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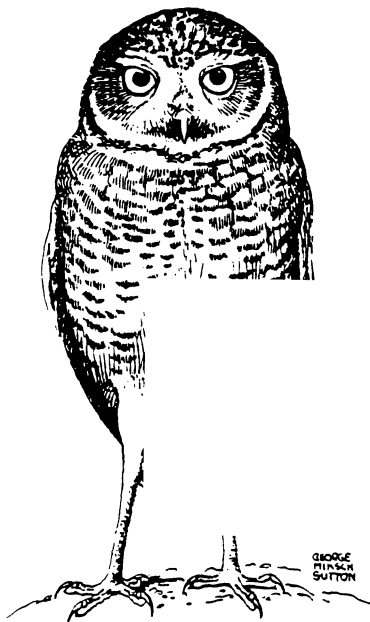
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"A Half-century of Winter Bird Surveys at Lincoln and Scottsbluff, Nebraska" by Paul A. Johnsgard, School of Biological Sciences, U. of Nebraska-Lincoln 68588

Since 1900, the National Audubon Society has sponsored annual "Christmas bird counts" during the two-week period encompassing Christmas; and as a result, long-term data on winter bird populations have accumulated, especially for some locations. The first two such counts in Nebraska were made in 1909 and in 1912 in Lincoln. While similar counts were made in Omaha from 1909 to 1911, no further counts were conducted elsewhere in the state until the 1940's. Beginning in 1947 and continuing to the present, an unbroken series of counts were made in Lincoln, usually by members of the University Place Bird Club, the Audubon Naturalist's Club, or the Wachiska chapter of the National Audubon Society. Omaha counts were re-initiated in 1944 and, except for a gap from 1955-1961, have also continued to the present. The only other long-term series of counts comes from Scottsbluff where an unbroken set of counts extends from 1949 to the present.

Few efforts have been made to summarize this great mass of potentially valuable information. In 1945, Leonard Wing offered a nation-wide summary of results for the first forty years of counts. Based on numbers of birds reported relative to observation time, his research indicated that the most common species nationally were the Red-winged Blackbird, American Crow, Common Grackle, Dark-eyed Junco, American Robin, American Tree Sparrow, European Starling, House Sparrow, Greater and Lesser Scaups, and Mallard. Based on the frequency of their occurrence in the total census sample for Lincoln, the most consistently reported species were the Downy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, American Crow, Hairy Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, American Tree Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Another nation-wide summary was made by Terry Root (1988), who analyzed data for the period 1963-72, and produced computer-generated maps showing the North American winter distributions of 253 species.

Because of the potential value of these counts in tracking Nebraska bird populations, I decided to analyze the data for the Lincoln and Scottsbluff areas. Early Christmas bird counts were generally not very thorough, and typically involved a few hours of effort by one or two people. Thus, the Lincoln counts for 1909 and 1911 were included in my analysis for their historic interest only. By the time the counts in Lincoln were re-initiated in the 1940's, strict guidelines had been established. Among these rules was the restriction in count area to a 15-mile diameter circle around a fixed point, which in Lincoln was initially established at the corner of A and 14th streets. In 1971, the count center was moved west about three miles to the corner of West Coddington Avenue and A Street, probably to bring recently formed reservoirs such as Pawnee Lake and Conestoga Lake into the census area. Additionally, records on total "party hours" and total "party miles" had to be reported to adjust for the progressively increasing numbers of persons involved and the similarly increasing amount of travel by automobile. Similarly, the Scottsbluff counts were initially not very restricted in coverage. These counts included Lake Alice and Lake Minatare, which often support vast numbers of early winter Mallards. Later counts were centered in eastern Scottsbluff, and still later ones (beginning in 1988) were centered at Scotts Bluff National Monument, which would probably favor conifer-adapted species.

Although I initially intended to analyze only the Lincoln-area data, I soon realized that several interesting comparisons might be made if data from Scottsbluff were also included. Scottsbluff is 400 miles west of Lincoln, some 3,000 feet higher in elevation, and its native woodland vegetation is mainly influenced by the western coniferous forest rather than the eastern deciduous forest. Its winter average temperatures average about the same as Lincoln's, but its frost-free period averages about 40 days shorter.

