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## Fall Field Report, August-November 1996

W. Ross Silcock

*Nebraska Game and Parks Commission*, [silcock@rosssilcock.com](mailto:silcock@rosssilcock.com)

Joel G. Jorgensen

*Nebraska Ornithologists' Union*, [joel.jorgensen@nebraska.gov](mailto:joel.jorgensen@nebraska.gov)

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FALL FIELD REPORT, AUGUST–NOVEMBER 1996

Compiled by

W. Ross Silcock, P.O. Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653  
Joel G. Jorgensen, 1218 Jackson St, Blair NE 68008

INTRODUCTION

This fall we received numerous excellent reports from which to compile this summary. Most parts of the state are covered, except the southwest and northcentral, although many observers at least pass through those areas. A note about details on unusual observations. The new NOU Field Card, which can be ordered by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the NOU Librarian, Univ of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, NE 68588-0514, indicates species that need complete documentations, mostly casual and accidental species. However, we realize that information about early and late migration dates, and rarity in the west or east is not readily available, so in this summary we have indicated significant reports that were not accompanied by details on the sighting by using the phrase "no details provided" or something similar. We would very much appreciate it if observers of these reports could provide details of the sighting, including identification points and circumstances such as habitat, viewing conditions, etc. These reports are as important as those of rare birds, and it would be nice to have them substantiated. Of course, sightings discussed in this report are always subject to acceptance by the NOU Records Committee; reports with asterisks denote those for which written documentation has been submitted to the NOU Records Committee.

And now to the good stuff! This fall was interesting from many aspects. Several species of waterbirds, considered accidental or casual a few years ago, were well reported this year, including Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Black Scoter, and Sabine's Gull. A discussion is included about hummingbirds in w NE, several of which were noted early this fall (hummingbird mania?). Few *Catharus* thrushes were noted, no Veeries and only 2 Swainson's Thrushes. Unprecedented numbers of Sage Thrashers were noted in Kimball Co, and excellent numbers of Palm and Blackburnian Warblers showed up, including the 3rd fall record for the panhandle region for Blackburnian. Good information is being received about the ranges of Eastern and Spotted Towhees.

Lingering birds included latest ever American Avocet, Western Sandpiper, and Forster's Tern, 2nd latest ever Common Poorwill, late Eastern and Say's Phoebes, late House Wren, record-late Bell's Vireo, record-late Scarlet Tanager, and 2nd latest Grasshopper Sparrow. There was also a record early Wilson's Warbler.

Rarities included Nebraska's 1st Yellow-billed Loon, 2nd Little Gull, 6th Laughing Gull, 4th Inca Dove, 1st Band-tailed Pigeon, a possible *Archilochus* (Ruby-throated or Black-chinned) Hummingbird in the panhandle region, the appearance of several Steller's Jays and Mountain Chickadees in Scotts Bluff Co, an *auduboni* (Rocky Mountain) Hermit Thrush in Scotts Bluff Co, the appearance of numbers of Dark-eyed (White-winged) Juncos away from the breeding range and eastward, several Cassin's Finches in Scotts Bluff Co, and a possible 6th Lesser Goldfinch.

ABBREVIATIONS

Initials in parentheses refer to observers; a list follows this report. \* = documented; please refer to *Nebraska Bird Review* 54:74 for information about writing documentations, and the

Official List of the Birds of Nebraska (NBR 56:86), which indicates that all birds whose status is less than Regular (acceptably reported in 9-10 of the past 10 years) should be documented. It is also important to document very early or very late records of Regular species. The best available reference for such dates is Johnsgard's "A Preliminary List of the Birds of Nebraska and Adjacent Plains States", much of which was published in NBR 48:26 (non-passerines) and NBR 48:46 (passerines).

ad = adult; ADF = Arbor Day Farm (Otoe Co); BOL = Branched Oak L SRA (Lancaster Co); CBC = Christmas Bird Count; cem = cemetery; CLNWR = Crescent L NWR (Garden Co); Co(s) = County(ies); FF = Fontenelle Forest Nature Center; imm = immature; juv = juvenile; L = Lake; LM = L. McConaughy (Keith Co); mob = many observers; NC = Nature Center; NE = Nebraska; NNF = Nebraska National Forest; NOU = Nebraska Ornithologists' Union; North Platte NWR (Scotts Bluff Co); NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; R = River; Res = Reservoir; RWB = Rainwater Basin (area of Federal, State, and private basins and wetlands mainly in Phelps, Kearney, Clay, Fillmore, Hamilton, and York Cos); SHP = State Historical Park; SL = Sewage Lagoons; SP = State Park; SRA = State Recreation Area; UNL = University of Nebraska-Lincoln; UNSM = University of Nebraska State Museum; WMA = Wildlife Management Area (State); WPA = Waterfowl Production Area (Federal).

#### GAZETTEER

Arbor L (WMA, Lancaster); Ayr L (Adams); Boyer Chute NWR (Washington); Chadron SP (Dawes); Chimney Rock SHP (Morrill); Clear Creek (WMA, Keith/Garden); Conestoga L (SRA, Lancaster); Crystal Cove L (Dakota); Cunningham L (Douglas); DeSoto NWR (Washington); Elmwood Park (Omaha, Douglas); Forest Lawn Cem (Omaha, Douglas); Funk Lagoon (WPA, Phelps); Gadwall Basin (WMA, Hamilton); Gavin's Point Dam (Cedar); Harlan Co Res (Harlan); Harvard Marsh (WPA, Clay); Hultine North Basin (= Sandpiper WPA, Clay); Jack Sinn Marsh (Lancaster/Saunders); James Ranch (SRA, Sioux); Jewell Park (Bellevue, Sarpy); Johnson L (SRA, Gosper/Dawson); Kiowa Springs (WMA, Scotts Bluff); L Alice (NPNWR, Scotts Bluff); L Minatare (SRA, Scotts Bluff); L North (Platte); L Ogallala (SRA, Keith); Nelson Basin (WPA, Hamilton); North Harvard Basin (3.5 mi n sw corner Harvard, Clay); Offutt Base L (Sarpy); Olive Creek L (SRA, Lancaster); Pawnee L (SRA, Lancaster); Pine Ridge (area of Ponderosa pinewoods in Sioux, Dawes, and Sheridan Cos); Ponca SP (Dixon); (Lillian Annette) Rowe Sanctuary (Kearney); Schilling Ref (WMA, Cass); Schramm Park (SRA, Sarpy); Scotts Bluff NM (Scotts Bluff); Sherman Res (SRA, Sherman); Smiley Canyon (Fort Robinson SP, Sioux); Sowbelly Canyon (Sioux); Stagecoach L (SRA, Lancaster); Standing Bear L (Douglas); Stateline Marsh (WMA, Scotts Bluff); Summit Res (SRA, Burt); Sutherland Res (SRA, Lincoln); Theesen Lagoon (WPA, Adams/Clay); Waco Basin (WPA, York); Wehrspann L (Sarpy); Wildcat Hills (SRA, Banner/Scotts Bluff); Wildcat Hills NC (Scotts Bluff); Winters Creek L (NPNWR, Scotts Bluff); Wolf L (Saunders); Wyuka Cem (Lincoln, Lancaster).

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Red-throated Loon:** Considering that there were only three documented records and about 20 total reports prior to this fall, four documented observations are amazing. Three of the observations were made on the heels of a strong cold front and include singles at BOL 30 Oct-3 Nov (JS,mob), at Stagecoach L. 31 Oct-3 Nov

(JGJ\*,WRS\*), and at Bluestem L SRA, Lancaster Co, on 3 Nov. (WRS\*). The other was a single at Wehrspann L. on 12 Nov (LP\*,BP\*,RB,JGJ\*). In addition, a possible Red-throated was reported from Johnson L. on the popular date of 3 Nov (LR,RH).

**Pacific Loon:** Apparent juvenile/first-winter birds were at Olive Creek L on 17 Nov (JGJ\*,GeJ) and Standing Bear L. on 17-24 Nov. (JGJ\*,GeJ,RB). The latter locale, a rather small lake, has now hosted three loon species. In addition, a possible Pacific was reported from Johnson L. on 3 Nov. (LR,RH).

**Common Loon:** The two basic-plumaged birds at L. Ogallala were joined by one in alternate plumage 3-11 Aug. (SJD,mob). Another probable immature was at War Axe SRA, Buffalo Co, from 12-23 Aug. (SJD,LR,RH). High count was 8 at NPNWR on 3 Nov. (LKM). Latest were 2 at Cunningham L. on 23 Nov. (JGJ).

**Yellow-billed Loon:** This first state record could have gotten away. The individual was first observed independently by two observers (JGJ & WRS) on 17 Nov at BOL. Both had the impression that the bird appeared to be a Yellow-billed, but exercised caution because the bird was viewed from some distance. On 21 Nov, JGJ returned, studied the bird for several hours, observed diagnostic features (i.e. pale culmen), and took several photos. The first-winter bird was observed through 22 Nov (LP,BP,RB,LEi).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** High count was 42 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). Latest were singles at Offutt Base L. on 28 Nov (LP,BP) and at a sandpit near the Kearney I-80 exit on 30 Nov (LR,RH).

**Horned Grebe:** Quite early was one at Gering SL on 27 Aug (AK), followed by one at L Yankton, Cedar Co, on 15 Sep (MBr). High count was 22 at NPNWR on 27 Oct (WRS). Latest were a pair at Standing Bear L. on 17 Nov (JGJ).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Like the rare loons, it was a spectacular season for this rare grebe. Reports include a first-summer bird at Sutherland Res on 26-27 Sep (SJD\*,JGJ\*,WRS,JS), an adult at LM on 13 Oct (MBr,DH), and a single, in apparent transitional plumage, at Sherman Res on 17 Nov (LR,RH).

**Eared Grebe:** Best counts were 210 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM) and 58 at NPNWR on 9 Oct (LK). Counts from the east were of fewer than 5 from any one locale. Latest were 2 at Summit Res on 18 Nov (JGJ).

**Western Grebe:** It appears that LM is a major staging area for the species in fall; 7000+ on 28 Sep was a careful estimate by birders in a boat (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS), 3600 were still present on 27 Oct (SJD). Another good count from the west was 780 at NPNWR on 11 Oct (LKM). Likely unprecedented numbers graced lakes in the eastern third of the state: 36 were collectively tallied in Lancaster, Douglas, and Burt Cos alone. Latest were 2 at Offutt Base L on 28 Nov (BP,LP).

**Clark's Grebe:** All reports are as follows: up to 13 were noted amongst Westerns at LM 3-13 Aug (SJD,WRS,mob), birders on a pelagic boat trip at LM tallied 20 on 28 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS), 3 were noted at Sutherland Res on 26-28 Sep (SJD), and 5 were at CLNWR on 2 Aug (JJo). In addition, 2 possible Western X Clark's hybrids were noted at LM on 27 Sep (SJD), both with bright orange bills and dark lores.

**American White Pelican:** High count, rather early in the season, was 300-400 at LM on 3-4 Aug (SJD,WRS,JGJ) and 200, on a more typical date of 29 Sep, at BOL (LEi). Latest was a single at Kiowa Springs on 10 Nov (LKM).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The one nest at Harlan Co Res found on 22 Jun (see Summer Report) grew to 26 nests on 12 Aug (SJD). High count was an impressive 4000 at Harlan Co Res on 20 Oct (LR,RH) and latest were 2 at Offutt Base L. on 28 Nov (BP,LP).

