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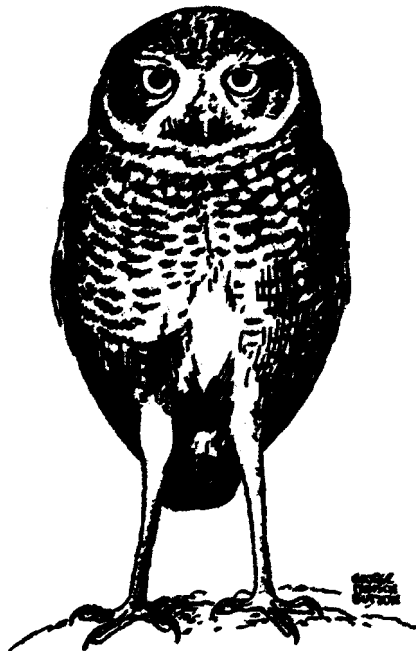
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FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2006

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INTRODUCTION

First, I want to say how much I appreciate observers' responses to my requests for additional details on various sightings, not just rarities, but early and late dates. It's important to have these details for the archives to help future readers and researchers feel more comfortable with records from our era.

Patterns that were apparent included a generally quiet fall for waterfowl (they were all at L McConaughy), but excellent numbers of the rarer two scoters (but NO White-winged!) and a surprising 16 Red-necked Grebes. On the other hand, numbers of staging Western Grebes were down significantly, apparently due to poor (dry) summer breeding conditions, but a flock of Brant and a Harlequin Duck added spice. Among herons, there were more Snowy Egrets than Greats in the eastern Rainwater Basin! Snowies and Little Blue Herons appeared in good numbers, and the 10th Glossy Ibis for 2006 (!) made an appearance. A fifth breeding location for Sandhill Crane was reported.

Among shorebirds, record numbers of American Golden-Plovers were located, and the recent increase in fall sightings of White-rumped Sandpipers continued. These two species, along with Hudsonian Godwit, are usually scarcer in fall than in spring. Also unprecedented historically was a fall flock of 28 migrant Mountain Plovers; previously, records after July were extremely unusual. Other lingering shorebirds included Semipalmated and Piping Plovers, Black-necked Stilt, Willet, and Long-billed Curlew. A count of 5500 Wilson's Phalaropes at Crescent L NWR was exciting!

Adding to our scanty knowledge of the (expanding?) western limits of Barred Owl distribution was a photo of one near North Platte. Western birds east included several late Rufous Hummingbirds, a Rock Wren, a Chestnut-collared Longspur, and a female Bullock's Oriole, while eastern birds west included a calling Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a White-eyed Vireo, and a Cape May Warbler. It seems that to find such rare eastern passerines, one must find a migrant trap like L Ogallala in the west. Staying in the east where they should be, and showing in better numbers overall and better than usual in August, were Philadelphia Vireo, and 4 warbler species: Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, and Canada.

I have to mention Lonnie Frimann's Curve-billed Thrasher; it's still at his southeast Sioux Co ranch and is entering its 6th year of age and 5th in Nebraska. Along with feeding young robins and Brown Thrashers, it has taken to following Lonnie around the ranch and even burst into song this past August.

Apart from the Harlequin Duck mentioned above, rarities included Wood Stork (mentioned in the Summer Report), Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Laughing, Little, and Great Black-backed Gulls, Arctic Tern, and Common Raven. Others, close calls that may have been correctly made but which may not have been documented quite well enough to convince the Records Committee (I hope I'm wrong), were a female Garganey, a Black Rail, and an easterly Brewer's Sparrow.

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; 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; m. ob.: many observers; NC: Nature Center; NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; NM: National Monument; NNF: Nebraska National Forest, Thomas Co; NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee; 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; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area; WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Harvard Marsh: WPA, Clay Co; Johnson L: SRA and Regulating Res, Gosper and Dawson Cos; L Minatare: Scotts Bluff Co; Oliver Res: SRA, Kimball Co; Ponca SP: Dixon Co; Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central Nebraska; Smith L: WMA, Sheridan Co; Wehrspann L: Corps of Engineers Reservoir with Chalco Hills Recreation Area, Sarpy Co; Willow Creek L: SRA, Pierce Co; Valentine NWR: Cherry Co.

OBSERVERS

AB: Aaron Brees, Des Moines, IA; AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff; AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; ARY: Allan Reyer, Bellevue; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BH: Barbi Hayes, Elkhorn; BS: Bill Scheible, Cedar Rapids, IA; CG: Carlos Grande, Geneva y España; CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett; CL: Chuck Lesiak, Lincoln; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; CS: Carolyn Sonderman, Omaha; CW: Cole Wild, Columbus; D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames; DB: Duane Bright, Bellevue; DH: Derek Hill, Imperial; DK: Dan Kim, Grand Island; DS: Don Showen, Lincoln; DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn; DW: Duane Wolff, Norfolk; EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue; EBe: Eric Bents, Omaha; G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma; GC: George Canterbury, Papillion; HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell; JEt: Jim Etherton, Doniphan; JF: John Flavin, Chadron; JG: Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA; JGu: Joe Gubanyi, Seward; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha; JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha; JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha; KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell; KK: Ken Kranik, Sterling, CO; KN: Kay Niyo, Evergreen, CO; KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue; L&CF: Laurence & Carol Falk, Nebraska City; L&SW: Lin and Steve Willet, Bellevue; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Lonnie Frimann, Scottsbluff; LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; LRB: Linda R. Brown, Lincoln; LS: Larry Snyder, Kimball; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MI: Marshall Iliff, West Roxbury, MA; MM: Marty Mathieson, Shelton; MN: Melvin Nenneman, Valentine; MU: Mark Urwiller, Kearney; MUS: Moni Usasz, Lincoln; NL: Nick Lyman, North

Platte; PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings; PR: Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA; RB: Roland Barth, Bellevue; RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; RL: Richard Luehrs, Kearney; RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha; RSg: Ruben Siegfried, Scottsbluff; SA: Sue Amiotte, Chadron; SJ: Stephen Jones, Boulder, CO; SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA; SS: Scott Schuette, Troy, MO; SW: Scott Wessel, Norfolk; TEL: Thomas E. Labeledz, Lincoln; TH: Tyler Hicks, Valentine; THa: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow; TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady; TM: Tracy Morfeld, Valley; TR: Tommie Rogers, Mound City, MO; TS: Tom Stehn, Aransas, TX; WF: William Flack, Madison; WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland; WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: One at LM 25 Aug and 17 Sep was probably summering (SJD). An early fall arrival was at LNB 26 Sep (CW); first large flock was the 250 near Hastings 23 Oct (PD). Unusual for the Panhandle were 1-3 at Oliver Res 30 Oct-4 Nov (SJD,TJW).

Snow Goose: Arrival was late; few were reported until 900 arrived at Johnson L 16 Nov (PD) and "thousands" were near West Point 28 Nov (RE).

Ross's Goose: Rather early arrivals were two at LNB 18 Oct (CW) and one at Hastings 21 Oct (PD). Best count was 79 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Brant: About the 18th fall record was a surprising flock of 30-40 in flight in Dixon Co 24 Oct (RE; details). Most are found as singles or with smaller forms of Canada Geese or Cackling Geese, although flocks of up to 3 have been reported.

Cackling Goose: A now-resident bird continued at Schramm SP 8 Sep (L&BP). First arrival was one at LNB 23 Oct (CW). First large flocks were the "hundreds" at Oliver Res 4 Nov (TJW) and 83 the same day in Knox Co (MB).

Canada Goose: First migrants reported were a flock of 68 at HCR 8 Sep (G&WH).

Trumpeter Swan: Routine reports.

Tundra Swan: Two adults and a juvenile were at LNB 10-23 Nov (CW, m.ob.); this species is a rare migrant.

Wood Duck: Routine reports.

Gadwall: A record fall count was the 5800 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

American Wigeon: A good fall count was the 1305 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: Last was one in Lancaster Co 5 Nov (LE).

Cinnamon Teal: Routine reports.

Northern Shoveler: A good count was the 1505 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Northern Pintail: An excellent count was the 530 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Garganey: A report of a female/juvenile in Nance Co 12 Oct was forwarded to NOURC. There are 2 documented records for the state.

Green-winged Teal: The 15,100 at LM 31 Oct (SJD) was a record fall count.

Canvasback: An excellent count was the 1388 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Redhead: The 1830 at LM 31 Oct (SJD) was merely a good count.

Ring-necked Duck: Two at Alma SL 4 Aug (JSt) provided a rare summer record away from the Sandhills; this species does not breed in the state. An excellent fall count was the 779 at LM 31 Oct (SJD).

Greater Scaup: Six at LO and 4 at L Maloney, Lincoln Co, 31 Oct (SJD) were rather early; 16 were at LO 2 Nov (JGJ).

Lesser Scaup: Almost tripling the previous record fall count were the 3450 at LM 31 Oct (SJD); the 1250 at L Maloney the same day (SJD) would have been enough to be a new record!

Harlequin Duck: A report from a wildlife biologist of 4 birds that flew in and landed at Goose L, Holt Co, 12 Nov (SW) was Nebraska's 5th documented report, 4th in the last 13 years, most in northeast Nebraska.

Surf Scoter: Probably a record showing was the total of 13 birds reported 22 Oct-16 Nov, including 6 female/juvenile birds at LM 31 Oct (SJD). Others were an immature at GPD 11 Nov (BFH), 3 sub-adult males at LNB 16 Nov (JGJ), and single female/immature birds at Red Cloud SL 22 Oct (LR,RH), Lincoln 27 Oct (JGJ), and Willow Creek L 27-29 Oct (MB,PR).

White-winged Scoter: Oddly, none were reported; this is usually the most common scoter.

Black Scoter: Completing a strange scoter fall, this species, normally the least numerous of the three, passed through in amazing numbers. A total of at least 27 were reported 14 Oct-28 Nov, including an unprecedented flock of 20 female/immature birds at Salt L, Lincoln, 25 Oct (JGJ). Some of these, or possibly different birds, lingered at Salt L through 8 Nov (JGJ,LE). Elsewhere, 1-3 were at PL 14-28 Oct (JGJ,LE), the 14 Oct date rather early, and singles were at BOL 15 Oct (JGJ), Willow Creek L 29 Oct (MB,PR), Niobrara 5 Nov (MB), and in Dodge Co 28-29 Nov (RE,D&JP).

Long-tailed Duck: Also in above average numbers, at least 7 were reported 30 Oct-17 Nov. A juvenile arrived rather early at Salt L, Lincoln, 30 Oct and stayed through 14 Nov (JGJ). An adult female and 2 immatures were at LO 3 Nov (TJW) and 2 were at Goose L, Holt Co, 12 Nov (SW). An immature was at L Maloney, Lincoln Co, 17 Nov (NL).

Bufflehead: The 1266 at LM 31 Oct (SJD) was an excellent count.

Common Goldeneye: Two in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Oct (AK) were rather early. Photos were provided of 2 at Johnson L 16 Nov that had dusky yellowish bills, a characteristic of Barrow's Goldeneye but sometimes seen in Commons also; the photos showed that the Johnson L birds were indeed Commons (PD).

Hooded Merganser: Good counts were the 89 in Lancaster Co 3 Nov (LE) and 80 at LO 31 Oct (SJD). An adult female at LO 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was unexpected; migrants usually arrive after mid-Sep.

Common Merganser: Singles in Scotts Bluff Co 30 Sep (AK) and at LO 5 Oct (DH) were at locations where molt migrants are known to occur; next reported was one at Johnson L 16 Nov (PD).

Red-breasted Merganser: Routine reports.

Ruddy Duck: Routine reports.

Gray Partridge: None were reported.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Reports from the northwest are rare; 3 at Smith L, 10 Aug (SJ) provide the first northern Panhandle report since 1978. One at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster Co, 30 Aug (RE) was unexpected for that county away from the Denton area. Four birds at Harvard Marsh 20 Oct (PD) continue the recent e. RWB sightings. Reports from the southwest include 12 birds nw. of Wellfleet 16 Oct (TJW) and 20 in sw. Chase Co 20 Oct (TJW). Best count was 50 in northern Buffalo Co 26 Nov (TEL).

