 11, made at FL on 26 August (LR, RH).

American Woodcock: The only report was of one spotted near Creighton on 9 September (MB). Few are reported in fall, probably because observers do not look for them. Fall migrants occur in weedy fields and even cornfields.

Wilson's Phalarope: This species flocks up and begins moving early in fall; 352 were counted at Scotts Bluff SL as early as 9 August (SJD).

Red-necked Phalarope: An excellent fall count was the 21 found in southwestern Sheridan Co on 14 September (SJD, JF).

Pomarine Jaeger: A juvenile was seen chasing Franklin's Gulls below Gavin's Point Dam on 21 October (MB) and another, possibly the same bird, flew over Santee into Knox Co the same day, 21 October (MB, PW). Another was seen below Gavin's Point Dam a few days later (David Stage fide MB). These sightings may all have been of the same bird; if so, it was the 11th documented record for the species, all in fall.

Parasitic Jaeger: The only report involved 2 birds found at LM on 15 September: a light morph subadult and an intermediate morph juvenile (SJD, JF), marking only the 4th and 5th documented records for this species, also all in fall.

Long-tailed Jaeger: Completing the jaeger sweep was a light morph adult identified at LM on 19 September (SJD). This sighting signifies the 4th documented record, all occurring in the period between 1 September and 3 October; this sighting is also the first of an adult.

Jaeger, sp.: A jaeger located at LM on 19 Sep was left unidentified to species, but it may have been a very dark juvenile Parasitic Jaeger (SJD). It appears from reports in recent years that jaegers are regular fall migrants, especially at large bodies of water like LM that attract gulls and terns.

Franklin's Gull: Fall aggregations at large reservoirs can be mind boggling, such as the 23,300 located at HCR on 20 September (SJD), and

the 13,740 found at LM on 19 September (SJD). The fall record high count is 85,000! One bird seen at LO on 20 August was nearly all white (SJD, JJD).

Bonaparte's Gull: One seen with Ring-billed Gulls on 18 August at Niobrara (MB) was one of only 6 records for July and August. A basic adult located at HCR on 20 September was also rather early (SJD); there are fewer than 20 reports even for September. Only about 10 to 15 were reported for the period, a very poor total for this species.

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Reports away from LM included an adult found at HCR on 20 September (SJD), where the species is only casual, and 2 adults spotted at L Minatare on 24 August (SJD). Numbers at LM had climbed to 90 by 19 September (SJD); peak fall counts have been in the 100 to 150 range.

Herring Gull: There are fewer than 25 documented records prior to mid-September, none of adults; this fall, 3 first alternate birds were present on 9 August and a 3rd alternate bird joined them the next day (SJD). Eight birds were present on 20 August (SJD, JJD). A first alternate bird discovered at L Minatare on 15 August was joined by a juvenile on 24 August (SJD). One bird spotted at L Alice on 22 September (AK) was unaged, but the basic adult seen at LO 1 October (LR, RH) was early for an adult. The earliest documented fall record of an adult is 29 September. Only about 25 birds were reported prior to the end of the period.

Thayer's Gull: The only report was of a "probable first winter" bird identified at Cunningham L on 27 November; the observer only managed a brief look (JGJ). In recent years, this species has been reported a few times each year by 30 November.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: A fourth alternate bird was found at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF; details); this sighting represents the 14th fall record for the state. Most fall records are of immatures, in contrast to spring, where most reports are of adults.

Great Black-backed Gull: An adult was spotted at LM between 15 and 28 September (SJD photos, JF, JGJ), only the 3rd fall record and about the 15th overall for the state.

Sabine's Gull: About 17 were reported statewide, all juveniles in the short period from 14 to 22 September on major reservoirs: 1 to 2 at Gavin's Point Dam between 14 and 16 September (SV, EL); 5 to 8 at LM between 15 and 19 September (SJD, JF); one at HCR on 20 September (SJD; amongst 15,000 Franklin's Gulls!); and one at BOL on 22 September (LE). The 8 birds seen at LM on 15 September (SJD) mark the 2nd highest fall count ever.

Caspian Tern: The only reports were of singles found in Cedar Co on 1 August (SV); at LM on 20 August (SJD, JJD); at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD); and 3 spotted at LM on 19 September (SJD).

Common Tern: A single adult located at LM on 9 August (SJD) was a little early. An excellent count was the 11 tallied at L Minatare on 14 September, including 2 molting adults and 9 juveniles (SJD, JF). Most fall reports involve molting adults and juveniles.

Forster's Tern: The 91 totaled at LM 14 Sep (SJD, JF) represents a record fall count. At Wagontrain L, Lancaster Co, a molting adult was seen feeding a juvenile a small fish on 18 August, indicating that migration begins while juveniles are still dependent (WRS).

Least Tern: The only reports were from LM, where 2 adults and 2 juveniles were found on 10 August--and an adult was spotted feeding a juvenile on 20 August (SJD, JJD)--and from Niobrara, where 16 were counted on 18 August (MB), the best ever fall count.

Black Tern: The bird spotted in Cedar Co on 30 September (SV) was rather late. The best count was a moderate 81 made at LO on 9 August (SJD).

Rock Dove: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Nesting was noted at Minden, where a pair built on an antenna; no date was provided (Larry Lehman, fide CN, DN), although birds had been reported in Minden in April and June this year. This species is now widespread in towns in the southwestern half of the state; an excellent count was the 15 made in a Lexington yard on 25 November (MB). Southeasterly reports included the first Seward Co record, one at Seward on 23 September (JG), and one in Omaha (Ed Higgins, fide EA), where there have been surprisingly few reports. The one seen on the west edge of Creighton on 2 Oct and on 25 November (MB) provided the first records for Knox Co. There are few records as yet from the northeast.