**American Bittern:** Few were reported. At CLNWR, 1-2 were found for much of the period, with the latest observation of a single on the rather late date of 13 Nov (MF). This is the fifth latest report. The only reports away from CLNWR were singles at Waco Basin, on 24 Sep (WRS) and at Private Marsh, 2 mi e Funk Lagoon, Clay Co, on 21 Sep (RH,LR).

**Least Bittern:** Only report was of a single at Funk Lagoon on 12 Aug (SJD), a locale where the species was noted during the summer period.

**Great Blue Heron:** A good single locale count was 56 at NPNWR on 11 Sept (LK). A few usually remain into Dec.

**Great Egret:** Good counts where good counts are expected, include 40 in Otoe Co on 5 Aug (LF,CF) and up to 56 in the RWB 11 Aug-2 Sep (JGJ). Good counts where not generally expected, were 17 at LM on 4 Aug (SJD) and 8 in Wheeler Co on 3 Aug (JJo). Latest were singles at the Hastings Basin, se edge of Hastings, Adams Co, (SJD) and Cunningham L (JGJ), both on 15 Oct.

**Snowy Egret:** The majority of birds were found in the far west. The season's high count, 22, and latest report was from CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF). At LM, 3 were found on 4 Aug (SJD,WRS,JGJ). Only a handful (about 5) were found in the RWB during Aug and Sep (JGJ,WRS,SJD,LR,RH).

**Little Blue Heron:** Only reports were 9 in Otoe Co on 5 Aug (LF,CF) and 2 in the RWB on 4-18 Aug (WRS,LR,RH).

**Cattle Egret:** It is sometimes easy to forget that this species first arrived in the state a mere 31 years ago when counts like the 500 in Otoe Co (LF,CF) are now being recorded. In the west, 40 were at LM on 4 Aug (SJD,WRS) and up to 4 were at CLNWR from 28 Aug-8 Sep (LKM,MF). Latest were 4 in the RWB on 24 Sep (WRS).

**Green Heron:** Apparently overlooked, or ignored, only four were reported. From the south-central, 2 were at Hansen Lagoon WPA, Clay Co, 11 Aug-2 Sep (JGJ) and 4 were at the Rowe Sanctuary on 24 Aug (LR,RH). Latest was one at ADF on 9 Sep (LF,CF).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Most were reported from Garden and Sheridan Cos, where a high count of 6 were tallied at CLNWR on 8 Sep (MF). Away from the panhandle region, the only reports were 4 at Harlan Co. Res on 12 Aug (SJD) and a single in Otoe Co on 16 Sep (LF,CF). Latest were 2 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A juvenile at CLNWR on 30 Aug (LKM) is about the seventh report from the panhandle region.

**White-faced Ibis:** High count was 27 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM), followed by 8 at Funk Lagoon on 21 Sep (LR,RH). Immatures, cautiously identified as *Plegadis* sp., were found in the east at Waco Basin on 24 Sep (WRS), in Colfax Co on 9 Sep (JGJ), and flying over FF on 11 Sep (BP,LP). Latest was another immature at Ayr L on 17 Oct (SJD).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The few reported were 2-3 at CLNWR 8-29 Oct (LKM) and 1 at NPNWR 6 Nov (LK).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Most were found in Oct, as expected. Earliest were 35 at Funk Lagoon on 6 Oct (LR,RH) and high count was 350 at Kirkpatrick WMA, York Co, on 27 Oct (LR,RH).

**Snow Goose:** Likely wounded non-migrants were one summering at Gavin's Point Dam (MBr), and another, observed on 15 Sep (WRS), at Wagon Train L SRA, Lancaster Co. Early were 2 at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, on 25 Aug and a single at Real WPA, Fillmore Co, on 17 Aug (JGJ). High count was from DeSoto NWR, where 60,000 were estimated on 2 Nov (JGJ), a rather low count for this location at this time of year. However, 10,000 at BOL on 12 Nov (LEi) was a good count for the location.

**Ross' Goose:** All reports are as follows: 2 at Johnson L 3 Nov (LR,RH), 5 at Cunningham L on 12 Nov (JGJ), 1 at Crystal Cove L

on 17-18 Nov (BH), 1 at Cunningham L on 22 Nov (JGJ), and 2 at Grandpa's Steakhouse L, Buffalo Co, on 24 Nov (LR,RH).

**Canada Goose:** High counts include 26,240 at NPNWR on 30 Nov (LK) and 1250 at Kiowa Springs on 2 Nov (LKM). At Johnson L, 200 of a smaller race were found on 10 Nov (LR,RH).

**Wood Duck:** Excellent high counts were from the far west and include 84 at NPNWR on 11 Sep (LK) and 22 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). The latter is a good count for the locale. Latest were 13 at CLNWR on 8 Nov (MF).

**Green-winged Teal:** High count was 670 at CLNWR on 29 Oct (LKM). Unusual was a leucistic or albinistic bird observed at Sutherland Res on 29 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS). Latest were 8 at Gering SL on 26 Nov, although a few sometimes remain into Dec.

**American Black Duck:** The only report was of a single at Offutt Base L on 28 Nov (BP,LP). With the population of the species decreasing as a whole, it is not a surprise that frequency of occurrence in NE, always at the periphery of the species range, appears to be decreasing. In a fruitless attempt to find the species, one observer (JGJ) spent several hours on different days scoping through Mallards at DeSoto NWR, a place where it could have been found with relative ease in the middle 1980s. Due to the possibility of dark or molting Mallards and hybrids, details on future sightings would be appreciated, particularly regarding the speculum pattern and colors. An example of a likely hybrid Mallard-Am. Black Duck was one resembling an Am. Black Duck, but whose speculum was black-purple-white in pattern rather than black-purple-black, at Waco Basin on 4 Aug (WRS).

**Mallard:** At NPNWR, 54,687 were recorded on 30 Nov (LK).

**Northern Pintail:** A good early count south of the Platte R was 35 on 17 Aug at Kissinger Basin WMA, Clay Co, (JGJ). A good count north of the Platte R during peak migration was 880 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF). A few usually linger into Dec.

**Blue-winged Teal:** High counts were 1200 in the RWB on 2 Sep (JGJ) and 490 at CLNWR on 26 Sep (LKM). Latest were 3 in Otoe Co on 20 Oct (LF,CF).

**Cinnamon Teal:** At CLNWR, 6 were identified on 8 Oct (LKM).

**Nothorn Shoveler:** High counts were 1240 at CLNWR on 26 Sep (LKM) and 2000 at North Platte SL on 28 Oct (WRS). Latest were 9 at Offutt Base L on 18 Nov (BP,LP).

**Gadwall:** High count was 2200 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM). Latest were 2 at Offutt Base L on 28 Nov (BP,LP).

**American Wigeon:** Observers noted few in the east, but the simple explanation is that all the wigeons were in the west. High counts were 1306 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF) and 440 at NPNWR on 9 Oct (LK). Latest were 2 at Offutt Base L on 28 Nov (BP,LP).

**Canvasback:** Earliest in the west was a single at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM) and earliest in the east was a single at Cunningham L on 23 Oct (JGJ). Excellent was a count of 890 at CLNWR on 29 Oct (LKM).

**Redhead:** First noted were 6 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). High counts were 639 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF), 155 at NPNWR on 3 Nov (LKM), and 100 at Conestoga L on 31 Oct (BP,LP). Latest were 6 at NPNWR on 19 Nov (LK).

**Ring-necked Duck:** The season's high count and earliest report was 1050 at CLNWR on 26 Sep (LKM). This concentration dropped to 463 on 13 Oct (MF). Earliest in the east, where no large concentrations were found, was a single at Cunningham L on 15 Oct (JGJ). Latest were 3 at BOL on 17 Nov (BP,LP).

**Greater Scaup:** Only report was a single at Wehrspann L on 8 Nov (JGJ). This species appears to be more common in spring than in fall, at least in the east.

**Lesser Scaup:** Earliest was a single at Funk Lagoon on 12 Aug

(SJD). High counts were 279 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF), 175 at the North Platte SL on 28 Oct (WRS), and 200 at BOL on 27 Oct (JGJ). Latest were 6 at NPNWR on 19 Nov (LK).

**Oldsquaw:** Tying the second earliest record was a single at Pawnee L on 31 Oct (JGJ). It was followed by a male at Wehrspann L on 12 Nov (BP\*,LP\*,RB), 2 males at BOL on 21 Nov (JGJ,GeJ), and finally a single at Pawnee L on 26 Nov (WRS).

**Black Scoter:** A good find was a female/immature at the North Platte SL on 28 Oct (WRS\*).

**Surf Scoter:** A single at Yankee Hill L SRA, Lancaster Co, and a pair at Pawnee L, both on 31 Oct (JGJ), were the only ones found. For quite some time it was thought that the White-winged Scoter was the most frequently occurring scoter in the state. However, a review of the last three fall reports shows that there have been nine reports, totalling 12 birds, of the Surf and six reports, totalling 7 birds, of the White-winged.

**White-winged Scoter:** A single was at Olive Creek L on 17 Nov (JS).

**Common Goldeneye:** Earliest were 3 at Cunningham L on 31 Oct (JGJ). High counts were 288 tallied in Lancaster Co on 26 Nov (WRS) and 325 at NPNWR on 30 Nov (LK).

**Bufflehead:** Earliest and a good count was 101 at CLNWR on 26 Sep (LKM). High counts were 1950 at CLNWR on 29 Oct (LKM) and 450 in Lincoln Co on 28 Oct (WRS). Latest and a good count was 124 at BOL on 18 Nov (BP,LP).

**Hooded Merganser:** Earliest were 36 at Stagecoach L on 31 Oct (JGJ). High count was 41 at Cunningham L on 15 Nov (JGJ). A good count away from the east was 12 at Sherman Res on 17 Nov (LR,RH). Latest was a single at Offutt Base L on 28 Nov (BP,LP).

**Common Merganser:** Possible molt migrants (see NBR 63:73) were 15 at LM on 3-4 Aug (MBr,WRS) and 165 at NPNWR on 12 Aug (LK). High counts were 1250 at BOL on 25 Nov (LEi) and 3250 at NPNWR on 30 Nov (LK).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Usually rare in fall, this species' occurrence this year may be unprecedented in numbers. Overall, 137 were tallied, mostly at the reservoirs of Douglas and Lancaster Cos. Earliest and rather far west were 5 at L Ogallala on 27 Oct (WRS). High count was 23 at Summit Res on 16 Nov (JGJ). Latest were 2 at Summit Res on 19 Nov (JGJ).

**Ruddy Duck:** A hen with a downy brood at Johnson Lagoon WPA, Phelps Co, on 4 Aug (JGJ) is the first breeding record known to us for Phelps Co. A single was at BOL on 2 Aug (LEi). High count was 1500 at the North Platte SL on 28 Oct (WRS). A good count for late Nov was 36 in Lancaster Co on 26 Nov (WRS). Latest were 2 at Wolf L on 30 Nov (THo).

**Turkey Vulture:** High counts included 15 at Schilling Ref on 8 Sep (BP,LP) and 17 at CLNWR on 24 Sep (MF). Latest were 3 in Otoe Co on 13 Oct (LF,CF).

**Osprey:** Earliest was a single at LM on 4 Aug (SJD). High count was 3 in Lancaster Co on 15 Sep (WRS). Latest was a single at Pawnee L on 5 Oct (MBr).