- Wild Turkey:** Very late for dependent poults was the sighting 7 Nov of a hen with 2 about 3 weeks old in Sarpy Co (ARy).
- Northern Bobwhite:** Adding to a few recent reports from the northwest were the 4 in Dawes Co 8 Aug (CNK).
- Pacific Loon:** The two reports were of a juvenile at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 31 Oct (SJD) and a single at LM 3 Nov (TJW). Reports in recent years have been few.
- Common Loon:** LO had 1-2 summering on 26-27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); one continued through 14 Oct (LR,RH), with probably a migrant there 2 Nov (JGJ). Elsewhere, first migrant was at GPD 21-22 Oct (MB,BFH). Best count was 5 at BOL 6 Nov (JGJ).
- Pied-billed Grebe:** The 166 at BOL 9 Sep (LE) was a good count.
- Horned Grebe:** This species was widely reported 16 Sep-25 Nov, a total of about 85. Best count was a moderate 26 at BOL 28 Sep (JGJ).
- Red-necked Grebe:** This may have been the best fall ever for the state, with a total of at least 16 birds reported, including an unprecedented flock of 11 at BOL 28 Oct (JGJ). First was a basic-plumaged bird at LO 3 Sep (DH), presumably an immature non-breeder. At least one was at BOL 25 Oct-6 Nov (JGJ,SJD,LE). In addition, a first-winter bird was at Red Willow Res, Frontier Co, 1 Nov (TJW) and 3 were at Calamus Res SRA, Garfield and Loup Cos, 14 Nov (JGJ).
- Eared Grebe:** Migrants were on the move a bit early, with 45 at Enders Res, Chase Co, 27 Sep (DH); one appeared at HCR 28 Sep (G&WH).
- Western Grebe:** Very early were 3 near Niobrara 13 Aug (BFH); previous earliest dates in the east were in mid-Sep. One photographed at Johnson L 16 Nov had features intermediate between Western and Clark's Grebes (PD). One at Wehrspann L rather early on 29 Aug was reported as a "possible" Clark's (JWH). What these intermediate birds are is not clear; they might be hybrids, immatures that have not yet achieved discrete characters, or wintering birds with unclear features. Best count was a mediocre (compared to previous years' top 3 counts of 30,000+) 8160 at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).
- Clark's Grebe:** Only the 4th and 5th fall reports for the east were singles at LNB 23 Oct (CW) and Willow Creek Res, Pierce Co, 27-29 Oct (MB,PR). The 21 at LM 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) was an excellent tally.
- American White Pelican:** Routine reports.
- Double-crested Cormorant:** Best count was the 1200 at HCR 8 Oct (G&WH). Rather early for such a number, 339 were at LO 26 Aug (SJD), perhaps a consequence of dry conditions in the Sandhills.
- American Bittern:** Rather early, possibly summering, was one near Niobrara 27 Aug (BFH), and last reported was rather late in Thayer Co 13 Nov (WF).
- Least Bittern:** The only report was from a northerly but possibly regular site, Ferry Landing WMA, Knox Co, 17 Sep (MB), also a rather late date.
- Great Blue Heron:** Routine reports.
- Great Egret:** Best count was from HCR, with 55 there 7 Aug (G&WH), while numbers were low in the e. RWB (JGJ). Less common westward, singles (same bird?) were at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and 15 Sep (SJD,KN,WRS).
- Snowy Egret:** Apparently replacing Great Egrets in the e. RWB, a surprising 61 in a single flock were found 5 Oct in Fillmore Co (JGJ). Elsewhere, 33 others were found statewide, with 13 at LNB 11 Sep (CW). One at Niobrara 25 Oct (MB) was 3rd latest ever in fall.

Little Blue Heron: A few more than usual (7) were reported, including 3 at HCR 13 Aug (G&WH), one near Ashland 3-5 Aug (GC, m.ob.), a juvenile at LNB 15 Aug (CW), one in Douglas Co 2 Oct (BH), and an immature at GPD 9 Oct (DW). The 9 Oct sighting is the 2nd-latest ever; there are now 6 reports for Oct, but none for the period 20 Sep-1 Oct.

Cattle Egret: One at Niobrara 4 Nov (MB) was about the 5th-latest ever.

Green Heron: Routine reports.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Routine reports.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: The only report was of one in Chase Co 19 Aug (DH); westerly reports are few, with only 5 from the Panhandle.

Glossy Ibis: Adding to the string of reports in recent years, one photographed in the RWB 5 Oct (JGJ) was the 10th for 2006, and by far the latest date so far for Nebraska.

White-faced Ibis: The good summer numbers continued at CLNWR, with 139 there 11 Aug (SS). Other good counts were 60 at LM 27 Aug (SJD,KN,WRS) and a belated report of 55 at HCR 7 Aug 2005 (G&WH). One at Tekamah 27 Oct (EBE) was the 3rd-latest ever.

Wood Stork: Discussion of the occurrence of one near Ashland 2-3 Aug was included in the Summer Report because of a Jun sighting of what was apparently the same bird. This was Nebraska's 2nd documented record.

Turkey Vulture: Two in Otoe Co 30 Nov (L&CF) were rather late. The 200-300 soaring over Lincoln 2 Oct (MUs) was an excellent count.

Osprey: Reports were statewide 25 Aug-27 Oct, the usual migration period. An excellent count was the 9 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,KN,WRS). One in Garden Co 7 Aug (CNK) was likely a non-breeding immature; such birds often don't complete their northward migration.

Mississippi Kite: Encouraging was the report of 2 adults over Red Cloud 4 Aug (JSt), where breeding has probably occurred since being documented there in 2004. This is one of only two known breeding sites in Nebraska, the other at Ogallala, where up to 4 birds were reported through 2 Sep (DH, m.ob.), including a juvenile 7 Aug (CNK).

Bald Eagle: The 3 adults and 3 immatures at Schramm SP 9 Sep (L&BP) were suggestive of at least one family group from the vicinity. Small numbers of adult or immature Bald Eagles can be assumed to be mostly local birds with possibly a few early migrants or wandering birds until perhaps Nov, when true migrants arrive in greater numbers.

Northern Harrier: Routine reports.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Routine reports.

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Northern Goshawk: None were reported; a few usually arrive by early Nov.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Although no details were received on either sighting, both were at plausible locations for the dates: one was in Lancaster Co 17 Sep (JGu) and the other, a juvenile, was at LNB 29-30 Oct (CW). Both may be dispersing juveniles; the Hitchcock Hawkwatch averages 6 Red-shouldered Hawks per year. (<http://hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=172>)

Broad-winged Hawk: Only 6 were reported: singles at FF 13 Sep (ARy) and at Bellevue 27 Sep (L&BP) and 3 in Lancaster Co 29 Sep (JGJ) at expected locations. One in Perkins Co 5 Oct (DH) was westerly; there are about 15 reports away from the east.

Swainson's Hawk: Best count was a moderate 100 in Dixon Co 27 Sep (JJ).

Red-tailed Hawk: Actually "routine", but noteworthy, was the presence of a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk (creatively named "Blackie") at the same location in Bellevue for at least the 12th consecutive year (RB).

Ferruginous Hawk: Eight were reported from Lincoln and Perkins Cos westward (TJW, DH,JGJ), with another in Harlan Co 12 Nov (G&WH) and 2 first-year birds in Cherry Co 18 Nov (MB).

Rough-legged Hawk: Routine reports.

Golden Eagle: Unexpected in the east, where the species is rare, were an adult in Lancaster Co 21 Oct (EB) and an immature at BOL 13 Oct (LE); most easterly birds are immatures. A bit easterly was an adult in Keya Paha Co 18 Nov (MB).

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: As expected, first sightings were in Aug, one in Seward Co 17 Aug (JGJ) and another in Clay Co 19 Aug (JGJ), both the long-distance migrant subspecies *columbarius*, as was one in Dakota Co 21 Oct (BFH). A *richardsonii* was near Oshkosh 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG). An additional 6 were reported by period's end.

Prairie Falcon: Easternmost were singles in Lancaster Co 14 Oct (LE), Pawnee Co 21 Nov (TEL), and GPD 21 Oct (BFH); this species is rare in the east. A good count was the 4 in Garden Co 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), while a single at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was early away from the breeding range.

Peregrine Falcon: About a dozen were reported statewide 25 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) through 14 Oct (JG), the expected migration period.

Gyr Falcon: One was reported without details at Valentine NWR 13 Nov (MN, fide MB); this is a plausible time and place for this species, with earliest dates in early Nov.

Black Rail: A report of a sighting at FF 27 Aug reads "a very small, very dark (looked black to me) rail flying up from my side of the stream. It flew to the other side, landed and immediately disappeared" (ARy). Most reports of this species are in the category of "fleeting glimpses", unfortunately, and are difficult to evaluate. It is not inconceivable that breeding could occur at FF; migration is thought to occur mid-Sep through mid-Oct (*Birds of North America*).

Virginia Rail: Routine reports.

Sora: Routine reports.

American Coot: Routine reports.

Sandhill Crane: A pair with 2 juveniles in a marshy area in a Rock Co pasture 15 Aug almost certainly indicate nesting; the rancher had not used the area since May (fide CH). This is the 5th location that breeding has likely occurred in recent years; the others were in the e. RWB, Sioux Co, Morrill Co, and Platte Co. Two adults which looked like Greater with Canada Geese in Morrill Co 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) may have been early migrants or possibly the pair that bred nearby earlier in the summer. Migrants did appear around the same time, as 35 flew over Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 19 Sep (NL). Best count was a moderate (for fall) 1000 flying over Scotts Bluff Co 13 Oct (KD), and rather late was another with Canada Geese in Scotts Bluff Co 30 Nov (AD). Unexpected in the east was one flying over FF 14 Oct (ARy).

Whooping Crane: Three family groups were reported in Nebraska 23 Oct-6 Nov (TS). One of the families stopped at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, for 13 days and were seen to have blackish bellies (RL); although they caused some concern about oil hindering their movements, they arrived safely at their wintering grounds at Aransas (TS).

Black-bellied Plover: The 40 at LM 30 Sep (DH) was an excellent count; 20 were there 5 Oct (JGJ).

American Golden-Plover: Adults are scarce in fall; one with 3 juveniles was in York Co 8 Sep (JGJ). Juveniles are far more numerous, although rare westward; 1-3 were at LM 15-17 Sep (SJD,KN,WRS), and one was still there 31 Oct (SJD). Unprecedented numbers appeared in York Co 3 Oct, when 320 were tallied, soon to be eclipsed by a record count of 336 two days later, including 286 at a single York Co site (JGJ).

Snowy Plover: None were reported; habitat at LM is beginning to be overgrown.

Semipalmated Plover: The 22 at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 2 Aug (CNK) was a record count for fall. There were two very late sightings: 2 were at PL 13-14 Oct (LE,JGJ), one lingering there until 28 Oct (LE), the 2nd-latest ever, and another was at LNB 18-23 Oct (CW), the 3rd-latest ever.

Piping Plover: Lingering record late was one at BOL 28 Sep-27 Oct (JGJ,LE), and another at LNB 18 Oct (CW) was 3rd-latest ever.

Killdeer: A good count at an unexpected location was the 300 in 2 groups in Gallagher Canyon, Lincoln Co, 3 Oct (TJW).

Mountain Plover: Unprecedented were two reports for Aug, including a flock of 28, apparently juveniles, in Kimball Co 31 Aug (LS). Two were in Deuel Co 16 Aug (DH). The only other record for the state after Jul is a specimen from Dawes Co 27 Sep 1920. Most depart the Colorado breeding grounds by early Aug.

Black-necked Stilt: The only reports were of 10 at CLNWR 11 Aug (SS) and 3 still there 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); the latter is only the 7th record after mid-Aug, the latest 21 Sep.

American Avocet: Two excellent counts were the 361 in Sheridan Co 26 Aug (SJD,AB, JG) and 308 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: A record fall count was the 63 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Willet: Rather late was one at LM 7 Oct (KN,BS), only the 5th Oct report. It may have been the same bird seen there 15-16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), also rather late. Willets are rare in fall in the east, and so 29 in Lancaster Co 13 Aug was unexpected (JGJ), as were 20 at LNB 1 Aug (CW).

Lesser Yellowlegs: The 499 at LM 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) was a good count.

Upland Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Long-billed Curlew: Only the 6th report for Sep was one at LM 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN); it may have been the same bird seen there 25 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and 29 Aug (DW).

Marbled Godwit: The only report was of 18 at LM 27 Aug (SJD,KN,WRS). Most have gone by the end of Aug.

Ruddy Turnstone: There were a surprising 4 reports, only the 16th-19th for fall. One was at LNB 5 Aug (CW), 2 juveniles at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG), one at BOL 6 Sep (JS), and one in Lancaster Co 16 Sep (CNK,D&JP).

