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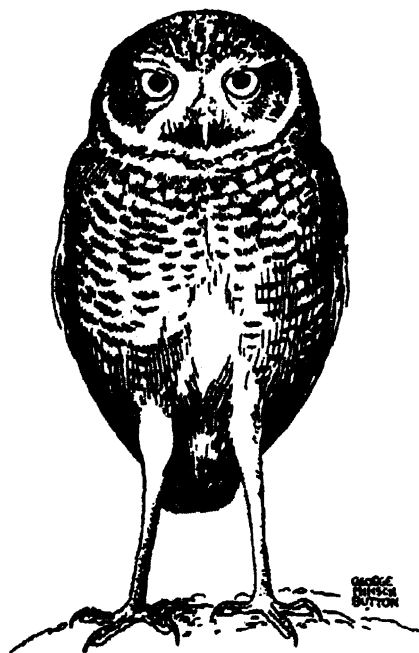
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Addendum to Greater Snow Goose Article

In "The Greater Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens atlanticus*) in Nebraska" by W. Ross Silcock, published in the Sept. 2004 issue of *The Nebraska Bird Review*, we failed to credit Randy Buettner of Grand Island, who made the original observation of the Greater Snow Goose and provided the specimen, which was obtained in Clay Co. and is shown in the photo, to William Lemburg.

FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The fall season is a mix of summer, fall migration, and winter. Thus there are breeding records of interest, such as Mississippi Kites nesting at Red Cloud, only the 2nd known location in Nebraska, and only the 3rd documented breeding record for Northern Parula, despite its common summer residency. Fall migration generates early arrival dates, high counts, and late departure dates, the last seemingly more numerous as our average temperatures increase. Included in the late departure category were several late shorebirds, Great Egret and White-faced Ibis, and even the latest ever Black-throated Blue Warbler.

Counts of interest were 3000 Double-crested Cormorants at Harlan Co Res and 588 Cattle Egrets at a single Rainwater Basin wetland. At the other end of the scale were low numbers of waterfowl, for reasons much speculated upon by hunters as well as birders, the consensus being that wet fall conditions in the Dakotas were holding geese and ducks there. The best count of Mallards by period's end was only 10,000, and no other puddle ducks had counts over 500. Geese did not arrive in numbers until the last days of the period. One bright spot was the number of Hooded Mergansers reported; there are almost no breeding records for Nebraska, and so one wonders whether these birds are indeed breeding undetected in the state. Also disappointing were low numbers of Long-billed Dowitchers and especially Buff-breasted Sandpipers in the Rainwater Basin.

Arrival of winter birds, especially invasion species, is anticipated each fall; the first of these is usually Red-breasted Nuthatch, which arrives in Aug most years, and this year appeared in numbers, seemingly every feeder hosting at least one. Best single-location count was 15. Exciting was the appearance of several Clark's Nutcrackers, and a Mountain Chickadee was found near Scottsbluff.

Rarities were few, but quality finds were the state's 3rd Common Ground-Dove and 4th fall Gray Flycatcher. Also rare for the locations were Ruby-throated Hummingbird in the Panhandle, westernmost ever Yellow-throated Vireo, a Bullock's Oriole far to the east, and 3 different Evening Grosbeaks near the Missouri River (and none elsewhere).

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co; Cem: Cemetery; Co(s): County(ies); CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; CRP: Conservation Reserve Program (USDA); FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; GPD: Gavin's Point Dam, Knox/Cedar Cos; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos; L: Lake; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; LNB: Lakes North and Babcock, Platte Co; LO: L Ogallala (includes contiguous Keystone L), Keith Co; NC: Nature Center; NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; NM: National Monument; NNF: 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; SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; SRA: State Recreation Area; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area; WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Carter Canyon: Scotts Bluff Co; Chadron SP: Dawes Co; Dead Timber WMA: Dodge Co; DeSoto NWR: Washington Co; Enders Res: Chase Co; Fort Robinson SHP: Dawes/Sioux Cos; Harvard WPA, Clay Co; Jeffrey L: Lincoln Co; L Alice: in North Platte NWR, Scotts Bluff Co; Niobrara Marsh: Knox Co; Ponca SP: Dixon Co; Rock Creek L SRA: Dundy Co; Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central Nebraska; Schramm Park SRA: Sarpy Co; Smith L WMA: Sheridan Co; Sutherland Res: Lincoln Co; Wehrspann L: Sarpy Co; Winters Creek L: Scotts Bluff Co.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; AR: Allan Reyer, Bellevue; AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; BT: Barb Tebbels, Kearney; CC: Carol Carpenter, Verdon; CE: Corey Ellingson, Bismarck, ND; CG: Carlos Grandes, Geneva y España; CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett; CHy: Carr Heaney, Omaha; CJO: Charles J. Otte, Junction City, KS; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; DB: Duane Bright, Bellevue; DD: Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; DDB: Deb DeButts, Fremont; DP: Don Paseka, Ames; DS: David Swanson, Vermillion, SD; DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn; EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue; EW: Edge Wade, Columbia, MO; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; GM: Georgianne Meyer, Bellevue; GW: Gertrude Wood, Lincoln; HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell; JD: Jon Dinan, Lincoln; JED: James E. Ducey, Omaha; JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JK: Josef Kren, Lincoln; JM: Jim Meyer, Elkhorn; JP: Jan Paseka, Ames; JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha; JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha; KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue; KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City; LFr: Lonnie Frimann, Scottsbluff; LH: Lynea Hinchman, Michigan City, IN; LO: Linda Ollinger, Wilsonville; LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue; LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MJ: Michelle Johnson, Lincoln; MM: Marty Mathieson, Shelton; MUs: Moni

Usasz, Lincoln; NB: Norma Brockmoller, Winside; NF: Nancy Fish, Superior; PD: Phyllis Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff; PDu: Paul Dunbar, Hastings; PS: Phil Swanson, Omaha; RB: Roland Barth, Bellevue; RD: Russell Duerksen, Bennet; RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln; RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; RR: Roy Reinarz, Jefferson; RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha; SF: Steve Finley, Lincoln; SJ: Stephen Jones, Boulder, CO; TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln; TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady; TM: Tracy Morfeld, Omaha; TP: Theresa Pester, Lincoln; TR: Tommie Rogers, Mound City, MO; WF: Willem Flack, Madison; WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma; WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: Fewer than usual were reported, the best count only 150 in Holt Co (JED). Rare in mid-summer, probably the same bird was seen in the eastern RWB 7 and 14 Aug (JGJ).

Snow Goose: Summer stragglers were reported as usual; the 7 birds were found statewide (JGJ,KD,CNK,LE,BP,LP). Migrants were first noted 28 Sep over Bellevue (EB), with flocks in the 10,000+ range not noted until the end of the period (GH,WH,LR,RH,TJW).

Ross's Goose: Still only casual in the Panhandle, although verging on regular, 6 were at Enders Res 16 Nov (TJW).

Canada Goose: Routine reports.

Cackling Goose: Few were reported as observers come to grips with this new species. Two at BOL 14-25 Nov were photographed (WRS,CE,JSt); 4 were in Douglas Co 25 Nov (BP,LP), 3 were in Platte Co 28 Nov (LR,RH), 3 were at Crystal Cove, Dakota Co, 15 Nov (BFH), and at least one small bird was at Stapleton SL 4 Nov (TJW). Identification as Cackling Geese by small size alone may be questionable, as the smallest Canada Goose subspecies, *parvipes*, overlaps Cackling Goose in measurements. Cackling Geese (subspecies *hutchinsii* occurs in Nebraska) have short necks, short bills, and steep foreheads, giving the head a blocky shape. The steep foreheads may be the most helpful in identifying Cackling Geese in the field. Although the extent of variation in *hutchinsii* is not clearly understood, some, probably older birds, may have darker breasts and thus resemble the Cackling Goose subspecies *minima* (another of the subspecies included within Cackling Goose). The subspecies *minima*, usually found west of the Rockies, is yet to be confirmed in Nebraska, although it has apparently occurred on the Atlantic Coast. Three Cackling Geese with dark breasts, one with a pale ring between the dark neck and breast, were in Seward Co 16 Nov (JG).

Trumpeter Swan: Best count was 35 at 5 locations in the Sandhills 15 Nov; 19 of these were at Swan L, Arthur Co (JED). An unusually large brood was the 7 young with 2 adults in Grant Co 14 Sep (RG).

Tundra Swan: None were reported; migrants occur rarely in Nov.

Wood Duck: Best count was 68 at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ), and 2 were still at Jeffrey L as late as 20 Nov (TJW).

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: Thousands were on Winters Creek L 7 Nov (PD,DD).

American Black Duck: Perhaps only casual in occurrence in the state in recent years, the only report this fall was of one in Seward Co 16 Nov (JG).

Mallard: Broods of downy young were in Clay Co 28 Aug and 3 Sep (JGJ), rather late for small ducklings. Best count, rather low for this species in fall, was

- 10,000 at both Enders Res 14-16 Nov (TJW) and in Platte Co 28 Nov (LR,RH)
- Blue-winged Teal:** Routine reports.
- Cinnamon Teal:** Routine reports.
- Northern Shoveler:** Best count was a mediocre 450 at BOL 21 Nov (WRS).
- Northern Pintail:** Routine reports.
- Green-winged Teal:** Routine reports.
- Canvasback:** An excellent count was the 1000 on Mother L, Cherry Co, 12 Nov (JED).
- Redhead:** Early were 9-18 in the eastern RWB 7-9 Aug (BP,LP,JGJ) and 4-10 on Alma SL from 1 Aug through the period (GH,WH).
- Ring-necked Duck:** Routine reports.
- Greater Scaup:** The only report was of a female at Stagecoach L, Lancaster Co, 21 Nov (WRS).
- Lesser Scaup:** Best count, and the only concentration noted, was a fall record of 1230 on Lancaster Co lakes 21 Nov (WRS). Unexpectedly early were singles in Clay Co 9 Aug (BP,LP) and near Alma 1 Sep (GH,WH); also a little early were 8 on Sutherland Res 28 Sep (TJW).
- Surf Scoter:** A surprise, and only report, was a juvenile on a small pond at SCP 15-17 Oct (KP,LH,TEL). This species is a rare migrant in fall.
- White-winged Scoter:** The 5 birds reported in the expected short period 10-21 Nov was a good showing: 3 males at Wellfleet L, Lincoln Co, 10 Nov (TJW), a first-winter female at BOL 14-21 Nov (WRS,CE), and a first-winter bird at Niobrara Marsh 19 Nov (MB).
- Black Scoter:** Rounding out the scoters was a female at Wehrspann L 30 Oct (CHy).
- Long-tailed Duck:** None were reported; arrival is generally in mid-Nov.
- Bufflehead:** The only concentration reported was the 580 in Lancaster Co 21 Nov (WRS).
- Common Goldeneye:** Fewer than 100 were reported before the end of the period: 50 on the Scottsbluff SL 9 Nov (PD,DD), 20 near Alma 20 Nov (GH,WH), one at BOL 20 Nov (LE), 6 at PL 21 Nov (WRS), and 12 at Jeffrey L 21 Nov (TJW).
- Hooded Merganser:** This species was widely reported, with best count the 39 in Lancaster Co 21 Nov (WRS). Apparently summering were immature/female-plumaged birds: 2 in Lancaster Co 1 Aug (LE) and one in Clay Co 3 Sep (JGJ).
- Common Merganser:** Like Common Goldeneye, not much in evidence before the end of the period, with 13 at Jeffrey L 21 Nov (TJW) and 25 in Platte Co 29 Nov (LR,RH). One in Scotts Bluff Co 2 Oct (AK) may have been a molt-migrant, a regular phenomenon at L Alice.
- Red-breasted Merganser:** All reports, a total of fewer than 20 birds, were from Lancaster Co 13 Nov (LE) through 21 Nov (WRS,CE).
- Ruddy Duck:** One of few duck species appearing in good numbers, 400 were at CLNWR 4 Oct (TR,EW) and hundreds at North Platte SL 20 Oct (TJW). A male at BOL 1 Aug (LE) may have been breeding, not unprecedented in Lancaster Co, as may have been the 4-6 near Alma through the period (GH,WH).
- Gray Partridge:** The only report was of the population in Sioux Co, which continues to survive; 5 were seen in central Sioux Co 7 Sep (HKH) and 7 were seen several times during the fall at WSR (HKH).
- Ring-necked Pheasant:** Routine reports.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Best count was the 55 near Loup City 4 Oct (TR,EW). One with 34 prairie-chickens in east-central Custer Co 13 Nov (LR,RH) is a reminder that these species hybridize with some regularity.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** The above-mentioned group of 34 in Custer Co was the best count (LR,RH). CRP grassland hosted one in Red Willow Co 18 Oct

(TJW), an encouraging sign. Reports were widespread; this species seems to be doing well at present. Noteworthy was the continued presence in the east of up to 10 at SCP (KP). Hayes Co had 8 birds 25 Oct (TJW), where few are reported, and one in southwest Red Willow Co 18 Oct (TJW) was one of very few reports from that county. These birds may have been dispersing to some extent after breeding.

Wild Turkey: Best count was 100+ in southeast Lincoln Co 30 Aug (TJW).

Northern Bobwhite: This species is at a low point in its population cycle; in addition to its presence in Lancaster Co through the period (LE), only two were reported. These were singles in northern Lincoln Co 29 Aug (LR,RH,TJW) and at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ), the latter in an area where the species is rare.

Pacific Loon: The only rare loon was one of this species at BOL 21 Nov (WRS; details).

Common Loon: Only 3 were reported: singles at Willow Creek Res, Pierce Co, 25 Oct (BFH), and at BOL 13 and 27 Nov (LE).

Pied-billed Grebe: Last reported were 1-2 at PL 20-21 Nov (LE,WRS).