Mourning Dove: Somewhat late were 2 feathered one-third-grown young found in a nest at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 8 September (WRS); and definitely taking a chance were the adults discovered with 2 eggs in a nest at CLNWR on 2 September. (JGJ).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: The 8 tallied in southeastern Nebraska on 18 August (WRS) was a good count; peak migration occurs at about this time. A bit late was the one seen at Ponca SP on 3 October (BFH).

Barn Owl: At the traditional CCM location, 1 to 2 were noted between 10 and 20 August (SJD, JJD); and another was seen at CLNWR on 14 September (SJD, JF). This species is rarely reported away from western Nebraska.

Eastern Screech-Owl: A hatching-year bird banded at Bellevue on 30 October was of a western race (RG), presumably the pale *swenki*, which occupies the northwestern part of the range of this species, including Nebraska.

Great Horned Owl: A fledged, essentially full-feathered juvenile making begging calls was spotted accompanied by an adult at Burchard L, Pawnee Co, on 18 August (WRS).

Snowy Owl: Possibly precursors of an influx this winter, two were reported before the end of the period. The one picked up dead near Gothenburg on 16 November was very thin (Barb Tebble fide CH); and another was found 4 miles north of Jackson on 21 November (fide KP). A "large white raptor" briefly seen near Bassett on 9 November may have been a Snowy Owl (CH).

Burrowing Owl: Routine reports.

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: None was reported.

Short-eared Owl: The only report was of one located at WSR on 25 August (SJD); breeding probably occurs in the area.

Common Nighthawk: Rather late was the one spotted over Nebraska City on 11 October (LF, CF). The best counts reached 78+ west of Scottsbluff on 26 August (KL); 50 at Gering Cem on 4 August (PD, DD); and "dozens and dozens" (48+?) at Papillion on 24 August (EC).

Common Poorwill: The one seen at Wildcat Hills on 5 October was sitting on the road and flew only when it was touched (Bob deLara fide KL); this record is rather late, but there are a few others as late as late October.

Chuck-will's-widow: The only report was of one identified calling at Wolf L, Saunders Co, on 4 August (TH). The latest Nebraska dates are 15 and 18 Aug, the latter also from Wolf L.

Whip-poor-will: None was reported. Departure is completed by early September.

Chimney Swift: Somewhat late for central Nebraska were the 12 spotted over Alma on 12 October (GH, WH).

White-throated Swift: Routine reports.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Towards the western edge of the Nebraska range, 1 to 3 migrants were located at an Alma feeder between 15 August and 8 September (GH, WH). In a southwestern Dixon Co yard, 5 per day, 4 males and a female, were present from 14 to 19 August (JJ); in the same yard, one chased a Barn Swallow and a Chipping Sparrow, but left the observer alone (JJ). Also in southwestern Dixon Co, the last reported was a female seen on 17 September (JJ).

Costa's Hummingbird: An exciting first state record was an apparent immature male at the Lexington feeder of Kathy Neiderdeppe from 11 to 15 November (LR, RH, JK, MU, m.ob.) The bird had apparently been visiting the feeder for about 5 weeks, putting its arrival at about 7 October; the bird's presence was reported when its lateness aroused the curiosity of the feeder owner, and the species was correctly identified as a Costa's by LR and RH. The bird was photographed by MU, who was familiar with its calls from experience in Los Angeles. The calls were described as a "zing" and a high-pitched "grinding" sound usually given in 5 notes. Also noted was the whitish supercilium and the tips of the primaries that reached to the end of the tail (LR, RH). There are 2 records for Kansas, summer 1990 in Wallace Co and 5 November 1993

near Lawrence (fide Lloyd Moore); and an adult male was spotted at Crow Valley Campground, Colorado, about 40 miles from Kimball Co, Nebraska, from 17 to 18 May 2001, the only Colorado record (SJD, JF).

Calliope Hummingbird: In what turned out to be an amazing fall for hummingbirds, there were two reports: one was seen at WSR from 9 to 10 August, described as "very small" and with a "very short beak"; it drank from a garden hose while the observer watered her garden (HKH). The other was an immature male found at Bushnell on 9 August (SJD; details). These signify the 4th and 5th fall records; the 3rd was in July of this summer (see Summer Report). The 5 fall records to date all occur in the period between 30 July and 10 August. There were also a number of records of this species in western Kansas this fall.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: A feeder in Mitchell hosted 1 to 2 on 8 August (KL), while unexpected was a male found at CPBS on 20 August (SJD, JJD; details). This sighting represents about the 8th fall record east of the Panhandle.

Rufous Hummingbird: The most common of the western hummers in Nebraska, this species appeared in numbers this fall. An amazing 9+ were counted in Kimball Co on 9 August (SJD). Including those seen in late July (Summer Report), 25 to 30 were reported in the period from 7 July (a very early male) through 25 August, the latter appearing in Mitchell (KL). Farther east, a single was spotted at LM on 10 August (SJD).

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: An immature observed in a Dixon Co yard on 30 September until October was a little late (JJ). Two adults and 3 juveniles were seen at SCP on 20 August (KP). Rare in the southern Panhandle, one was spotted in southwestern Kimball Co on 14 September (SJD, JF).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: One was located rather far west at CCM on 19 September (SJD); there are very few records west of Keith Co. The resident bird (birds?) at McGrew is seen "every 2 weeks or so" (fide AK).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: There were only 5 reports: the immature noted at Bellevue on 20 September (BP, LP) was rather early. Other reports included singles found at FF on 29 September (BP, LP) and at Nebraska City on 30 September (LE); in addition, two were spotted at Hillcrest Cem, Omaha, on 6 October (B), and one was identified at ADF on 18 and 19 November (LF, CF).