Sanderling: Routine reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: One at PL 6 Oct (LE) was rather late.

Western Sandpiper: The only reports were of one at ADF 4 Aug (L&CF), one at PL the same day (LE), 6 juveniles at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG), and 1 juvenile at LM 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Least Sandpiper: The 300 at PL 1 Aug (JGJ) was an excellent count. Often a late migrant, one at LNB 19-23 Nov (JJ,CS,MB) was rather late. There are 3 records for Dec.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Only the 6th documented fall record, all since 2001, was the 30 at Wehrspann L 2 Aug (CNK). It appears this species is becoming more numerous in fall; traditionally fall migration was along and off the Atlantic Coast, as for Hudsonian Godwit.

Baird's Sandpiper: Fourth-latest ever were 2 at PL 25 Nov (LE); merely rather late were 18 near Niobrara 4 Nov (MB).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The 800 at LNB 15 Aug (CW) was a record fall count, but not surprisingly so, as 3 of the 4 highest ever fall counts are from that site.

Dunlin: The only reports were of one in Lancaster Co 17 Sep (LE), rather early, and 4 at LM 31 Oct (SJD). Most move through in Oct.

Stilt Sandpiper: Rather late were 2 in Lancaster Co 28 Oct (JGJ), and a good count was the 400 at PL 1 Aug (JGJ).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Westerly were one at LM 20 Aug (CG) and 4 in Perkins Co 1 Sep (DH). Juveniles were noted beginning 17 Aug (JGJ).

Short-billed Dowitcher: The only reports were of 4 at Wehrspann L 5 Aug (CNK) and adults at LNB 15 and 18 Aug (CW), the LNB dates rather late for an adult.

Long-billed Dowitcher: The 1000 estimated at LM 5 Oct (DH) was an excellent count.

Wilson's Snipe: Routine reports.

American Woodcock: None were reported; late dates are in Nov.

Wilson's Phalarope: An amazing tally was the record 5500 (including an albino) at CLNWR 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); the highest fall counts are all from there.

Red-necked Phalarope: Rare in the east, one was at PL 22 Sep (JGJ). The 22 at LM 26 Aug (SJD,JG,AB) was a good count.

Red Phalarope: The only reports were of a molting adult at LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB; SJD photo) and a juvenile there 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN; SJD photo). These are only the 12th and 13th records for the state, 11 of these in fall.

Pomarine Jaeger: A light morph juvenile was photographed at LM 17 Sep (SJD,KN,WRS); this is the 13th record for the state, all in fall.

Laughing Gull: Only the 3rd and 4th fall records were a first-year bird at Lincoln 22 Oct (JGJ) and a 2nd winter bird at Willow Creek Res 27 Oct (MB). There are but 15 documented records in all.

Franklin's Gull: Best count was the 7000 at BOL 3 Oct (JGJ); all-time high counts are 35,000+.

Little Gull: The 12th and 13th for fall were a juvenile rather early at LO 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG; SJD photo) and an adult at BOL 25 Oct (JGJ). Most records are in fall; there are 5 others in spring and summer.

Bonaparte's Gull: Best count was a moderate 120 at BOL 22 Oct (JGJ).

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Most at LM was an excellent 124 on 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN); about 160 were reported there for the period.

Herring Gull: Summer sightings are unusual, especially away from LM; 2 were at Wehrspann L 2 Aug (CNK) and a juvenile was at BOL 22 Sep (JGJ). Unusual for the date were 3 adults at LM 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); this is the earliest fall date for adults by about a month.

Thayer's Gull: First to arrive was an adult at GPD 11 Nov (BFH); strangely, adults are often early in fall.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: At least 6 different birds were at LM: a first alternate rather early 25 Aug (SJD,AB,JG), 2 adults 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), and a 3rd alternate (with an adult) 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), and 2 first basic birds 31 Oct (SJD). There are now about 60 records for the state for this regular spring and fall migrant.

Great Black-backed Gull: An adult was at LM briefly 1-31 Oct (MI,DH,SJD; SJD photo). Most stay for extended periods. This is the 7th fall record, 13th in all.

Sabine's Gull: This was a good fall for this species, with about 22 reported statewide, including the 6th-9th records from the east. Earliest was record early 27 Aug at LO (SJD, AB,JG) and last were 2 at Enders Res, Chase Co, 8 Oct (DH). As expected, all were juveniles, with best count 7 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN). Reports from the east were of one in Platte Co 10 Sep (CW), 3 at GPD 10 Sep (MB), and one in Saunders Co 6 Oct (LE).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A surprising location for the only sighting was Wild Rose L, Hall Co, where a juvenile was found 6 Nov (PD, photos).

Least Tern: An excellent count was the 25 at LNB 13 Aug (CW), presumably migrants. LNB has been a traditional spot for fall migrants.

Caspian Tern: This was a good fall for this species, with at least 15 reported statewide 2 Aug (CW) through 9 Oct (JGJ,LE), the latter rather late.

Black Tern: Routine reports.

Common Tern: This species also occurred in good numbers statewide, total about 30, and best count 7 at LM 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Arctic Tern: A first year bird was at LNB 26 Sep-1 Oct (CW,MB,PR,JJ,BFH; CW details). If accepted by NOURC, this would be the 4th state record.

Forster's Tern: Routine reports.

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: High counts keep getting higher; 75 were at Brady 24 Oct (TJW), and 50 were at both Scottsbluff 13 Oct (KD) and Arnold 20 Nov (TJW). Obviously flocks form in fall, with the 3 highest counts to date, 60-75, in the period 24 Oct-20 Nov.

White-winged Dove: Four were reported, including two at a Cozad feeder 11 Sep (MU), one north of Hershey 8 Sep (TJW), and one at Scottsbluff 13 Aug (RSg). One was reported at Cozad 11 May (Spring Report). As numbers continue to increase, this species will no doubt begin to breed regularly.

Mourning Dove: A late date for eggs was a nest with two of them at Utica 3 Sep (JGu).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: The only reports were of one in Otoe Co 1 Aug (L&CF) and another photographed at Rulo 29 Aug (TR).

Barn Owl: A pair nested for the second year at a site near Creighton; 2 adult-sized birds were there 13 Aug (BFH). Adding to reports from the northeast in recent years was one heard overhead in Stanton Co 3 Sep (TJW). One was at Ulysses 12 Aug (LE) at a site used last year. An interesting photo was received of 2 adults with 6 young at a nesting site near Dalton this summer (KK). Elsewhere, reports were of 1-3 birds at regular southern and western locations (SJD,KD, m.ob.).

Eastern Screech-Owl: A red morph bird was seen in Knox Co 25 Oct (MB); this color morph is rarely reported from northern and western Nebraska.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: None were reported; departure is in Oct.

Barred Owl: A photograph of one as far west as North Platte 18 Nov was received (fide TJW); the scanty evidence available suggests that occurrence is regular

west only to the Columbus area and Hall Co (DK), but that a few straggle farther westward in the Platte Valley. A report of a road-killed bird in Nance Co 26 Nov 1982 has also come to hand (fide WM). Also pushing westward was one at Redbird in Holt Co 4 Sep (MB); there are several reports from Knox Co. Although this species is sedentary, there is some dispersal from natal sites, usually less than 50 km or so, but one young banded in Nova Scotia moved 1600 km westward in a few months (from "Birds of North America Online").

Long-eared Owl: None were reported.

Short-eared Owl: Good numbers were reported, including a record count of 12 at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 21 Nov (CL, fide JGJ) and 7 in Johnson Co 7 Nov (TEL). The latter were using Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields, which, with appropriate management, can provide a major boost to all native grassland species. Two more, in Kimball Co 4 Nov (TJW), were also in CRP fields. Other reports were of singles at Valentine NWR 29 Oct (SJD) and near Brewster 14 Nov (JGJ).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: None were reported; arrival is in late Oct.

Common Nighthawk: A record count was the 600 over Omaha 25 Sep (EB).

Common Poorwill: The only reports were of one near Ash Hollow SHP, Garden Co, 25 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and 9-11 Sep near Gering (AK), both regular locations.

Whip-poor-will: None were reported; departure is in early Sep.

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: About 70 (yes, an excellent count) were seen entering a roost crack at Scotts Bluff NM, Scotts Bluff Co, 8 Aug, where usually only about 12 were seen (KD); these were likely recently-fledged young, but also possible migrants at that date. The only other report was of 4 at Wildcat Hills NC 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Good numbers were reported, including excellent feeder counts of 15 in w. Douglas Co 5 Sep (DSt) and 12 near Valley 17 Aug (TM). Reports were through late Sep, last in Creighton 27 Sep (MB). Fall reports usually extend westward to about Grand Island, but are scarce farther west. A male at Brady 12-13 Aug (TJW) may have summered; a female was there 19 May, and a pair 9 May-13 Jun 2004. Although intriguing, all may have been migrants. There were reports of 1-2 at Bassett 23 Aug-17 Sep (CH). Intriguing was a photo received of an immature male at WSR 23 Aug (HKH); this was one of only about 5 reports from the Panhandle, the first with tangible documentation. Black-chinned Hummingbird is a fall possibility that far west.

Calliope Hummingbird: Reports continue to increase; at least 8 were reported, 7 at three sets of feeders in Scotts Bluff Co: near Mitchell (KD) a female/immature 1-5 Aug, another 27 Aug-1 Sep, and 1-2 from 17-29 Sep; in Scottsbluff (RSg) a single 22 Aug (RSg); and near Gering 1-2 from 27-29 Aug (AK). The latest date above, 29 Sep, is about a month later than the previous late date among the 22 or so overall reports. Another female/juvenile was at Bushnell 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: Three were reported: singles near Mitchell 1 and 5 Aug (KD), one in se. Sioux Co 12 Aug (LF), and a female/juvenile at Bushnell 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG). This is a regular fall migrant through the western Panhandle.

Rufous Hummingbird: Expected westerly reports were of about 8 birds through 23 Aug (KD,TJW,AK). The latest records for the state, however, are from the

east. One appeared at a Bellevue feeder 19 Aug (L&SW), was photographed 23 Aug (CNK), and remained as late as 28 Nov (photos, fide CNK). This is the 4th Nov record for the east. Two others were reported in early Sep at a different Bellevue feeder (fide CNK), and one unidentified to species at a third Bellevue feeder 31 Oct (DB) was most likely a Rufous. Also easterly was a "brilliant male" at a Creighton feeder 27-28 Sep (MB). Any hummingbird in the east after the first week of Oct is unlikely to be a Ruby-throated.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Still rare as far west as Scotts Bluff Co, one was there 18 Nov (KD).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Most move through in Sep-Oct, but a few linger later in the southeast. Five such birds were reported, latest 2 in Bellevue 27 Nov (DB). Migrants occur rather far westward in fall; one was at North Platte 25 Sep (TJW).

Red-naped Sapsucker: Two were reported, both at WSR: one each 19 Sep (KD) and 13 Oct (HKH). This is a casual to rare fall migrant mostly in the western Panhandle 13 Sep-16 Oct.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Pileated Woodpecker: One was seen 12 Aug in se. Otoe Co (L&CF) and 2 were at FF 13 Sep (L&BP,ARy), both regular locations, but one on the north edge of Nebraska City 13 Aug (L&CF) was a surprise.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: One arrived rather early at ADF 6 Aug (L&CF). Rare westward, one was at LO 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).

Western Wood-Pewee: One was reported in Platte Co 4 Sep; its underbill was described as "mostly black". While this might indicate this species, there is overlap in this key feature with Eastern Wood-Pewee and identification other than in the hand of out-of-range birds is difficult. There are no documented records away from the breeding range or east of the Panhandle.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Routine reports.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Singles were reported 26 Aug in Lancaster Co (LE) and 29 Aug near Rulo (TR). Most unexpected was one at LO 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG, SJD details), the westernmost fall record; there are, however, 2 banding records for the same location in spring as well as a single Panhandle record in spring.

Acadian Flycatcher: None were reported; departure is in early Sep.

Alder Flycatcher: Rarely identified in fall, only the 7th such documented record was of 2 birds singing at FF 16 Aug (L&BP). The records are in the period 21 Jul-4 Sep.

Willow Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Least Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Hammond's Flycatcher: None were reported; most pass through in early Sep.

Dusky Flycatcher: The only report was of 2 at Oliver Res 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).

Eastern Phoebe: Routine reports.

Say's Phoebe: The 10 in Kimball Co 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was a record count. Easternmost were 1-3 in Harlan Co 8-10 Sep (G&WH) and one in Lincoln Co 3 Sep (TJW); this species is rare east of the Panhandle in fall.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Three were at Oliver Res 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG), only the 9th fall Panhandle report. Fall movement begins in late Aug.