**Mississippi Kite:** Encouraging was the presence of a total of 8 adults and an active nest with a downy young in Ogallala on 11 Aug (SJD,BP,LP). An adult remained until at least 2 Sep (LR,RH).

**Bald Eagle:** High count was 5 at NPNWR on 30 Nov (LK); winter birds had not yet arrived.

**Northern Harrier:** High count was 13 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM). Another good count, from the south-central, was 7 at Harvard Marsh on 16 Oct (SJD). Latest was a single at NPNWR on 19 Nov (LK), although some linger into Dec.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Fifteen were tallied in ten Cos. Early observations suggestive of nearby nesting were of singles in

Sowbelly Canyon on 2 Aug (SJD) and in Scottsbluff Co on 4 Aug (AK). **Cooper's Hawk:** In contrast to the preceding species, only 9 were tallied in five Cos. Earliest was a single at CLNWR on 4 Sep (MF). **Broad-winged Hawk:** Singles were found at FF on 16 Sep and LM on 27 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS). The latter is the first for that locale (Rosche 1994-Birds of LM). Few are reported in fall.

**Swainson's Hawk:** Best count was a mere 3 in Garden Co on 12 Aug (LKM). A bird in Scotts Bluff Co., whose characteristic underwing pattern was carefully observed, was rather late on 26 Oct (WRS).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A "Harlan's" type was observed at Clear Creek on 27 Oct (WRS).

**Ferruginous Hawk:** Ten birds were tallied in the west, with the high count of 3 at and around LM on 18 Oct (LKM), also the most easterly. The other 7 were in the panhandle region.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Exceptionally early, but without details, were a single at NPNWR on 28 Aug (LK) and a pair there on 11 Sep (LK). A single at CLNWR on 5 Oct (MF) was also somewhat earlier than one would typically expect. Otherwise, the species was well reported during late Oct and Nov.

**Golden Eagle:** Five were reported from the panhandle, but an immature observed flying over Cunningham L on 6 Nov (JGJ) was about as far east as one can get in NE.

**American Kestrel:** Reports were routine.

**Merlin:** Twelve birds were reported from ten counties. Earliest was an immature near the Gibbon Platte R bridge on 25 Aug (LH,RH). This report may seem early, but there are many reports from the last week of Aug throughout NE, suggesting a regular movement (all immatures?) at that time. A single at Jack Sinn Marsh on 26 Sep was identified as a "Richardson's" (SJD), while another at Bruning Pit, Fillmore Co, on 24 Sep (WRS) was identified as a "columbarius".

**Peregrine Falcon:** Earliest was a single at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). High count was 2 at Arbor Day Farm on 2 Sep (LF,CF). Latest were singles at Fremont on 9 Sep (JGJ) and BOL 7 Oct (LEi).

**Prairie Falcon:** All five reports were from the panhandle region, except for a probable at Ravenna on 17 Nov (LR,RH).

**Gray Partridge:** A single four miles s of Creighton on 11 Aug (MBr) suggests that the species is not yet extirpated.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** A good count was 85 at Kiowa Springs on 2 Nov (LKM).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Easterly were 32 five miles s of Creighton on 22 Oct (MBr). In the south-central, 6 birds 6 mi s of Kearney on 24 Nov (LR,RH) may have been either local birds or fall arrivals.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** High count was 22 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM).

**Wild Turkey:** Good counts include 45 near Chadron on 17 Oct (LKM), 40 s of Gering on 7 Nov (AK), and 28 at Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos, on 30 Nov (LF,CF).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Interesting were reports of 6 on 30 Aug (LKM) and 12 on 31 Oct (MF) at CLNWR. This species appears to be doing very well in the western half of the state at the present time.

**Virginia Rail:** Only report was of 2 a mile north of Brunswick on 22 Sep (MBr).

**Sora:** Few were reported. Singles were at Harvard Marsh on 17 Aug (JGJ) and at Hastings Basin on 15 Oct (SJD). Rails do sometimes end up in strange places during migration, as was the case with a single at a steel building job site in Blair on 5 Oct (JGJ, GeJ).

**American Coot:** High counts were 5775 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF) and 3000 in Lancaster Co on 17 Oct (WRS). Latest was a single se of Gering on 17 Nov (LKM).

**Sandhill Crane:** Several migrants made it a bit east this fall, including fly-overs by 7 at Cunningham L (JGJ), 33 at BOL (LP,BP),



and 17 at Pawnee L (BP,LP), all on 31 Oct. A flock of 77 flew over Blair on 2 Nov (JGJ). High count was 600 at the Rowe Sanctuary on 2 Nov (LR,RH).

**Black-bellied Plover:** The first ad to arrive was one at Theesen Lagoon on 11 Aug, followed by 1-2 at Schilling Ref on 20-25 Aug (BP,LP,RB). The earliest juvs to arrive were 9, also the high count, in Antelope Co. on 13 Sep (MBr), followed by 4 at Schilling Ref on 15-23 Sep (WRS,BP,LP). Latest was a single juv at L North on 31 Oct (JGJ).

**American Golden-Plover:** The first ad to arrive was one at Theesen Lagoon on 4 Aug (JGJ,WRS), followed by a single at North Harvard Basin on 17 Aug (JGJ) and 1-3 at Schilling Ref from 20-25 Aug (BP,LP,RB). The earliest juvs were a group of 3 in Antelope Co on 14 Sep (MBr), followed by 1 at L North on 19 Sep (JGJ). High count, as well as the latest, were 13 juvs in a plowed field near the Tekamah SL on 24 Oct (JGJ).

**Semipalmated Plover:** High counts were of 8 at Schilling Ref on 18 Aug (BP,LP) and 6 in Otoe Co on 5 Aug (LF,CF). Latest was 1 at CLNWR on 28 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS).

**Piping Plover:** At LM, 3 were found on 3 Aug (WRS). Latest, for this early migrant, were singles at L North on 25 Aug (MBr) and at BOL on 9 Sep (LEi).

**Killdeer:** High counts were 100 at NPNWR on 25 Sep (LK) and 72 at Schilling Ref on 25 Aug (BP,LP). Latest were 10 at Cunningham L (JGJ) and 2 at Tekamah SL (JGJ), both on 16 Nov.

**American Avocet:** High count was 150 at CLNWR on 2 Aug (JJo). High count from the east was 14 at BOL on 24 Sep (LEi). Several late reports were a surprise and these are as follows: 7 at L North on 26 Oct (MBr), 2 at Hultine North Basin on 28 Oct (WRS), 1 at L North on 31 Oct (JGJ), and a single at the Tekamah SL on 1 Nov (JGJ). Prior to this fall, the latest recorded dates were 27, 28, and 28 Oct.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Despite four single locale counts of 6, no counts exceeded that number. Latest was a single juv at Wehrspann L on 12 Nov (JGJ).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** High counts were unimpressive and include 33 at Schilling Ref on 30 Aug (BP,LP) and 29 at Hultine North Basin on 2 Sep (JGJ). Latest were 2 at Stateline Marsh on 10 Nov (LKM).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** High counts were 7 at both BOL on 2 Aug (Lei) and at LaPlatte on 6 Aug (BP,LP). Latest was in Dixon Co on 15 Sep (MBr). In e NE, two juvs were identified as *T.s. solitaria* in late Aug (JGJ), and two other juvs were identified as *T.s. cinnoea* in early Sep (JGJ). Juvs are the only age class that can be identified to subspecies in the field (see Paulson-Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest).

**Willet:** Rare in the east in fall, it appears to have been scarce in the west also. The only reports were pairs at both NPNWR on 4 Aug (LKM) and CLNWR on 2 Aug (JJo).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Probably overlooked, few were reported and no more than 3 were tallied at any one locale. Latest were singles at Stateline Marsh (LKM) and in Lancaster Co (MBr), both on 5 Oct.

**Upland Sandpiper:** High counts were 15 from both CLNWR on 2 Aug (JJo) and two miles s of Verdigre on 2 Sep (MB). Latest was a single flying over FF on 7 Sep (BP,LP).

**Long-billed Curlew:** The only reports were 5 in Garden Co on 2 Aug (JJo) and 12 six miles n of Big Springs on 4 Aug (SJD). This species departs very early in fall.

**Marbled Godwit:** Three juvs at North Harvard Basin on 11 Aug (JGJ) and another juvenile at L North on 9 Sep (JGJ) are only the 10th and 11th fall reports e of Keith Co. In the panhandle region, 3 were at NPNWR on 3 Aug (LKM) and 4 at CLNWR on 4 Oct (MF). The

latter is the 3rd latest ever, but not close to the two latest, 21 and 24 Oct.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** A good find and only the 8th fall report was a single at Schilling Ref on 8 Sep (BP,LP). Of these fall reports, 5 are in period 4-9 Sep, the others 25-31 July. As is the case in spring, the species appears to migrate through the state quickly and within a brief period in fall. The early cluster of dates probably indicates the ad migration and the later cluster of dates the juv migration.

**Red Knot:** Another good find and only the 9th documented fall report was a single juv, also at Schilling Ref, on 23 Sep (WRS\*,mob). This appears to be the only record for 1996.

**Sanderling:** Numbers were lower this year than the previous two, but reports were widespread with the species found in six Cos. High count was 75 at NPNWR on 28 Aug (LK), presumably most, if not all, juvs. Latest were 4 at LM on 28 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS) and a single at NPNWR on 9 Oct (LK).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A good count for fall was 100 at Schuyler on 17 Aug (JGJ). Latest were singles at Schilling Ref on 23 Sep (BP,LP) and in Antelope Co on 30 Sep (MBr).

**Western Sandpiper:** More common in fall than in spring, 47 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM) was nevertheless an excellent count for NE. Latest were a single juv at Hultine North Basin on 28 Oct (WRS) and 8 juvs at CLNWR on 29 Oct (LKM). These two reports are now the latest on record.

**Least Sandpiper:** High counts were 78 at Ayr L on 17 Oct (SJD) and 64 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM). Latest were 12 at L North on 26 Oct (MBr).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** The only report, without details, was from Cass Co on 23 Aug (GW,DW,KD,JD). There are no documented fall records for NE; most White-rumped Sandpipers migrate off the Atlantic Coast in fall.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** High counts include 250 in the RWB on 2 Aug (WRS) and 125 at Schuyler on 17 Aug (JGJ). Latest were 5 at L North on 24 Oct (MBr), 9 at Theesen Lagoon on 28 Oct (WRS), and 2 at Conestoga L on 4 Nov (LEi).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Again this fall, excellent numbers were reported, including counts of 225 at Schuyler and 145 at North Harvard Basin, both on 17 Aug (JGJ). Latest were singles at Pawnee L on 4 Nov (LEi), at Cunningham L on 6 Nov (JGJ), and at Verdon L SRA, Richardson Co, on 20 Nov (LF,CF). The latter ties the second latest ever.