Since 52 years of data were available from Lincoln starting in 1946, I decided to group results into 17 sets of years. These triads were in turn grouped in one ten-year period (1946 to 1955), four nine-year periods (1956-1991), plus a recent six-year period from 1991 to 1997. In Scottsbluff, the 48 years of data available to me were similarly divided into five nine-year periods beginning in 1949, plus a three-year period including 1994 through 1996. During that total period some changes in species-level taxonomy have occurred. For example, the rufous-sided towhee has been "split" into two species, so records of these have been grouped simply as "towhee sp." The various forms of flickers, juncos, and other racial variants have been lumped as well. Furthermore, records of meadowlarks during winter in eastern Nebraska certainly include both eastern and western forms (but probably mostly westerns); these two nearly inseparable species have likewise been grouped together as "meadowlarks sp." for Lincoln-area counts; but the Scottsbluff counts are presumed to be entirely comprised of Western Meadowlarks. A few sightings of inadequately identified birds such as "falcon sp.," "duck sp.," and the like have been ignored. Rock Doves were evidently not included in the Christmas count summaries until the 1970's, but were present and fairly common in Lincoln when I arrived in 1961, and probably also then occurred in Scottsbluff.

Table 1 presents a listing of species ranked according to their relative consistency of occurrence in the Lincoln area over the entire 54-year period. Within each grouping the species are organized by diminishing occurrence; thus in the last grouping, the 17 species listed from American Bittern to Pine Grosbeak have been reported only once, whereas the Black-capped Chickadee, American Tree Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco are the only species that were observed on every year's count. Compared with Leonard Wing's list of highly-consistent species, those in both lists are the three just mentioned ones plus the Blue Jay, American Crow, Hairy Woodpecker, and Song Sparrow. Table 2 provides a similar listing for Scottsbluff, and the same table provides some comparative information for the two locations.

Tables 4 and 5 list all those species that were observed during at least five Lincoln and Scottsbluff counts respectively, and indicates the total number of individuals reported during each multi-year interval. To provide a basis for making between-year comparisons, the total average numbers of party hours and party miles for each of these intervals are also provided. Although it might seem logical that more consistency might occur when comparing party-hours than party-miles, a surprisingly low range of variation occurred with the latter comparison in both localities, suggesting that it might be the better normalizing statistic.

Although the cumulative numerical totals for the European Starling are shown for the Lincoln counts, the great year-to-year variation in their abundance (owing to the occasional presence of massive winter roosts during some counts) made it impractical to include these numbers without greatly affecting the relative

numerical composition of all the other species. The same was true for the Mallard data from Scottsbluff.

Migrant birds other than Starlings that exhibited substantial year-to-year variability in winter abundance in the Lincoln area were the Horned Lark and the Lapland Longspur, both of which are known to be quite unpredictably common, depending on snow cover in the Great Plains. In Scottsbluff, there were similar large temporal variations in species such as the Pinyon Jay, Bohemian Waxwings, and the Western Meadowlark.

Species that remained consistently abundant in the Lincoln area throughout most or all of the entire period include the Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, most woodpeckers, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, the Meadowlarks, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. These species mostly comprise Lincoln's basic early winter avifauna, although the Cedar Waxwing is likely to disappear during very cold periods. The species that have been consistently abundant in the Scottsbluff area include many of these same species, but excludes the Mourning Dove, Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Cedar Waxwing, and the Harris' Sparrow. The Black-billed Magpie and the Red-winged Blackbird, however, have been consistently abundant there.

Most of the strongly increasing species in the Lincoln area, including geese, ducks, gulls, and other water-related birds such as the Red-winged Blackbirds, reflect the increased amounts of surface water now present. European Starlings, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds, which mainly comprise the great flocks of migrating "blackbirds" that now annually descend on Lincoln, have learned to exploit the nearby grainfields and the relative warmth and safety of the city during winter months. American Crows have also increasingly adapted to city life. The recent explosion of House Finches in Lincoln illustrates the westward expansion of the species from the Atlantic Coast since the 1940's. This species and other seed-eaters such as Northern Cardinals have also no doubt benefitted from the great increase in bird-feeding activities by Lincolniters.