Cassin's Kingbird: Best count was 17 in Kimball Co 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).

Western Kingbird: One at LM 1 Oct (MI) was rather late, and the 67 in Garden Co 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was a good count.

Eastern Kingbird: The 103 in Cedar Co 20 Aug (JJ) was an excellent count.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The only reports were of one in Nance Co 12 Aug (LE) and 2 immatures nw. of Lincoln 14 Aug (DS, fide TEL). The latter may have been offspring of a pair that was near PL during Jun (Summer Report).

Northern Shrike: Routine reports.

Loggerhead Shrike: Routine reports.

White-eyed Vireo: A juvenile at LO 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) was a surprise; it is only the 2nd fall record away from the east, both at the same place.

Bell's Vireo: Two at LO 3 Sep (DH) were rather late for that westerly location.

Yellow-throated Vireo: One in Holt Co 4 Sep (MB) was westerly.

Plumbeous Vireo: None were reported; departure is in early Sep.

Cassin's Vireo: The only report was east of the usual migration corridor, LO 3 Sep (DH). This and another from the same location are the only 2 records east of the Panhandle.

Blue-headed Vireo: Two at FF 27 Aug (CNK) were rather early, and one at CLNWR 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) was westerly; the latter is the 3rd documented from the Panhandle in fall.

Warbling Vireo: One at WSR 9 Sep (KD) was rather late for the west, and the 14 at LO 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was a record count.

Philadelphia Vireo: There were 8 reports of 9 birds, a better showing than usual: one was in Lancaster Co 18 Aug (LE), two were at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 29 Aug (RE), and singles were at Bellevue 4 Sep (CNK), in Lancaster Co 8 and 15 Sep (LE), and at LNB 29 Aug, 6 Sep, and 13 Sep (CW).

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: None were reported.

Black-billed Magpie: One in Cedar Co 20 Aug (JJ) was the first there in 2 years. Some post-breeding wandering occurs, likely the reason 1-2 were in Thayer Co 13 Nov (WF).

American Crow: Routine reports.

Common Raven: An exciting find was one flying over and calling at Valentine NWR 28 Oct (SJD, details). Despite several tantalizing reports in the last 10 years or so, this is only the 3rd documented record for the state since 1900.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: Routine reports.

Tree Swallow: The 600 at Meadowlark L, Seward Co, 21 Aug (PD) was an excellent count.

Violet-green Swallow: The only report was from near Gering 5 Aug (AK).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: The 310 at Nebraska City 16 Sep (L&CF) was an excellent count; the 3 highest counts are all from this area.

Bank Swallow: The 805 at BOL 4 Aug (LE) was a good count.

Cliff Swallow: Routine reports.

Barn Swallow: The 1400 at LNB 26 Sep (CW) was a good count.

Black-capped Chickadee: The 5 at Chester Island WMA, Lincoln Co, 4 Aug reminded the observer that he has lacked chickadees at his Brady feeder, 2.5 miles away, for more than 3 years (TJW).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Singles described as "first for fall" in Buffalo Co 2 Aug (MM) and Hall Co 23 Aug (JEt) may have been local breeders; small numbers apparently breed west along the Platte Valley regularly to Hall Co and occasionally to the Hershey area (*Birds of Nebraska*). Another was ne. of Scottsbluff 30 Sep (AK). This species usually arrives in Sep in areas where it does not summer.

Pygmy Nuthatch: A somewhat late brood was the 3 begging juveniles in Dawes Co 8 Aug (CNK).

Brown Creeper: The 6 at Brownville 5 Nov (RE) was a good count.

Rock Wren: A surprise was one at Wehrspann L 30 Sep (JWH); there are about 12 fall records for the east. Three using dirt cut-banks in Chase Co 20 Oct (TJW) were rather late.

Carolina Wren: "Outliers" are becoming commonplace in this species, indicative of recent mild winters. The colony at Barnett Park in McCook continues; 2 were there 26 Aug (LR,RH) and 4 on 29 Oct (LR,RH). Working west along the Platte River were singles in Kearney 26 Aug (KS), Cozad 10 Sep (LR,RH) and North Platte 26 Sep (TJW). Another was at Broken Bow 17 Nov (THa).

House Wren: Rather late were 3 at ADF 30 Oct (L&CF); there are only 9 later dates.

Winter Wren: The only westerly report was of one at North Platte 10 Oct (TJW); there are still fewer than 10 records from the western half of the state in fall. The remaining reports were from the east 24 Sep (JWH) through 14 Oct (RS).

Sedge Wren: Numbers appeared as expected during Aug, notably at Valentine NWR, where "many showed up" during the 2 weeks prior to 9 Aug (TH). Four at Harvard Marsh 16 Oct (PD) were a bit tardy. Sedge Wrens are scarce in Nebraska during Jun and early Jul, and so the presence of several territorial birds in lowland meadow areas at Wehrspann L was of interest (JWH). No evidence of breeding was observed, and the area was abandoned around 25 Aug after "a full 2 months of activity" and at the same time "new" birds were occupying the upland grasslands (JWH).

Marsh Wren: Routine reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Routine reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Arrival is much earlier in the north and west than elsewhere; first were 11 at WSR 9 Sep (KD), and so 3 in Lancaster Co 9 Sep (LE) were rather early.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: This species is about to colonize the entire state. Reports included several across the north: singles were near Bridgeport 20 Aug (CG), at LO 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), in Holt Co 4 Sep (MB), and in Dixon Co 26 Aug (JJ) and 5 Sep (L&BP). Best count was an excellent 12 at Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co, 30 Aug (AK), and 3 were at Scotts Bluff NM, Scotts Bluff Co, 12 Aug (SS). Three at Oliver Res 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) were probably migrants.

Eastern Bluebird: Lingers in the north and west were 2 in Scotts Bluff Co 14 Oct (KD) and one at Valentine NWR 29 Oct (SJD). Most depart those areas by late Oct, although a few may be found in winter anywhere in the state. A good count was the 100 in Webster Co 22 Oct (LR,RH).

Mountain Bluebird: A migrant flock of 15 was at WSR 15 Oct (HKH), and 5 at Wellfleet 16 Oct (TJW) were on the move also.

Townsend's Solitaire: Early even for the Panhandle, where migrants arrive by late Aug, was one at Chimney Rock, Morrill Co, 20 Aug (CG). The east was also reached early, by about a month, with one in Cedar Co 24 Oct (RE). Another in Seward Co 19 Nov (LR,RH) was more timely.

Veery: None were reported; migration is in Sep.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: The only report of this casual fall migrant was of one at Omaha 14 Oct (RS), only about the 30th record overall for fall.

Swainson's Thrush: Routine reports.

Hermit Thrush: Arrival in the west is earlier than eastward, involving different subspecies. Two were at WSR 19 Sep (KD) and one at North Platte 26 Sep (TJW), while first in the east was at Bellevue 6 Oct (L&BP).

Wood Thrush: Routine reports.

American Robin: Routine reports.

Varied Thrush: The only report was a repeat of last year: one was at WSR 24-28 Oct (HKH).

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: A good count was the 9, including a family group, in Kimball Co 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).

Sage Thrasher: This species moves through mostly in Aug; an adult with a dependent juvenile was at Scotts Bluff NM 8 Aug (KD), and another was at Chimney Rock, Morrill Co, 20 Aug (CG).

Brown Thrasher: Routine reports.

Curve-billed Thrasher: Continuing into its 4th year of residence and 6th year of age, this interesting individual actually began singing during Aug as a follow-up to its usual philanthropic attempts to feed other birds' young; it was still present at the end of the period (LF).

European Starling: Routine reports.

American Pipit: The 600 in two flocks in an alfalfa field near Hastings 21 Oct (PD) was an excellent count. One at LM 26 Aug (DH) was rather early.

Sprague's Pipit: There were 4 reports 15-21 Oct, west to Hastings: 3 were at SCP 15 Oct (KP) and also 21 Oct (EB), one was photographed at Harvard Marsh 16 Oct (PD), and 11 were scattered through an alfalfa field near Hastings 21 Oct (PD).

Bohemian Waxwing: The only report was of one with Cedar Waxwings in Lincoln 22 Nov (JGJ).

Cedar Waxwing: A rather early flock of 36 was at FF 27 Aug (CNK), and a large flock of 200 at North Platte 10 Oct contained mostly molting birds (TJW). Molt normally occurs Sep-Nov in adults.

Golden-winged Warbler: Only the 20th and 21st records for fall overall were singles in Lincoln 26 Aug (LE) and at ADF 13 Sep (L&CF). This is only a casual migrant in fall.

Tennessee Warbler: Routine reports.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Routine reports.

Nashville Warbler: Western migrants may belong to the white-bellied western subspecies *ridgwayi*; one was at LO 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG). Although this species migrates late in fall, with late dates in very early Nov, a surprise was one in se. Sioux Co 27 Nov (LF). There is a single documented Dec record.

Northern Parula: Routine reports.

Yellow Warbler: An excellent count was the 43 at LO 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); the 3 highest fall counts are in the period 25-26 Aug.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: More than usual were reported, a total of 16. Only the 13th-16th fall records west of Lancaster Co were apparently 3 different birds at LO: 29 Aug and 2 Sep (DH), a juvenile 15 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), and one at WSR 9 Sep (RSg). The 17th such record was one at a York Co fast-food outlet 26 Aug (JGJ), apparently the first RWB record.

- Magnolia Warbler:** Four were reported in the east 29 Aug (TR,L&BP) through 13 Sep (L&CF,JJ).
- Cape May Warbler:** Considering that there are only 7 fall records in all, all from Douglas-Sarpy Cos, extraordinary was the female at LO 27 Aug seen by 3 observers experienced with the species (SJD,AB,JG).
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** The only reports were of one at WSR 5-7 Oct (HKH) and 2 in Omaha 14 Oct (BH).
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** The 120 in Nance Co 8 Oct (LR,RH) was close to a record fall tally (9 short).
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** A good tally of 12 was reported 25 Aug (L&CF) through 13 Sep (CW,JWH,L&BP), including 3 at LNB 1 Sep (CW). Westerly was one in Holt Co 4 Sep (MB).
- Townsend's Warbler:** There were 13 reported from a rather early 17 Aug (HKH) through 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), east to LO 26-27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and CLNWR 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Four were reported in the east 25 Aug-6 Sep (L&BP,CNK,LE), but a surprise was one at LO 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG), only the 13th away from the east.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** None were reported; this species becomes inconspicuous in Aug.
- Pine Warbler:** Two males were with Yellow-rumped Warblers near North Platte 10 Oct (TJW, details). This is a hardy species, wintering not far south of Nebraska. There are 2 previous fall Panhandle records among about 25 in all, but no others west of Wayne Co.
- Palm Warbler:** This species is only casual in fall, with a total of about 37 records. One was in Dixon Co 26 Aug (JJ), a record early date, and another was at ADF 5 Oct (L&CF).
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** The only reports of this regular fall migrant were of singles at Rulo 29 Aug (TR) and ADF 14 Sep (L&CF).
- Black-and-white Warbler:** The 11 in Bellevue 26 Aug (CNK) was an excellent count.
- American Redstart:** The 11 at Bellevue 4 Sep (CNK) and the 10 at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 21 Aug (L&BP) were excellent counts.
- Ovenbird:** Good counts were the 5 at LO 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and again there 3 Sep (DH).
- Northern Waterthrush:** Westerly was one at LO 2 Sep (DH). There are about 30 records for the Panhandle.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** None were reported; departure is in early Sep.
- Kentucky Warbler:** The only report was of 2 at Wehrspann L 10 Sep (JWH). Few are reported in fall.
- Mourning Warbler:** The only reports were of singles in Lincoln 26 Aug (LE), Dixon Co 27 Aug (JJ), and at FF 29 Aug (L&BP).
- MacGillivray's Warbler:** About 8 were reported in the Panhandle 23 Aug (HKH) through 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).
- Common Yellowthroat:** Routine reports.
- Wilson's Warbler:** One of the most common fall migrants, this species was widely-reported 21 Aug (L&BP) through 8 Oct (HKH). Best count was a mediocre 21 at LO 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

Canada Warbler: More than the usual 1-2 were reported, a total of 8, including 3 singles at FF 26-29 Aug (AEK,CNK,L&BP), 2 at Bellevue 26 Aug (CNK), another at Bellevue 26 Aug (L&BP), and one in Otoe Co 2 Sep (L&CF). Along with the Cape May Warbler (above), a female Canada Warbler as far west as LO 27 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) was extraordinary.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Routine reports.