**Dunlin:** The 6 reports received are the first for fall since 1989, except for 1 in fall 1995. Earliest were 4 at Ayr L on 17 Oct. High counts were 10 at Cunningham L on 25 Oct (JGJ) and 5 at L North on 26 Oct (MBr). Last was a single at the Tekamah SL on 1 Nov (JGJ). These reports may seem late, but are typical for this species.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** High counts were of 50 at CLNWR on 2 Aug (JJo) and 63 at North Harvard Basin on 11 Aug (JGJ). Latest were 48 at Ayr L on 17 Oct (SJD).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Including those from the Summer Report, observers tallied 162 this migration. Most were in the east-central, primarily the RWB, but 27, the season's high count, were in the east at Schilling Ref on 21 Aug (BP,LP). Latest were 5 in Colfax Co on 9 Sep (JGJ).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Four reports with details were received, all apparent juvs 24 Aug-10 Sep: 3 were in Platte Co on 24 Aug (JGJ), 1-2 in Colfax Co 24 Aug-10 Sep (JGJ), 1 at Treadway Pond, 1.5 mi n, 0.5 mi w of I-80 Exit 332, Hamilton Co, on 2 Sep (JGJ), and 3 in Cass Co on 8 Sep (BP,LP). Another report, without details,

was of a single at Niobrara on 24 Aug (MBr).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** High count was 232 at CLNWR on 8 Sep (MF). Also, 68 juvs were tallied at Ayr L on 17 Oct (SJD). Latest were 2 at Cunningham L on 31 Oct (JGJ). A single at Wehrspann L on 10 Nov (WRS), identified as Dowitcher sp., was probably also a Long-billed considering the lateness of the observation.

**Common Snipe:** High count was 18 in Colfax Co on 21 Sep (JGJ). Latest was a single in Scotts Bluff Co on 17 Nov (AK).

**American Woodcock:** The only report was of a single at Niobrara on 2 Sep (MBr).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** High count was 1600 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). Latest were 6 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** High count was 16 at CLNWR on 26 Sep (LKM). Other reports include a juv sitting on open water, far from shore, at LM on 28 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS) and 1-2 at Schilling Ref on 20 Sep (BP,LP,RB).

**Laughing Gull:** A second-winter bird was at Sutherland Res on 28 Oct (WRS\*). This is about the 6th NE record and 2nd at that location.

**Franklin's Gull:** The 2000 at Sutherland Res on 11 Aug (SJD) grew to an astonishing 85,000+ on 28 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS). The next highest count, 5000 at BOL on 7 Oct (LEI), would have been the highest in most recent years. Late birds were at Summit Res on 15 Nov (JGJ), Standing Bear L on 16 Nov (JGJ), and at Cunningham L on 22 Nov (JGJ).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Earliest were 4 at Pawnee L on 3 Oct (JGJ). High count, from the west, was 77 at Sutherland Res on 28 Oct (WRS). Latest were 3 at Cunningham L on 16 Nov (JGJ).

**Little Gull:** A young bird, still in juvenal plumage, at Pawnee L on 3-5 Oct (JGJ\*,mob) is the 2nd state record. The first was an ad at Wehrspann L on 26 Apr 1995 (NBR 63:45).

**Ring-billed Gull:** High counts were 900 at LM on 4 Aug (SJD), 1000 in the North Platte valley on 27 Oct (WRS), and 1340 at NPNWR on 13 Oct (LKM).

**California Gull:** Up to 148 were at LM 4-11 Aug (SJD,WRS,JGJ,LP,BP). This concentration fell to 61 on 29 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS) and to 8 on 18 Oct (LKM).

**Herring Gull:** A good early-season count was 4-10 at LM 2-11 Aug (JJo,SJD). Only small groups had arrived at reservoirs by Nov.

**Thayer's Gull:** A first-winter bird was at BOL on 17 Nov (WRS\*). The same or a different bird was there on 25 Nov (BP,LP).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A second-winter bird was observed at BOL on 17 Nov (JGJ\*,GeJ).

**Glaucous Gull:** This species is now expected and somewhat ordinary, a recent development. Single first-winter birds were found by the end of the period at Cunningham L on 24 Nov, Pawnee L on 26 Nov (WRS), and BOL on 28 Nov (WRS).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** This species is, by contrast, unexpected, but a first-summer bird found at LM on 4 Aug (SJD\*) was extraordinary.

**Sabine's Gull:** The unprecedented number of reports for this species this fall was likely a result of observers being at the right place (western reservoirs) at the right time (Sep-Oct after the passage of a cold front). Two juvs and an adult, a real gem, were at the inlet area of L Maloney SRA, Lincoln Co, on 26 Sep (SJD\*,JGJ\*). At least 1 juv remained until 29 Sep (mob). Other juvs were discovered at Sutherland Res on 26 Sep (JGJ\*,SJD\*) and in the middle of LM, far from shore, on 28 Sep (SJD\*,WRS\*,JGJ\*). If that were not enough, another juv was at Gavin's Point Dam on 26 Oct-6 Nov (BFH,MBr), the latest ever.

**Caspian Tern:** High count was 4 in Otoe Co on 30 Aug (LF,CF).

Three were found during the first week of Oct, including a single

at Cunningham L on 7 Oct (JGJ), the third latest on record.

**Common Tern:** Reports with details of this rare migrant included a juv at BOL on 2 Sep (JGJ\*), a juv at Cunningham L on 6 Sep (JGJ\*), and a juv accompanied by an adult at Sutherland Res on 29 Sep (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS). Reported without details were 3 were in Hooker Co 26 Aug (LF,CF).

**Forster's Tern:** High count was 50 at LM on 4 Aug (WRS). Late birds were singles at Carter L, Omaha, on 24 Oct (JGJ), Niobrara on 27 Oct (MBr), and Sutherland Res on 28 Oct (WRS\*). These records, in respective order, are the 4th, 2nd, and latest records ever.

**Least Tern:** High count was 8 at LM on 4 Aug (SJD,WRS). Latest was a single at Schilling Ref on 8 Sep (BP,LP).

**Black Tern:** High count was 64 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM). Latest was a single at Sutherland Res on 28 Oct (SJD,WRS,JGJ,JS).

**Rock Dove:** Reports were routine.

**Band-tailed Pigeon:** Potentially a somewhat overdue first state record if approved by the NOU Records Committee was one on a telephone wire in Morrill 1 Oct (ECT\*).

**Mourning Dove:** Last to leave the panhandle was 1 at L Minatare 6 Nov (KLM); singles were still near Axtell at period's end (LR,RH) and at BOL 25 Nov (LEi).

**Inca Dove:** Nebraska's 4th record was one that appeared at the Rosche feeder in Chadron "a few weeks prior to early Oct" (fide NR) and was seen there by several observers 28 Sep-12 Oct (SJD, MBr). It, or possibly another, was at the Uridil feeder in Chadron on and before 6 Nov (ZUr). The 4 Nebraska records (3 at feeders) have been during the period Sep-Mar.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Only 3 were reported, none w of Knox Co (MBr); last was 1 in Dixon Co 3 Sep (JJo), a rather early last date.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** None were reported w of Knox Co (MBr); last was 1 at ADF 9 Sep (LF,CF), also an early departure date. Best count was 5 at FF 23 Aug (RB).

**Barn Owl:** The only reports were of 3 s of Gering 1-27 Aug (AK) and 1 at an apparently suitable nest site in a bank at Red Willow Res SRA, Frontier/Hitchcock Cos, 11 Aug (SJD).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** The only report of this (presumably common statewide?) owl was of 1 at CLNWR 8 Sep and 7 Oct (LKM).

**Great Horned Owl:** Reports were routine.

**Burrowing Owl:** A good count was of 9 in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Aug (LKM). Another was in Cherry Co (no specific location) 6 Sep (JJo). No reports were received from the e edge of the range.

**Barred Owl:** The only report was of 2 at Schramm Park 28 Nov (WRS). This owl may be declining in NE; we would appreciate it if observers could let us know of locations (specific wooded areas) that they know are frequented by Barred Owls.

**Short-eared Owl:** All reports were from CLNWR, probably a stronghold for the species, although all may have been non-local birds. Two were seen in flight 28 Sep (SJD,WRS) and others were reported from 7 Oct through period's end, with a peak of 5 on 4 Nov (MF). This species is more conspicuous in late fall, but is probably nomadic rather than migratory.

**Common Nighthawk:** Largest concentration was 100 over Bellevue 23 Sep (BP,LP). Last in the w was 1 at Stateline Marsh 1 Sep (LKM) and in the e at least 8 flew over Bellevue 5 Oct (AD).

**Common Poorwill:** No information accompanied a report of the 2nd-latest ever for NE at CLNWR on 20 Oct (MF). Another was close to departure near the e edge of the range at NNF, Thomas Co, 27 Sep (RB,LR,RH).

**Whip-poor-will:** No fall birds were reported; they are difficult to detect, but late dates are in early Oct.

**Chimney Swift:** Most reported in the w, where it is regular in the Platte valley, were 9 at Scottsbluff 10 Aug (AK), while elsewhere best count was 100 at Kearney 9 Sep (LR,RH). Last were 12 at Bellevue 16 Oct (BP,LP). It was also reported from Kimball and Deuel Cos (MBR), where it is regular now, also.

**White-throated Swift:** Reports were from regular locations in Sowbelly Canyon and at Scotts Bluff NM. Last were 6 at the NM 29 Sep (LKM), the 2nd-latest sighting for NE, after an undocumented report 13 Oct 1984.

**Archilochus Hummingbird Sp.:** Intriguing was a report of a fem/imm of this genus seen briefly at Bushnell 4 Aug (SJD); species involved are Ruby-throated and Black-chinned. The former is best considered hypothetical in the panhandle, with only 2 spring and 1 fall reports, none documented; there is, however, a documented record for Wyoming 7-8 Sep 1995 (AFN 50:87) and a specimen for Chase Co, NE, 15 Sep 1985 (UNSM ZM15512). There are no spring or fall records for Colorado. Black-chinned is unrecorded in NE, and appears to be less likely to occur in the panhandle than Ruby-throated; there are no records of Black-chinned in e Wyoming (Scott 1993, Birder's Guide to Wyoming), and no Colorado records from the ne plains (Andrews and Righter 1992, Colorado Birds). Except for adult males, birds of these species are indistinguishable in the field.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** As is usual, none were reported w of Knox Co, where the last was seen 22 Sep (MBR). Elsewhere, best count was only 10, at FF 23 Aug; the observers noted this was the lowest high count in recent years, possibly a result of replacement of jewelweed by goldenglow (BP,LP). Last was an adult female at Bellevue 7 Oct (AD).

**Selasphorus Hummingbird Sp.:** The "Calliope-hunters" were out in force in early Aug at "hummingbird row" on Maple Street in Bushnell, but came up empty. Nevertheless, about 11 birds of this genus were found, most boldly identified to species, or, in the case of "Rufous-Allen's", almost to species. Because Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds are not separable in the field (see Heidcamp, Birding 29:18 for a discussion), and because there is a specimen of Allen's from Massachusetts, observers in localities where Rufous is not regular are obligated to call these birds "Rufous/Allen's". Only in the NE panhandle, however, (reports of Rufous elsewhere in NE must face stricter scrutiny), we feel that, because Rufous is regular in early fall and Allen's is not known to be regular anywhere away from the Pacific coast, the likelihood of occurrence of Allen's is so infinitesimally small that the possibility of any individual Rufous being an Allen's can be disregarded. Of course, we do not disregard the possibility that Allen's occurs, just as we entertain the possibility that some basic-plumaged Semipalmated Sandpipers we see are in fact Red-necked Stints (but we do not call these birds "Red-necked/Semipalmated" Sandpipers).