Horned Grebe: Some 24 were reported statewide 16 Oct-21 Nov; peak count was 10 at BOL 21 Nov (WRS).

Red-necked Grebe: The only report was of one in Sarpy Co 26 Oct (CHy).

Eared Grebe: Routine reports.

Western Grebe: Fall buildup was noted as usual at LM and Sutherland Res, where thousands were present at each place 28 Sep (TJW). None were reported from the east.

Clark's Grebe: The only report was of 3 at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ); as yet breeding has not yet been noted at this location.

American White Pelican: Following the failure of nesting at Chase Lake NWR in central North Dakota during the summer, the large numbers reported in Nebraska then were not duplicated this fall, suggesting that most birds had moved on. There were, however, some higher-than-usual numbers in Aug, with 500+ at PL and BOL by 26 Aug (GW) and 300 at Ponca SP 23 Aug (BP,LP). More usual were the hundreds at Sutherland Res 28 Sep (TJW). Lingered were 40 at HCR 27 Nov (GH,WH) and 2 at LNB 28 Nov (LR,RH).

Double-crested Cormorant: Best count was a remarkable 3000 on a sandbar at HCR 2 Oct (GH,WH); another good count was 1200 at BOL 3 Oct (LE). The highest fall counts are in the 3000-5000 range, all from HCR. The 80 early birds at Scottsbluff SL for a few days through 1 Aug (KD) may have been from a failed nesting colony.

Least Bittern: The only report was of one at FF 21 Aug (EB).

American Bittern: Routine reports.

Great Blue Heron: Routine reports.

Great Egret: Best count was the 27 in the eastern RWB 7 Aug (JGJ); 18 were at Harvard WPA 12 Sep (PDU). Unexpected were some late birds: singles in Buffalo Co 4 Nov (LR,RH), at Niobrara Marsh 20-21 Nov (MB), and at BOL 21 Nov (WRS). The latter two sightings are the 2nd and 3rd latest ever.

Snowy Egret: An excellent 50 or so were reported, best count the 19 in the eastern RWB 7 Aug, including a single-location RWB record of 12 at Clay Co Wetland #85 (JGJ). Another good count was the 15 at PL and BOL 26 Aug (GW).

Little Blue Heron: The only reports were of 2-3 immatures in the eastern RWB 7-14 Aug (JGJ,BP,LP) and one at Abomination Marsh, Douglas Co, 7 Aug (JT).

Cattle Egret: An amazing tally was the record for fall of 591 in the eastern RWB 7 Aug, including 588 at Clay Co Wetland #132 (JGJ,BP,LP); most had departed by 28 Aug (JGJ). Another good count was the 122 at Harvard WPA 12 Sep

(PDU). Up to 4 lost souls were still in Scotts Bluff Co 15-18 Nov (KD,AK,PD, DD), establishing a new late date for Nebraska. Another was at Chilibaba Pond, Scotts Bluff Co, 19 Sep (KD). This species is rare in the Panhandle.

Green Heron: One in eastern Lincoln Co 23 Aug (TJW) was near the western edge of the summer range.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Routine reports.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Three juveniles were reported, all from the RWB, as expected in recent years. One was at near Glenvil 28 Aug (JGJ) and two were at Harvard WPA 12 Sep (PDU).

White-faced Ibis: Best counts were 28 surprisingly far east at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 2 Sep (SF), and 22 at Harvard WPA 9 Oct (PDU). Record late by one day was a juvenile *Plegadis* sp. in Buffalo Co 13 Nov (PDU).

Turkey Vulture: Large aggregations were 100-150 in Lincoln 12 Sep (fide MM), 129 at Ponca SP 25 Aug (BP,LP), 120 flyovers in 3 hours at FF 25 Sep (EB), and 80-100 at Chadron 16 Sep (RG). One in Otoe Co 26 Nov (LF) provided one of few Nov sightings for the state.

Mississippi Kite: A significant finding was a nesting pair at Red Cloud, only the 2nd known site in the state. The intrepid pair overcame a major obstacle: one of them was injured in Jul but was rehabilitated and released at the nest site 23 Aug, at which time the other adult and a nearly-fledged young bird were still present (BT). Along with the observations at the Hitchcock Nature Center Hawkwatch nearby in Iowa, this species is being seen in the Missouri Valley in Sep more often. Singles were near Blair 10 Sep (JGJ), and in western Douglas Co 10 and 14 Sep (DSt).

Bald Eagle: Adults were noted at a few sites where breeding probably occurred. Two were east of the North Platte airport for the 3rd year (TJW); an adult and an immature were near Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co, 20 Oct (JED); an adult and an immature were in Greeley Co 6 Nov (LR,RH); 2 adults with 3 immatures were near Fremont 21 Nov (DDB, MJ); an adult was near Schramm Park SRA 25 Aug (CNK); one was near Brady 5 Nov (TJW); and another was at Enders Res 14-15 Nov (TJW). It's difficult to call any sighting of this species routine, but breeding pairs are now numerous across the state.

Northern Harrier: A good count was the 28 seen in 600 miles of driving in southwest Nebraska 21-22 Oct (TJW).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: One was very early in Otoe Co 2 Aug, and singles were also early at FF 22 Aug and Smith L WMA 31 Aug. It is curious that 2/3 of the reported sightings of this species for summer are from the southeast, where summering birds would be least expected. The Hitchcock Nature Center Hawkwatch had 948 Sharp-shins in fall 2003, the earliest on 2 Sep. Given the relatively large numbers of Cooper's Hawks in the southeast, in the absence of identification details I suspect small Cooper's seen in Aug are being misidentified as Sharp-shins. Best count was 8 at Ponca SP 15 Sep (BP,LP).

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Northern Goshawk: The two reports were of one over Ashland 21 Nov (WRS) and a juvenile harassing Rock Pigeons under an overpass in Douglas Co 28 Nov (JT).

Red-shouldered Hawk: The only reports were from FF 14 and 29 Aug (BP,LP); this is a regular site.

Broad-winged Hawk: One seen in Cass Co 14 Aug (CNK) may have been an early migrant, although summering there is possible. A good count was the 35 which flew over FF in 3 hours 25 Sep (EB).

Swainson's Hawk: Best counts were on schedule in late Sep: 450 in Washington

Co 28 Sep (JM), 200 near St Paul 27 Sep (fide KP), and 150 near Gibbon 29 Sep (LR,RH). Strangely rare in summer in the eastern RWB, one was seen there 28 Aug (JGJ). A rare rufous morph bird (underparts entirely rufous) was seen in Lincoln Co 29 Aug (LR,RH).

Red-tailed Hawk: One of 12 Red-tails seen in southeast Nebraska 6 Nov was a Harlan's (WRS); another was near Lakeside 7 Nov (JED).

Ferruginous Hawk: About 11 were reported, including 5 seen in 600 miles of driving in southwest Nebraska 21-22 Oct (TJW). Easterly was one at a prairie-dog town in Franklin Co 3 and 23 Oct (LR,RH).

Rough-legged Hawk: Earliest were an adult female over FF 25 Sep (EB) and a single in Sherman Co 26 Sep (LR,RH). Although there are about 40 summer and early fall records of this species in the period 21 May-13 Sep, none are documented, and probably none are valid. Continuing this dilemma was a juvenile female buteo purported to be this species found injured 6 Aug near Sutherland Res. It died 10 Aug, was tested for West Nile Virus and found to be negative, but no photo was taken and the remains were incinerated. It is virtually impossible for a juvenile Rough-legged Hawk to be in Nebraska as early as this, considering the species' breeding phenology.

Golden Eagle: There were two easterly reports: one was in Rock Co 16 Oct (JED), and a juvenile was as far east as western Otoe Co 29 Oct (RE); juveniles are the most likely age class to be seen eastward in fall.

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: About 12 were reported statewide, earliest ones far to the east in Otoe Co 22 Aug (LF) and Dixon Co 23 Aug (JJ).

Prairie Falcon: Earliest eastward were one rather early in Dixon Co 12 Sep (JJ) and another in Jefferson Co 22 Sep (RE).

Peregrine Falcon: Routine reports.

Virginia Rail: An immature at Walnut Creek L, Sarpy Co, 22 Aug (CHy) was a bit early, and one along the Niobrara River near Nenzel 16 Nov (JED) may have been attempting to winter.

Sora: Singles in Lincoln Co 20 Oct (TJW) and Dodge Co 25 Oct (DP) were rather late.

American Coot: Best counts were moderate: 1070 at BOL 9 Oct (LE) and 1000 at Winters Creek L 10 Oct (KD).

Sandhill Crane: Large numbers flew over the state in mid-Oct, such as the steady stream of groups of 25-250 flying over most of the day at Wilsonville (LO). Rather early was one somewhat easterly in Lancaster Co 13 Sep (GM, details) and one over Alma 29 Nov (GH,WH) was rather late.

Whooping Crane: The only report was of 6 birds 17 miles south of Long Pine 7 Oct (CH).

Black-bellied Plover: Adults in fall are rare; only the 4th such record for the eastern RWB was one at North Lake Basin, Seward Co, 28 Aug (JGJ). Few were reported overall; last were 2 rather late in southwest Cherry Co 11 Nov (JED).

American Golden-Plover: Adults of this species are rare in fall also; a molting bird was at North Lake Basin, Seward Co, 28 Aug (JGJ). A good fall count was a group of 35 presumed juveniles in a harvested soybean field in Dixon Co 12 Oct (JJ), and a juvenile at PL 14 Nov (WRS,CE) was rather late.

Semipalmated Plover: A good fall tally was 8 at CLNWR 4 Oct (TR,EW).

Piping Plover: The only reports were of 2 at HCR 8-11 Aug (CG,GH,WH) and 2 at Ponca SP 24 Aug (BP,LP); both are regular summer locations.

Killdeer: Best counts were 125 at a Sarpy Co sod farm 4 Aug (BP,LP) and 100 at Scottsbluff SL 11 Aug (PD,DD).

- Black-necked Stilt:** Most have gone by the end of Jul, but 2 were still in Grant Co 14 Sep (RG), second latest ever for the state.
- American Avocet:** Best count was an excellent 265 at Gillet L, Garden Co, 30 Sep (JED). Rather late were 3 in Grant Co 3 Nov (JED). Up to 42 were at BOL 21 Aug-30 Oct (LE).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Routine reports.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** Routine reports.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Best count was 12 in Lancaster Co 7 Aug (LE).
- Willet:** None were reported; departure is in Sep.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** One at Brewers Bridge, Cherry Co, 22 Oct was rather late (JED).
- Upland Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Long-billed Curlew:** The only report of this early-departing species was of one at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ).
- Marbled Godwit:** The only report was of 2 at LM 12 Aug (JSt); most may have moved through Nebraska early due to breeding failure, as discussed in the Summer Report.
- Sanderling:** Routine reports.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Best count was 40+ in the Schramm Park SRA area 25 Aug (CNK). A report of one rather late at Jeffrey L 31 Oct (TJW) was forwarded to the NOU Records Committee; late dates for this species are not well understood due to the few documented sightings in Oct.
- Western Sandpiper:** About 9 were reported 12 Aug (KD) through 9 Oct (GH,WH). The only bird whose age was noted was a juvenile in the eastern RWB 3 Sep (JGJ). This species is more numerous in fall than in spring.
- Least Sandpiper:** Best counts were 60+ near Schramm Park SRA 25 Aug (CNK) and 45 at Holmes L, Lincoln, 8 Sep (LE). A few very late birds were found, 13 at PL 14 Nov (WRS,CE), 6 still there 27 Nov (LE), and 11 at BOL 20 Nov (LE). These are the latest records except for two in Dec.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** Good details were provided for one at Holmes L, Lincoln, 5 Sep (RD), only the 4th documented fall record for Nebraska.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Very late were 3 at PL 14 Nov (WRS,CE); 2 were still there 20 Nov (LE). There are 5 later records, including 2 for Dec.
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** Good numbers were reported in early Aug, including 200 in the eastern RWB 7 Aug (JGJ) and 150-200 there 5 Aug (CG). Rather late was one at PL 14 Nov (WRS,CE); there are 4 later records, including one in Dec.
- Dunlin:** The only reports were of one near Verona 23 Oct (JGJ) and 6 near Alma 25 Oct (GH,WH).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Jorgensen noted that his study of this species in the eastern RWB revealed this to be the poorest fall in years for the species, with only 49 found, 10 of these juveniles on 3 Sep. A good count in addition was the 27 in the Waco-Utica area 2 Aug (CG). Additional sightings were of 5-13 at Sarpy Co sod farms 4-22 Aug (BP,LP), 2 near Schramm Park SRA 25 Aug (CNK), 5 at Harvard WPA 29 Aug (PDu), 6 at Louisville 12 Sep (CNK,BP,LP), and one in Richardson Co 13 Sep (CC).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** The only reports were of 16 at Abomination Marsh, Douglas Co, 7 Aug (JT) and a juvenile at Harvard WPA 12 Sep (PDu).
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Numbers were amazingly low in the eastern RWB this fall (JGJ). Best count was only 76, at Harvard WPA 15 Oct (PDu).
- Wilson's Snipe:** Migrants, usually young birds, can depart breeding areas early; one in the eastern RWB 9 Aug and 3 there 12 Aug (CG) were likely early migrants.

Two at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 7 Aug (LE) were likely also early migrants; breeding there is possible, however. An amazing count was the estimated 200, based on 80 flushed by walking, at Harvard WPA 6 Nov (PDu).

American Woodcock: None were reported; most migrants pass through in Oct.

Wilson's Phalarope: Routine reports.

Red-necked Phalarope: None were reported; high counts are in Sep.

Franklin's Gull: Best count was an impressive 30,000 at HCR 24 Sep (GH,WH), where the species stages in fall.