Red-naped Sapsucker: There were 3 reports. Singles were found at WSR on 19 and 29 September (HKH), possibly the same bird; and two were spotted at Oliver Res on 26 September (JAS). Although neither of the preceding reports was accompanied by details, 9 of the 10 fall reports--only 5 of which are documented--fall in the period between 13 September and 4 October.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Although distributed statewide, numbers are low in the southern Panhandle; the single found at Oliver Res on 24 August was considered a "very rare" sighting by the observer (SJD).

Northern Flicker: Summering flickers in the western Panhandle tend to be "salmon-shafted", thus a red-shafted bird spotted at Oliver Res on 1 September (TEL) was likely an early migrant. An excellent count of 43 made in Scotts Bluff and Morrill Cos on 3 September consisted of mostly yellow-shafted birds (KL); these were also likely early migrants, as summering birds in this part of the Panhandle also tend not to be particularly yellow-shafted. The first red-shafted flicker reached Phelps Co on 21 October (LR, RH).

Pileated Woodpecker: Reports away from FF are suggestive of fall wandering, possibly as the population in the lower Missouri Valley increases. One was seen at Hummel Park, Omaha, on 8 November (Mark Tarleton fide CNK).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The one seen at FL on 12 August (LR, RH) was rather early, while the one identified at FF on 1 October was rather late (BP, LP). Rare in the Panhandle in fall, one was spotted at Oliver Res on 1 September (TEL). Only 10 were reported.

Western Wood-Pewee: The one seen at WSR on 14 September (HKH) was rather late, as was another noted at Gering Cem on 11 September (AK). The 24 unspecified wood-pewees tallied at Oliver Res on 1 September (JGJ, TEL) represent an excellent count; most if not all were likely this species. None was reported east of the Panhandle.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Excellent counts were the 13 totaled in southeastern Nebraska on 18 August (WRS) and the 13 found in Lancaster Co on 26 August (LE).

Empidonax species: Interesting data were obtained by mist netting and sight observations at WSR on 25 August; of 16 empids, 4 were Willows, 3 Least, 1 each Dusky and Hammond's, and 7 unidentified to species (see also the individual species accounts).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: The only report was of one spotted at Platte River SP on 7 September (B; no details). This date is within the expected range for fall migration.

Willow Flycatcher: Documented records for any empid in the fall are valuable. At least 4 Willows were identified, two of which were netted, at WSR on 25 August (SJD, HKH). Another was identified at Oliver Res on 19 September (SJD, details). This species is currently considered an uncommon fall migrant statewide ("Birds of Nebraska").

Least Flycatcher: Of the 3+ in the area, 2 were netted at WSR on 25 August (SJD, HKH, AK), and 2 more were netted there on 30 August (SJD, m.ob.) This statewide migrant appears very early in fall; one was found in Dixon Co on 5 August (JJ). The 10 totaled at Oliver Res on 1 September (TEL) marks a good count.

Hammond's Flycatcher: Four were found this fall, including one netted at WSR on 25 August (SJD, HKH, AK), the earliest to date. Others

included singles seen at Bushnell Cem on 1 September (TJ); at Oliver Res ("possible") on 1 September (TEL); and at LO on 15 September (SJD, details). There are now 14 fall records, east to Adams Co, in the period between 25 August to 21 September.

Dusky Flycatcher: This species is proving to be a regular component of the empid movement through the Panhandle in fall. This fall, 5 were found, including singles netted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS) and at WSR on 25 August (SJD, HKH, AK). Others included singles spotted at Oliver Res ("possible") on 1 September (TEL), on 7 September (SJD), and on 14 September (SJD, JF). In the past two falls, netting and careful field observation indicate that fall passage occurs between 24 August and 20 September, with an earlier record on 21 July.

Eastern Phoebe: Adults with juveniles were reported at Burchard L, Pawnee Co, on 18 August (WRS) and near Gibbon on 16 September (LR, RH), the latter rather late. The last to leave were the 2 birds located in Lancaster Co on 14 October (LE).

Say's Phoebe: The 8 birds found in Scotts Bluff Co on 1 September (KL) provided an excellent count. Unusual as far east as Knox Co was the one seen there on 22 September (MB), only the 9th fall record for the east. The one spotted in Blaine Co on 29 September (MB) was rather late.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Cassin's Kingbird: The best count reached 14 in southwestern Kimball Co on 10 August (SJD).

Western Kingbird: The 34 found in southwestern Kimball Co on 15 August (SJD) provided a good count.

Eastern Kingbird: An excellent count totaled 78 in Buffalo Co on 1 September (LR, RH).

Northern Shrike: The one spotted in Cherry Co on 29 September (GW; no details) was rather early.

Loggerhead Shrike: The one noted in Dixon Co on 27 October (JJ; no details) was rather late.

Bell's Vireo: The 9 seen at Little Blue Area, Thayer Co, on 2 September (LR, RH) represent a good count. The one found at Sandpiper Basin, Fillmore Co, on 18 September (JGJ) was tardy.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: Few are reported away from breeding areas, but two were found this fall at Oliver Res, singles spotted on 20 August (SJD, JJD) and on 1 September (JGJ). These dates provide an indication of departure from breeding areas.

Cassin's Vireo: As in recent falls, several were reported, indicating that this species is a regular fall migrant, essentially restricted to the Panhandle. The 12 birds reported were seen in the period between 20 August and 7 September, including one netted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS). The single spotted at Oliver Res on 20 August (SJD, JJD) provided a new early date for the species. The 4 tallied at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS) was a good count.

Blue-headed Vireo: The one seen at LO on 19 September (SJD; details) and another identified in Hall Co on 16 September (LR, RH) represent only the 5th and 6th documented records away from the east. One located in a southwestern Dixon Co yard on 21 and 22 August (JJ) was the 2nd-earliest ever. The best count reached 4 in Sarpy and Washington Cos on 16 September (WRS).

Warbling Vireo: One was banded at Neale Woods NC on 17 November (Betty Grenon, Craig Hensley, fide DM); this report is the latest ever by about a month. Of 8 birds seen at Oliver Res on 21 August, 2 were netted, and both were of the Rocky Mountains subspecies *brewsteri* (SJD).