Regarding separation of Rufous/Allen's and Broad-tailed, points to look for, according to Nancy Newfield (NOURC files) are the color of the sides and undertail coverts (bright rufous in Rufous, pinkish- or creamy-buff in Broad-tailed), extent of rufous coloration in the central tail feathers (Rufous if rufous color obvious, possibly either species if not obvious), and the color of the tips of the central tail feathers (black in Rufous, green in Broad-tailed).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Three were reported. A fem/imm was at Bushnell 2 Aug (\*SJD,\*WRS). Others were reported at expected times and locations, but without details, 21 Aug at Morrill (ECT) and 2

Sep at James Ranch (SLe). This species and Rufous Hummingbird are regular early-fall migrants in the panhandle.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** About 8 were reported as this species or "Rufous/Allen's" in the period 2-10 Aug. Up to 3 were at Bushnell 2 Aug (\*SJD,\*WRS), and 2 were in Kimball the same day (WRS). One was at Harrison 8 Aug (MBr,EBr). Two "Rufous/Allen's" were at Kimball 10 Aug (\*SJD).

**Belted Kingfisher:** Reports were routine.

**Lewis' Woodpecker:** The previously-tenuous future of this species as a summer bird in NE seems assured for a time by apparent colonization of the massive 1989 Fort Robinson burn. Two were in Smiley Canyon 1 Aug, about 1.25 miles from highway 20 (JJo). No others were reported.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Last in the w was 1 at CLNWR 26 Sep (LKM), and, even in the e, an apparent early departure was made, with the last in Otoe Co seen 13 Oct (LF,CF). A few linger into winter in the extreme se in suitable years.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Most westerly was 1 in Dundy Co 13 Nov (LKM), at this date possibly not a local breeder; although the species reached Dundy Co as a breeding bird in the 1960s, there are few breeding records in adjacent Colorado.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The 5 reports of this uncommon migrant were, as expected, from the e, all in the short period 5-14 Oct: a female/immature was at Forest Lawn Cem 5 Oct (WRS), a juv was se of Blair 7 Oct (JGJ), 2 were at Bennet Cem 10 Oct (JGJ), 1 was at Forest Lawn Cem 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ), and a good count of 3 was made at Wyuka Cem, Lincoln, on 14 Oct (LEi).

**Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine.

**Northern Flicker:** Rather early for the location, a "red-shafted" was in Merrick Co 22 Sep (LR,RH). Best counts for the species were 28 at Forest Lawn Cem on 5 Oct (WRS) and 27 at NPNWR 13 Oct (LKM).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Rare in the panhandle, a single in Smiley Canyon and 2 at Chadron SP 1 Aug were reported without details (JJo). These would be the earliest panhandle records for this migrant. All other reports were from e NE. First was 1 in Lancaster Co 21 Aug (LEi), best count was 3 at Elmwood Park on 2 Sep (CEJ), and last was 1 there on 17 Sep (CEJ).

**Western Wood-Pewee:** None were reported e of Morrill Co, where 1 was near Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM), also the last. Best counts were 7 in Sowbelly Canyon 3 Aug (WRS) and 6 at Chadron SP 1 Aug (JJo).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Most westerly were in Howard Co 8 Sep (LR,RH) and Knox Co the same day (MBr). Last was rather late in Otoe Co 27 Sep (LF,CF).

**Empidonax Flycatcher Sp.:** In the e, singles were in Dakota Co, apparently a migrant, on 24 Aug (BFH), and in n Saunders Co 31 Aug (THo). In the w, a single was at Morrill 22 Aug (AK).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Birds reported as this species without details were in s Lancaster Co 9 Aug (LEi) and at ADF 14 Aug (LF,CF). Even in early Aug, birds of other *Empidonax* species may be migrating.

**Least Flycatcher:** The only reports of birds identified as this species, again without details, were of 1-2 at ADF 11-24 Sep (LF,CF).

**Cordilleran Flycatcher:** Two, identified by song, were at the regular location in Sowbelly Canyon 2 Aug (SJD,WRS).

**Eastern Phoebe:** Rather rare as far w as Frontier/Red Willow Cos, 1 was along highway 83 on the boundary 11 Aug (SJD). Other reports were from e NE, latest rather late in Elmwood Park 20 Oct (CEJ).

**Say's Phoebe:** Furthest e was 1 at Sinniger Lagoon WPA, York Co, 2 Sep (JGJ) and latest a single 3 miles s of Purdum on 29 Sep (RB). There are only 5 reports for Oct.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** Three were in Sowbelly Canyon 2 Aug (WRS), now a regular summer location marking the w edge of the species range. Other reports were from e NE, latest singles in Omaha (CEJ) and Bellevue (BP,LP) on 14 Sep.

**Cassin's Kingbird:** Good numbers continue in a favored canyon 7 mi s of Redington; 10 were there 3 Aug (SJD). Singles were in Smiley Canyon 8-10 Aug (MBr) and at L Alice 23 Aug (LKM), with the last a migrant at Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM), a rather early late date for this species.

**Western Kingbird:** Best count was 35 at NPNWR 1 Sep (LKM), presumably migrants; last was at CLNWR 7 Sep (MF). Last in e NE were early to depart, in Platte Co 25 Aug (MBr).

**Eastern Kingbird:** Best counts were 39 in Dixon Co 26 Aug (JJo) and 38 at NPNWR 1 Sep (LKM), also last in w NE. Last in e NE were 22 in Dixon Co 17 Sep (JJo).

**Horned Lark:** Migrants had arrived in force by mid-Nov, with 3250 reported 17 Nov between Gibbon and Loup City (LR,RH), and 1050 in Scotts Bluff Co the same day (LKM).

**Purple Martin:** Most westerly were 3 near Axtell on 11 Aug (LR,RH). Best count and last was a group of 41 in Lancaster Co 21 Aug (LEi).

**Tree Swallow:** Most westerly were 25 at CLNWR, a regular summer location, 2 Aug (JJo). Best count was 200 at Schilling Ref 23 Sep (WRS).

**Violet-green Swallow:** Reports were, as expected, from the panhandle; best count was 15 s of Gering 2 Aug (AK). None were reported after 10 Aug, from Smiley Canyon (MBr). This species usually is gone by late Aug.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Best count was "hundreds" around Nebraska City 13 Aug (LF,CF). Last were 250 at Schilling Ref 15 Sep (WRS).

**Bank Swallow:** Best count was 150 at Nebraska City 13 Aug (LF,CF). Last were 14 at L Alice 1 Sep (LKM).

**Cliff Swallow:** Best count was 1000 at Ayr L 18 Aug (LR,RH); large flocks of migrants occur at this time throughout the RWB. Last was in Cass Co 17 Sep (GW,DW, KD,JD).

**Barn Swallow:** Best counts were 2000 at Gadwall Basin 22 Sep (LR,RH) and 1070 in the RWB 24 Sep (WRS). Last were in Knox Co 6 Oct (MBr).

**Steller's Jay:** By period's end, there were 4 reports of as many as 8 birds in Scotts Bluff Co, bringing the total all-time to 30 reports for the state; strangely, none had appeared elsewhere. This "incursion" fits the previous pattern of occurrence of this species: 18 of the previous 26 reports were from the Platte valley. First this year was the earliest ever reported by 1 day, 11 Aug at the feeders of the Wildcat Hills NC (fide AK); subsequently, up to 5 were there 2-7 Nov (MBr,fide AK). Another was at a bird bath in Gering 6 Nov (fide AK), and 1 was at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder, location uncertain, 26 Nov (fide AK).

**Blue Jay:** Best count was 44 at ADF 22 Sep (LF,CF), apparently migrants; migration peaked in mid Sep in n Saunders Co (THo). Regular now as far w as Scotts Bluff Co, 6 were at Gering 21 Sep (AK).

**Pinyon Jay:** Although more difficult to detect due to resident birds, there appeared to be eastward movement this fall by this corvid also (1 was at a feeder in central Iowa!). Large numbers, up to 45 (LKM), were at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders 12 Oct through period's end (MBr, mob.). A single was at a Chadron feeder 24 Oct (ZUr).

**Clark's Nutcracker:** Although a single of this species was also at an Iowa feeder this fall, the only suggestion of an influx in NE by period's end was a sighting near James Ranch 19 Aug, reported with a question mark by the observer (SLe).

**Black-billed Magpie:** Best count was an excellent 107 in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Aug (LKM). Easterly reports included 2 in Merrick Co 22 Sep (LR,RH), 3 in nw Lancaster Co 25 Nov (BP,LP), and, unexpectedly, 2 at Fairbury 5 Oct (LF,CF). This species wanders eastward somewhat in fall, but as yet there are no records from the 4 Cos in extreme se NE.

**American Crow:** Best count was 3000 in the RWB 28 Oct (WRS); this species is strongly migratory on the Great Plains, with the peak movement Oct-Nov. A good count for the panhandle was 24 s of Gering 15 Oct (AK).

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Reports were routine.

**Mountain Chickadee:** Another invasive species, this one reappeared this fall; apart from a single sighting in Nov 1995, none had been recorded since 1977. This year the first were noted during the first week of Oct; 7 were at Stateline Marsh 5 Oct (LKM) and 3 at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder the same day (AK). Many were attending feeders in Scotts Bluff Co through period's end (fide AK), and NE's first specimen was obtained when one flew into a window (AK); no date or location for the specimen was provided. As of 30 Nov, none had been reported from outside Scotts Bluff Co.

**Tufted Titmouse:** Reports were from the se NE range, including one from the n edge of the breeding range, 4 birds w of Fort Calhoun 13 Oct (JGJ,WRS).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Reports were routine; no unusual influx had been detected by period's end. First migrant appeared at Nebraska City 3 Sep (LF,CF).

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** This species may be establishing itself as a resident in w Scotts Bluff Co at Stateline Marsh; one was there 23 Aug (LKM), and there have been summer reports in recent years from there also. It breeds w in the Platte valley to about Hershey in Lincoln Co (Rosche) and on the Pine Ridge. Two subspecies, with different call notes, occur in summer in NE. Western *nelsoni* occupies the Pine Ridge and Niobrara valley eastward to the Niobrara Valley Preserve in Keya Paha, Rock, and Brown Cos, and the Missouri valley and major river valleys westward to varying extents are occupied by eastern *cookei*. It would be of interest to know which occurs at Stateline Marsh. Only an uncommon winter resident at CLNWR, one had arrived there by 23 Sep (MFr). It is resident throughout the Republican valley; one was in Dundey Co 13 Nov (LKM).

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** Reports were as expected from the Pine Ridge and Wildcat Hills; best count was 18 at Chadron SP 1 Aug (JJo).

**Brown Creeper:** First was at Forest Lawn Cemetery 5 Oct (WRS); best counts were 7 there 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ) and 6 in FF 2 Nov (BP,LP). Uncommon in the panhandle, singles were in Scotts Bluff Co 27 Oct (WRS) and in Nov (AK).

**Rock Wren:** A good count was 15 in Sioux Co 1 Aug (JJo). Last were singles at Sutherland Res (SJD) and Scotts Bluff NM (LKM), both on 29 Sep.

**Carolina Wren:** Reports were from Douglas, Sarpy, and Otoe Cos, including 1 (waiting?) by the kitchen at Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha, 15 Aug (MBr,EBr). It seems that this species has declined somewhat in numbers in the last 2-3 years.

**House Wren:** Best count was only 11, at NPNWR 23 Aug (LKM). Last were in Dixon Co 20 Oct (JJo), a rather late date, and at Nebraska City 2 Nov (LF,CF), only the 3rd Nov report ever.