Bonaparte's Gull: Best count was the 50 at Winters Creek L rather early on 5-6 Sep (KD); most do not arrive until mid-Oct.

Ring-billed Gull: Most reports were from BOL, where 35 were present at the start of the period (LE), increasing to 1240 there 21 Nov (WRS).

Herring Gull: Best count was the 95 at BOL 21 Nov, mostly adults, but including 8 first-winter and one second-winter bird (WRS).

Thayer's Gull: The only report was of an adult at GPD 28 Nov (JJ).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: The only report was of a first-winter bird at GPD 12 Nov (DS fide MB), only the 20th fall record for this species.

Sabine's Gull: None were reported; most pass through in late Sep and early Oct.

Black-legged Kittiwake: None were reported; most reports are in Nov.

Caspian Tern: Only 3 were reported: 2 at BOL 7 Aug (LE) and one near Schramm Park SRA 27 Aug (CNK).

Common Tern: None were reported; migration peaks in mid-Sep.

Forster's Tern: Only 30 were reported, very low for this species, 8 Aug (CG) through 25 Sep (LE). Best count was 18 at BOL 14 Aug (LE).

Least Tern: Routine reports.

Black Tern: Rather late were one in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Sep (PD,DD) and 2 near Winside 26 Sep (NB). Few were reported.

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Counts of this species are becoming larger; best this fall were the 65 in north Kearney 31 Oct (LR,RH) and 30-40 in the observer's Brady yard 5 Oct (TJW). Generally associated with towns, isolated singles are unusual, such as one miles from town in Clay Co 23 Oct (JGJ). A photo (see <http://www.rosssilcock.com/RedDoveEdit.jpg>) was submitted of a reddish dove in Kearney that appears to be carrying genes of this species and White-winged Dove (hybridization between these two species likely occurred in Kearney in 2001). Although the reddish appearance and very white primaries could conceivably result from leucism or even an admixture of genes from a reddish Rock Pigeon, it was pointed out by Kevin McGowan that this bird resembles what breeders of Ringneck Doves call a Tangerine Ringneck (see http://www.rupert-fish.co.uk/interests/dove_breeding/ECD-breeding.html). As McGowan adds, "This is a clear reminder that many of the collared-doves appearing around the country are not actually spreading from the expanding breeding population but are escaped caged birds." We are aware that releases of captive Ringneck Doves in some numbers has happened recently in the Morrill area (KD).

Mourning Dove: A bit late was a brood about to fledge in Clay Co 28 Aug (JGJ), and one in Scotts Bluff Co was tardy 12 Nov (AK), although wintering occurs rarely in the North Platte Valley. One in Dixon Co 29 Nov (JJ) was tardy also for the northeast.

Inca Dove: For the record, a single was in Madison 15 Oct 2000; details provided suggested that this bird, as well as a few Canyon Towhees, was brought from Arizona and released (WF).

Common Ground-Dove: One in a Clay Co corn stubble field 26 Nov was closely-observed and well-described (JD). This is the 6th report for Nebraska, only the 3rd documented. Two of the documented records are in Nov, when northward vagrancy appears to peak, but one is in Jun. One of the undocumented records is in Jun, and likely correct.

Black-billed Cuckoo: The only reports were of singles in Lancaster Co 14 and 21 Aug (LE).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: A record-tying count was 8 in Cass Co 14 Aug (CNK), and last was one in Otoe Co 24 Sep (LF).

Barn Owl: The only report was of one on the grounds of Fort Robinson SHP 15 Oct (TJW), a rather late date. Departure is generally completed by mid-Oct.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: One at Rock Creek L SRA 25 Oct was very light gray (TJW). Although the earliest known arrival date for the very pale northern subspecies is 11 Nov, it may be more likely that this bird was one of the occasional pale birds known to occur among the generally darker resident birds.

Burrowing Owl: An excellent count was the 14 at Buffalo Creek WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, 1 Aug (KD).

Barred Owl: Near the west edge of the range in the southeast was one at Homestead NM, Gage Co, 9 Nov (RE). A surprise was one seen outside an office window in downtown Omaha 9 Nov (fide TP).

Long-eared Owl: None were reported.

Short-eared Owl: Three were reported from areas where summering occurs: Dawes, Sheridan, and Lincoln Cos (TJW, JED). One in Dixon Co 19 Nov (JJ) may have been on the move.

Common Nighthawk: Best counts in the east were widely spaced, suggesting that fall migration is protracted: 100 were seen between Omaha and Blair 25 Aug (JGJ) and 140 over Bellevue 26 Sep (CNK). Last were 2 in Bellevue 10 Oct (CNK).

Common Poorwill: Easternmost were one in Thomas Co 25 Sep (fide AK) and a rather late road-killed bird in southeast Lincoln Co 1 Oct (TJW).

Whip-poor-will: None were reported; last dates are in mid-Sep.

Chimney Swift: Best count was a record 205 at FF 19 Sep (BP, LP), and last was one in Nebraska City 27 Oct (LF), the 2nd-latest fall date ever.

White-throated Swift: A good count was the 31 at Scotts Bluff NM, Scotts Bluff Co, 5 Sep (PD, DD).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Best count was the 12 at the observer's feeders in Elkhorn during the latter half of Aug (DSt); generally good numbers were noted throughout the east, west to Bassett 9 Aug and 13 Sep (CH) and North Platte 11 Sep (TJW). Unexpected were two Panhandle reports: one was seen at WSR 11 Sep (AK) and another possibly this species, with no visible rufous, was at the observer's Mitchell feeder 12 Sep (KD). There are only two documented fall records for the Panhandle, but the species may occur in small numbers each fall, as suggested by recent records in Colorado.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: None were reported after the single near Mitchell 16 Jul (see Summer Report).

Rufous Hummingbird: None were reported after the single at WSR 29 Jul (see Summer Report).

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: The only report of this locally-distributed species was of one in a newly-burned area in the southeast part of Chadron SP 11 Oct (RE), a rather late date for the species.

Red-headed Woodpecker: A good acorn crop at FF resulted in a record fall tally of 100+ there 4 Sep (EB). Last was surprisingly far west, in Scotts Bluff Co 10 Oct (AK), rather late at that location. At Alma, Red-headed Woodpeckers displaced Red-bellies during the summer, but the latter returned when the Red-headeds departed (GH,WH).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Some 22 were reported, 14 of these, including 10 juveniles, by one observer in Lincoln (RE). Earliest was a rather early juvenile in Dixon Co 25 Sep (JJ). Rare westward were singles at Brady 31 Oct (TJW) and near Halsey 4 Nov (TJW), both rather late dates away from the east.

Northern Flicker: First red-shafted birds reported from the east were at ADF 24 Sep (LF) and in Lincoln 29 Sep (TP), both rather early dates that far east.

Pileated Woodpecker: The only reports were of singles at the usual location, FF, 18 Aug (BP,LP) and 4 Sep (EB), and another about a mile north of FF at Mt. Vernon Gardens, Omaha, 6 Sep (DB).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: About 28 were reported statewide 8 Aug (LR,RH) through 24 Sep (LF); best count the 6 at FF 4 Sep (EB), the high fall count. Panhandle reports are rare; one was in Carter Canyon 4 Sep (AK) and 2 were at Winters Creek L 5 Sep (KD).

Western Wood-Pewee: Seven were reported from the Panhandle, last one at Riverside Park, Scottsbluff, 14 Sep (AK).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: One at SCP 11 Oct (RD, details) was rather late; there are only 3 later dates, none documented, through 20 Oct. Confusion at this time with Eastern Phoebe is possible.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: There were two reported, including one banded 7 Aug at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co (RS). Possibly the same bird was in the area 12 Aug (CNK). These are significant in that the former documents the early fall date for the state. Data for migration of empids in the east is scanty.

Alder Flycatcher: A welcome addition to our scanty knowledge of fall passage of this species was the banding of one at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 7 Aug (RS). There are few documented fall records.

Willow Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Least Flycatcher: This species arrives early in fall; first was one in Dixon Co 13 Aug (JJ). Four others were reported through 26 Sep, also in Dixon Co (JJ).

Hammond's Flycatcher: None were reported; passage through the Panhandle is 25 Aug-21 Sep.

Gray Flycatcher: Details were provided by experienced birders of one in Carter Canyon 5 Oct (TR,EW). There are 3 other fall reports, possibly all of the same bird, 24 Aug-4 Sep 2002, and a single spring record.

Dusky Flycatcher: None were reported; passage through the Panhandle is 24 Aug-20 Sep.

Cordilleran/Pacific Slope Flycatcher: Two were reported, both at locations where breeding does not occur: singles at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ) and at WSR 11 Sep (AK). It has been suggested that both taxa may occur on the western Great Plains in fall.

Eastern Phoebe: Last was one rather late in Stanton Co 27 Oct (DP,JP), and one at Fort Robinson SHP 12 Oct (TJW) was a mild surprise so far west. A good count was the 6 in Otoe Co 24 Sep (LF).

Say's Phoebe: Rather late were singles in Sherman Co 3 Oct (TR,EW) and in Hayes Co 4 Oct (TJW).

Great Crested Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Cassin's Kingbird: A good count was the 15-20 in Carter Canyon 4 Sep (AK).

Western Kingbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Kingbird: Best count was 38 near Rulo 30 Aug (TR).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Seemingly becoming regular in small numbers, mostly in the south-central, the only report for the period was of one at Deshler 13 Sep (fide NF).

Northern Shrike: First were 3 birds in southwest Nebraska 21 Oct (TJW). Good numbers, about 22, were reported during the period, including one as far southeast as Rulo 26 Nov (TR).

Loggerhead Shrike: One at North Platte SL 20 Oct (TJW), rather late for the location, barely departed before the Northerns arrived, a typical pattern. Unexpected, however, was a very late Loggerhead near Nenzel 17 Nov (JED).

Bell's Vireo: Routine reports.

Yellow-throated Vireo: A major surprise was one at Rock Creek L SRA on the very late date of 25 Oct (TJW, details), the latest and also the westernmost documented record for the state. Two additional Oct reports are undocumented, one each from Sarpy Co and, surprisingly, Lincoln Co.

Plumbeous Vireo: None were reported; most depart by mid-Sep.

Cassin's Vireo: None were reported; passage through the Panhandle is 20 Aug-21 Sep.

Blue-headed Vireo: Rare westward, one was reported in Grant Co 25 Sep (fide AK). Of 7 reported, last was in WP 3 Oct (LE).

Warbling Vireo: One in Scotts Bluff Co 2 Oct (AK) was rather late for the Panhandle; resident Warbling Vireos (western subspecies) depart in Sep, with latest date 13 Sep, suggesting that this sighting might have been of the eastern subspecies. There are only 3 Panhandle records later than 13 Sep: 30 Sep, 2 Oct (this fall), and 8 Oct.

Philadelphia Vireo: The only report was from the Panhandle 6 Sep, a bird at Winters Creek L carefully studied at close range and key features noted (KD). There are 4 other documented Panhandle records: 3, 7, and 28 Sep, and an amazing banding record 17 Nov.

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Blue Jay: Migration peaks during the last week in Sep, and so hundreds over FF 25 Sep (EB) were right on time.

Pinyon Jay: None were reported; this species is resident in the Panhandle.

Clark's Nutcracker: Obviously endowed with some sort of nutcracker attractant, the observer (TJW) has racked up 4 of these birds this summer and fall. Following a single adult in southeast Lincoln Co 30 Aug (TJW, photos), 3 more were found at a more expected location near Crawford 13 Oct (TJW). Incursions usually are led by birds appearing in late Aug; time will tell whether more will follow this winter.

Black-billed Magpie: Fort Robinson SHP is a good place to see this species; 19 were there 13 Oct (TJW). Southeasterly was one near BOL 25 Nov (JSt).

American Crow: Best count was a moderate 220 at BOL 20 Nov (LE).

Horned Lark: The abundance of this species in Panhandle grasslands is indicated by the 600 estimated there 6 Aug (PD,DD).

Purple Martin: Westernmost were 2 in Lincoln Co 14 Aug (LR,RH). This species departs early; flocks were noted at Bassett 8 Aug (CH) and in Cass Co 14 Aug (CNK). Last were 5 rather late at Nebraska City 30 Sep (LF).

Tree Swallow: Best count was an excellent 750 at BOL 3 Oct (LE), a new fall high. Uncommon in the Panhandle (but increasing), one was found dead in a bluebird nest box on Old Stage Hill Rd, Scotts Bluff Co, 10 Oct (KD).

Violet-green Swallow: None were reported; most have gone by mid-Aug.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: Routine reports.

Barn Swallow: Major movement was underway in the east in early Oct; thousands comprised a virtually pure flock at LNB 9 Oct, and additional thousands were at Wilkinson WMA, Platte Co, the same day (TJW). Somewhat dwarfed by comparison was the count of 750 at BOL 3 Oct (LE). A second brood hatched near Gibbon 2 Aug (LR,RH), rather late.

Black-capped Chickadee: There was some indication that numbers are recovering in areas where birds had disappeared in the last year or so, although at Superior none have been seen since last fall (NF).

Mountain Chickadee: A hopeful sign (along with the nutcrackers) for things to come this winter was the presence of one east of Scottsbluff 27 Sep (fide AK).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: This species was widely reported, sometimes in good numbers, the best showing in several years. Best counts were 15 in the Phillips Cem 21 Nov (LR,RH) and 10 at the observer's Elkhorn feeder 15 Nov (DSt). About 124 were reported. Banding at NNF indicated that an influx was underway as many of the banded birds were larger than the local residents there (RG). Another banded 20 Oct in Bellevue was a hatch year male (RG). First to arrive were about on time for first fall sightings of this species, 15 Aug in Lincoln (MUs), and 21 Aug in southeast Lincoln Co (TJW).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Pygmy Nuthatch: One was in Carter Canyon 4 Sep (AK), where it occurs regularly in low numbers, but good numbers were noted at Chadron SP, where 14 were counted 15 Sep (RG) and 8 on 11 Oct (RE). Breeding has occurred east to Sheridan Co.