Philadelphia Vireo: The 8 birds reported, more than usual, were found in the short period from 7 to 16 September. The bird identified at Oliver Res on 7 September (SJD; details) represents only the 4th Panhandle record. Almost in the Panhandle was another bird seen at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF). In the east, two were found at Summit L on 7 September (B); singles were discovered at Wilderness Park on 8 and on 15 September (LE); one was located in Sarpy Co on 10 September (BP, LP); and one was identified in Knox Co on 16 September (MB).

Red-eyed Vireo: Good counts included the 13 found in Washington and Sarpy Cos on 3 September (WRS) and 9 noted in Lancaster Co on 8 September (LE). Rather late was the one seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 7 October (LF, CF). Uncommon to rare in the Panhandle, 5 were reported there between 20 August and 14 September (SJD, JF).

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: The only report was of at least one spotted in Sioux Co on 17 October (RG).

Clark's Nutcracker: Stragglers can appear in summer on occasion: one such was sighted at the top of Scotts Bluff NM on 25 August (GH, WH; details). There is one prior record from the Wildcat Hills, that in summer 1969.

Black-billed Magpie: Two observers in the northeast noted that this species has declined; it was "much diminished" in Knox Co (MB), and had decreased in Yankton Co, SD (SV; South Dakota needs a plug). A few wander east of the summer range in fall; only the 2nd modern record for the county was one found 6 miles south of Blair on 2 October (B). Easterly were 2 to 4 located in Dodge Co between 30 October and 23 November (DP, JP) and 4 seen in Thayer Co on 3 September (LR, RH).

American Crow: The only concentration reported was the 600 counted at Cottonwood Area, Phelps Co, on 21 October (LR, RH). This date marks about the fall migration peak for the species, which is strongly migratory on the Great Plains.

Common Raven: An intriguing report of a raven located in the Pine Ridge was of one identified with a kettle of Turkey Vultures at Chadron SP on 20 September; the group of vultures roosted in pines, and a "typical raven call" was heard (RG). This species has been reported a few times

in the Pine Ridge over the years, but has not been well documented (photo, recording).

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: Routine reports.

Tree Swallow: Routine reports.

Violet-green Swallow: None was reported; the last dates occur in August.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: The best count was 200 to 300, made at Kiowa Springs on 12 August (HKH).

Cliff Swallow: The best counts reached 1,175 at Ponca SP on 8 August (JJ) and 1,000 at Johnson Basin on 19 August (LR, RH); and "thousands" of Barn and Cliff Swallows were found at Alma on 23 September (GH, WH).

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: An excellent count was the 50 found at LO on 1 October (LR, RH); a count of this magnitude is suggestive of some type of influx. Another good count totaled 23 at Wilderness Park, on 16 November (LE).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Although widely-reported, numbers were generally not large, totalling only about 28 birds, with the exception of the remarkable 43 counted at NNF on 30 September (LR, RH). The species breeds at NNF, but migrants must have been included in such a high count. The first birds noted away from potential breeding habitat were singles identified at Oliver Res (TEL) and in Lincoln (LE) both on 1 September.

White-breasted Nuthatch: The one seen at LM on 15 September was of the eastern race *cookei* (SJD, JF); this subspecies probably breeds in the area.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: A good count was the 6 found at Wilderness Park on 16 November (LE). First to arrive were singles located in Knox and Cedar Cos on 6 October (SV).

Rock Wren: An excellent count totaled 9 in Scotts Bluff Co on 1 September (KL). The one spotted at CLNWR on 2 September (JGJ) was unexpected in such habitat and was likely dispersing.

Carolina Wren: After a cold 2000-2001 winter when populations of this species were hard hit, the small group located at Methodist Cove, HCR, persists, after a lack of sightings through the winter, spring, and early summer: 1 to 2 were spotted there on 13 August (GH, WH) and on 20 September (SJD). A few are also "repopulating" Wilderness Park: the first seen there since last winter was found on 11 August (LE), and 2 were noted there on 7 October (LE). It is possible that these sightings are of birds which were at these locations and left when weather conditions became untenable, returning this summer. The birds at HCR are at a

location unlikely to be repopulated randomly, and this soon, by wandering birds. It is curious that at both sites, which experienced observers cover, birds reappeared in mid-August.

House Wren: The one spotted at ADF on 21 October (LF, CF) was rather late.

Winter Wren: A bird banded at NNF on 9 October was determined to be of the eastern subspecies *hiemalis* (RG), the expected subspecies in Nebraska (see "Birds of Nebraska").

Sedge Wren: Few were reported; most years see an influx to Nebraska of singing birds in August, which are thought to be failed breeders returning from north of Nebraska and attempting to try again (see "Birds of Nebraska"). If this hypothesis is correct, breeding up north must have been successful this year! The only reports included one bird seen in southwestern Dixon Co on 5 August (JJ) and 6 spotted at SCP on 20 August (KP). Rather late migrants were 2 found at South Sioux City on 18 October (BFH).