Summer Tanager: The only report was of one at ICSP, a regular summer haunt, 9 Aug (L&BP). Departure is in early Sep.

Scarlet Tanager: The only report was of 3 at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 5 Sep (L&BP). Departure is in early Oct.

Western Tanager: The only report was of 2 at WSR 24 Sep (HKH).

Spotted Towhee: Singles appeared a few days early in Lancaster Co 17 Sep (LE) and Adams Co 18 Sep (PD); most arrive in the last 10 days of Sep.

Eastern Towhee: Somewhat westerly were 5 in Thayer Co 19 Aug (LR,RH), although breeding occurs regularly west to Harlan Co.

Cassin's Sparrow: An adult and a juvenile were near LM 26 Aug (SJD,AB,JG); this is the same place a few birds were found in late Jul (Summer Report). The 26 Aug date is also the latest date overall for the state.

American Tree Sparrow: Routine reports.

Chipping Sparrow: The 93 in Dixon Co 8 Oct (JJ) was a good count.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Two in n. Sioux Co 16 Aug (WM) were rather early if migrants; it is possible that breeding occurs in the northwest, however (*Birds of Nebraska*).

Brewer's Sparrow: One was reported 18 Sep in Adams Co (PD, details); the observer was "90% sure". There is a specimen record for Long Pine 20 Aug 1919, due north of Lexington.

Field Sparrow: Routine reports.

Vesper Sparrow: Although dwarfed by previous high counts of "thousands" and "hundreds", the 94 in Adams Co 24 Sep (PD) was nevertheless respectable.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: The 300 in Dawes Co 8 Aug (CNK) was an excellent count. Easternmost was one in Adams Co 18 Sep (PD), where rare.

Savannah Sparrow: Occasionally birds are found in summer in the east; 2 were in Seward Co 2 Aug (RE). The 6 in Dawes Co 8 Aug (CNK) were in a part of the state where breeding occurs on occasion. The 145 in Adams Co 24 Sep (PD) was a good count.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: Two sites in Pawnee Co consisting of CRP grassland with native grass admixtures had a total of 21 birds on 13 Aug (WRS). A juvenile was photographed at North Lake WMA, Seward Co, 15 Aug (CG).

Le Conte's Sparrow: Good numbers were reported from the eastern half of the state, including 11 in the e. RWB 5 Oct (JGJ), 11 in Nance Co 8 Oct (LR,RH), and 10 at Harvard Marsh 1 Oct (PD). Last was rather late in Washington Co 29 Oct (JT).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: The only report was of one in Platte Co 2 Oct (CW,PD).

Fox Sparrow: Routine reports.

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Uncommon in the west, one was at WSR 9 Sep (KD).

Swamp Sparrow: First migrants were 4 in Adams Co 24 Sep (PD) and another at LNB the same day (CW). A good count was the 24 at Wilkinson WMA, Platte Co, 2 Oct (CW, PD).

White-throated Sparrow: Rare in the Panhandle in fall, singles were at L Minatare rather early 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), at Oliver Res 1 Oct (MI), and in Scotts Bluff Co 21 Oct (AK). Also rather early was one in Lancaster Co 17 Sep (JG). A record fall count was the 100 at LNB 18 Oct (CW).

White-crowned Sparrow: Routine reports.

Harris's Sparrow: Less common westward, one was in Chase Co 27 Sep (DH) and 2 were in Hitchcock Co 16 Oct (TJW).

Dark-eyed Junco: A "Pink-sided Oregon" Junco was rather early at North Platte 26 Sep (TJW) and 2-3 were in Chase Co 27 Sep (DH).

McCown's Longspur: A flock was at WSR 11 Sep (HKH), indicating the start of fall migration. There are few reports east of the Panhandle, and so a basic adult photographed in Adams Co 19 Oct (PD) provided a significant record. Oddly, the only other easterly record for fall is from Adams Co, also on 19 Oct, in 1964. A juvenile was photographed at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN). These are only the 5th and 6th fall records east of the Panhandle.

Lapland Longspur: Rather early were 1-2 in Chase Co 2 Oct (DH). This species forms huge flocks, usually described as "thousands", and so the 9000 in Seward Co 19 Nov (LR,RH) may not have been too surprising. That the observers actually estimated the number is significant!

Smith's Longspur: A statewide migrant in fall, but with few reports, an important sighting was of a flock of 20 near Chadron 15 Oct (JF). The 17 fall records are in the period 18 Sep-20 Dec.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Easterly was a first-winter bird photographed 24 Sep in Adams Co (PD); this is the only documented fall record from the eastern half of the state. The few other reports are from Adams and Webster Cos. Two at LM 25 Aug (SJD,AB,JG) and 15 on 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) were the easternmost otherwise; little is known about early departure dates from breeding areas.

Snow Bunting: There were several reports beginning with 5 at LNB 12 Nov (CNK), followed by up to 7 there through 23 Nov (WF,CS,MB). Two were at HCR 12 Nov (G&WH), 6 were at Willow Creek Res the same day (MB), and 2 were at PL 17 Nov (LE).

Northern Cardinal: Adding to the few Panhandle records was a male near Chadron 7 Sep (SA). This is only the 5th sighting in the northwest since 1960.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Rare westward in fall, a surprising 3 females/immatures were at LO 26 Aug (SJD, AB,JG), and an immature male was there 29 Aug (DH). Breeding has not been confirmed at LO.

Black-headed Grosbeak: Two in Scotts Bluff Co 15 Oct (RSg) were record late by 5 days.

Blue Grosbeak: Routine reports.

Lazuli Bunting: One at WSR 9 Sep (KD) was rather late.

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: Following the big westward push this summer, the 2 at Hyannis 2 Aug (TJW) were not as surprising as they might have been.

Bobolink: Routine reports.

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One in Knox Co 22 Nov (MB) was tardy.

Rusty Blackbird: The 3 reports included singles in Platte Co 2 Oct (CW,PD), Fillmore Co 23 Oct (PD), and a surprising record count of 88 in Knox Co 25 Oct which dwindled to only 2 by 11 Nov (MB).

Brewer's Blackbird: Routine reports.

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: Reports are now statewide. Best counts were 150 at North Platte 20 Oct (TJW) and 120 at Alma 26 Oct (G&WH). Two remained at Grand Island 26 Nov (TEL).

Brown-headed Cowbird: An excellent count was the 5000 in Lancaster Co 1 Sep (LE).

Orchard Oriole: One at Hastings 2 Oct (PD) was the 4th Oct record and 4th-latest ever.

Baltimore Oriole: Last was one at Lincoln 16 Sep (LRB).

Bullock's Oriole: A female was reported from LNB 21 Aug (CW). This is only the 3rd report for fall east of the Panhandle; the others were 11 Aug and 4 Sep.

Purple Finch: The only report was of a male at LNB 23 Nov (MB). This is a late arrival date; generally birds are present by early Oct.

House Finch: Of interest was a female at Bellevue 30 Nov with white on its head (L&BP). There is some conjecture that some male western House Finches may have white in place of red on their heads and breasts, and that this color variant does not occur in the introduced eastern House Finch and thus may give some indication as to where the populations might have merged.

Red Crossbill: The 3 reports, totaling only 6 birds, were from the Panhandle 8 Aug (CNK) through 16 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN,CG).

Pine Siskin: Routine reports.

Lesser Goldfinch: One was reported at Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co, 3 Sep (fide AK). There are about 20 reports in all for the state.

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln Fall Field Days

The 2006 NOU Fall Field Days were held in and around Lincoln on Sept. 15-17. Our evening meals and programs took place at the Howard Johnson's Motel on Cornhusker Highway.

Our Friday evening speaker was Dr. Paul Johnsgard, who spoke about the Birding Trails website being developed by a committee of the All Bird Consortium. On Saturday afternoon, NOU Librarian Mary Lou Pritchard gave a tour of the current exhibit of her late husband Bud Pritchard's artwork at the Nebraska State Museum in Morrill Hall. Saturday evening Dan Kim spoke on the Whooping Crane Trust activities along the Platte River in central Nebraska.

Field trips destinations were Holmes Lake, Wilderness Park, Pioneers Park, Wyuka Cemetery, Pawnee Lake, Twin Lakes, Oak Glen, Meadowlark Lake and Spring Creek Prairie. Field trip leaders were Joe Gubanyi, Larry Einemann and Kevin Poague. Our Sunday noon compilation was held at the new visitors' center at the Audubon Spring Creek Prairie.

Fall NOU Meeting at Lincoln

	Lancaster	Seward	Cass	Saunders
Snow Goose	x			
Canada Goose	x	x	x	
Wood Duck	x			x
Gadwall	x			
Mallard	x		x	
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x	
Northern Shoveler	x			
Northern Pintail	x			
Green-winged Teal			x	
Redhead	x			
Ring-necked Pheasant	x			
Wild Turkey	x			
Northern Bobwhite	x			
Pied-billed Grebe	x			
American White Pelican	x			
Double-crested Cormorant	x	x		
Great Blue Heron	x	x		x
Great Egret	x			
Snowy Egret	x			
Green Heron	x			
Turkey Vulture	x	x		x
Osprey	x			
Northern Harrier	x			
Sharp-shinned Hawk	x	x		
Cooper's Hawk	x			
Red-shouldered Hawk	x			
Swainson's Hawk	x	x		
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x
American Kestrel	x	x		x
American Coot	x			
Semipalmated Plover	x	x		
Killdeer	x	x	x	
Lesser Yellowlegs	x	x		
Solitary Sandpiper		x		
Spotted Sandpiper	x	x		
Ruddy Turnstone	x			
Sanderling	x			
Semipalmated Sandpiper	x			
Least Sandpiper	x			
Baird's Sandpiper	x	x		

Fall NOU Meeting at Lincoln

	Lancaster	Seward	Cass	Saunders
Pectoral Sandpiper	x	x	x	
Dunlin	x			
Stilt Sandpiper	x	x		
Dowitcher sp	x			
Wilson's Snipe		x		
Phalarope sp		x		
Franklin's Gull	x			
Ring-billed Gull	x			
Common Tern	x			
Forster's Tern	x			
Black Tern	x	x		
Rock Pigeon	x			
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	x	x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x
Great Horned Owl	x			
Common Nighthawk	x			
Chimney Swift	x	x		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x	x		
Belted Kingfisher	x	x		
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x		
Downy Woodpecker	x	x		
Hairy Woodpecker	x	x		
Northern Flicker	x	x		
Olive-sided Flycatcher	x			
Eastern Phoebe	x	x		
Eastern Kingbird	x			
Philadelphia Vireo	x			
Red-eyed Vireo	x			
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x
American Crow	x	x	x	
Horned Lark	x		x	
Tree Swallow	x	x		
Bank Swallow	x	x		
Cliff Swallow	x			
Barn Swallow	x	x		x
Black-capped Chickadee	x	x		
Red-breasted Nuthatch		x		
White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x		
Carolina Wren	x			

Fall NOU Meeting at Lincoln

	Lancaster	Seward	Cass	Saunders
House Wren	x	x		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		x		
Eastern Bluebird	x	x		
American Robin	x	x		
Gray Catbird	x			
Brown Thrasher	x	x		
European Starling	x	x		
Tennessee Warbler		x		
Nashville Warbler	x			
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x			
Common Yellowthroat	x	x		
Wilson's Warbler	x			
Spotted Towhee	x			
Eastern Towhee	x			
Chipping Sparrow	x			
Field Sparrow	x			
Grasshopper Sparrow	x			
Song Sparrow	x	x		
Lincoln's Sparrow	x			
White-throated Sparrow		x		
Northern Cardinal	x	x		x
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	x			
Dickcissel	x			
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x	
Western Meadowlark	x	x	x	
Common Grackle	x	x	x	
Great-tailed Grackle				x
Brown-headed Cowbird	x			
Baltimore Oriole	x			
House Finch	x	x		
American Goldfinch	x	x		
House Sparrow	x			
County totals	103	55	15	11
Total species	112			

The Art and Artistic Legacy of Louis Agassiz Fuertes

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Perhaps some Nebraska birders will not immediately recognize the name Louis Agassiz Fuertes, as he died almost 80 years ago. Yet he influenced the art of bird painting as much as did John James Audubon, and provided wonderful artwork for many major state bird reference books. He also personally tutored George Miksch Sutton, the Nebraska-born artist and biologist who provided the NOU with its Burrowing Owl logo, and who contributed greatly to American ornithology, especially that of the southern Great Plains.