**Winter Wren:** Only 7-8 birds were reported; westerly were 1-2 nw of Creighton 6 Oct (MBr,EBr), a good count of 3 were at the Krimlofski Tract, Washington Co, 6 Oct (JGJ), and singles were at Nebraska City 3 Oct (LF,CF); Hummel Park, Douglas Co, 5 Oct (WRS); and in the observer's yard in Bellevue 20 Oct (RGr). Oct is peak migration time for this species in NE.



**Sedge Wren:** Aug birds may be nesting; as many as 8 were at Wehrspann L 20 Aug (BP,LP), others were reported w to Antelope Co on 23 Aug (MBr) and Phelps Co on 25 Aug (LR,RH), a singing male was in tall brome with nettles near Willis 25 Aug (BFH), and 4 sang continuously from 10 pm to 3 am at Harvard Marsh 17-18 Aug (JGJ). Reports in Sep probably are mostly migrants; best count was 12 at Jack Sinn Marsh on 15 Sep (WRS), and last were singles in Lancaster Co (MBr) and Saunders Co (MBr), both on 19 Oct.

**Marsh Wren:** Migrants were reported in e and se NE 15 Sep-7 Oct (WRS,LEi), and at CLNWR 9 Oct (LKM), but a rather late bird was at CLNWR 29 Nov (MF); this species attempts to winter in Garden and Keith Cos most years at seeps and warm springs.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** First was at ADF 4 Oct (LF,CF); only about 7 were reported.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** First were singles in Dixon Co 14 Sep (JJo,MBr). Best count was 35 in Douglas Co 13 Oct (WRS), and last was at Wolf L on 27 Oct (THo). None were reported w of Buffalo Co, where one was at the Rowe Sanctuary 12 Oct (LR,RH).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Last, and only report, was of one in Colfax Co 25 Aug (MBr). Most depart by early Sep.

**Eastern Bluebird:** Westerly was at least 1 at James Ranch through 23 Sep (SLe), as were 1-3 at Stateline Marsh 5-12 Oct (LKM,AK), and as many as 10 at Wildcat Hills 27 Oct (LKM). Best counts were 35 at Harlan Co Res 20 Oct (LR,RH) and 28 in Douglas Co 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ). A male was still in Dixon Co 30 Nov (JJo).

**Mountain Bluebird:** The last reported in the breeding range was at James Ranch 29 Sep (SLe), a rather early departure date; unexpected during the breeding season was 1 in Kimball Co (location not given) 7 Aug (MBr); this appears to be the first summer report from Kimball Co. Migrants first were noted at Stateline Marsh 5 Oct (LKM), and had moved as far e as Custer Co by 13 Oct (MBr), location not given. No large groups were reported.

**Townsend's Solitaire:** Further summer reports (see Summer Report), when this species is rare, included 2 in Sowbelly Canyon 2 Aug (SJD,WRS). Fall arrivers were first noted 28 Sep at Winters Creek L (LKM), and had reached e to Keith Co by 13 Oct (MBr). Best counts were 33 in Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co, 11 Nov (LKM), and 22 at LM 27 Oct (WRS).

**Veery:** None were reported. This species is rare, but regular, in fall in e NE.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Capping a thrush migration marked by very few reports, the only report for the genus other than Hermit Thrush was of 2 Swainson's Thrushes in Dakota Co 8 Sep (BFH). We wonder whether thrushes and several warbler species (for example Palm Warbler, which see) are actually much rarer in fall or whether observers do not spend as much time looking for migrant songbirds in fall.

**Hermit Thrush:** Rare in fall in e NE, a good count was of 4 in Washington Co 13 Oct (JGJ,WRS); singles were at Schramm Park 19 Oct (BP,LP) and Arbor Lodge SHP, Nebraska City, 25 Nov (LF,CF). Hermit Thrush is only a casual migrant in the panhandle; while the eastern race *faxonii* is known to occur there (AOU 1957), the status of the grayish Rocky Mountain race *auduboni* is unclear. The only record of *auduboni* for NE is, surprisingly, a specimen identified as this race collected in Lincoln 4 Apr 1900 (UNSM 6670). Thus apparently only the 2nd report of this race for NE was 1 at Stateline Marsh 12 Oct (MBr,AK, HKH,DHe); it was described as "light grey, pale" (MBr).

**Wood Thrush:** The only report was of 1 at FF 11 Sep (SJD,BP,LP).

**American Robin:** Several flocks of 100-400 were noted statewide 23 Sep-27 Oct, suggesting peak movement.

**Gray Catbird:** Reports were only from Thomas Co (LR,RH) eastward; last was at BOL 7 Oct (LEi).

**Northern Mockingbird:** Reports were routine, including Kimball (SJD,BP,LP), Scotts Bluff (LKM), and Lancaster (MBr) Cos.

**Sage Thrasher:** This was probably the best fall yet for this species. A total of about 26 were reported, including amazing counts of 11 at Oliver Res SRA, Kimball Co, 18 Aug (fide NR), other reports from there 10-31 Aug (BP,LP,SJD,LKM), and 10+ s of I-80 Exit 1 in Kimball Co 10 Aug (SJD). There were reports from s of Exit 1 as early as 18 Jul, when 4 were seen (fide NR), at that date possibly a family group and suggestive of nesting. Others were 2 at Windlass Hill SHP, Garden Co, 7 Aug (MBr), 2 near Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM), and 1 near Long Canyon, Banner Co, 2 Aug (SJD,WRS).

**Brown Thrasher:** Last was in Hall Co 6 Oct (LF,CF).

**American Pipit:** This species was much in evidence, some 34 reported. Best counts were 14 at LM 27 Sep (SJD,WRS) and 7 at Hultine North Basin 28 Oct (WRS). First was in Antelope Co 15 Sep (MBr) and last at CLNWR 29 Oct (LKM).

**Sprague's Pipit:** This rare migrant was reported only from ne of Jack Sinn Marsh in Saunders Co 19 Oct (MBr,DSt).

**Cedar Waxwing:** Small numbers were reported statewide in Aug, not unusual for this low-density statewide summer resident. First evidence of flocking was 13 at Winters Creek L 1 Sep (LKM), and best count was 75 at Pawnee L 26 Nov (WRS).

**Northern Shrike:** First arrivals were s of Gering 20 Oct (AK) and near Gibbon 27 Oct (LR,RH). Southeasterly were 2 in n Lancaster Co 4 Nov (LEi), and 1-2 at BOL 18-24 Nov (BP,LP,RB).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Late westerly reports, neither with details, were from Scotts Bluff Co 11 Nov (LKM) and CLNWR 25 Nov (MF). These are only the 3rd and 4th panhandle reports for Nov. In general, there is little overlap of the shrike species, with most Loggerheads departing the panhandle by the end of Sep.

**European Starling:** Best counts were 6100 at NPNWR 9 Nov (LKM) and 4000 in Scotts Bluff Co 26 Oct (WRS).

**Bell's Vireo:** Four were reported, all from e NE, the latest at ADF 8 Oct (LF,CF), a record late date. Second latest was 1 at Arbor L 9 Sep (LEi).

**Solitary Vireo:** All reports were from e NE. First was at ADF 9 Sep (LF,CF), best count 5 at FF 11 Sep (BP,LP), and last rather late at Forest Lawn Cemetery on 13 Oct (JGJ,WRS).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reports were of 4 birds in Douglas and Sarpy Cos, last a singing bird at Schramm Park 15 Sep (WRS).

**Warbling Vireo:** Best count was 6 at FF 14 Sep (BP,LP), and last 1 at Boyer Chute NWR 23 Sep (WRS).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** There have been no fall reports since 1981, and so 3 birds this fall were a surprise. All were identified by the presence of black lores and entirely yellowish underparts. Singles were at Willis 14 Sep (BFH), at Schramm Park 15 Sep (WRS\*), and at BOL 10 Oct (JGJ\*), the latter rather late.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Best count was 6 at FF 7 Sep (BP,LP), and last 2 at Boyer Chute NWR 23 Sep (WRS). None were reported w of Antelope Co, where 1 was present 6 Sep (MBr).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Only the 13th and 14th fall reports for NE, all since 1973, singles were at ADF 11 Sep (LF,CF) and at FF the same day (SJD).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Few were reported for this usually fairly common e NE migrant. First was 1 at FF 4 Sep (BP,LP), and last were 4 there on 22 Sep (BP,LP) and 1 at ADF the same day (LF,CF).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First was at CLNWR 30 Aug (LKM), best count 12 at Forest Lawn Cemetery on 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ), and last 2 at ADF 22 Oct (LF,CF).

**Nashville Warbler:** Good numbers were noted, none w of Thomas Co, where 1 was rather far w at NNF 28 Sep (LR,RH), and Buffalo Co, where 1 was at Rowe Sanctuary 12 Oct (LR,RH). First was at FF 23 Aug (RBa), best count 10 at Willis 14 Sep (BFH), and last, 2 in Dixon Co 22 Oct (JJo).

**Northern Parula:** Two were reported: 1 at FF 11 Sep (BP,LP), and another at Ponca SP 14 Sep (MBr,DHe). Fall reports are unusual.

**Yellow Warbler:** Last in the w were 5 at CLNWR 30 Aug, also best count (LKM), while in the e 2 were at FF 11 Sep (BP,LP).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Reports were, as expected, from the Missouri valley: first were 3 at Jewell Park 27 Aug (BP,LP), also best count along with 3 at FF 7 Sep (BP,LP), and last, 1 at FF 11 Sep (BP,LP).

**Magnolia Warbler:** The only report was of 2 at FF 11 Sep (SJD,BP,LP).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** This rare state-wide fall migrant was reported only once, without details, a single at FF 16 Oct (fide NR).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Presumed summering birds (subspecies was not noted) were in Sioux Co in Aug (MBr,SLe). First migrant was at ADF 17 Sep (LF,CF). Best counts were 129 in Washington/Douglas Cos 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ) and 100 at Rowe Sanctuary the same day (LR,RH). Last were 2 in Gosper Co 10 Nov (LR,RH).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Only 6 were reported, all from the Missouri valley; first was at Jewell Park 27 Aug (BP,LP), best count 3 at FF 14 Sep (BP,LP), and last, 1 at ADF 15 Sep (LF,CF).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** Good numbers were reported, including a male at Jewell Park 27 Aug in "full breeding plumage, never seen in fall before" by experienced observers (BP,LP). As expected, most were in the Missouri valley, but unexpected was 1 at Morrill 23 Aug (ECT) for only the 3rd fall panhandle report. Elsewhere, first were a surprising 10, also high count, at Jewell Park 27 Aug (BP,LP), and last, 1 at FF 7 Sep (BP,LP).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** The only reports were of 1-2 at the regular FF summer site 10-14 Sep (SJD,BP,LP).

**Palm Warbler:** There are only about 20 fall reports for the state, even though spring and fall migrants use the same routes. Perhaps it is overlooked in fall as it occupies open areas rather than woodlands like other warblers. The only report was from Rowe Sanctuary, 13 Oct (LR,RH).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** First of this e NE migrant was 1 at FF 7 Sep (BP,LP), and last a presumed male (buffy flanks) at Schramm Park 24 Sep (WRS).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Apart from summer birds in Sowbelly Canyon (WRS,SJD), first migrant was at Jewell Park 27 Aug (BP,LP). Best count was 10 at Ponca SP 3 Sep (MBr), and last, 1 in Dixon Co 22 Sep (JJo). No migrants were reported from the w.