Marsh Wren: The two located at FL on 9 September (LR, RH) presumably were part of the summer population there, while one discovered at Mud Springs, Morrill Co, on 15 November (PD, DD) must have been attempting to winter, as occurs regularly at seeps in the North Platte Valley.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Few were reported, with a total of only 8 birds. The one seen at NNF on 30 September (LR,RH) was rather early.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: The one spotted at WSR on 25 August (SJD) was rather early. This species arrives in northern and western Nebraska about 20 days before it reaches the southeast; the first birds reported in the southeast were 5 located in Washington and Sarpy Cos on 16 September (WRS). The best count was the 24 tallied in Thomas Co on 30 September (LR, RH).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Numbers continue to be eye-opening at various locations recently colonized in the Panhandle. At the established site on Stage Hill Road, Scotts Bluff Co, 9 were counted on 9 August (SJD), and an amazing count of 25 to 30 birds was made from 11 to 12 August at a new location (although a single had been reported by Dave Heidt in the same area 30 August 1997) for the species in canyons south of Redington (WM). Most of the latter birds were located in Mountain Mahogany thickets, similar habitat to that hosting gnatcatchers along Stage Hill Road; a few birds looked to be in juvenal plumage (WM). Other Panhandle sightings included singles spotted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS); at WSR on 30 August (SJD, HKH, JAS); at CLNWR on 2 September (JGJ); and in southwestern Kimball Co on 14 September (SJD, JF), a rather late. The one found in Burt Co on 26 August (JGJ) was at the northern edge of the range in the southeast. The bird discovered at HCR on 20 September (SJD) was the western edge of the range in the southeast; summering birds have been known in this area for several years.

Eastern Bluebird: A westerly breeding report was of a male seen feeding 3 recent fledglings in Smiley Canyon, Dawes Co, on 1 August (RW). There are several breeding records for Dawes and Scotts Bluff Cos in the Panhandle. The best count totaled 29 in southeastern Otoe Co on 14 October (LF, CF).

Mountain Bluebird: Breeding is unknown in southwestern Kimball Co, but a single seen there as early as 15 August (SJD), along with a prior record there for 7 August, suggests that some birds leave the breeding range early. Few were reported.

Townsend's Solitaire: The one found at WSR on 30 August (SJD, HKH, JAS) was a bit early, although about on time for the first fall birds to appear in the northwest. One had arrived in Thomas Co by 30 September (LR, RH). A bit far south and east was one spotted at Alma Cem between 7 and 11 November (GH, WH).

Veery: Surprisingly, the only report came from the Panhandle; one netted and photographed at WSR on 30 August was thought to be of the western subspecies *salicicolus* (SJD, HKH, JAS), which breeds in the Black Hills of South Dakota and would be expected to migrate through the Panhandle in small numbers.

Swainson's Thrush: Singles noted at WSR (SJD, HKH; netted) and at Ponca SP (JJ) on 25 August were rather early. The hatching-year bird banded at Bellevue on 30 October (RG) ties the latest fall record with a report that occurred in Douglas Co in 1977. Only about 14 were reported.

Hermit Thrush: The Rocky Mountain subspecies *auduboni* apparently provides most Panhandle migrant records; it also moves through 2 to 3 weeks earlier than the eastern birds, most of which are *faxoni*. Presumed *auduboni* were singles sighted at WSR on 19 and 29 September and on 8 October (HKH). One picked up at UNL on 30 October provided a new late date for the UNL collection (fide TEL), although there are several later records for the southeast, including one this fall in Seward Co on 29 November (JG).

Wood Thrush: Routine reports.

American Robin: The best counts reached 1,400 at Red Willow Res, Frontier Co, on 25 November (LR, RH), a near-record fall count, and 950 in Buffalo Co on 18 November (LR, RH).

Gray Catbird: The one seen at WSR on 29 September (HKH) was the 4th latest ever for the Panhandle; the latest is 3 October. Another bird found near Gibbon on 23 November (LR, RH) was very late for the location; while November records are not unexpected, most occur in the southeast. A record fall count was the 20 tallied in Lancaster Co on 2 September (LE).

Northern Mockingbird: Routine reports.

Sage Thrasher: The only reports came from Scotts Bluff Co: two were spotted along Robidoux Road (KL), and two were located in Carter Canyon (TEL), all on 1 September.

Brown Thrasher: The latest, but not unusually so, was one seen in southwester Dixon Co on 15 November (JJ).

European Starling: Routine reports.

American Pipit: Large numbers were found at Johnson Basin this fall, beginning with 38 on 7 October (LR, RH) and building to an excellent count of 320 on the rather late date of 18 November (LR, RH).

Sprague's Pipit: This species is rarely reported, probably because few observers look for it. SCP yielded 1 to 2 on 25 October (MB). This date is a bit late for the species; peak movement in Nebraska probably occurs in early October.

Bohemian Waxwing: None was reported; arrival, when it occurs, is in November.

Cedar Waxwing: A strange sight must have been the "several hundred" seen in a flock hawking (waxwinging?) for insects at ICSP on 12 October (LRB), a record fall count to boot. According to Bent ("Life Histories"), Cedar Waxwings are "adroit flycatchers."

Golden-winged Warbler: The only report was of a male spotted in Otoe Co on 2 September (LF, CF). This sighting marks only the 17th fall report to date.

Tennessee Warbler: Only 5 were reported, all in the east between 27 August and 8 September (JJ, WRS, LE).

Orange-crowned Warbler: This species put on a good showing, with a wide range of occurrence dates (from 15 August to 7 November) and a record count. The one seen at Oliver Res on 15 August (SJD) was rather early. The 50+ found in Thomas Co on 30 September (LR, RH) represents a record fall count. The bird spotted at ADF on 7 November (LF, CF) was rather late; there are only 4 later dates.

Nashville Warbler: This species was also much in evidence, with reports in the long period between 19 August and 28 October, all from the central and east, as expected. The earliest were the 2 discovered at Ponca SP on 19 August (BP, LP), 3rd-earliest date ever; and the last was one spotted at Bellevue on 28 October (KCR), a rather late date. Counts were moderate, however, with the best reaching only 11, in Washington and Sarpy Cos on 16 September (WRS).

Northern Parula: Few were reported, with most reports coming from known breeding locations, such as an adult female and 2 immatures located in Washington and Sarpy Cos on 8 September (WRS), and a female seen at ICSP on 18 August (WRS). The one noted at Wilderness Park on 8 September (LE) was somewhat unexpected.