Brown Creeper: One at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ) may have been summering; despite many summer reports, breeding has not yet been confirmed in the northwest. Elsewhere, first arrival was one at WP 3 Oct (LE).

Rock Wren: The 18 at Buffalo Creek WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, 1 Aug (KD) was an excellent count. Unexpected eastward was one at the Orleans Cem 3 Oct (GH,WH), and rather late was one in Chase Co 25 Oct (TJW); there are only 3 later records.

Carolina Wren: One was building a nest as late as 7 Aug in Bellevue (AR). This species is not hard to find in the southeast currently; 3 were at WP through the period (LE) and 7 were found in Nemaha and Richardson Cos 7 Nov (WRS,JSt).

House Wren: Rather late was one at ADF 20 Oct (LF).

Winter Wren: About 12 were reported, the earliest one at DeSoto NWR 6 Sep (CJO), 3rd earliest on record. Five were located at 3 locations in the Niobrara River Valley in northeast Cherry Co 20-22 Oct (JED), and one was near Nenzel 17 Nov (JED), rather late so far north.

Sedge Wren: These birds put in their usual Aug appearance in numbers, including 5 singing at Wehrspann L 3 Aug, where nesting was likely (CHy). Only 3 were reported after Aug, however: singles in Jefferson Co 25 Sep (RR), at FF 2 Oct (EB), and, rather late, one in Lincoln 25 Oct (LE).

Marsh Wren: The abundance of this species in the Sandhills is reflected by the 57 counted at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ). Two were near Nenzel along the Niobrara River 16-17 Nov, where wintering occurred last year (JED).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Routine reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Routine reports.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Routine reports.

Eastern Bluebird: Excellent counts were 100+ at Winside 26 Sep (NB) and 200-300 in groups of 2-30 in Lincoln Co 20 Oct (TJW). Westerly were 12 at Enders Res 16 Nov (TJW).

Mountain Bluebird: First migrants detected were 2 in Perkins Co 21 Oct (TJW) and 6 in northeast Cherry Co 22 Oct (JED). Six had arrived in the cedar canyons of southeast Lincoln Co, where they winter, by 30 Oct (TJW), and 20 were in Custer Co 31 Oct (LR,RH). Winter status in the Niobrara Valley and in Custer Co is not well understood.

Townsend's Solitaire: Rather early for fall movement were 5 in southern Garden Co 28 Aug (TJW) and one in Carter Canyon 4 Sep (AK). Several had reached north-central Nebraska by early Nov (TJW,JED). Best count was 14 in Carter Canyon 5 Oct (TR,EW).

Veery: None were reported; passage is in Sep.

Swainson's Thrush: About 15 were reported statewide 31 Aug (SJ) through 2 Oct (AK), best count 3 at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 22 Sep (AK). Almost a routine migration.

Hermit Thrush: Some 9 were reported 3 Oct (JT) through 26 Oct (EB), all but one in the east. The exception was one in Perkins Co 22 Oct (TJW).

Wood Thrush: None were reported; most depart by the end of Sep.

American Robin: The usual huge numbers were noted in central Nebraska cedar habitat, with thousands at Jeffrey L 31 Oct (TJW), at Chester Island WMA, Lincoln Co, 7 Nov (TJW), and at Wellfleet WMA, Lincoln Co, 10 Nov (TJW). A mere 1600 were in northeast Custer Co 13 Nov (LR,RH).

Gray Catbird: Four were reported from the Panhandle through 11 Sep (SJ,AK,HKH). Last elsewhere was one at NNF 4 Nov (TJW), rather late for the location.

Northern Mockingbird: Routine reports.

Age Thrasher: The only reports were of 2 at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ) and 2 in extreme southeast Sioux Co 6 Sep (LFr, fide AK), looking in on the Curve-billed Thrasher, no doubt.

Brown Thrasher: Routine reports.

Curve-billed Thrasher: The long-staying (now-resident?) individual at the Frimann Ranch was still there 6 Sep (LFr, fide AK).

European Starling: Routine reports.

American Pipit: Rather late, and a good count, were the 120 on the Merrick-Hamilton Co line 16 Nov (LR,RH). Also a bit late were the 45 at Harvard WPA 6 Nov (PDu).

Sprague's Pipit: Now reported regularly as observers discover and check appropriate habitat, 6 were found at SCP 16 Sep-11 Oct (KP,RD), and one in a grazed pasture in Lancaster Co 3 Oct (LE).

Bohemian Waxwing: Suggestive of wide-spread occurrence this winter, the two reports were both from the east. Singles with Cedar Waxwings were at DeSoto NWR 15 Nov (CE) and at BOL 20 Nov (LE).

Cedar Waxwing: Flocks form by late Aug; 65 were at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ). Best count was 150 in a single flock at ICSP 7 Nov (JSt,WRS).

Tennessee Warbler: Rather inconspicuous in fall, the only report was of one at WP 25 Sep (LE).

Orange-crowned Warbler: As usual, widely-reported and definitely not inconspicuous, best counts were 18 at ADF 10 Oct (LF) and 17 at WP 3 Oct (LE). Reports were from 31 Aug at ADF (LF) through 20 Oct at North Platte (TJW).

Nashville Warbler: Also widespread, about 22 were reported from Thomas Co (fide

AK) eastward 8 Sep (BP,LP) through 13 Oct (AR).

Northern Parula: One of only 3 confirmed breeding records was an adult feeding a young bird at FF 20 Aug (BP,LP). Inconspicuous in fall, the only report was of one at FF 7 Sep (RB).

Yellow Warbler: Last were 2 in Sidney 1 Oct (AS).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: None were reported; most move through in Sep.

Magnolia Warbler: None were reported; most move through in Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A surprise was a male in an Omaha yard 30 Oct (PS), latest fall date by 10 days. It was the only report for this regular but rare fall migrant.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: The only reports were of 2 at Chadron SP 15 Sep (RG), where breeding occurs, and 2 near Mitchell 31 Oct (KD), the latter rather late.

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: Two at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ) were not identified to subspecies; at that date and location they may have been either subspecies. Elsewhere, first was one at SCP 16 Sep (KP), and best counts were 54 in Lancaster Co 9 Oct (LE) and 50 at Dead Timber WMA 10 Oct (JSt). Last reported were 6 at Mormon Island SRA, Hall Co, 16 Nov (RE). Nov and later sightings are uncommon.

Black-throated Green Warbler: The 4 reported were singles in Lincoln 7 Sep (MUs), at Ponca SP 14 Sep (BP,LP), at Dead Timber WMA 4 Oct (RE), and 12 Oct at Bellevue (BP,LP).

Townsend's Warbler: None were reported; movement through the Panhandle is in late Aug and Sep.

Blackburnian Warbler: None were reported; most move through in Sep.

Yellow-throated Warbler: None were reported; inconspicuous in fall, most have gone by Sep.

Bay-breasted Warbler: The only report was of one at SCP 11 Oct (RD).

Black-and-white Warbler: Only one was reported, at Walnut Creek L, Douglas Co, 7 Sep (SF).

American Redstart: Routine reports.

Prothonotary Warbler: The only report was of one seen well in southeast Otoe Co 30 Aug (LF). Few are seen in fall, with latest dates in early Sep.

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Northern Waterthrush: Only two were reported, singles near Bartley on the Republican River 4 Sep (LR,RH) and at Dead Timber WMA 4 Oct (RE).

Louisiana Waterthrush: None were reported; most have gone by Sep.

Kentucky Warbler: None were reported; most have gone by mid-Sep.

Connecticut Warbler: Only casual as a fall migrant, one was at FF 4 Sep (EB, details), a rather early date.

Mourning Warbler: None were reported; most move through in Sep and early Oct.

MacGillivray's Warbler: The two reports were of singles in Sidney 30 Aug (AS) and at WSR 11 Sep (fide AK).

Common Yellowthroat: A good count was 8 in Dixon Co 12 Sep (JJ).

Wilson's Warbler: Another of the few warblers common statewide in fall, reports ranged from 28 Aug in Lancaster Co (LE) through 16 Oct near Gering (AK) and at FF (BP,LP), with no high counts noted.

Canada Warbler: The only report was of one near Rulo 30 Aug (TR).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Rather late was one in Carter Canyon 2 Oct (AK).

Summer Tanager: The only reports were of singles near Rulo 30 Aug (TR) and at FF 4 Sep (EB). There are very few fall reports away from Schramm Park SRA.

Scarlet Tanager: The only reports were a good count of 5 at FF 4 Sep (EB), a

young female at a Bellevue birdbath 26 Aug (BP,LP), and a single at FF 8 Sep (BP,LP).

Western Tanager: Earliest migrant was an immature male at Sidney 29 Aug (AS), and last one at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 2 Oct (AK). These dates define the period of regular migration.

Spotted Towhee: Earliest to appear east of the breeding range were singles rather early in Clay Co 25 Sep (JGJ) and at SCP 30 Sep (KP), while last reported from the breeding range was one at Fort Robinson SHP 14 Oct (TJW). An excellent count, indicative of fall movement, was the 21 at Chadron SP 15 Sep (RG).

Eastern Towhee: Routine reports.

American Tree Sparrow: Earliest were 6 rather early for the location in Jefferson Co 25 Sep (RR) and 2 at WSR 29 Sep (HKH). Best count was 100 in Lincoln Co 2 Nov (TJW).

Chipping Sparrow: Only 10 were banded at NNF, where usually up to 400 are banded (RG). Last was a juvenile at Rock Creek L SRA 25 Oct (TJW).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Good numbers were reported statewide 4 Sep (AK) through 26 Oct (LF), best count hundreds in Lincoln and Custer Cos 27 Sep (TJW).

Brewer's Sparrow: None were reported; most depart by late Sep.

Field Sparrow: Five at Smith L WMA 31 Aug (SJ) were only the 19th fall Panhandle report. Although Field Sparrows are known to summer at Smith L WMA, breeding has not been documented. Migrants appear in late Aug.

Vesper Sparrow: Migration clearly peaked in late Sep and early Oct; thousands were in Lincoln and Custer Cos 27 Sep (TJW) and hundreds in Lincoln and Hayes Cos 4 Oct (TJW). Last were at 3 locations in the southeast 17 Oct (CNK,TEL,LF).

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Best count was an excellent 266 in Kimball Co 4 Aug (PD,DD). Flocking begins in late Jul.

Savannah Sparrow: Reports were widespread 29 Aug (LR,RH,TJW) through 28 Oct (LF), with best count 200 in Dixon Co 3 Oct (JJ).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: The only report was of one carefully studied at WP 30 Oct (RE, details).

LeConte's Sparrow: Some 24 were reported from the south and east as expected 25 Sep-24 Oct (JGJ,RD, DP,JP,LE), best count 13 in Lincoln 24 Oct (LE).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: The only reports were of singles at BOL 9 Oct (LE) and SCP 11 Oct (RD).

Fox Sparrow: All reports were from the east, as expected, from 26 Sep (NB) through 15 Nov (LF); best counts were 11 at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 27 Oct (DP,JP) and 8 (banded) at SCP 16 Oct (JK).

Song Sparrow: An uncommon migrant in the Panhandle, one was at WSR 11 Sep (AK), and another near Fort Robinson SHP 12 Oct was reddish with gray coloration (TJW), possibly of the western subspecies *montana*. Best counts were 15-20 in Lincoln Co 19 Oct (TJW) and 14 in one brush pile at ICSP 14 Nov (WRS).

Lincoln's Sparrow: Another species reported statewide, despite being uncommon in the Panhandle, from 11 Sep in the northwest (AK) through 14 Nov in the southeast (WRS). Best count was 25 in the observer's Dixon Co yard 3 Oct (JJ).

Swamp Sparrow: Of interest were the 9-10 birds summering in sedges rather than the usual cattails along the Cedar River in Greeley Co 8 Aug (LR,RH). Breeding does occur at Smith L WMA, where 7 were found 31 Aug (SJ). One at Rock Creek L SRA 25 Oct (TJW) was westerly.

White-throated Sparrow: First were at least 3 found in Thomas, Arthur, and Loup Cos 25 Sep (fide AK), and 2 in Dixon Co 26 Sep (JJ).

White-crowned Sparrow: First were 3 at Chadron SP 15 Sep (RG), and best count an excellent hundreds at Arnold L SRA, Custer Co, 5 Oct (TJW) and 170 still there 31 Oct (LR,RH). Numbers were high overall.

Harris's Sparrow: This species had a better showing this fall than in recent years, with good numbers reported, including 150 at Arnold L SRA, (the sparrow capital this fall) 31 Oct (LR,RH). First was one in Thomas Co 25 Sep (fide AK). One banded at SCP May 2004 was recaptured there 16 Oct (JK). Rare in the Panhandle in fall, and thus of interest, were 2 at Fort Robinson SHP 13 Oct (TJW).

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: Two at Chadron SP 15 Sep (RG) may have been local breeders or migrants; the eastern extent of the breeding range is unclear. Clearly migrants were the 2 in Perkins Co 30 Oct (TJW) and one easterly in Lincoln Co 9 Nov (TJW). Lincoln Co is at the east edge of the migration range.

Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco: First was one at WSR 11 Sep (AK), and, in the east, one at Winside 26 Sep (NB). Hundreds were in Lincoln Co 2 Nov (TJW).

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco: No Pink-sided Juncos were reported. Earliest Oregon was at Sidney 1 Oct (AS), and, eastward, the only report was of one at ADF 17 Oct (LF).

McCown's Longspur: The only report was of 22 at WSR 25 Oct (HKH), a rather late date.

Lapland Longspur: Numbers reported were thought to be better than last year at this time (GH,WH,TJW).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: None were reported; most leave by mid-Oct.