**American Redstart:** Summer birds were reported from Sioux (WRS) and Dawes (JJo,MBr) Cos. Migrants appeared first in Bellevue 22 Aug (BP,LP) and at Morrill 23 Aug (ECT). Best count was only 4, at FF 2 Sep (BP,LP). Last was at Krimlofski Tract, Washington Co, 23 Sep (WRS).

**Ovenbird:** Apart from summer birds in Sowbelly Canyon (WRS), migrants appeared first at Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM). Last was in Antelope Co 14 Sep (MBr). Few were reported.

**Northern Waterthrush:** Surprisingly, only 1 was reported, this at Crystal Cove L 8 Sep (BFH).

**Mourning Warbler:** The only reports were of singles at FF 4-8 Sep (BP,LP) and 2 at Crystal Cove L 8 Sep (BFH).

**Common Yellowthroat:** Last were in e NE: 1 in Knox Co 7 Oct (MBr) and 2 at ADF 2 Oct (LF,CF). Best count was only 7, at CLNWR 30 Aug

(LKM).

**Wilson's Warbler:** First was 1 at CLNWR 13 Aug (LKM), record early by 1 day, and next a single in Lancaster Co 23 Aug (LEi). Best count was 25 at Ponca SP 3 Sep (MBr). Last was in Thomas Co 28 Sep (MBr).

**Canada Warbler:** This was a good fall for this species, about 17 birds reported, all from e NE in the short period 23 Aug-11 Sep. First were 2 at FF 23 Aug (RB,BP,LP), best count 5 at Ponca SP 31 Aug (MBr), and last 1 at FF 11 Sep (BP,LP).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Unexpected was 1 in Antelope Co 8 Sep, the first known to the observer for that Co (MBr); presumably a migrant, such reports are rare eastwardly.

**Summer Tanager:** Also unexpected were 2 fems at FF 6 Sep (BP,LP). Not known to breed regularly at FF, these may have been from further north, where reports are few in summer, or post-breeding wanderers. No others were reported.

**Scarlet Tanager:** The first Nov record for NE and latest by a month were 2 fems (with details provided) at Johnson L 10 Nov (LR,RH). Also, rather late were 2 winter-plumaged males at Schramm Park 24 Sep (WRS). The previous record-late date was 10 Oct.

**Western Tanager:** None were reported.

**Northern Cardinal:** Reports of the small resident population continue from Scotts Bluff Co, where 2 males and 2 females were noted (AK,LKM). Otherwise, perhaps the most westerly established population is in se Garden Co in the Oshkosh area (Rosche).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Most westerly reported were males near Gibbon 3 and 17 Aug (LR,RH); this is near the west edge of the range of "pure" birds of this species in the Platte valley. Elsewhere, last was 1 at Willis 14 Sep (BFH).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** The Gibbon area has both *Phaeucticus* grosbeaks; in addition to the Rose-breasteds (above), Black-headed were there 31 Aug-22 Sep (LR,RH), the last date rather late.

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reports were statewide, as expected; best count was 8 in Dixon Co 16 Aug (JJo), probably migrants. Last were in Colfax Co 25 Aug (MBr) and rather late in Dixon Co 22 Sep (JJo).

**Lazuli Bunting:** Most easterly was 1 at Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM), presumably a migrant, also the latest.

**Indigo Bunting:** Most westerly was not far w, in Knox Co (MBr), although it was rather late, on 21 Sep (MBr). Away from the Missouri valley, the record latest is 18 Sep.

**Dickcissel:** Although most leave by mid Oct, lingerers even into Dec are on record. Still rather late, however, were a female in Hamilton Co 27 Oct (LR,RH) and a single at ADF 28 Oct (LF,CF).

**Eastern Towhee:** Mark Brogie reports that this species occurs in Ponca SP in summer (singles were at Ponca SP 31 Aug-2 Sep), and Spotted Towhee just to the w, the dividing line centered on Cedar Co. It should be noted that one of the reasons these species were recently separated is that although hybrids occur where the species' ranges meet, pure birds occur also, indicating continuing assortative mating. Thus, in e NE, pure birds are expected to occur within a milieu of intergrades. Sibley and West (1959, Auk 76:326-338), placed the midpoint of the cline in characters of the two species along the Missouri River between Blair and the mouth of the Niobrara River; it would be expected that "pure" Easterns would occur past this point, as Brogie has observed. A similar situation occurs elsewhere in s and e NE where these two species both occur. However, data so far indicate that few Spotted Towhees occur in summer southeast of the area of intergradation of the two species; this area can be approximated by a line connecting Dakota, Dodge, Platte, Hall, and Harlan Cos. Observers in these areas should note the proportions of "pure" birds of each species and intergrades.

Single Eastern Towhees were in n Saunders Co 3 and 24 Aug (THo) and at BOL 7 Oct (LEi).

**Spotted Towhee:** Supporting the location of the area of intergradation between Eastern and Spotted Towhees (above), were summer sightings of Spotted Towhees eastward to central Knox Co (MBr), n Saunders Co 10 Aug (THo), Platte and Colfax Cos 25 Aug (MBr), and Holstein in Kearney Co 3 Aug (LR,RH). Migrants begin to appear se of this area in early Oct; first in Lancaster Co were 2 at BOL 7 Oct (LEi), 1 was in Washington Co 13 Oct (WRS,JGJ), and 1 was at FF by 20 Oct (BP,LP). There is a corresponding departure from the panhandle by Nov; last in Scotts Bluff Co was at Mitchell 26 Oct (WRS).

**American Tree Sparrow:** First were in Sioux Co 12 Oct (MBr) and Washington Co the next day (WRS,JGJ). Best count was 115 at CLNWR 27 Nov (MF).

**Chipping Sparrow:** Peak movement was indicated by counts of 100 at NNF, Thomas Co, 29 Sep (LR,RH), 100 at Rowe Sanctuary 13 Oct (LR,RH), and 70 at the Gering Cem 24 Sep (AK). Last was 1 at a Nebraska City feeder 31 Oct (LF,CF), and, in w NE, 2 in Scotts Bluff Co 13 Oct (LKM).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Following a Jul report, another was noted at James Ranch 12 Aug (SLe); breeding is possible in this part of NE. First migrants were 15 at CLNWR 30 Aug (LKM), also the rather low best count, and last were 5 in Nebraska City 30 Oct (LF,CF).

**Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report was of a summer bird in Kimball Co (MBr). No specific location was given. Reports are few from Kimball Co, but this species may breed in isolated suitable habitat, short-grass prairie with scattered sagebrush or other small shrubs, anywhere in the panhandle. Most easterly locations have been Kilpatrick L in Box Butte Co and s of Chappell in Deuel Co.

**Field Sparrow:** No westerly reports were received. Best count was 100 at Rowe Sanctuary 13 Oct (LR,RH), indicating peak movement. Last were at ADF 1 Nov (LF,CF) and in n Saunders Co 13 Nov, where 3 were singing into Oct (THo).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Best counts were 72 at CLNWR 26 Sep (LKM) and 60 near Brownlee in Cherry Co 28 Sep (LR,RH), indicating that peak movement is rather early in this species. Last were 2 in Dixon Co 22 Oct (JJo), 1 in n Lancaster Co 21 Oct (LEi), and, in w NE, 18 at CLNWR 9 Oct (LKM).

**Lark Sparrow:** Best counts were summer birds; 100 were in Garden Co 2 Aug (JJo) and 45 in Kimball Co 1 Sep (LR,RH). Last were 1 at CLNWR 5 Oct (MFr) and 15 in Hall Co 6 Oct (LF,CF).

**Lark Bunting:** None were reported outside the panhandle. Best count was 380 in sw Kimball Co 1 Sep (LR,RH). Last were 58 near Chimney Rock SHP 2 Sep (LKM).

**Savannah Sparrow:** First were 2 at CLNWR 30 Aug (LKM) and, in e NE, 1 at Schilling Ref 23 Sep (WRS). Best counts were 500 at Springer WPA, Hamilton Co, 5 Oct (LR,RH) and 370 at CLNWR 26 Sep (LKM). Last were 65 around Nelson Basin 27 Oct (LR,RH) and 13 in Lancaster Co 21 Oct (LEi).

**Baird's Sparrow:** The only report of this rarely detected migrant was of 1 at L Alice 27 Sep (LKM\*); the NOU Records Committee has the report.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Best count was 150 in Garden Co 1 Aug (JJo). Last was in n Saunders Co 3 Nov (THo); a description was provided for this bird, which is the 2nd latest on record other than 1 in Adams Co 6 Nov 1965. Otherwise, latest was 1 at Harvard Marsh 16 Oct (SJD).

**LeConte's Sparrow:** This species was reported in numbers this fall. Best counts were 15 at Arbor L 15 Oct (LEi), 10 at a spot 2 miles

w of Creighton on 7 Oct (MBr), and 10 at Harvard Marsh 16 Oct (SJD). Last were 9 at Nelson Basin 27 Oct (LR,RH). None were reported w of Knox, Pierce, Hamilton, and Clay Cos.

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** Observers found this species at Jack Sinn Marsh 15 Sep (WRS\*), the 3rd earliest on record, through 20 Oct (fide NR), with best count only 2, on 26 Sep (SJD,WRS). An excellent tally of 9 was found at Harvard Marsh 16 Oct (SJD). This species probably occurs throughout e NE during fall migration.

**Fox Sparrow:** First appeared at 3 locations 8 Oct: Niobrara (MBr), Dixon Co (JJo), and ADF (LF,CF). Best count was 10 at Boyer Chute NWR 20 Oct (BP,LP). Last were 3 in nw Douglas Co 10 Nov (WRS). None were reported w of Knox Co.

**Song Sparrow:** Unusual in summer in the panhandle, singles were at Oliver Res SRA, Kimball Co, 31 Aug (LR,RH), perhaps the only regular summer location in the panhandle (Rosche), and at CLNWR 7 Sep (MF). The latter bird was likely a migrant, as migration begins in late Aug. Migrants are uncommon in the panhandle, but several were noted in Scotts Bluff Co: 3 were at Stateline Marsh 12 Oct (AK), 3 dark-chestnut birds with gray napes were at Cochran L, Scotts Bluff Co, 27 Oct (WRS), and 4 were near Gering 17 Nov (LKM). The 3 Cochran L birds may be of the Rocky Mountain race *montana*, which is probably a regular migrant in the panhandle in small numbers. Best count was 55 at Harvard Marsh 25 Sep (WRS).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** First was at ADF 16 Sep (LF,CF), followed by 1 in Knox Co 21 Sep (MBr) and, in w NE, 1 at CLNWR 9 Oct (LKM). Best count was 100 at Rowe Sanctuary 13 Oct (LR,RH). Last were at ADF 3 Nov (LF,CF), a single in n Saunders Co 27 Oct (THo), and 2 at Nelson Basin the same day (LR,RH).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Away from likely breeding areas, migrants appeared first at ADF 2 Oct (LF,CF) and at BOL 7 Oct (LEi). Best count was 24 in Lancaster Co 15 Oct (LEi), and last were at ADF 3 Nov (LF,CF) and 2 at Nelson Basin 27 Oct (LR,RH).

**White-throated Sparrow:** Rare in w NE in fall, unexpected was 1 in Sioux Co 12 Oct (MBr). Elsewhere, first were singles at Wolf L 28 Sep (THo) and in Dixon Co 29 Sep (JJo). Best count was 16 on 16 Oct at ADF (LF,CF). Last were 1 at ADF 6 Nov (LF,CF) and 6 in Lancaster Co 4 Nov (LEi).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** First was in Antelope Co 22 Sep (MBr), followed by 15 s of Gering 24 Sep (AK), and, in e NE, 1 at ADF 25 Sep (LF,CF). Best counts were 75 at CLNWR 2 Oct (MF) and 50 there 9 Oct (LKM).