Yellow Warbler: Described somewhat laconically as a "big fallout," the 70+ tallied at WSR on 25 August (SJD, HKH, AK) more than tripled the previous record count. The two found at a location, where breeding does not occur, in Clay Co on 11 August (Big Daddy's Ornithological Gardens) were described as "certain migrants" (JGJ); most Nebraska breeders probably leave in August.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Only 3 were reported, including only the 3rd Panhandle record, a single located at CLNWR on 2 September (JGJ). The others were an immature found at Neale Woods, Washington Co, on 3 September (WRS), and a single identified at Bellevue on 17 September (BP, LP).

Magnolia Warbler: An immature netted at WSR on 30 August (SJD, m.ob.) marks only the 6th Panhandle record. Almost in the Panhandle, the 2nd Keith Co record was a female spotted at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF). Only 7 others were reported, all sighted in the east between 3 and 30 September.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: The only report was of one located at Summit L on 8 September (B).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: The only reports of *auduboni* came, as expected, from the Panhandle and early. Two juveniles were spotted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS), a rather early date, even for *auduboni*; two more juveniles were seen there on 1 September (JGJ, TEL), and one was found in Scotts Bluff Co on 14 October (KL). The latter is the latest date for the taxon; there are also reports on 9 and 11 October. A single spotted at PL on 8 September (LE) was not identified to subspecies, but was rather early. The best count totaled an excellent 100 at ICSP on 12 October (LRB). The 15 birds seen at Niobrara SP on 10 November (MB) were rather late for the location.

Black-throated Gray Warbler: The first documented fall record was of a female seen at Oliver Res on 7 September (SJD; details). This sighting represents the 3rd documented record for the species in Nebraska.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Only 3 were reported, including a male spotted in Blaine Co on 30 September (MB), where it is only casual; there are 5 Panhandle records in fall. Other reports included an immature female seen at Hummel Park, Omaha, on 8 September (WRS) and a single found at FF on 27 September (B).

Townsend's Warbler: Reports were as expected from the Panhandle, but one was found a bit further east, in Grant Co on 2 September (MB). A good count was the 5 noted at Bushnell Cem on 20 August (SJD, JJD), also a rather early date; 5 were also found on 1 September at Oliver Res (TEL). The one spotted at WSR 2 on 9 September (HKH) was rather late. In all, about 25 were reported.

Blackburnian Warbler: Surprisingly, the only report came from the Panhandle; the one seen at CLNWR on 2 September (JGJ) was only the 5th Panhandle report. This species is an uncommon migrant in fall even in the east.

Yellow-throated Warbler: None was reported; late dates occur in late September.

Palm Warbler: Only casual in fall, especially away from the east, 3 were reported. One of the eastern yellowish subspecies *hypochrysea* was seen at HCR on 20 September (SJD), and a western bird (*palmarum*), the

more numerous of the two subspecies in Nebraska, was identified at Summit L on 9 October (JGJ). A single bird unidentified to subspecies was located at FF on 11 October(B), a rather late date.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Only the 5th fall record away from the east, a "fall female" was spotted at LM on 15 September (SJD, JF). There is only one fall Panhandle record. The 6 others reported were all seen in the Missouri Valley in the period from 8 to 17 September (BFH, BP, LP, WRS), including a good count of 3 made in Washington and Sarpy Cos on 16 September (WRS).

Cerulean Warbler: None was reported; this species seems to be at a low ebb currently.

Black-and-white Warbler: The one located at Ponca SP on 19 August (BP, LP) was rather early. A bird spotted in a Scottsbluff yard between 28 October and 2 November (PD, DD) provided the 3rd latest date ever.

American Redstart: Three seen at Coffee Park, Sioux Co, on 7 August (PD, DD) were at a location where summering occurs. The first probable migrant was a rather early female spotted at L Minatare on 15 August (SJD). Also a migrant was an immature female netted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS); this species is thought to be uncommon in the Panhandle ("Birds of Nebraska"), although the 6+ located at WSR (2 netted) on 25 August (SJD, HKH) gives one pause. Other Panhandle reports included a single found at Oliver Res on 1 September (TEL); another identified in Scotts Bluff Co on 3 September (KL); 3 seen at CLNWR on 14 September (SJD, JF); and one found at WSR on 19 September (HKH).

Prothonotary Warbler: The only report was of one carefully studied along the MRET on 8 September (WRS); this sighting represents the 6th latest fall record.

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Northern Waterthrush: The few reports came from the Panhandle, where the species is casual in fall. Three were found between 24 August and 7 September, one of which was netted (SJD, HKH, JAS). There are still fewer than 30 reports away from the east in fall.

Louisiana Waterthrush: None was reported; late dates occur in early September.

Kentucky Warbler: None was reported; late dates occur in mid- to late September.

Mourning Warbler: Ten were reported, most in the Missouri Valley, in the period between 25 August and 17 September. Both the one spotted at Ponca SP on 25 August (JJ) and a male found at FF on 26 August (B) were rather early. Two were seen at Wilderness Park on 15 September (LE), and two more were found on the UNL campus on 17 September (Emily Thaden fide TEL).

MacGillivray's Warbler: All reports, of 12 birds, came, as expected, from the Panhandle between 20 August and 6 October. Rather early were

the 2 identified at Oliver Res on 20 August (SJD, JAS), and the one spotted in Scotts Bluff Co on 6 October (KL) was rather late.

Common Yellowthroat: The 45 found at Lilley Sandpits, Hall Co, on 16 September (LR, RH) mark a record fall count.

Hooded Warbler: For a "southeastern" warbler, this species has been reported surprisingly often in the Panhandle. A first year bird seen at WSR on 29 September (HKH; details) represents the 11th such report, and first documented for fall. Prior reports included 9 reported in spring and a single undocumented fall report on 21 August 1989 in Scotts Bluff Co.