Snow Bunting: The 3 reports were from the northeast (RE,MB,LR,RH), including hundreds near Niobrara 21 Nov (MB).

Northern Cardinal: This species is spreading slowly in Scotts Bluff Co; apart from the usual location east of Scottsbluff, there were several reports in Sep and Oct west of Gering (fide AK). A late nest with 3 eggs was found at North Platte 3 Aug (TJW). In the Verdon area, cardinals were thought to produce 4-5 broods each season (CC).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Routine reports.

Black-headed Grosbeak: A description was received of 2 birds near Valley 20 Oct that were probably this species (TM). Later fall records indeed tend to be easterly, but are few.

Blue Grosbeak: Routine reports.

Lazuli Bunting: Adults were feeding young in Scotts Bluff Co 1 Aug (KD). A surprise was a pure-looking singing male in Dixon Co 2 Aug (JJ); this is about the 4th summer record from the east.

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: One in Clay Co 25 Sep (JGJ) was tardy.

Bobolink: Three at FF 21 Aug included a molting male, a juvenile, and a female (EB). One in Dixon Co 26 Sep (JJ) was rather late.

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Migrants appear in early Aug; two were at HCR 4 Aug (GH,WH), where breeding does not occur. Best counts were 200-300 in Scotts Bluff Co 6 Sep (KD) and hundreds there 12 Sep (KD).

Rusty Blackbird: The only reports were of 4 at Jack Sinn WMA,

- Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 24 Oct (LE) and one that barely made it into the fall season: it was with starlings on the observers' Dodge Co farm 30 Nov (DP,JP).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** An excellent count was the estimated 2000-3000 in an almost pure flock near McCook 18 Oct (TJW). Easterly were 12 in Clay Co 23 Oct (JGJ).
- Common Grackle:** Very large flocks, each estimated at 100,000, were noted flying southward over Brady 5 Oct (TJW) and FF 25 Sep (EB), marking peak migration. Lingering was one near Olive Creek L, Lancaster Co, 21 Nov (WRS); the latest birds are typically singles.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Uncommon in the southwest, a small group was near McCook 18 Oct (TJW).
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Best count was a flock in Lancaster Co 14 Aug (LE); flocks begin to form as early as late Jun. Rather late was a flock present at the observer's feeder all fall through 23 Nov (CNK); a single was in Lincoln with other blackbirds 27 Nov (LE). Only a few are still present in Dec, those in the extreme southeast.
- Orchard Oriole:** One in Clay Co 25 Sep (JGJ) was rather late.
- Baltimore Oriole:** Routine reports.
- Bullock's Oriole:** A carefully-observed bird fitting the description of an adult male was at FF 4 Sep (EB, details); the description did not suggest any hybrid characters. Although only the 2nd record of an adult male east of the Panhandle, immatures, often difficult to identify and the age group most prone to wander, may be overlooked.
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** None were reported; arrival is in late Oct.
- Purple Finch:** Only about 21 were reported, west to Halsey, where a male was attending a feeder 19 Oct and 3 Nov (RG,TJW). First was rather early at WSR 27 Sep (HKH), and best count 11 in Otoe Co 26 Nov (LF).
- House Finch:** In the "what the heck are those?" department were the 30-40 in a Red Willow Co CRP grassland 18 Oct (TJW).
- Red Crossbill:** A few were reported: at least one at a regular location in Thomas Co 25 Sep (fide AK), one at the feeders at Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co, 3 Nov (AK), 3 a bit further east at North Platte 12 Nov (TJW), and 4 females surprisingly far to the east at the Brownville Cem 12 Nov (WRS,JSt).
- White-winged Crossbill:** Unexpected was a female at the observer's Elkhorn feeder 15 Nov (DSt), the only report. Most reports of this species are from the east in Nov.
- Common Redpoll:** The only reports were from the extreme northeast; two were at GPD 27 Nov (JJ) and 2 in Dixon Co 28 Nov (JJ).
- Pine Siskin:** Siskins were widespread in good numbers this fall. A few appeared away from potential breeding locations in early Sep, mostly in the Panhandle, and reached the east by 15 Sep, when one was seen at Ponca SP (BP,LP). Best count was 60 in Dundey Co 25 Oct (TJW). Dozens were at an Elkhorn feeder 15 Nov (DSt). The first seen by the observer for 3-4 years in Lancaster Co were found this fall (LE).
- American Goldfinch:** Adults with dependent young first appeared in the observer's Mitchell yard 25 Aug (KD), and a group of 15 in Sarpy Co had begging young as late as 9 Oct (CNK).
- Evening Grosbeak:** At least 4 birds appeared at two widely-spaced feeders this fall. A male on 12 Oct, a female on 14 Oct, and 2 females the next day, were at a Sidney feeder (AS), and, more surprisingly, a juvenile male appeared at a Bellevue feeder 25-30 Oct (KCR,CNK). The latter is an early date for the east.
- House Sparrow:** Routine reports.

Lake McConaughy and Nebraska Piping Plover Recovery Goals

Mark M. Peyton, Senior District Biologist
The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

Since 1992 the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (Central) has protected and monitored nesting Piping Plovers along the shore of Lake McConaughy (Keith County, Nebraska). Over those 13 seasons, Central monitored 849 Piping Plover nests and documented the successful fledging (successful fledging is defined as a chick at least 24 days old, or one observed flying) of 1,237 Piping Plover chicks (Table 1), making Lake McConaughy one of the most productive nesting areas for Piping Plovers in Nebraska. The following is a documentation of the contributions of Lake McConaughy to the recovery goals for Piping Plovers in Nebraska.

Piping Plover use of Lake McConaughy

On May 1, 2004, Lake McConaughy was at 39.7% capacity (633,100 ac/ft of a capacity of 1,594,100 ac/ft) with water elevation at 3217 feet above mean sea level. This is 26 feet lower than in 2002 and nine feet lower than 2003. While the steady decline in storage and elevation of the water in the reservoir is of serious concern, specifically for downstream water users and recreational fishermen, the large amount of exposed, sandy beaches has been ideal for nesting Piping Plovers. In terms of the number of adult birds sighted at the lake, the number of nests located and monitored, and the number of successfully fledged chicks, 2004 was a record-setting year, breaking the records set in 2003.

As part of its endangered species protection plan at Lake McConaughy, Central conducts weekly surveys of nesting Piping Plovers from late April through July. In 2004, a maximum of 168 pairs of adult Piping Plovers was counted. These birds were associated with 183 known nests, which produced 371 fledged chicks. The previous record numbers from 2003 were 111 pairs of adults, 118 nests, and 205 fledged chicks. (Table 1). Predictions for lake levels in 2005 suggest habitat conditions similar to those seen in 2004. Based upon these predictions it is expected there will again be extensive use of the beaches by Piping Plovers.

The lake will fill to capacity at some time in the future, as it did in 1995 and 1997, and those birds now nesting along the open beach will have to seek breeding areas elsewhere. Over the long term, the filling of the lake is essential for the continued use of the beach by nesting Piping Plovers because inundation of the beach removes the vegetation that is now encroaching upon the open sand. This acts to rejuvenate the habitat for nesting Piping Plovers in subsequent years.

Piping Plover recovery in Nebraska

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Piping Plover Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1988) identifies specific recovery goals for Nebraska including the maintenance of 250 adult pairs of Piping Plovers for the Missouri River adjacent to Nebraska and 215 adult pairs elsewhere in the state. The Service subdivided those Nebraska goals by allocating the need for 140 of the 215 pairs to the Platte River, 50 pairs to the Niobrara River and 25 pairs to the Loup River.

Table 1. Piping plover nest success at Lake McConaughy 1992 - 2004.

Year	# Adult Pairs	# Nests	Nest Hatched	Successful Nest	# Chicks	# Fledged	Fledge Success	Fledge Ratio
1992	53	66	46	70%	112	71	63%	1.34
1993	69	83	60	72%	172	110	64%	1.59
1994	46	50	35	70%	102	65	64%	1.41
1995	16	37	3	8%	7	6	86%	0.38
1996	44	60	16	27%	66	37	56%	0.84
1997	35	40	14	35%	55	17	31%	0.49
1998	18	25	9	36%	26	13	50%	0.72
1999	24	34	14	41%	34	24	71%	1.00
2000	29	33	29	88%	103	74	72%	2.55
2001	51	51	51	100%	181	112	62%	2.20
2002	67	69	67	97%	206	132	64%	1.97
2003	111	118	106	90%	308	205	67%	1.85
2004	168	183	168	92%	491	371	76%	2.21
Totals	731	849	618	72.8%	1863	1237	66.4%	1.69
Averages	56.2	65.3	47.5	63.5%	143.3	95.2	63.4%	1.43
SD	26.7	26.1	30.1	30.6%	88.2	59.4	13.2%	0.70

In a Service-sponsored workshop conducted in September of 2000 (Lutey, 2002) it was recommended that the 140-pair goal for the Platte River be further refined to allocate 77 pairs of birds between Columbus and the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers (lower Platte), and 63 pairs between Lexington and Columbus (central Platte), with at least 16 of those pairs located between Lexington and Kearney. It was further recommended that Piping Plovers nesting along the shore of Lake McConaughy be counted toward the overall recovery goal for the species in the Great Plains, but not counted toward the Platte River goal because "...at the time the recovery plans were written, the recovery teams did not consider the South Platte or North Platte Rivers as central to recovery of the species." (Lutey, 2002).

A population can be defined as a group of individuals of the same species, living and reproducing in the same area. Piping Plover chicks banded in the central Platte River have subsequently nested as adults on the lower Platte and along the shore of Lake McConaughy (Wingfield, 1993). Thus, I would argue that the birds at the Lake and those along the Platte River in Nebraska are of the same population and all should be counted toward the same recovery goal.

The 168 pairs of Piping Plovers nesting this past year at Lake McConaughy represent 78% of the statewide and 120% of the Platte River recovery goals. Coupled with birds elsewhere along the Platte and throughout the state, these numbers may constitute the achievement of the Platte River and statewide population recovery goals for Piping Plovers for the second straight year.

Though the number of Piping Plovers nesting at Lake McConaughy coupled with the birds on the Platte and elsewhere in Nebraska represents potential recovery, the recovery plan also requires that population goals be met for 15 consecutive years.

When considering a broader scale and looking at populations throughout the Great Plains, maintenance of the recovered population for 15 consecutive years is an appropriate goal. However, in smaller geographic units it may be impossible to attain. Given the ephemeral nature of Piping Plover habitat on a smaller geographic scale, 15 consecutive years may not be realistic. Rivers on the Great Plains flood and dry up on cyclic intervals, as do their associated reservoirs and lakes. During these cycles of flood and drought, habitat is gained and then lost for some period. Piping Plovers are adapted to the ephemeral nature of their habitat. These birds relocate to different areas during unfavorable times. Thus, in some years they can be found in large numbers and successfully reproduce and in other years they may not be present at all. Knetter (et. al. 2002) pointed this out in regard to alkali lakes in the Northern Great Plains stating that Piping Plover habitat, and thus the number of birds present in an area, varies considerably year to year and that this variation needs to be considered in establishing recovery goals.

This considerable variation is common in Nebraska. Central documented population changes ranging from 16 pairs to 168 pairs along the shore of Lake McConaughy (Table 1). On the Missouri numbers of Piping Plovers ranged from 16 pairs to 138 pairs. On the Loup the population was reduced 62% in one year only to recover two years later (Table 2).

According to the average state-wide counts, as of 2001 we were at 61% of recovery within Nebraska not including the Missouri River (131/215 pairs), and 44% of

Table 2. Nebraska Piping Plover Survey Data (adult birds).

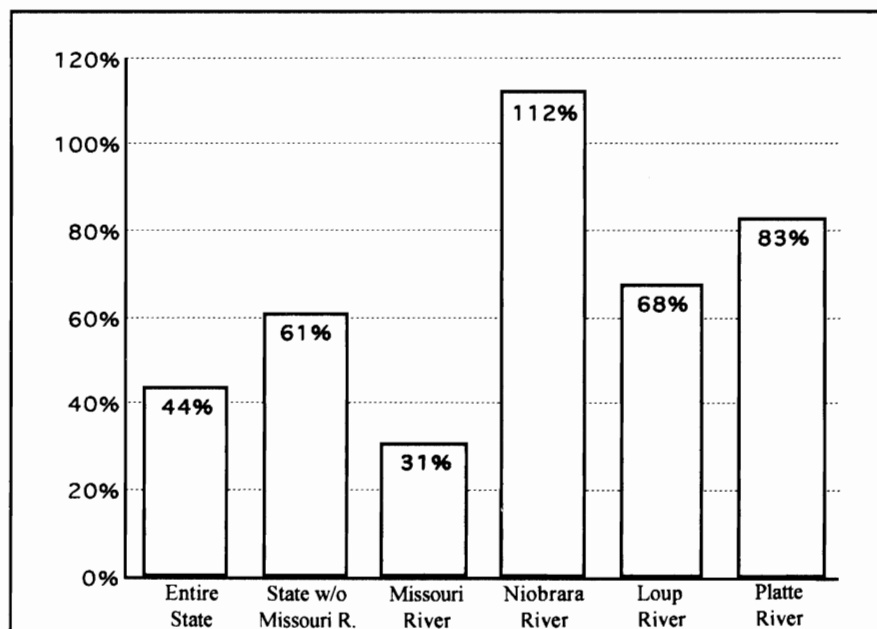
Year	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Estimated average (pairs*)
Missouri River	193	243	130	186	222	124	153	91	67	31	54	164	259	276		78
Niobrara River	126	83			162					107					82	56
Loup River		44		37		61	23		69	33	10	12			17	17
Elkhorn River						4	9	8	8	7	23			6	21	5
Upper Platte	0	2	0	8	7	8	9	10	8	24	14	14	10	8	2	4
Central Platte	87	56	87	54	67	67	56	62	39	55	34	34		33	30	27
Lower Platte	117	161	190	149	88	97	81	73		53	92	57		52	68	49
South Platte	2	5	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	2		5		6	2	2
Lake McConaughy				37	61	106	142	70	70	96	24	30	48	52	74	34
State Total	525	594	413	472	607	467	474	314	261	408	251	316	317	433	296	
Missouri Riv. Total	193	243	130	186	222	124	153	91	67	31	54	164	259	276	na	
Total of State																
without Missouri R.	332	351	283	286	385	343	321	223	194	377	197	152	58	157	296	

Source: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Census Data 1987 - 2001 (unpublished)

* Calculated as the average number of birds recorded divided by two

recovery for the entire state of Nebraska (209/465) (Figure 1). When the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission makes available the data for 2002 -2004, the three-fold increase in birds surveyed at Lake McConaughy, significant increases along the Missouri, and completed surveys of the Niobrara River and elsewhere will not only push the one-year totals above recovery goals for the state, but possibly the long-term averages as well.