It is interesting that, like John James Audubon, Roger Tory Peterson and George Miksch Sutton, we would never think of referring to Louis Agassiz Fuertes in any other way than including his middle name. It is not that there have ever been or will ever be another Louis Fuertes with whom we might possibly confuse him; Fuertes had no comparable antecedent. Dr. Livingstone Farrand, Cornell University's president at the time of Fuertes' tragic death, did not hesitate to schedule a memorial service for him in Willard Straight Hall on the University campus on October 30, 1927. When reminded that such action for a non-academic was without precedent in Cornell's history, Dr. Farrand simply replied, "There is no precedent for Louis Agassiz Fuertes." And so there was none. Like Mozart, he arose from moderate obscurity, exploded in a shower of unmatched talent, and disappeared all too soon, leaving the world to cherish his work but also to grieve and wonder what sort of elemental mix could ever produce such a person.

It is true that Fuertes came from fine parental stock; his father was a professor of civil engineering (and later dean of the engineering college) at Cornell, and his mother was noted for her outstanding musical talent. He had three brothers and two sisters, but none of these would ever attain the heights of fame that Louis would eventually scale. It is also true that his father had high hopes that Louis might become an outstanding architect or engineer, and when Louis entered Cornell in the fall of 1893 he enrolled as an architecture student. He had traveled in Europe with his parents the previous year, studying for a time in Switzerland, and began to exhibit the sort of drawing talent that an architect might need. However, like Charles Darwin, their fathers' dreams were not to materialize, since Louis was far more interested in studying nature directly than in pursuing academic studies. It is perhaps ironic that his father had bestowed the name "Louis Agassiz" on his son in honor of the internationally famous scientist, whose primary maxim was, "Study nature, not books." It is also perhaps apocryphal, but quite possibly true, that once during a class Louis escaped out a side window of the Cornell lecture hall he was attending, in order to track down the identity of a bird he heard singing outside. Finally, his exasperated father sought the advice of Cornell's renowned botanist Liberty Hyde Bailey as to what he might possibly do about his wayward son. Bailey's simple and sage advice was, "Let him go."

And did Louis go! Although his talents would certainly have become known eventually, he was fortunate enough to be discovered by none other than Elliott Coues, then President of the American Ornithologists' Union and perhaps the greatest ornithologist that America ever produced. Serendipitously, Coues was the

uncle of a friend and fellow member of the Cornell glee club. The critical initial meeting of Fuertes and Coues occurred in 1894, when Louis was only a sophomore, and during a trip of the glee club to Washington, D.C. From their first meeting it was already apparent to Coues, who was known universally for his sharp critical tongue and feared as an implacable enemy of mediocrity in all forms, that Louis had an artistic talent of immense proportions. Coues urged Louis to consider becoming a professional bird artist (never mind that such a profession didn't exist that that time; even John James Audubon had died in poverty). Thanks to Coues' professional influence, Fuertes was able to have his artwork exhibited at the 1895 (12th) annual meeting



Great-Horned Owl Louis Agassiz Fuertes
Photo courtesy of the U. S. Department of the Interior

of the American Ornithologists' Union in New York. This group then had about 600 members nationwide, including all of America's best-known ornithologists, and its journal *The Auk* was already the primary scientific ornithological periodical in America. Furthermore, Coues invited Fuertes to illustrate a children's book, *Citizen Bird*, that Coues was then writing with Mabel O. Wright. Thus, his painting career was launched.

Although Fuertes wasn't able to attend the 1895 meeting of the A.O.U., he did attend the following year. There he fell under the strong and pervasive influence of Abbott H. Thayer, who was already a nationally known nature artist. Thayer accepted Fuertes as a sort of surrogate son, and he spent a great deal of time with the Thayer family at their homes in New York and New Hampshire. Thayer had undergone four years of artistic training in Paris, and urged Fuertes to develop his already keen powers of observation to new levels. Thus, in only two years Fuertes suddenly had the advice of a highly talented and successful painter, and of America's most competent and famous ornithologists. Additionally Coues hired Fuertes to

illustrate the fifth edition of Coues' forthcoming (in 1903) *Key to North American Birds*, a reference work that was destined to become the mainstay of American ornithology, and which even today receives frequent use by professional ornithologists such as myself.

The artistic influence of Abbott Thayer was a powerful one, for it had become an over-riding issue with Thayer that animals such as birds primarily had evolved their distinctive colors and patterns for protective (concealment) reasons, rather than perhaps for achieving conspicuousness (advertisement) in their environment. Included in the means of achieving concealment are such devices as disruptive patterning (patterns that tend break up the body into many confusing or distracting forms), background-matching colors (cryptic coloration), and countershading (the tendency to have pale underparts and dark upperparts; thus counteracting the shading effects of the underparts caused by overhead light). This concealment argument obviously makes sense for some species, such as for many ground-dwelling or ground-nesting birds that might be vulnerable to visual predators. However, Thayer tried to apply it in many extreme cases, such as trying account for the pink coloration of flamingos and roseate spoonbills by suggesting that they would become virtually invisible at sunrise and sunset, when the general coloration of their surroundings is briefly pink to reddish.

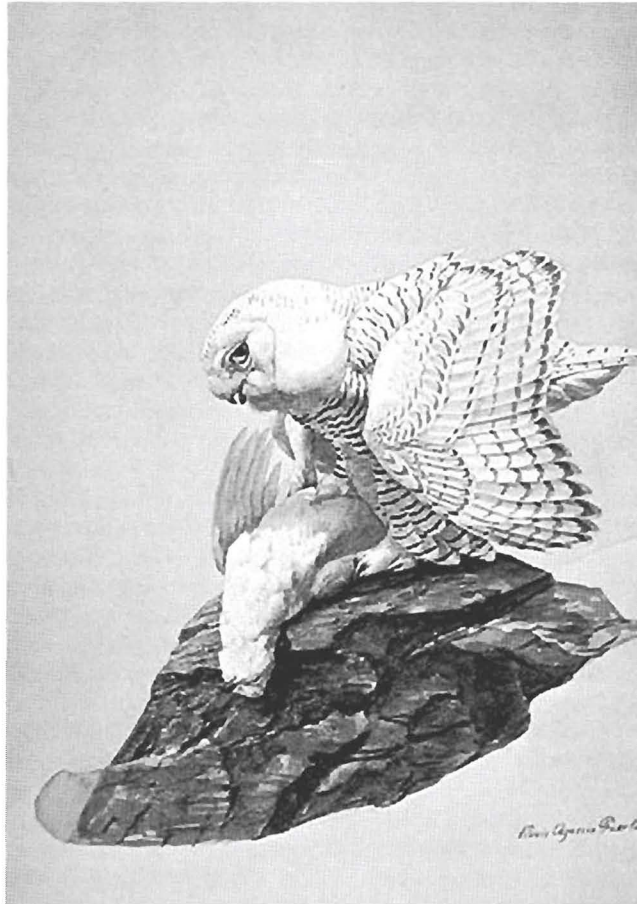
Although some of Thayer's arguments, such as those regarding countershading, were compelling and eventually accepted by biologists, they thrust Fuertes into a nearly lifelong dilemma. He must not only try to satisfy the controversial artistic views of Thayer, who constantly urged Fuertes to hide the birds effectively within their background, but also attempt to deal with the equally understandable views of virtually all publishers, who always urged him to make the birds more conspicuous and contrasting against their surroundings. Fuertes additionally had to cope with the economics of expensive color printing, which dictated that as many birds as possible must be crowded into a single plate, regardless of the possible straining of credulity that such crowding of subjects might produce. However, an inherent advantage of such grouping, as later exploited by field-guide artists, is the instructional potential for easy inter-species visual comparisons by people wishing to learn field identification traits. It is a testament to Fuertes' compositional ability that one may marvel at the multi-species plates in, for example, *The Birds of New York* or *The Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States*, without first thinking about the ecological or behavioral problems inherent in such groupings.

Evidently Fuertes decided quite early that he would primarily be a painter of bird "portraits," rather than painting subject matter in which birds might play an important role within a much broader landscape, in the manner of the great contemporary Swedish nature artist Bruno Liljefors. Such bird portraits were first perfected by Jacques Barraband, a French artist of the early 1800s, who probably painted his subjects from mounted specimens. In a 1910 article in *The Amateur Sportsman*, Fuertes described himself as "a bird portrait painter." His friend Frank M. Chapman similarly described Fuertes as a "great portrait painter of birds." Chapman later (1937) described Fuertes' genius and compared his approach to art with that of John James Audubon, the other great historic figure in American bird art. Chapman believed that both men possessed an extreme love for birds, possessing "some rare and precious heritage," as well as a "loving sympathy" for birds. Both artists killed thousands of birds, either for preservation as scientific specimens or as a basis for painting, yet both obviously and paradoxically loved their subjects intensely. In the words of Wilfred Osgood, Fuertes might sit with a freshly killed bird in hand, "stroking its feathers in detached ecstasy, and crooning

over it in a manner that in another might have seemed ridiculous.” In his Abyssinian memoirs Osgood also wrote (1936) that Fuertes was uniquely able to “spread the charm and beauty of birds, not merely by accuracy of line and color, but in the expression of subtle intangible qualities approaching spirituality.” Chapman (1937) stated that, whereas Audubon attempted to produce the visual effect of life by painting his subjects in motion (often inaccurately), Fuertes achieved his visual magic through “his ability to produce facial expressions which could be worn only by living birds.”

Besides an intense appreciation for the appearance of a bird, Fuertes could thus consign to memory a bird’s special qualities that gave it a unique character or “personality,” and delay converting these impressions to paper for several hours after experiencing the scene or event. Frank Chapman commented that “His mind appears to be a delicately sensitized plate designed especially to catch and fix images of bird life” (Chapman, 1927). I have personally known only one artist of similar retentive abilities. Paul Geraghty, a Canadian artist of rare talent, once visited me while I was doing fieldwork in Grand Teton National Park. Paul could spend an entire day in the field with only binoculars in hand, but that night would sit down with pencil and paper and draw dozens of scenes of birds and mammals with camera-like precision, sketching as fast as the graphite would flow from his pencil-tip. Chapman believed that this photographic-like retention of form, color, and even recalling complex bird songs gave Fuertes a special capacity for achieving authenticity. It is rare that a knowledgeable ornithologist will fail to recognize a Fuertes painting well before seeing his distinctive initials or signature; only the works of a few other more recent artists such as George Miksch Sutton can so readily carry the cachet of authenticity that is present in any Fuertes bird portrait.

Starting with a trip to Florida with the Thayer family in 1898, Fuertes soon participated in a series of field expeditions to observe and collect



Snowy Owl Louis Agassiz Fuertes

Photo courtesy of the U. S. Department of the Interior

specimens in such remote places as Alaska, western Canada, Mexico, Colombia, and the American West. He even took time to go collecting on his honeymoon, and on one occasion had to be rescued from a steep cliff-face he had climbed down in trying to recover a Zone-tailed Hawk that he had shot. On such expeditions he would hunt from sunrise to about noon. In the afternoon he would skin and prepare study specimens of the birds he had collected, and then paint selected examples while it was still early enough to paint by natural light. In the evening he would enter his journal notes and catch up on correspondence. Fuertes was especially careful to note fugitive "softpart" features, such as the texture and colors of the eyes, bare skin, bill, and even the inside of the mouth or what the bird had been eating when shot. Pencil sketches, washes, and transparent watercolors were variously used; Fuertes' abilities to depict soft feathers with the brush is legendary, and totally different from the "hard-edged" feathers of Audubon and his followers. Probably many of these field sketches were intended only as preliminary studies for future, more finished works; but they have an immediacy and visual power that is unmatched, and are far superior to what would be expected as specimen studies that might supplement a biologist's field notes.

During a 1925 trip to Wyoming Fuertes encountered James E. Baum, a wealthy Chicago sportsman and big-game hunter who was also a fine writer with connections to the *Chicago Daily News*. The following spring Baum proposed making a hunting trip to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), a remote area in the great Rift Valley of northeastern Africa that was rich in wildlife but having few if any restrictions on the killing of game. Shortly afterwards Fuertes and Baum visited with Wilfred Osgood, curator of mammals at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. Together they worked out a proposal to have the museum underwrite, not a recreational hunting trip, but a scientific collecting expedition to this little-visited and biologically unknown country. They also approached the *Chicago Daily News* for financial support, and soon received word that the paper would pay \$25,000 to help finance the trip. It was thus to become known as the Field Museum/*Chicago Daily News* Abyssinian Expedition, and would be Fuertes' last expedition. He was 52 years old at the trip's outset in the fall of 1926, at the peak of his artistic powers, and would live only a few months after his return to Ithaca the following year.