Wilson's Warbler: This fall was great for this species; about 300 were reported statewide in the period between 15 August and 29 September, including excellent counts of 81 made in Kimball Co on 7 September (SJD) and 70 at Oliver Res on 1 September (TEL). Rather early was a male spotted at L Minatare on 15 August (SJD).

Canada Warbler: None was reported; this species is a regular fall migrant in the east.

Yellow-breasted Chat: The only report was of one netted at Oliver Res on 24 August (SJD, JAS).

Summer Tanager: The one noted at FF on 21 September was rather late (B). The only other reports were of one spotted in Otoe Co on 10 August (LF, CF) and 3 located at ICSP on 18 August (WRS), all probably summering birds.

Scarlet Tanager: The 6 birds reported all were, as expected, found in the Missouri Valley; the last was one seen in Bellevue on 17 September (BP, LP).

Western Tanager: Four were reported, all migrants in the Panhandle between 5 and 7 September (KL, SJD).

Spotted Towhee: The first birds to arrive in the southeast were 2 found in Lincoln on 6 October (LE), about on time. The five noted at Ponca SP on 25 August (JJ) were probably part of the local breeding population, near the eastern edge of the breeding range. The 14 banded in Dawes Co on 20 September (RG) represented a good tally.

Eastern Towhee: This species was well reported, with almost all birds found within the summer range southeast of a line connecting Cedar and Hall Cos. Exceptions were apparent migrants seen somewhat west of this area: the two banded at NNF on 17 September were, interestingly, recaptured there on 10 October (RG); a female was spotted near Gibbon on 28 September (LR, RH); and a single was spotted at Niobrara SP on 10 November (MB), the latter a rather late date for the location. A pair with 3 juveniles was spotted at Wilderness Park on 26 August (LE).

American Tree Sparrow: The best count reached 150 in Buffalo Co on 18 November (LR, RH).

Chipping Sparrow: The 120 totaled at NNF on 30 September (WRS) was an excellent count. None was found after 20 August in Harlan Co,

when a single bird was seen there (GH, WH); this species is rare in the southwest.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: The only report was of 7 located in southwestern Kimball Co on 10 August (SJD). Breeding occurs in the area, but migrants can appear as early as late July.

Field Sparrow: This species is rare in the Panhandle in fall; of interest were reports from LO, very near the Panhandle: singles were discovered there on 20 August (SJD, JJD)--a rather early date for a migrant--and again on 19 September (SJD); and 4 were spotted there on 1 October (LR, RH). Most Nebraska birds are the western bland-faced subspecies *arenacea*, fitting the appearance of the 6 carefully studied at NNF on 30 September (WRS).

Vesper Sparrow: The one identified in Cedar Co on 1 August (SV) probably was part of the local breeding population. Migration was underway by mid-September, when 24 were found in Dixon Co (JJ). The one seen at a Creighton feeder between 28 November and 3 December (MB; details) was rather late; there are a few other December reports, but none later than 4 December are documented.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Few were reported. The farthest east was one spotted near Broken Bow on 8 October (RG), a rather late date. The best count was only 40, made on 31 August in Kimball Co (BP, LP).

Savannah Sparrow: The one seen at Lincoln on 15 November (LE) was rather late. Few were reported.

Grasshopper Sparrow: An excellent count was the 46 summering in southwestern Dixon Co on 5 August; they were scattered over a few square miles in CRP grassland (JJ). This species does not form fall flocks.

LeConte's Sparrow: The four birds spotted at SCP on 23 October (KP) were getting a bit tardy.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: About 8 were reported, all in the east in the period between 30 September and 14 October, as expected. Singles were found in southwestern Dixon Co on 30 September (JJ) and east of Niobrara in Knox Co on 6 October (MB); 1 to 2 were seen at BOL between 13 and 14 October (LE); and 1 to 2 were identified at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, on 14 October (LE).

Fox Sparrow: Nebraska Fox Sparrows are "Red Fox Sparrow," probably a separate species (*Passerella iliaca*) which consists of 2 subspecies, *iliaca* and *zaboria*. The latter is somewhat grayer, and a bird which had "characteristics of red and slate morphs" was found near Gibbon on 18 November (LR, RH).

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: The only report of double-digit numbers was a moderate 17 discovered in Clay Co on 5 October (JGJ). Uncommon in the Panhandle, 6 were reported there between 19 September and 13 November (HKH, RG, AK, PD, DD).

Swamp Sparrow: Apparently summering were one identified at FL on 13 August (MU) and another heard singing at Johnson Basin on 19 August (LR, RH), the latter suggesting a new potential nesting location.

White-throated Sparrow: The one spotted at FF on 21 September (B) was rather early. A good count reached 24 at Summit L on 9 October (JGJ). Farthest west were singles found at WSR on 8 and on 28 October (HKH); this species is rare in the Panhandle.

White-crowned Sparrow: An immature spotted at Oliver Res on 7 September (SJD) was rather early. No large numbers were reported; observers did not report any subspecies.

Harris's Sparrow: Few were reported, with best counts reaching only 25 in Buffalo Co on 18 November (LR, RH) and 22 at ADF on 29 October (LE). Rare in the Panhandle, "several" were seen at WSR on 28 October (HKH).

Dark-eyed Junco: Routine reports.

McCown's Longspur: None were reported.

Lapland Longspur: Routine reports.

Smith's Longspur: There are only about 15 fall reports in all, a third of which occur in the period between 23 and 29 October. Fitting this pattern were about 20 birds found at SCP on 23 October: a few were identified as this species (KP; details) although probably all were Smith's; they were found in the "east prairie" in habitat varying from bare ground to grazed pasture 3 to 4 feet tall with open patches (KP). A single bird was spotted rather late east of Creighton on 26 November (MB), although there are 2 prior mid-December CBC reports.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: A flock of 35 found at Oliver Res on 20 October (JF) was rather late. Late dates occur in late October, and there are no documented winter records.