Figure 1. Percent of Piping Plover Population Recovery Goals for Various Areas in Nebraska as of 2001



Source: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Census Data
1987 - 2001 (unpublished)

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THE 2002 NEBRASKA NEST REPORT

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In contrast to last year, with "the winter that wouldn't end," this breeding season began with a "spring that wouldn't begin." The winter was mild and uneventful, but although the spring was neither cold nor stormy, the usual warmup did not come, and when the weather finally warmed in May, it brought no moisture. The resulting drought was worst in the west and southwest, areas that had already been abnormally dry for several years. In mid-June in the southern Panhandle, many ranchers were still feeding hay to the cattle because the grass simply did not grow. The dry conditions surely had an effect on breeding birds of all kinds, and probably affected shorebirds and ground-nesting birds especially, due to lack of standing water and ground cover. While the absence of detailed base-line data makes the results impossible to quantify, probably some and perhaps many of the birds observed simply spent the summer without breeding. With this qualified comment comes the predictable plea for more breeding records from across the state, enabling us to build a database of detailed breeding records of selected areas by recording observations in the same area year by year, along with data on accompanying and associated environmental conditions.

OBSERVERS

The following observers submitted records for the nesting report: Linda Brown (LB), John Ewing (JE), Robin Harding (RH), Helen Hughson (HH), Alice Kenitz (AK), Clem Klaphake (CK), Marty Mathieson (MM), Wayne Mollhoff (WM), Colleen Noecker (CN), Don Paseka (DP), Janis Paseka (JP), Lanny Randolph (LR), A. Don Showen (ADS), David Stage (DS), J. Harley Winfrey (HW), Sarah Winfrey (SW).

A total of 348 reports was received on a total of 81 species. Species reported but not included in the following species accounts include: Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, American Avocet, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Brown Thrasher, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, and Baltimore Oriole.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ICSP = Indian Cave State Park, SP = State Park, WHNC = Wildcat Hills Nature Center, WMA = Wildlife Management Area

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Canada Goose It was interesting to note the east to west progression of the season on a cross-state trip on 5 April 2002. At Twin Lakes WMA 12 mi. SE of Seward, Seward Co., a pair occupied a nest with 5 eggs. Along the Middle Loup River, 4 mi. NW of Dunning, Blaine Co., a pair was investigating a nest site but had not yet occupied it. In Grant Co. near Whitman and Hyannis, pairs were present but were not yet showing interest in the available nest tubs. (LB,WM)

- Trumpeter Swan** On 2 June 2002 a pair of adults was closely guarding 4-5 young on the nest on south Wolfenberger Lake 3 mi. W of Hyannis, Grant Co. (WM) A pair of adults with 4 young were seen on the lake 2 mi. E of Hyannis, Grant Co., on 27 July 2002. (DS)
- Mallard** Forgoing the usual ground nest, a nest built 7 ft. up in the crotch of a tree held 7 eggs on 9 July 2002 in Sioux Co., 14 mi. NNE of Scottsbluff. (HH)
- Sharp-tailed Grouse** An adult and 3 very small young were noted in Sioux Co. on 8 June 2002, 16 mi. NNE of Scottsbluff. (HH)
- Wild Turkey** A hen and large brood of 15 young were noted near Elkhorn, Douglas Co., on 22 July 2002. (DS)
- Northern Bobwhite** A female with a brood of 12 young were reported near Osceola, Polk Co., on 23 June 2002. (DS)
- Pied-billed Grebe** A nest with 8 eggs was located on the Saunders Co. portion of Jack Sinn WMA, Saunders/Lancaster Cos., SE of Ceresco on 5 June 2002. (WM) A nest with a single egg was found on Willy Lake, Sheridan Co., 1 mi. S of Bingham, on 23 June 2002. (WM)
- Western Grebe** A colony of six nests with eggs was located on Willy Lake, a traditional breeding site in Sheridan Co., 1 mi. S, 1 mi. E of Bingham on 23 June 2002. An additional 65 non-breeding *Aechmophorus* sp. grebes were also present. When revisited on 19 July, there were 8 adults and 3 young birds present. The non-breeding birds were no longer present. By the latter date, the surface area of the lake had decreased by 15-20%, the water level was several feet below normal, and the deepest part of the lake was less than 2 ft. deep. The water was a turbid greenish brown and how the grebes could find and catch fish was a mystery. (WM)
- Clark's Grebe** A nest with eggs was located in the above-mentioned colony on Willy Lake on 23 June 2002. On 19 July a pair of young birds was observed begging from and being fed by the pair of adults. Although adults and young have been observed here and elsewhere in the state for a number of years, this might be the first observation of a nest with eggs reported. (WM)
- Great Blue Heron** The breeding colony on the Niobrara River 9 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., had 2-3-week-old young peering over the edges of the nests on 31 May 2002. Sixteen active nests were noted. The usual pair of Red-tailed Hawks (with at least one young in the nest) was again in residence. (WM) A large colony on the Platte River in Dawson Co. near Gothenburg moved and set up in a new location in a riparian cottonwood grove north of mile marker 213.5 north of I-80. On 11 May 2002 more than 90 nests were seen before the emerging foliage hid them from view. (WM) Active colonies were noted on 20 June 2002 in Cherry Co. on Gordon Ck. 5 mi. S of Merritt Res. and at Mayhew Lake, 22 mi. N of Mullen. (CK)
- Northern Harrier** A pair was noted nest-building at Medicine Creek Res., Frontier Co., on 21 April 2002. (LR,RH)
- Red-tailed Hawk** A nest at the edge of a Great Blue Heron colony 9 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., held at least 1 young on 31 May 2002. (WM)
- Golden Eagle** A bird was noted incubating a nest in Sioux Co. 12 mi. N of Scottsbluff on 15 April 2002. Two young were noted on 12 May and one fledged on 12 July. (HH)
- American Coot** Four nests with apparently complete clutches of 7-18 eggs were located on a pond in the Saunders Co. portion of the Jack Sinn WMA, SE of Ceresco, Saunders/Lancaster Cos., on 7 June 2002(WM). Two weeks later, on 23

June 2002 at Willy Lake, Sheridan Co., 6 nests with incomplete clutches of 2-5 eggs were found, along with one nest containing 7 eggs. (WM)

Long-billed Curlew Two half-grown young were noted feeding with a pair of adults on 15 June 2002 in Sioux Co. 10 mi. N of Scottsbluff. (HH)

Common Nighthawk A nest with 2 eggs was found in shortgrass prairie 5 mi. S of Harrisburg, Banner Co., on 7 July 2002. (JE)

Lewis's Woodpecker The nest hole used by a pair since at least 1999 was expropriated by the resident pair of American Kestrels before the woodpeckers returned in May. Due to the height and increasing fragility of the dead snag, the usurpation had the tacit support of the observer. However, two active new nests were located in the same general area of West Ash Canyon SE of Crawford, Dawes Co. On 21 June 2002 one nest held a single egg, plus 5 young ranging from 1-5 days old. On 22 June 2002 the other nest held 7 eggs. (WM)

Red-headed Woodpecker A nest with 3 eggs and 3 young was found 7 mi. S of Redington, Morrill Co. on 22 June 2002. (WM)

Red-bellied Woodpecker A nest still under construction on 19 April 2002 was occupied on 26 April. It was found occupied by a pair of European Starlings on 12 May. This nest is not the nest mentioned in the account under European Starling listed below. (WM)

Downy Woodpecker A nest with 4 young about 1 week old was found 25 May 2002 at ICSP, Nemaha Co. (WM)

Hairy Woodpecker A nest near the picnic area / campground in West Ash Canyon 10 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., held both eggs and young when discovered on 1 June 2002. By 21 June only a single young remained in the nest. (WM)

Pileated Woodpecker Birds were reported in Indian Cave SP in late Feb. 2002 (DS) and apparently breeding by 18 May. (ADS) On 25-26 May a pair of adults was observed feeding young, with 1-2 young at a time sticking their heads out of the hole to be fed. On the latter date, the young appeared to be almost fully grown. By 16 June the woodpeckers had fledged and the hole was occupied by a pair of bats with at least 2 young. (WM) The hole was located 38 ft. up a 100-ft. tall dead cottonwood snag. This appears to be the second detailed nest report in the state.

Western Wood-Pewee A nest with 2 eggs was located in West Ash Canyon, 10 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 21 June 2002. (WM) Another nest with 3 eggs was located 8 mi. S of Redington, Morrill Co., on 22 June 2002. (WM)

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Thanks to Dr. Rosalind Morris, former editor of *The Nebraska Bird Review*, Dr. Norma Johnson's original field notes were found and made available for study. Her extensive notes that formed the basis for the report of nesting Yellow-bellied Flycatchers that appeared in the 1978 nesting report by Esther Bennett were included. Douglas A. Gross, author of the species account in the *The Birds of North America: Life Histories for the 21st Century* series agreed to review the notes. He felt that the notes did indeed describe an *Empidonax* flycatcher but did not conclusively prove that it was a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. His concerns included: 1) Dr. Johnson did not state how she decided one of the birds was the male (since the sexes look alike); 2) she did not describe the location of the nest (a key component of identification of nesting *Empidonax*); and 3) there was not enough detail in the description of the birds themselves, or their calls, to conclusively rule out other similar species. His final comment was that the description and habitat made it seem more likely that it was a pair of Pacific-slope, or western Cordilleran Flycatchers, (which would also have been

equally far out of range), and that it was unfortunate that Dr. Johnson is no longer available to provide additional details.

Say's Phoebe A nest with a single egg was found in an abandoned shed 3 mi. NE of Marsland, Dawes Co., on 2 June 2002. (WM)

Cassin's Kingbird Two nests were found 8 mi. S of Redington, Morrill Co., on 22 June 2002. One nest held 1 egg and 3 young, the other held 4 young. (WM)

Western Kingbird Four nests found 22 June 2002, also 8 mi. S of Redington, Morrill Co., ranged in development from eggs and newly hatched young through nearly-fledged young. (WM)

Eastern Kingbird An interesting finding was nearly synchronous nesting across the state, with egg-laying underway near Ceresco in both Lancaster and Saunders Co. on 19 June 2002, and incubation underway in Morrill Co. 8 mi. S of Redington on 22 June 2002, and at Willy Lake near Bingham, Sheridan Co., on 23 June. (WM)

Loggerhead Shrike A nest with eggs was under incubation near Ceresco, Saunders Co., on 14 June 2002. On 3 July it held young, 3-5 days old. (WM) Three young were being fed by adults in Blaine Co. 10 mi. N of Brewster on 27 July 2002. (DS)

Blue Jay An adult incubating 2 eggs was fed while on the nest in Ashland, Saunders Co., on 30 April 2002. Three more nests with eggs, also in Ashland, were found on 12 May 2002. (WM)

Black-billed Magpie After a fruitless search on a chilly, damp day for the current Pinyon Jay breeding colony, the remaining time available was spent collecting information on a colony of magpies. Six nests were found 11 May 2002 in an area of 80 acres – more widely spaced than the usual placement of the jays' nests. All 6 nests held eggs, but only 2 were being incubated, with both of the incubating birds leaving the nest only after some prodding. The colony was located 7 mi. S. of Redington, Morrill Co. (WM) On 28 May 2002 a nest with eggs was located 9 mi. NE of North Bend, Dodge Co. (DP,JP). At Ft. Robinson SP, Sioux Co., on 1 June 2002, one nest contained half-grown young, and the young from an adjacent nest had already fledged. (WM)

Horned Lark Fledged young were noted in Sioux Co. on 6 May 2002, 14 mi. N of Scottsbluff (HH), and on 8 June 2002, 13 mi. SW of Harrison. (HH)

Tree Swallow Several weeks earlier than the Violet-green Swallows noted above, 5 nest boxes with eggs were noted on 26 May 2002 at Twin Lakes WMA 12 mi. SE of Seward, Seward Co. By 9 June young were present in 4 of the nests. (LB)

Violet-green Swallow Nest-building by the female was underway in a tree cavity in West Ash Canyon 10 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 31 May 2002. On 22 June the female was incubating 5 eggs. Also on 31 May, construction was underway in a nearby cliff cavity, but it was abandoned by 22 June. (WM)

At the WHNC, 8 mi. S of Gering, Scotts Bluff and Banner Cos., at least 2 nest boxes with eggs were noted on 15 June 2002. On 2 July, small young were noted in both boxes. (HW)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow A colony of 6-8 pairs was found in Indian Cave, in Indian Cave SP, Richardson Co., nesting on open ledges and shallow cavities in the stone walls of the cave, a setting quite at odds with their usual earthen riverbank nest sites. On 26 May 2002 one nest with 3 eggs was already being incubated, while other nests were still under construction. On 16 June the nest held 4 young that were several days old, while another nest held 2 eggs. The

other nests were less accessible and could not be checked without excessive disturbance. (WM)