The Abyssinian Expedition

The expedition traveled by boat across the Mediterranean from France, through the Suez Canal, and arrived in Djibouti (then part of French Somaliland) in early October of 1926. The group then traveled by train to Addis Ababa, capital of Abyssinia. The scientific party included Fuertes, Osgood, and Baum, plus Alfred M. Bailey, a young ornithologist who had very recently been hired as a collector and curator by the museum. The final member was C. Suydam Cutting, a wealthy museum patron and volunteer participant in the expedition, who also made a 16-mm documentary film of its highlights.

After a few weeks of settling in at the Imperial Hotel of Addis Ababa, the group obtained an audience with emperor Hailie Selasse (Ras Tafari), then only 34 years old. He was highly receptive to and favorably impressed by the group, and provided them all the documents they would need for travel and collecting throughout the entire country. Before leaving Addis Ababa, Fuertes was devastated to learn that his personal gear, including clothing, field equipment, and all of his drawing and painting supplies had been lost en route. Fortunately, he was able to buy a small set of watercolors in Addis Ababa, and evidently made do with such paper and brushes as were also locally available for his drawing and painting needs.

Most of the Abyssinian paintings were done as life-size specimen studies on paper measuring approximately 11 x 15" (28 x 38 cm.), but some sketches are on sheets as small as 7 x 9" (18 x 23 cm.). A few formally composed and more scenic watercolors such as the groups of Colobus monkeys, White-eared Turacos and Mountain Nyalas were done on sheets as large as approximately 14 x 18" (35 x 46 cm.). These are all undated but were probably all executed after his return to the U.S.

By the latter part of October, before setting out on their main expedition, Fuertes and "Bill" Bailey had each collected and prepared more than 80 specimens in less than a week while staying eight days (October 18-26) at a ranch north of Addis Ababa, in Shoa Province. On October 21 Fuertes painted the first of his bird studies, of an African Harrier Hawk, and a day later painted a Thick-billed Raven. These and the remaining watercolor studies were all done in natural size, and thus most of the larger species were simply head and shoulder portraits, often with small whole-animal images in the background. Fuertes also began a large series of variably completed pencil sketches while at the ranch.

On October 30 the entire group reassembled and departed from Addis Ababa, with 36 pack mules, plus dozens of packers, muleteers, cooks, interpreters, and guards. Fuertes and Osgood headed south, through Arusi, Bale, Sidamo and Galla provinces. Within three months they returned again to Addis Ababa, reaching there on January 21, 1927. By then Fuertes had preserved 559 bird skins that he had obtained in more than 40 field camps, had already painted nearly 40 field studies of birds and mammals, and made about 20 pencil drawings. During their second month-long stay in Addis Ababa they again visited Haile Selasse, and Fuertes presented the emperor with the choice of a finished painting, to be made from one of his field studies. The emperor chose his portrait of the Narina Trogon. On his 53rd birthday, February 7, Fuertes was in Addis Ababa, packing trunks for shipment to Khartoum and itching to be back in the field. The group left two days later.

Again leaving Addis Ababa, the party headed north toward Gojam Province, into a mountainous region, and across the valley of the Blue Nile. From there they headed west of Lake Tsana. During this phase Fuertes completed an additional 30 or so watercolors, and at least a dozen pencil sketches. One of the last birds to be collected (by Alfred Bailey) in Abyssinia and painted by Fuertes was the African Swallow-tailed Kite. It was obtained on April 15 near Metema, the westernmost town in Abyssinia (Bailey, 1977). The very last subject for Fuertes' brush was a Four-banded Sandgrouse, obtained on April 17. Then the group crossed the Sudan-Abyssinian border and arrived in Khartoum on April 24. At this time they began to pack and prepare for shipment 22 cases of their accumulated specimens, including some 2,000 birds and nearly as many mammals. They then headed down the Nile to Cairo and Alexandria, and on to Europe, where Fuertes was reunited with his wife and daughter in London on May 12, 1927 (Mary Boynton, pers. comm.).

On his return to Ithaca, Fuertes had nearly a year's work to catch up with, but he couldn't resist showing the plates to friends and colleagues. During a chance encounter with a young acquaintance, Henry Guerlac, Fuertes called him over, and the two sat down on a sidewalk in Ithaca, feet in the gutter, and "gloated over" the illustrations, oblivious to both oncoming traffic and pedestrians (Marcham, 1971). In a letter written to George Miksch Sutton on June 26, 1927, he excitedly reported, "We had a marvelous trip in Abyssinia, and among other things I got far the best lot of field studies I ever did on one trip; a hundred color studies and a lot of drawings" (Sutton, 1979). Frank Chapman (1928) similarly described his Abyssinian studies as "incomparably the best he ever made in the field." Chapman had seen them as a result of a visit that Fuertes and his wife had made to their home in Tannersville, New York, during which Fuertes had told them of the Abyssinian trip and had

shown them his wonderful collection of paintings. Tragically, on their return trip he was killed near Unadilla, New York. The car in which he and his wife were traveling was struck by a train at a railroad crossing, the view of which had been concealed to them by a load of hay. Incredibly, at the moment of the crash the packet of paintings was thrown free of the demolished car and was rescued intact. Mrs. Fuertes was also thrown free, but was seriously hurt.

The entire collection of Abyssinian field studies was later purchased from Mrs. Fuertes by C. Suydam Cutting, patron of the Museum and a participant in the Abyssinian expedition, and in due course were presented to the Field Museum. Mr. Cutting also guaranteed the cost of reproduction of a selected group (32) of the watercolor plates, including 28 bird subjects and four mammal studies, or about a third of the total 108 paintings done by Fuertes during the expedition. These were published in album form, and printed on high-quality heavy stock, using up to nine offset lithographic colors, and with image sizes of 20 x 25 cm (8 x 10"). Introductory comments were provided by Winfred Osgood. In 1936 a selection of 16 of these same plates (14 birds, two mammals; all of which were also in the album) were included in a book that represented the combined Abyssinian journal notes of Fuertes and Osgood (Fuertes & Osgood, 1936). These plates were reproduced at slightly smaller size than in the album, and had much narrower borders. Both publications soon went out of print and rapidly became collectors' items. Some of the Abyssinian studies have also been reproduced more recently, most notably in the biographies of Fuertes by F. G. Marcham (1971), which included 12 bird and two mammal portraits, and that of R. M. Peck (1982), which included ten color and eight halftone reproductions of the Abyssinian birds. However, a substantial number of the Abyssinian watercolors and pencil sketches remained unpublished, all of which are still housed in the rare book room of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

Fuertes' Artistic Legacy

The artistic legacy left by Fuertes is both real and symbolic. Frank Chapman (1928) summarized Fuertes' list of "more important" published bird illustrations, which represent a lasting, substantive artistic legacy. These total at least 400 monochrome illustrations (about half appearing in Coues' *Key to North American Birds*) and at least 700 color plates, with the largest number (250) appearing in the National Geographic's *Book of Birds* (1918), and a lesser number (106) in E. H. Eaton's *Birds of New York* (1910-1914). There were also 68 plates in E. H. Forbush's three-volume *Birds of Massachusetts* (1925-1929), which are generally considered to be Fuertes' best illustrations, given the limitations of crowding several species on a single plate. A total of 35 color plates and 35 halftones appeared in *The Bird Life of Texas* by H. C. Oberholser (1974), nearly 50 years after Fuertes' death. More than 100 also appeared in the National Audubon Society's *Bird Lore* magazine between 1903 and 1926. These latter plates typically appeared as frontispiece illustrations, and collectively included most American passerines, as well as later series on swifts, hummingbirds, woodpeckers and herons. Several series of small but charming paintings were reproduced on cards published by Church & Dwight between the 1920s and 1940s, and were included free in boxes of baking soda. Such sets were avidly collected by children and introduced many of them (including me) to Fuertes and to many American bird species for the first time. More complete listings of his published plates were provided in an obituary by Frank Chapman (1928), and in a biography by M. F. Boynton (1956).

In addition, Fuertes completed many unpublished works on birds as commissioned projects or simply as gifts, as well as many mammal studies and those of other biological subjects. The archival library of Cornell University, which also includes most of Fuertes' surviving papers, has over 2,500 pencil sketches. Thus, his overall output of published and unpublished paintings must have easily exceeded three thousand items, but no complete accounting, or *catalogue raisonné*, exists.

Additionally, Fuertes left a powerful and lasting mark on subsequent generations of American nature artists. Perhaps the person most directly affected by Fuertes, because he received extensive instruction in bird art directly from the master, was George Miksch Sutton. The summer (1916) that Sutton spent in the Fuertes household as a teenager transformed his art and shaped his life. Sutton went on to become the premier bird artist of America following the death of Fuertes, and especially his early work sometimes is so close in style to that of Fuertes that it is sometimes necessary to examine the artist's signature to be certain of its origin. Sutton was himself a great teacher as well as an outstanding scientist, giving advice and encouragement to many talented artists. These have included Robert Verity Clem, whose shorebird paintings carry the authentic smell of tundra and marshland, the late and tragically short-lived Donald L. Malick, whose African field studies often bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Fuertes, and John O'Neill, who knows the visual feel of the American tropics like few others. No bird artist alive is likely to be ignorant of Fuertes' work, and probably all have gazed at his work in wonder, asking themselves, "How in the world did he do that?"

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THE 2006 NEBRASKA NEST REPORT

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The drought that began in 1999 continued over most of Nebraska this year, with 7 of the past 8 years receiving lower than normal rainfall. More normal rains fell in April and early May, especially in the central and east, before stopping for most of the summer. Most of the Panhandle and southwest were declared drought disaster areas by early summer, setting the stage in late July for the worst fire season in memory in the Pine Ridge area of the northern Panhandle (Fowler, 2007). Ultimately, 83 of 93 counties were declared part of the drought disaster area. Low water levels made for a disastrous breeding season for waterbirds in the western Sandhills, and with mid-summer finding many potholes and ponds dry or nearly so, it appeared that many waterbirds either left or just "hung out" for the season.

With the Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas Project II getting underway this year, many more records of breeding were received than could be reported here in detail. Well over 500 nests were reported, involving 122 species from 54 counties around the state. Despite the increase in reports, there remain gaps in the information available about many of our breeding birds. Details about when nest-building begins, egg dates, dates and age of young in the nest, fledging, how long the young are cared for after they leave the nest, habitat used, nest placement, etc., are still needed for nearly all species, and should be recorded and reported.

SPECIES

Species reported but not detailed in the accounts below include: Wood Duck, Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Mississippi Kite, Cooper's Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Piping Plover, Killdeer, American Avocet, Upland Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlew, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Common Poorwill, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Horned Lark, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Cassin's Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

OBSERVERS

Reports were received from the following observers: Virginia Correa (VC), Kathy DeLara (KD), Stephen J. Dinsmore (SD), Bill Glenn (BG), Bob Grier (BGr), Joseph Gubanyi (JG), Helen Hughson (HH), Bill Huser (BH), Jan Johnson (JJ), Alice Kenitz (AK), Clem Klaphake (CK), Clarence Mertins (CM), Wayne Mollhoff (WM), Betsy Mulliken (BM), Jerry Mulliken (JM), Emily Munter (EM), Lucas Negus (LN), Colleen Noecker (CN), Don Paseka (DP), Janis Paseka (JP), Allen Reyer (AR), David Stage (DS), Pat Stewart (PS), and Thomas Walker (TW).

ABBREVIATIONS

SP – State Park

SRA – State Recreation Area

WMA – Wildlife Management Area

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Trumpeter Swan A pair with 4 cygnets was seen on a small lake 36 mi S of Merriman, Cherry Co., on 8 June 2006 (CK). Another pair with 3 young was noted on a marshy lake 5.5 mi W of Merriman, Cherry Co., on 16 August 2006 (WM).

Wild Turkey A nest with 11 eggs that had been recently destroyed by a mammalian predator was found on 3 May 2006 at Oak Valley WMA 3 mi S of Battle Creek, Madison Co. A hen was flushed off a nest with 10 eggs at Sherman Reservoir SRA, 3 mi NE of Loup City, Sherman Co., on 13 May 2006 (WM). A hen with two late-hatched young “that couldn’t have been more than three weeks old” was noted at Bellevue, Sarpy Co., on the late date of 6 November 2006 (AR).