Snow Bunting: Only 2 were reported, arriving just before the end of the period: one was seen near Creighton on 27 November (MB), and one was identified in Knox Co on 29 November (SV).

Northern Cardinal: Routine reports.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A young male spotted ear Gibbon on 24 August (LR, RH) was in an area where a few apparently summer; Black-headed Grosbeaks occur there also. A female found at a Sarpy Co feeder on 26 October (Melba Wigg, fide RG) was about the 3rd-latest for fall, although there are 4 reports of birds at least attempting to winter.

Black-headed Grosbeak: A female was seen in a yard near Gibbon on 13 August and 16 September (LR, RH). Both *Pheucticus* grosbeaks occur in the area.

Blue Grosbeak: The latest was one located in Scotts Bluff Co on 22 September (AK). Three spotted in the Bushnell Cem on 7 September (SJD) were indicative of peak migration.

Lazuli Bunting: All reports came from the Panhandle, as expected, with the best count of 5 at made WSR on 25 August, 4 of which were netted

(SJD, HKH ,AK). The one seen in Scotts Bluff Co on 22 September (AK) marked the 6th latest on record.

Indigo Bunting: The 10 counted at Wilderness Park on 18 August (LE) may have been local birds, although fall movement begins early in this species. An immature male spotted at NNF on 30 September (TEL, WRS; details) was a rather late surprise for the location; however the one identified in Dixon Co on 30 October (JJ) was 2nd latest ever for the state. Interestingly, the latest is one which remained at the same location into early January 1999 (JJ).

Dickcissel: A good count of 37 made in Dixon Co on 5 August (JJ) was of summering birds. The westernmost bird was found at CCM on 10 August (SJD), where the species is rare. By 31 August at SCP, "only a few were left bantering about" (KP), but 3 seen at Prairie Marsh Basin, Thayer Co, were still carrying food on 2 September (LR, RH). The last were the 3 "still around" near Creighton on 2 October (MB).

Bobolink: Few were reported, with best count of only 12 made at CCM on 10 August (SJD). The one spotted in Knox Co on 16 September (MB) was rather late for this early-departing species.

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: The best count was 400 made at Johnson Basin on 20 September (SJD). The two seen near Niobrara on 3 November (MB) were rather late for the location.

Rusty Blackbird: Two birds found in a mixed flock of Yellow-headed and Brewer's Blackbirds in Cherry Co on 29 September (DP, JP; details) provided the 3rd-earliest arrival date on record. This species tends to be a late fall migrant and is rare away from the east. Other reports occurred from 1 November through the end of the period, with no birds reported west of Lancaster Co.

Brewer's Blackbird: The first migrant noted away from the northwestern Nebraska breeding range was spotted in Cherry Co on 29 September (fide NOU), and the best count of 300 was made in the east RWB on 28 October (JGJ). The one found in Dodge Co (with a female Red-winged Blackbird) on 16 November (DP ,JP) was a little late; there are, however, a few winter reports from the southeast.

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: The small group at Kiowa Springs continues, with 2 seen there on 2 September (KL); nest building has been observed at this location, the only known Panhandle breeding site. Within a group of 18 adults and juveniles, a female was spotted feeding a juvenile at Father Hupp Basin, Thayer Co, on 2 September (LR, RH). The best count reached an excellent 300 at Weis Basin, Fillmore Co, on 18 September (JGJ). Beginning in 1998, a flock has assembled in Niobrara Marsh in late November to early Dec; this year 45 were found there on 17

November, increasing to 127 by 23 November (MB), the best count made there so far.

Brown-headed Cowbird: the best counts were both of 1,000: near Bruning on 3 September (LR, RH) and near Holdrege on 21 October (LR, RH). Usually early to depart as a species, the last were 15 spotted in Co on 28 October (LR, RH).

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: Routine reports.

Bullock's Oriole: An immature male spotted in Kimball Co on 7 September (SJD) was a little tardy. Few were reported.

Gray-crowned Rosy-finch: None was reported; early dates occur in late October.

Purple Finch: Only 9 birds were reported: a female at ADF on 21 October (LF, CF); 5 at FF on 31 October (BP, LP); a female at Bellevue on 2 November (KCR); and 2 males at ADF on 19 November (LF, CF).

House Finch: Numbers appear to be increasing in Scotts Bluff Co, indicating recovery from disease; 30 to 40 birds were regulars at the observer's feeders, whereas the peak last winter was 21 (KL). Amazing numbers were noted in Thomas Co, where 600 were estimated on 28 September along the Middle Loup River (LR, RH).

Red Crossbill: All reports came from the northern Panhandle (Sioux, Dawes, and Scotts Bluff Cos) except for reports of 8 to 20 found at NNF on 30 September (LR, RH, WRS). Of 33 banded in Dawes Co on 20 September, some with black stripes were considered newly-hatched birds (RG). Based on current knowledge for Nebraska, this date would be a rather late fledging date, but juvenal plumage can be held for as long as 9 months, and there are even occasional reports of birds breeding while in juvenal plumage (Pyle, Identification Guide to North American Birds).

Common Redpoll: The only one making it into the Fall Report was spotted at a feeder in Nebraska City on 23 November; it was with siskins and goldfinches (LF, CF).

Pine Siskin: A single that appeared at Niobrara on 18 August was considered early at that location (MB); no others were noted away from breeding areas until 30 November, when 4 were spotted in Bellevue (B). In Nebraska, siskins tend to disappear from breeding sites by early July, with early arrival dates away from breeding areas in early to mid-August ("Birds of Nebraska"). Larger numbers were noted by the end of the period, with best count of 40 registered in Frontier Co on 25 November (LR, RH).

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

Evening Grosbeak: One was banded in Dawes Co on 20 September (RG), the only report, and rather early for migrants; this species is a hypothetical breeder in the Pine Ridge.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.