Bank Swallow A colony was found in vertical hard-packed sand “blowout” walls in a gently rolling upland shortgrass prairie pasture miles from any surface water, 7 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co. On 31 May 2002, 9 of the 16 holes were occupied, with nest-building underway in some of the holes. On 21 June one of the nests held eggs and young, while the other 8 nests held only eggs. (WM) As with the just-mentioned Rough-winged Swallows, this setting is very different from the usual nest sites found elsewhere in the state, but is similar to some other sites reported in the western Panhandle. (HH)

Red-breasted Nuthatch A pair of adults was noted carrying food to a cavity with 2-3-day-old young in West Ash Canyon, 12 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 10 May 2002. On 7 June the fledged, begging young were seen being fed by the adults in the nest tree. At the same time, a pair of House Wrens was busy building a twig nest in the recently-vacated cavity. (WM)

White-breasted Nuthatch In Ashland, Saunders Co., on 26 April 2002, an adult was seen carrying food to its incubating mate in a natural cavity used by Black-capped Chickadees 2 years previously. On 28 April the cavity held 7 eggs and an incubating bird that would not leave the cavity. On 4 May the nest held at least 4 just-hatched young and 2 eggs. (WM) Five young in a nest box were banded at Elkhorn, Douglas Co., on 14 June 2002. (DS)

Pygmy Nuthatch On 10 May 2002 a newly-excavated nest cavity 12 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., held an incomplete clutch of 4 eggs. The eggs were covered over with fluffy nest material when found. (WM)

Brown Creeper Apparently the first report of an active nest for the Panhandle, a nest with week-old young was found in West Ash Canyon 10 mi. SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 1 June 2002. (WM) Creepers have previously been reported breeding only in the middle Niobrara Valley and at the east end of the state, and only a single active nest has actually been found at each location. Breeding season birds exhibiting various breeding-related behaviors have been found in the Pine Ridge previously, and it was long believed to be the most likely area of the state for regular nesting. Given their inconspicuous habits, rather early nesting, and invisible nests, they may breed more frequently than suspected in this area.

Rock Wren A nest with 2 eggs was found on 24 July 2002, in Sioux Co. 11 mi. N of Scottsbluff. (HH)

Marsh Wren Wrens were numerous in the cattail marsh surrounding Willy Lake, 2 mi. SE of Bingham, Sheridan Co. On 2 June 2002 three nearly completed nests were found, along with 3-4 times that number of “dummy” nests. On 23 June one of the nests held 4-5 young that were less than a week old. (WM)

Eastern Bluebird A pair was noted hanging around a nest box in Seward Co. by 12 March 2002, possibly adding nest material. The nest was completed by 31 March and held 4 eggs on 5 Apr. (LB, WM) A nest in a pine snag in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co., held 5 eggs on 10 May 2002. (WM) Another in a nest box at Albion, Boone Co., held 5 eggs on 17 April 2002. (CN) A nest box at the WHNC, Scotts Bluff Co., held 5 young on 15 May 2002. (HW)

Mountain Bluebirds A nest box in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co., held 2 eggs on 10 May 2002. (WM)

Townsend's Solitaire The report of a pair at a nest on 10 April 2002 at the WHNC, Scotts Bluff Co., proved to be a false alarm. Nesting activity was not

observed and the birds were not seen again. (HW,SW)

European Starling A pair nested again in Ashland, Saunders Co., in a willow snag cavity that was usurped from a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers last year. The nest held at least 3 young on 12 May 2002. (WM)

Cedar Waxwing Nest building was observed at Medicine Ck Res., Frontier Co., on 30 June 2002. (RH,LR)

Summer Tanager Rarely reported with nesting details previously, a pair was found attending a nest at ICSP, Richardson Co. The nest held 1 egg and 2 small young on 28 June 2002. (WM)

Lark Sparrow A nest with 4 eggs was reported in Sioux Co. 12 mi. N of Scottsbluff on 13 June 2002. Young were seen beside the nest on 29 June. (HH)

Lark Bunting A nest with 5 eggs was found in Sioux Co. on 5 June 2002, 14 mi. NNE of Scottsbluff. (HH)

Black-headed Grosbeak A pair was observed nest-building in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co. on 2 June 2002. By 22 June the nest had been abandoned. On 21 June 2002 another nest that held 4 young was found nearby. (WM)

Yellow-headed Blackbird In another example of synchronous nesting across the state, a colony with 7 nests was found near Lakeside, Sheridan Co., on 2 June 2002. Four nests were near completion, while the other 3 each held a single egg. (WM) Another colony at Willy Lake, near Bingham, Sheridan Co., on the same date ranged from nests nearing completion to just-hatched young. (WM) A colony of 9 nests in the Saunders Co. portion of Jack Sinn WMA, Saunders & Lancaster Cos., ranged from initial stages of nest-building to nests with 3 eggs on 5 June 2002. (WM)

Brewer's Blackbird A colony of 8 nests was found on 31 May 2002, 12 mi. E of Harrison, Sioux Co. The contents ranged from eggs to eggs and just-hatched young in the same nest. (WM)

Common Grackle A colony of 6 nests was found on 3 May 2002 in Lincoln, Lancaster Co. Activity ranged from nearly-complete nests to nests with eggs. (WM) Another colony of 9 nests was located on 11 May 2002 near Alda, Hall Co. Eight of the nests held only eggs, while 1 nest had eggs and just-hatched young. (WM) A nest in Shelton, Buffalo Co., held 3 eggs on 16 June 2002. (MM)

Great-tailed Grackle A colony was again active at Jack Sinn WMA near Ceresco, Saunders & Lancaster Cos. Nest-building was noted in the Saunders Co. portion of the WMA on 4 May 2002, eggs were noted on 14 May, and young were noted on 5 June. Some early nests were scavenged as sources for building materials and incorporated into later nests. (WM)

Brown-headed Cowbird Eggs were noted in Chipping Sparrow and House Finch nests (WM) and a young cowbird was noted being fed by a Lark Bunting. (HH)

Bullock's Oriole A nest with 1 egg and 3 just-hatched young was found on 22 June 2002, 9 mi. SW of Redington, Morrill Co. (WM)

House Finch A nest with 2 House Finch eggs, a House Sparrow egg, and a Brown-headed Cowbird egg was noted on 27 April 2002 in Ashland, Saunders Co. (WM)

Pine Siskin Adults were noted feeding just-fledged, begging young in Bassett, Rock Co., on 21 May 2002. (CH)

House Sparrow Two nests with eggs were noted on 28 April 2002 at Mahoney SP, Cass Co. (WM)

Does Birding Have a Future?

Rick Wright, Tucson, AZ, rwright@aba.org

[Editor's note: This was an address given at the NOU Fall Field Days in Halsey on Sept. 25, 2004.]

Does birding have a future?

Now this might seem an odd question, even an absurd question, to pose to an audience like this, and the answer might seem obvious. How could birding not have a future when we, all of us, are birders who bird, and when survey after recent survey assures us that our numbers are growing, our diversity increasing, and our economic and ethical contributions to American society ever more conspicuous. Does birding have a future? The simple answer is yes.

That's the simple answer. The more interesting answer is yes—yes, but. Yes, birding has a future, but that future is, I believe, not likely to look much like the sport's present. In some ways, it will resemble elements and phases of our past; in other ways, ways that we cannot foresee, it will be unlike anything we have known.

These general statements could apply to the development of just about anything human, of course. What is unique and I think greatly to our advantage, though, is that as birders at the beginning of the twenty-first century we actually have some choices about which elements of the past we wish to carry along with us into the future. And if we make those choices wisely, in full awareness of what present-day birding is, how it became what it is, and why it is facing—must face—the necessity of change—if we are aware of all these factors, we can make thoughtful choices, I believe, that will not only insure the sport's persistence into the next hundred years, but make birding a more attractive pastime for newcomers, a more valuable contribution to what we call science, and a more influential force in the negotiation of environmental policy in this country and around the world.

Just what constitutes modern-day birding has become a strangely controversial question in the last few years. As readers of the birding press have certainly noticed, an academic cottage industry has sprung up among the social scientists, and the definition of our pastime, our hobby, our sport, our passion, has become a question with high stakes. The most liberal definitions seem to be prevailing nowadays, with the label of "birder" applied to anyone who can name 10 birds, or anyone who has bought birdseed in the past year, or anyone who has ever traveled more than a mile to see birds. The bar really was set this absurdly low in several of the most infamous surveys to have appeared in the last few years, surveys that have come up with such outlandish numbers as 40, 50, even 70 million "birders" in America. Never mind that you'd have to be deaf, blind, and three days buried to be unable to name 10 birds, never mind that your birdseed goes straight to feed the pigeons and Muscovy ducks in the park, never mind that the latest bird you traveled over a mile to see required hourly basting while the pumpkin pies were baking—these surveys will account you a birder. That is how they come up with numbers that make every fifth person on the street "one of us," a conclusion that is, let me use the word again, absurd.

Only birders know what birding is, and only birders know another birder when they see one. Let me try this definition—or better, this description. Birding in America in the early twenty-first century involves looking for birds with the purpose of identifying them. I've been told that this definition is oversimplified, but I like to think of it as elegant. Note that I said "looking for," not "looking at"; this excludes the fisherman who, quite rightly, admires the Osprey that is having better luck than he is, and it excludes the kitchen-window watcher smiling at the goldfinches on the thistle feeder. Note too that I said "identifying," not "observing"; this excludes the graduate student painstakingly following every move of a pintail—but painfully unaware that the bird in the background is a Baikal Teal. And note finally that I said "for the purpose of identifying". This excludes the many hunters with highly developed field skills, it excludes most scientific investigators, it excludes early morning park walkers no matter how much they enjoy the dawn chorus.

Birding: looking for birds with the purpose of identifying them. An elegant definition, a narrow definition—but I believe an accurate one to describe the state of birding in modern America. Birding involves a conscious effort to seek out birds; it involves a conscious effort to identify the birds found; and that effort at identification is the goal and purpose of the effort to find them. If you're not looking for birds, identifying birds, and finding your principal satisfaction in making that identification, you're not birding.

I hope that this seems obvious to most of us. But as obvious as it may be, it is not inevitable. Those of you who read *Birding* will recall the manifesto with which I inaugurated "Sources." In introducing that series to our readers, I wrote that no cultural phenomenon is inevitable or natural, that every human activity arises from human choices, whether consciously made or not. To my mind, this makes birding even more interesting than if it were simply unfiltered observation, more interesting to do, and much more rewarding to think about. Birding, in other words, did not have to develop the way that it has, and there is nothing natural or predestined about what our activity looks like now in the year 2004. But neither is it accidental that birders have followed this among all the other potential parallel paths.

Theoretically, any one of numerous aspects could have taken center stage to become the defining principle of modern birding; the focus on identification, which to my mind distinguishes the sport from all other bird- or nature-related activities, is the product of some very specific situations and pressures. Other historical or cultural circumstances might have given us a very different form of birding from what we enjoy today.

At the turn of the twentieth century, as those of you who have read Ray Korpi, Jr.'s fine dissertation know, birding, birdwatching, bird study, whatever the label, was a constantly shifting landscape, full of alternative approaches to appreciating the birds around us: there was a bit of museum science in Frank Chapman's guides, a fledgling sort of ecology in Florence Merriam's books, wildlife economics in the great *Birds of America* edited by Gilbert Pearson, adventure in Seton, identification in Reed, and so on, a riotous mix of ways to learn about the birds.

I do not know if it was somehow necessary to choose among these various

approaches, but choose we did. Of all the challenges presented in the various sub-fields of early twentieth-century birding, those posed by identification, with their straightforward “x-or-not-x” structure, were perhaps those most amenable to easy solution. Thus, while fields such as taxonomy, ecology, and wildlife management, with their broad questions and leisurely modes of investigation, became literally more and more academic over the years, by the 1920s and 1930s field identification was widely recognized as the sexy aspect of birding, where the most progress was being made the most visibly—after all, identification problems could be solved quickly and definitively with the simple application of better glass or some well-directed lead. Recall the well-known and poorly attested Legend of St. Ludlow, when Griscom, while birding Central Park, called a female *Dendroica*, which his doubting field companion then dropped from the tree—only to find that the Great Identifier had been right.

Ludlow Griscom, Peterson, and the others of that time became stars not only because of their undeniable identification skills, but because they recognized that those skills—far more easily and far more effectively than the arcana of science—could be communicated and learned. At first, identification information was passed around informally, orally, from birder to birder; but then the young Peterson conceived of his field guide “on a new plan,” and literally within weeks, publishers too were convinced that here at last was a type of birding that they could sell. Nature study, ecology, aesthetic appreciation were all fine and good, but such “birdcraft” (to borrow the charming term coined by my namesake Mabel Osgood Wright) was inconveniently holistic for the publishing houses, intellectually too ill-defined and physically too unwieldy for a pocketbook.

Birding in the sense of bird identification might have turned out nothing more than one more of the fads of the 1930s and 1940s, but its new prominence coincided with the rise of the automobile in most Americans’ lives. Access to transportation, whether to a woodlot across town or to a saltmarsh across the continent, made possible the first part of my definition of modern birding, the search for birds to identify. The authors and publishers of bird books responded eagerly. The best example is the advance of the Peterson juggernaut, with the original *Field Guide to the Birds* followed over the years by volumes devoted to western birds, European birds, Texas birds, Mexican birds, and West Indian birds; note that in the titles in the Peterson series, “the birds” means eastern birds, all other avifaunas being treated as the exotic targets of traveling birders from east—usually far east—of the notorious meridian not that many miles from Halsey.