Green Heron A nesting colony (rather than the usual solitary nests), apparently the first colony reported in Nebraska, was found on 17 May 2006 at Two Rivers SRA, a mile S of Venice, Douglas Co. Nests with 3, 5, 5, and 5 eggs were examined. Several other nests that also appeared to be active were inaccessible (WM).

Turkey Vulture Two downy young were found in a barn 5 mi E of Seward, Seward Co., on 21 July 2006. The ‘nest’ was apparently in the hayloft, from which the young had fallen before being discovered by the owner (CM, JG).

Bald Eagle An adult was adding material to a nest on the Platte River near Clarks, Merrick Co., on 2 March 2006. An adult was incubating eggs or brooding young on 19 April; young were being fed on 14 June and still present on 26 June (WM). A nest on the Platte River near Hwy 75, Cass Co., was occupied on 23 April 2006. By 15 May movement by what appeared to be small young was noted, with nearly full-grown young noted jumping around on the nest by 10 June. Young were noted on the nest until 12 July (CK).

Northern Harrier A pair was noted nest-building in May 2006 at Kiowa WMA, 3 mi S of Morrill, Scotts Bluff Co. On 26 June one young was found in the nest, while 2 others were exploring the area nearby (KD).

- Ferruginous Hawk** A pair occupying a nest used the previous year were noted feeding two young on 22 June 2006 in northern Box Butte Co. (BG).
- Golden Eagle** Adults were seen carrying sticks to a nest located 60 ft. up a cliff in southern Sioux Co. about 15 mi N of Scottsbluff, on 15 March 2006. On 15 April an adult was noted brooding, and on 23 April "tiny, white babies" were seen. The area was hit by a severe storm on 24-25 April, and the young were not seen when the site was visited on 5 May. By 12 May the adults had left the nest area (HH).
- Sandhill Crane** A pair with 2 young was found on 18 July 2006 at Facus Springs WMA, Morrill Co. Flight was noted on 4 August for the larger chick and on 16 August for the smaller chick (EM, BGr). (Grier, 2007)
- Marbled Godwit** Pairs displaying typically aggressive defense of territory were found ~10 mi WSW of Wood Lake, Cherry Co., on 17 June 2006 (BH) and ~6 mi NW of Whitney, Dawes Co., on 20 June 2006 (WM). These are the first indications of breeding away from Sheridan Co., which is the location of the 3 previous reports of breeding and is about 100 mi. away from either of the new locations (Mollhoff 2005; Sharpe et al. 2001). Based on these reports, observers should be alert for possible breeding almost anywhere in the grasslands of western and northern Nebraska.
- Forster's Tern** Beem Lake, at Avocet WMA, 2 mi E of Hyannis, Grant Co., had declining water levels this year, with most of the cattails and even some bulrush stands left high and dry. Instead of the usual 4-8 ft. water depth, when visited on 30 June 2006, the deepest water found was only 1 ft. deep. Six nests with 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, and 3 eggs, and a clutch of 3 swimming young about a week old were found on that date (WM).
- Black Tern** Also at Avocet WMA near Hyannis, Grant Co., on 30 June 2006, a nesting colony had 4 nests with 3 eggs each, another nest with a single egg and one just-hatched young, and a nest with 3 young that were several days old (WM).
- White-winged Dove** A single bird showed up on 27 April 2006 in the Albion, Boone Co., neighborhood where they nested last year. By 12 May it had begun a nest which was later abandoned. Finally, on 30 May, a second bird was seen, a nest was built, and by 26 July the pair was seen attending a young bird (CN).
- Barn Owl** A brood of 3 young was found in the empty attic of a school in Ulysses, Butler Co., on 24 July 2006 (JG). Another brood of 8 young was found beneath a highway bridge 2 mi N of Big Springs, Deuel Co., on 8 June 2006 (WM).
- Barred Owl** A pair were found in a nest box west of Elkhorn, Douglas Co., with 2 young less than a week old present on 20 April 2006. The young were about 10 in. tall when checked on 8 May (DS).
- Common Nighthawk** A nest with two eggs was found in a soybean field 5 mi NW of Powell, Jefferson Co., on 18 July 2006 (BG). Another bird was flushed from its nest ~15 mi N of Scottsbluff in southern Sioux Co. in July 2006, revealing a remarkably large clutch of 4 eggs (HH).
- Western Wood-pewee** On 8 June 2006 a bird was seen adding cottonwood 'cotton' to line its nest at Smith Lake WMA, about 20 mi S of Rushville, Sheridan Co. (CK).
- Willow Flycatcher** A nest with a single egg was found on 1 July 2006 on Minnechaduza Ck, 10 mi NW of Crookston, Cherry Co. (WM).
- Say's Phoebe** A nest on a ledge at Toadstool Geologic Park, Sioux Co., held 4 eggs on 21 June 2006. A nest in the stovepipe hole inside an abandoned

schoolhouse 20 mi SW of Whiteclay, Sheridan Co., held a single egg and at least 2 young on 27 June 2006. A nest underneath a bridge over a dry wash 1 mi W of Haigler, Dundy Co., held 6 eggs on 4 July 2006 (WM).

Cassin's Kingbird A nest in the ponderosa pines 7.5 mi S of Redington, Morrill Co. held 2 eggs on 9 June 2006 (WM).

Loggerhead Shrike In view of a range-wide population decline for the past several decades, it was gratifying to find a nest with 2 eggs and 3 just-hatched young a mile SE of Ceresco, Saunders Co., on 17 May 2006 in an intensively farmed area. Another welcome sight was a single fledged young, still bobtailed and with short primaries, on the edge of the 30,000-acre Thayer Fire 3 mi NE of Harrison, Sioux Co., on 16 August 2006 (WM).

Plumbeous Vireo An adult repeatedly fed a begging young bird that trailed it on 28 June 2006 in West Ash Creek Canyon 10 mi ESE of Crawford, Dawes Co. (WM).

Pinyon Jay The jay colony 8 mi SSW of Redington, Morrill Co., nested in the same site the colony used in 2001. Four active nests, with 4, 4, 4, and 5 eggs, were found within a half-hour on 17 April 2006. As usual with this tight-sitting species, none of the birds betrayed their presence until flushing after the observer had climbed to within a foot or two of the nest (WM).

Tree Swallow Routinely found in nest boxes now, a pair was nest-building at Mahoney SP, Cass Co., on 26 April 2006. Another such nest held 6 eggs at Two Rivers SRA, 1 mi S of Venice, Douglas Co., on 16 May 2006. Another female refused to leave her 5 eggs 1 mi S of Surprise, Butler Co., even when the box was opened and a finger gently lifted her to the side to check the clutch! A box on a fencepost bordering a Sandhills pasture 15 mi NW of Bartlett, Wheeler Co., held 5 eggs on 13 June 2006 (WM).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow A nest with 5 eggs was found in a road cutbank 5 mi SE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 28 June 2006. Another nest with at least 3 young was found in a roadcut 9 mi S of Crawford on Breakneck Hill Road, Dawes Co., on 29 June 2006 (WM).

Bank Swallow A nest in a small colony found in a sandy roadcut in the arid sandsage prairie 26 mi W of Alliance, Box Butte Co., held at least 4 small young on 29 June 2006 (WM).

Brown Creeper Documenting one of the rare confirmations of nesting in Nebraska, a pair of adults was seen repeatedly carrying food into and then leaving from behind an area of raised bark on a dead tree at Neale Woods Nature Center, Washington/Douglas Cos., on 29 May 2006 (CK).

Marsh Wren On 8 June 2006 multiple males were busy building nests at Smith Lake WMA about 20 mi S of Rushville, Sheridan Co. (CK). A colony with 5 active and 17 'dummy' nests at Cottonwood Lake SRA a mile E of Merriman, Cherry Co., had clutches of 0, 1, 2, 4, and 4 eggs on 1 July 2006. A colony at Cottonwood-Steverson WMA 35 mi S of Merriman with about the same proportion of active vs. 'dummy' nests had clutches of 1, 3, 4, 4, 4, and 5 eggs on 30 June 2006 (WM).

Wood Thrush A bird was observed on its nest in Hormel Park, Fremont, Dodge Co., on 9 May 2006 (JP).

Sage Thrasher A pair of adults with a single fledged young was noted near the relict limber pine forest 12 mi SW of Bushnell, Kimball Co., on 25 July 2006. Another pair was found 2 miles away and another single adult was seen 4 miles away. Their presence on this date makes it seem possible that breeding took place somewhere in the vicinity. However, an active nest or flightless young have still not been documented in Nebraska (WM).

- European Starling** Four fully-feathered young in a nest at Two Rivers SRA a mile south of Venice, Douglas Co., appeared ready to fledge on 17 May 2006 (WM).
- Black-and-white Warbler** A recently-fledged begging young in West Ash Creek Canyon 11 mi ESE of Crawford, Dawes Co., was fed by an adult male 3 times in less than 30 seconds on 28 June 2006 (WM).
- Eastern Towhee** A ground nest found in a patch of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) held 4 eggs when found on 20 May 2006 at Ponca State Park, Dixon Co. (DP,JP,BM,JM).
- Brewer's Sparrow** Adults were noted carrying food to young at multiple locations in the sandsage prairie area 27 mi W of Alliance, Box Butte Co., on 29 June 2006 (WM).
- Field Sparrow** A pair was observed building a nest on 11 June 2006 at Dead Timber SRA, 5 mi NW of Scribner, Dodge Co. (DP,JP). An agitated pair, both of them carrying food, was initially found in a patch of greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), near Montrose Church, 26 mi NE of Harrison, Sioux Co., on 21 June 2006. Searching revealed a nest in some adjacent buckbrush (*Symphoricarpos* sp.) and the reason for the agitation: a green racer (*Coluber constrictor*) was pulling a day-old young sparrow through a hole in the bottom of the nest and literally racing away with it (WM).
- Henslow's Sparrow** A late report was received of four nests found in Stanton Co., 3 mi NE of Stanton in 2005. Nests with eggs were found on 22 and 28 June and 3 August 2005. One of the nests found on 22 June later fledged 3 young (LN).
- Swamp Sparrow** Perhaps only the second active nest reported in the state was one found at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., which held 6 eggs on 11 June 2006 (SD).



Swamp Sparrow nest at Lake McConaughy Photo courtesy of Steven J. Dinsmore

- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco** A recently-fledged young bird was found following an adult in West Ash Creek Canyon 11 mi ESE of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 28 June 2006, continually begging for food (WM).
- Lazuli Bunting** A pair was found defending a nest alongside Breakneck Hill Road 8 mi S of Crawford, Dawes Co., on 29 June 2006. The nest was empty but for a single Brown-headed Cowbird egg (WM).
- Western Meadowlark** A nest of this superabundant bird (but one with infrequently reported nests) was found at Schlagel Creek WMA south of Valentine, Cherry Co., on 2 July 2006. It contained 2 eggs and 3 just-hatched young. Another nest found 3 mi NW of Cody, Cherry Co., on 1 July 2006 held 1 meadowlark egg and 1 Brown-headed Cowbird egg (WM).
- Yellow-headed Blackbird** A young bird at Avocet WMA, 2 mi E of Hyannis, Grant Co., just out of the nest on 30 June 2006, tried to fly across a 30-ft. stretch of open water. It splashed down about halfway across and was closely harassed (but not touched) by several diving Black Terns as it flapped and 'swam' the rest of the way across (WM).
- Great-tailed Grackle** Birds at the recently-established colony in the highway/railroad right-of-way 4 mi SW of Waverly, Lancaster Co., were just starting to build nests on 13 April 2006. Nests with eggs were noted by 25 April, and construction on other nests was still continuing on 1 May. A total of 12 nests was found. A colony with 2 nests at Jack Sinn WMA, 4 mi ESE of Ceresco, Saunders/Lancaster Cos., had eggs in the nests on 17 May 2006 (WM).
- Orchard Oriole** A nest with 3 oriole eggs, plus 5 Brown-headed Cowbird eggs, was found on 15 June 2006, 6 mi SE of Syracuse, Otoe Co. (WM).
- Red Crossbill** Adults were seen feeding young at Gordon, Sheridan Co., on 8 June 2006 (CK). A mixed-age flock of 12-15 birds was observed feeding in ponderosa pines 8 mi S of Redington, Morrill Co., on 9 June 2006. Adults were noted tearing open the new green cones, extracting seeds and feeding the begging young (CK, WM). Adults were seen with fledged young 10 mi N of Hay Springs, Sheridan Co., on 26 June and in West Ash Creek Canyon, 10 mi SE of Crawford on 28 June (WM).

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