**Harris' Sparrow:** First were at Brownlee, Cherry Co, 28 Sep (LR,RH) and at NNF, Thomas Co, the next day (LR,RH). Best counts were 100 in Lancaster Co 4 Nov (LEi) and 40 in n Saunders Co 9 Nov (THo). Uncommon in the w, reports were of 3 at CLNWR 9 Oct (LKM), 1-8 in Scotts Bluff Co 24-26 Oct (AK,WRS), and 2 in Dundy Co 13 Nov (LKM).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** First migrants (race not noted) were s of Gering 24 Sep (AK) and at NNF, Thomas Co, 29 Sep (RB). Among specified races, first "Oregons" were at James Ranch 30 Sep (SLe) and e to Buffalo Co 12 Oct (LR,RH) and Douglas Co 10 Nov (WRS); a "Slate-colored" was at Forest Lawn Cem 5 Oct (WRS); "White-winged" first appeared at James Ranch 7 Oct (SLe), and migrants were in Scotts Bluff Co 26 Oct (WRS) and e of the normal winter range in Buffalo Co 16 Nov (LR,RH). "White-winged" Juncos were more common than usual s of Gering, where they are "rarely seen, perhaps once every 4-5 years" (AK). Most "White-winged" Juncos winter within the breeding range or in Colorado. A dark-gray bird at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders 27 Oct was black-hooded with no pinkish or reddish in its plumage and a ragged breast separation between the white and black; it was suspected to be of the race *cismontanus* (WRS), which itself may be a stable hybrid population between "Slate-colored"

and "Oregon" Juncos (Rising, James D. 1996. Sparrows of the United States and Canada). Best count was 240 in Lancaster Co 4 Nov (LEi). **McCown's Longspur:** Reports were from the summer range in Sioux and Kimball Cos (MBr).

**Lapland Longspur:** First and best counts were 50 in Burt Co 24 Oct (fide NR) and 6 in Scotts Bluff Co 26 Oct (WRS).

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Reports were from the summer range in Sioux Co (MBr, WRS), but a presumed migrant at CLNWR 29 Oct (LKM) was of significance. Breeding birds depart during Oct, and this CLNWR bird is the latest migrant except for another in Sioux Co 8 Nov 1980 and a few undocumented winter reports.

**Snow Bunting:** The only birds that made it into the fall report were 4 near Bancroft on 28 Nov (LF, CF).

**Bobolink:** This species is inconspicuous in fall; migration takes place in Aug. The only reports were of 7 in Dixon Co 4 Aug (JJo), 9 at CLNWR 13 Aug and the last, 36 there 30 Aug (LKM), and 3 in n Lancaster Co 24 Sep (LEi). The latter date is the 2nd latest ever for the state behind a 27 Sep 1927 Lincoln Co record (Tout).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Best counts were 100,000 at Clear Creek 27 Oct (WRS) and 9000 at Funk Lagoon 18 Oct (LKM).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Last reported was 1 in n Lancaster Co 21 Oct (LEi). Best count was 30 at CLNWR on 9 Oct (LKM), a location where this species summers in good numbers.

**Western Meadowlark:** Best count was of 350 summer birds in the Lowell area 3 Aug (LR, RH), while probable migrants were 200 at Nelson Basin 27 Oct (LR, RH).

**Meadowlark sp.:** Probable migrants were 100 at James Ranch 30 Sep (SLe).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Best count was only 45, at Nebraska City 30 Aug (LF, CF). A few summer in the lower Missouri valley. Last were 30 at Funk Lagoon 18 Oct (LKM).

**Rusty Blackbird:** The only reports were of 3 in n Saunders Co 3 Nov (THo) and 11 in Dixon Co 16 Nov (JJo).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** First migrant away from w NE was a single at Funk Lagoon 21 Sep (LR, RH). This species is uncommon as a migrant in e NE, so surprising was a large flock of 1000 far to the se at Nebraska City 23 Oct (LF, CF); no details were provided. None were reported later than 28 Oct, when 19 were in Clay Co (WRS).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Reports from known summer locations were received; of interest was 1 at Arbor L 23 Aug (LEi); this may have been a migrant, as the breeding areas are vacated in Aug. Flocks form after breeding, such as 127 birds at Mallard Haven WPA, Fillmore Co (JGJ). North of the current range in se NE and the RWB were birds in Knox Co 24 Aug (MBr) and Stanton Co 25 Aug (MBr). An influx was noted at Nebraska City, where none had been seen previously by the observers; 7 appeared on 8 Oct (4 males, 3 females), increasing to 12 on 20 Oct (7 males, 5 females), and last seen 12 Nov, when 35 were seen, all males (LF, CF).

**Common Grackle:** Rather late in the w was 1 at CLNWR 10 Nov (LKM). Best count was 9000 at Funk Lagoon 18 Oct (LKM).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Best count was an amazing 12,000 at Funk Lagoon 18 Oct (LKM); the observer commented on the surprising number. A count of 1000 2 miles e of Funk Lagoon was made 21 Sep (LR, RH). Last were several in n Lancaster Co 12 Nov (LEi) and 1 in Dixon Co 16 Nov (JJo).

**Orchard Oriole:** Few were reported. Last were 2 in n Saunders Co 24 Aug (THo) and 5 at CLNWR 13 Aug (LKM). Last fall migration dates are in late Sep.

**Baltimore Oriole:** Few were reported, none w of Buffalo and Kearney Cos (LR, RH). Last was rather late in Cass Co 27 Sep (GW, DW, KD,

JD).

**Bullock's Oriole:** The only reports were of singles in Scotts Bluff Co 12 Aug (AK) and 1 Sep (LKM).

**Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** Hopefully an indicator of things to come, 12 were at the Hughson Ranch in s Sioux Co 24 Nov (LKM) and a few days prior (HKH). No others were reported of this rare plains wanderer.

**Purple Finch:** Only about 6 had appeared by period's end. First was at Gering 15 Nov (AK), where it is rare, a fem was at the observers' feeder near Gibbon 16-17 Nov (LR,RH), and another was there 30 Nov (LR,RH), 2 were at ADF 18 Nov (LF,CF), and another at the observers' Nebraska City feeder 24 Nov (LF,CF).

**Cassin's Finch:** Very rare in summer, 4 were reported without details in Sowbelly Canyon 1 Aug (JJo). While there is only one confirmed breeding record, there are records of a few birds appearing beginning in late Jul in the panhandle, possibly wandering juveniles. A fall influx was noted in the panhandle, most conspicuously at the feeders of the Wildcat Hills NC, where birds were first noted 6 Oct, and up to 14 had appeared by period's end (LKM). Also in Sowbelly Canyon, 2 were present 12 Oct (MBr), and 1 was s of Gering 30 Nov (AK).

**House Finch:** Reports were routine.

**Red Crossbill:** Definitely not routine were Aug reports far e of the usual range. Near Gibbon, 2 immatures appeared in the observers' yard on sunflowers 3 Aug (LR,RH); an influx was noted in the Kearney area during Aug (George Brown fide NR). As far e as Sarpy Co 4 immatures were at the Bellevue Cem 21 Aug (BP,LP). Also at unusual locations for Aug were birds in s Sioux Co 2 Aug (SJD), up to 7 in Kimball Co 2-10 Aug (SJD,MBr), and singles below Kingsley Dam, LM, 3 and 11 Aug (SJD). Best count was 250 in Sioux Co, most in Monroe Canyon, Sioux Co, 2 Aug (SJD).

**White-winged Crossbill:** Details were provided for a single imm or juv bird seen at Harrison 8 Aug; it was heavily spotted, had 2 broad white wingbars or patches, and was feeding on spruce cones on the ground (MBr). This species is casual in NE, most appearing Nov-Apr, but there are 3 prior undocumented reports in the Jun-Aug period. It should be noted that this species is a low-density breeder in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

**Common Redpoll:** The only report for the period was of 1 s of Gering 10 Nov (AK).

**Pine Siskin:** First birds noted in e NE were 7 at BOL 24 Sep (LEi) and 3 at Jack Sinn Marsh the same day (WRS), although 27 at CLNWR on 13 Aug (LKM) and 1 at Boot Hill, Ogallala, 2 Sep (LR,RH) may have been heading eastward. As many as 100 were at Rowe Sanctuary 13 Oct (LR,RH). A large flock was at the feeders of the Wildcat Hills NC, estimated at 50 on 7 Nov (AK). It may summer in the Wildcat Hills (AK), and now does so at NNF, Thomas Co, where 6 were noted 2 Aug (JJo).

**Lesser Goldfinch:** A report was submitted to the NOU Records Committee of a bird "probably" this species near Gibbon 16 Nov; it had a black cap and a greenish back, but no other features were seen (LR,RH). Of 5 prior reports, only 1 was e of the panhandle, but it was judged "Not Accepted" by the NOU Records Committee.

**American Goldfinch:** Reports were routine, although it was considered "rather scarce this fall" in n Saunders Co (THo).

**Evening Grosbeak:** Excellent numbers were noted in the panhandle before period's end, with up to 100 at a feeder in Gering 30 Nov (AK) and 20 at a feeder in Chadron where none had been seen before (ZUr). First was 1 at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders 12 Oct (MBr), where it was reported through the period, and 1 was at L Minatare 23 Nov (LKM).



**House Sparrow:** Reports were routine.

#### OBSERVERS

Roland Barth (RBa), Omaha; Ellen Brogie (EBr), Creighton; Mark Brogie (MBr), Creighton; Hillary Cotton (HCo), Omaha; Kevin DeGarmo (KD), Elmwood; Jan DeGarmo (JD), Elmwood; Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Ames, IA; Art Douglas (AD), Bellevue; Larry Einemann (LEi), Lincoln; Jim Etherton (JE), Doniphan; Carol Falk (CF), Nebraska City; Laurence Falk (LF), Nebraska City; Marlin French (MF), Ellsworth; Robin Harding (RH), Gibbon; Dave Heidt (DHe), Creighton; Nicole Hendricks (NHe), Omaha; Thomas Hoffman (THo), Omaha; Bill F. Huser (BFH), South Sioux City; Clyde E. Johnson (CEJ), Omaha; Jan Johnson (JJo), Wakefield; Gerald Jorgensen (GeJ), Blair; Joel G. Jorgensen (JGJ), Blair; Alice Kenitz (AK), Gering; Lucy Koenig (LK), Scottsbluff; Kristen Krueger (KK), Omaha; Sandy Lemmon (SLe), Crawford; Larry K. Malone (LKM), Scottsbluff; Babs Padelford (BP), Bellevue; Loren Padelford (LP), Bellevue; Jerry L. Probst (JLP), Sioux City, IA; Lanny Randolph (LR), Gibbon; Neal Ratzlaff (NR), Omaha; Sara Shirk (SSh), Omaha; Stan Shirk (StS), Omaha; W. Ross Silcock (WRS), Tabor, IA; Dave Stage (DSt), Laurel; John Sullivan (JS), Elmwood; Edna Claire Thomas (ECT), Morrill; Zee Uridil (ZUr), Chadron; Suzanne Winckler (SWi), Omaha; Donald Wood (DW), Elmwood; Gertrude Wood (GW), Elmwood.