Modern birding looks the way it does because bird identification, however challenging it may be, is at least clear cut and easily communicated, and because the easy mobility afforded us by cheap and convenient transportation ensures a good supply of new identification challenges, keeping the activity fresh. Tired of fall warblers? The first geese are in the Rainwater Basin. Up to here with juvenile sparrows? McConaughy is probably dry enough for some good shorebirds.

Particularly in the last twenty years, birding-as-identification has also been greatly bolstered by the publishing industry. Fifty years ago, Roger Tory Peterson remarked with some incredulity that Great Britain published something like a bird book every two weeks; nowadays, in Britain, Holland, Scandinavia, and the US, it’s more like two a day, and by far the most successful are the identification guides, ranging from general guides with a regional scope to detailed identification

monographs on difficult species groups. These are what sell, and their print runs are accordingly large. Conversely, books treating broader topics in the natural history or ecology of birds appear in very small editions, and their marketing ranges from the subdued to the nonexistent. A good example is the work done by Steve Hilty over the last 25 years in South America. His field guides to Colombia and now to Venezuela have sold like hotcakes, as they should; in contrast, I'm not sure that his fine introduction to the behavior, breeding, and natural history of those same birds lasted a week on the shelves before it hit the remainder tables.

Now this is not the beginning of a critique of "mere" identification, and it is not the start of a tirade against listing. Like most birders, I still find the challenge of identification the most satisfying part of our hobby, and I confess that on any given day I can tell you my Arizona year list to three significant figures. But birding-as-identification has, I think, led to two serious problems in birding culture, and they are the reasons that birding must change.

These two problems are almost diametrically different, even though they arise from the same causes. The first is a sort of atomization in what was once an intensely social hobby based on the oral transmission of natural historical knowledge. If asked about the most important and most memorable source of our early birding information, most of us of my generation and the generations before will talk about a mentor, a guiding spirit who introduced us to birds and to birding; some of mine are sitting in this very room, and they must know how unbounded my gratitude is.

The increasing mobility and the increasing focus on identification in modern birding, though, has created a new kind of birder, one that I am frankly uncomfortable with. Convinced that everything they need to know is in a couple of books and an airline ticket, these birders—attracted to the sport because it is fashionable, because they heard Peter Cashwell talk about it on NPR—these birders trot out to buy the latest Austrian glass and field guide, and learn the birds on their own. Their initiative is laudable, I suppose, and some of them even become reasonably good identifiers. Such autodidacts show up regularly on my trips and tours, and I often enjoy them as field companions.

But what these birders "on a new plan" too often seem to lack is a sense of integration into a community. They too often fail to grasp the significance of the birds' integration into ecological settings, and of their integration into a cultural context. They have the gear, they have the books, they sometimes have the skills, but their sources are literally impersonal, commercial and material substitutes for the chain of oral tradition and teaching that has somehow been broken in these recent decades. These birders of this new type, welcome as they are when we meet them in the field, are not likely to contribute to the development and preservation of a birding culture. More ominously, they are less likely to view critical environmental issues through a birder's lens, and they are unlikely to think of themselves as part of a community that has clout to exercise. These can be delightful and charming people, but birding for them is abstract, remote, unconnected to the greater issues of the society they live in, and I think that's a shame, sometimes even a danger, for the birds, for the birding community, and for these birders themselves.

If the one of these problems is atomization, birding in a cultural and historical vacuum, the other, paradoxically, is an excessive sociability, or the

appearance of sociability—clump-birding, I like to call it. Given that I now make much of what passes for my living by encouraging mass birding tourism, it may seem disingenuous, and it may be self-defeating, for me to criticize this phenomenon. But I have noticed increasingly that the ease of transportation and the ready availability of “definitive” identification information, the same factors that energize the NPR birder, offer others an excuse for a strange passivity. Because birding is identification, all these birders have to do is carry the books—the information is in there. Because birding is identification, all they have to do is be present when the bird is called. I will not descend into anecdote, but these are the birders who follow their local guides at five feet’s distance, ticking in the indexes of their Stokes guides the names of birds they haven’t bothered to look at. These are the birders who at the Grand Canyon peer out from under the brim of their Explorer’s Lodge baseball caps to ask what the big black-and-white birds are eating peanuts from their hand. The right guide or leader can turn many of these birders from their passivity, exciting them into a greater engagement in their hobby; but others remain part of the clump, and ultimately, despite their Victor Emanuel luggage tags, just as far outside of birding culture as the NPR types.

Recent discussions about the future of birding have generally focused on recruiting non-birders to the cause; the idea is that if we can turn “young people” away from their rather shady pursuit of hip hop music and video games, we older folks will have reinforcements behind us, and the future of birding will be secure. That’s crazy, of course, as anyone who has ever set out on the heartbreaking path of turning a non-birder into one of us knows. I hope you have all read Pete Dunne’s little essay in *Golden Wings*, where, with his usual wryness, he concludes that there will always be model airplane enthusiasts, there will always be collectors of salt-and-pepper shakers, and there will always be birders—until we start to force these pursuits on our children. The pathway to conversion is a dead end, and non-birders, I regret to say it, will always remain non-birders, tolerant if we are lucky, simply uncomprehending if we are not.

Let’s forget about recruitment, then, and concentrate not on non-birders but on potential birders. And there is a large pool, in precisely the two “new-fashioned” types of birder I have described. After all, it is only historical accident, the commodification of knowledge and the coincidence of cheap gasoline and good roads, that has led to the dominance of these types, the atomized and the passive; they are otherwise out there, ripe for the picking, as it were, already interested in birds and birding, requiring not conversion but simply a revised catechism.

How do we do this? How can we integrate into a birding culture people who may not even be aware of its existence? The question is particularly important for organizations like the NOU and many other state groups, which recently have been having more and more difficulty making themselves known to these “outsider” birders, and then convincing them that what they have to offer is of value.

First, I think, it would be a mistake to deny the central position that identification issues occupy in modern-day birding. Instead, we should work to make explicit the connections between id characteristics and life histories; last week’s Ruff in Arizona, for example, was occasion for a minor and short-lived controversy about the bird’s age, but that controversy led some of us to some very interesting speculation on the possible signaling function of the barred tertials retained by some adults in basic plumage. I found the discussion fascinating, and

hope that perhaps it inspired some less engaged birders, loners or passive tourists, to go beyond the field guides and to appreciate more clearly the importance of regular exchange with other birders. At this point, I had meant to urge you to pay careful attention to taking advantage of such opportunities on NOU field trips, but after my experiences on Dave Heidt's excursion today, I can say that this is a lesson your trip leaders have already learned and learned well.

The promotion of good old-fashioned mentoring is another area where I am afraid the birding community is less active than it could be. Obviously, such relationships cannot be imposed on anyone, on new birders or their seniors, but there are informal "match-making" services available within some organizations; these can work wonders in establishing connections that are not exclusively electronic. A birder, young or old, whose beginnings are based in a human relationship rather than solely in the identification literature is far more likely to become a "good birding citizen," it seems to me, supporting the organizations and causes that at times suffer for lack of interest now.

The loss of organizations like the NOU to declines in membership would be more than regrettable, from a social, historical, and even scientific standpoint. But the environmental and political stakes are even higher. Birders of the new type, birders who are not integrated into a solid birding community, are much less likely to vote with their hobby foremost in their minds; they will make civic choices on criteria that may disregard the well-being of their natural surroundings, and those choices, it seems to me, are often wrong, or only coincidentally right. The stakes are high, this year of all years, and our ability to bring new-style birders into an open and welcoming fold is vital for the survival of our organizations, our culture, and our environment.

In Memory of Dr. Roger Sharpe

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union member, author and educator Roger Sharpe passed away on June 27, 2003. He is survived by his wife Beverly, three daughters and one son.

Dr. Sharpe was born on March 31, 1941. His Ph.D. was in Vertebrate Zoology from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. He was an instructor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 1968 until his retirement in 2000. He was a professor of ornithology, environmental biology and conservation biology, and he began and continued to coordinate the Environmental Studies Program there.

Dr. Sharpe also originated an exchange program with Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia, for both faculty and students. He was part of a team of scientists assembled to help combat pollution in Czechoslovakia.

His interests and talents outside of the world of zoology and ornithology were many. He was an accomplished cook and published a cookbook which included many recipes of Czech and Viennese origin. He played the piano, violin, accordion and banjo, and he loved art, antiques and travel.

He joined the NOU in 1961 as a Life Member. He served as NOU president from 1966 to 1968 and again from 1971 to 1972. He contributed much to the field of ornithology in Nebraska, most recently being a co-author of *Birds of Nebraska Their Distribution and Temporal Occurrence* with W. Ross Silcock and Joel Jorgensen.

We extend our sympathies to the family of Dr. Sharpe.

Fall Field Days

The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Fall Field Days were held at the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey on September 24-26, 2004. Thirty-nine NOU members and friends were in attendance for a weekend of excellent weather and birding. Field trips, led by Dave Heidt, Robin Harding and Lanny Randolph, targeted the lakes in various counties to the north and west of Halsey, where a good variety of waterfowl was seen. Highlights included Trumpeter Swans, 11 species of ducks, White-faced Ibis in Grant Co., a Golden Eagle in Thomas Co., 16 species of shorebirds, 5 warbler species and 12 species of sparrows.

NOU 2004 Fall Field Days

	Thomas	Hooker	Grant	Arthur	Blaine	Loup	McPherson	Cherry
Canada Goose			x		x	x	x	x
Trumpeter Swan			x	x			x	x
Wood Duck	x	x	x			x		x
Gadwall		x	x	x			x	
American Wigeon				x			x	x
Mallard	x		x	x	x		x	
Blue-winged Teal		x	x	x			x	
Northern Shoveler			x	x			x	x
Northern Pintail			x	x			x	x
Green-winged Teal			x	x			x	
Redhead			x					
Bufflehead			x					
Ruddy Duck			x					
Ring-necked Pheasant			x					
Sharp-tailed Grouse	x							
Greater Prairie-Chicken					x	x		
Wild Turkey	x					x		
Pied-billed Grebe	x		x	x			x	x
Western Grebe				x			x	
American White Pelican			x			x	x	x
Double-crested Cormorant		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Great Blue Heron			x	x		x		x
Cattle Egret						x		
White-faced Ibis			x					

NOU 2004 Fall Field Days

	Thomas	Hooker	Grant	Arthur	Blaine	Loup	McPherson	Cherry
Turkey Vulture	x				x		x	
Bald Eagle				x		x		
Northern Harrier	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sharp-shinned Hawk	x		x		x			
Cooper's Hawk	x					x		
Swainson's Hawk	x	x	x		x			x
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Ferruginous Hawk			x					
Golden Eagle	x							
American Kestrel	x				x	x	x	
Merlin						x		
Prairie Falcon	x			x				
Virginia Rail						x		x
Sora			x					
American Coot			x	x			x	
Black-bellied Plover						x		
American Golden-Plover						x		
Semipalmated Plover							x	
Killdeer		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
American Avocet			x					
Greater Yellowlegs		x	x	x		x	x	
Lesser Yellowlegs		x	x	x		x	x	
Solitary Sandpiper						x		
Spotted Sandpiper				x		x	x	
Least Sandpiper				x		x	x	
Baird's Sandpiper			x					
Pectoral Sandpiper					x			
Stilt Sandpiper			x					
Long-billed Dowitcher						x		
dowitcher species			x					
Wilson's Snipe			x					
Wilson's Phalarope			x					
Franklin's Gull						x		
Ring-billed Gull		x	x	x		x	x	

NOU 2004 Fall Field Days

	Thomas	Hooker	Grant	Arthur	Blaine	Loup	McPherson	Cherry
Forster's Tern			x	x				
Rock Pigeon	x	x						
Eurasian Collared-Dove							x	
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Eastern Screech-Owl	x							
Great Horned Owl	x							
Burrowing Owl	x					x		
Common Poorwill	x							
Belted Kingfisher	x		x		x	x		
Downy Woodpecker	x		x					
Hairy Woodpecker	x							
Northern Flicker	x		x		x	x		
Say's Phoebe	x			x				
Loggerhead Shrike				x				
shrike species					x			
Blue-headed Vireo			x					
Blue Jay	x		x		x			
American Crow	x	x			x	x		
Horned Lark	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Black-capped Chickadee	x					x		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	x		x		x			
White-breasted Nuthatch	x		x			x		
House Wren	x			x	x			
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	x					x		
Eastern Bluebird	x							
Townsend's Solitaire			x					
Swainson's Thrush	x							
American Robin	x		x		x	x		
Gray Catbird	x		x			x		
Brown Thrasher	x		x					
European Starling			x		x	x		
American Pipit						x		
Cedar Waxwing	x		x					

NOU 2004 Fall Field Days

	Thomas	Hooker	Grant	Arthur	Blaine	Loup	McPherson	Cherry
Orange-crowned Warbler	x		x		x	x		
Nashville Warbler	x							
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x		x		x	x		
Common Yellowthroat	x		x			x		
Wilson's Warbler	x		x		x			
Spotted Towhee	x		x	x	x	x		
Chipping Sparrow	x		x	x	x			
Clay-colored Sparrow	x				x	x		
Field Sparrow	x				x	x		
Vesper Sparrow		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Lark Sparrow	x		x	x				
Savannah Sparrow	x		x		x		x	
Song Sparrow	x		x					
Lincoln's Sparrow	x					x		
Swamp Sparrow	x				x			
White-throated Sparrow	x			x		x		
Harris's Sparrow	x							
White-crowned Sparrow	x		x	x	x	x		
Dark-eyed Junco			x	x		x		
Northern Cardinal	x							
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Western Meadowlark	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x		x	x				
Common Grackle			x			x		
House Finch	x							
Red Crossbill	x							
Pine Siskin	x		x					
American Goldfinch	x		x		x	x		
House Sparrow			x		x			
County Totals	65	19	70	40	39	55	32	16
Total Species	119							

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