In Scottsbluff, some similar increasing trends have occurred, such as with the Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Wild Turkey, Blue Jay, American Crow, and House Finch. The Wild Turkey and Canada Goose have greatly benefitted by the Game and Parks Commission's introduction efforts, and the Blue Jay and House Finch probably have gained in numbers through bird-feeding activities, as they have in Lincoln.

Species that have declined in the Lincoln area over the entire period include the Short-eared Owl, Tufted Titmouse, and perhaps the Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak. Short-eared Owls have declined nationally during the period between 1966 and 1993, whereas Tufted Titmice have increased (Price et al., 1995). Reduced numbers of crossbills and grosbeaks may reflect the ameliorating winters of recent decades.

Fewer species seem to have declined in the Scottsbluff area, but they certainly include the Northern Bobwhite, and possibly also the Brown Creeper and House Sparrow. The sample size of the Brown Creeper may also be too small to be significant, and the apparent House Sparrow variations are unconvincing. Nationally, House Sparrow populations declined considerably between 1966 and

1993, but Brown Creeper trends are unclear (Price et al., 1995). The Northern Bobwhite is near the western edge of its native range in western Nebraska and might thus be subject to irregular population changes. It too has declined nationally since 1966.

References

- Price, J., Sam Droege, and A. Price. 1995. The Summer Atlas of North American Birds. New York: Academic Press.
- Root, T. 1987. Atlas of Wintering North American Birds. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Wing, L. 1945. "Christmas Birds: A Summary of Forty Years of Counting." Audubon Magazine, 43:380-1.

TABLE 1

Relative Species Occurrence During Entire 53-Year Count Period (1909-1997) at Lincoln, Nebraska*

Recorded 50 or More Years: American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Harris' Sparrow.

Recorded 41-50 Years: White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Great Horned Owl, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Kestrel, Mallard, Meadowlark spp., Northern Harrier, Mourning Dove.

Recorded 31-40 Years: Pine Siskin, Horned Lark, Cedar Waxwing, Belted Kingfisher, Purple Finch, Long-eared Owl, Common Grackle.

Recorded 21-30 Years: White-throated Sparrow, Towhee spp., Loggerhead Shrike, Rock Dove, White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown-headed Cowbird, Barred Owl.

Recorded 11-20 Years: Brown Thrasher, Tufted Titmouse, Cooper's Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Merganser, Common Snipe, Great Blue Heron, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Lapland Longspur, Short-eared Owl, Northern Shrike, Canada Goose, Swamp Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, Townsend's Solitaire, Brown Thrasher, House Finch, Herring Gull.

Recorded 5-10 Years: Eastern Bluebird, Field Sparrow, Common Goldeneye, Red Crossbill, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Evening Grosbeak, Wood Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Bohemian Waxwing, Black-billed Magpie, Lincoln's Sparrow, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, American Coot.

Recorded Fewer Than 5 Years: Double-crested Cormorant, American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Northern Sawwhet Owl, Smith's Longspur, Greater White-fronted goose, Wild Turkey, Northern Mockingbird, Fox Sparrow, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Northern Goshawk, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Snow Bunting, White-winged Crossbill, American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Osprey, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Parasitic Jaeger, Common Barn-owl, Pygmy Nuthatch, Orange-

crowned Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Great-tailed Grackle, Pine Grosbeak

* Arranged within groups in sequence of descending frequency.

TABLE 2

Relative Frequency of Species, 1949-1996, Scottsbluff CBC

Observed 41 to 48 Years: Mallard, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Townsend's Solitaire, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Observed 31-40 Years: Canada Goose, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, White-crowned Sparrow, House Finch, Pine Siskin.

Observed 21-30 Years: Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Rock Dove, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Song Sparrow.

Observed 11-20 Years: Great Blue Heron, Green-winged Teal, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Wild Turkey, Mourning Dove, Pinyon Jay, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Harris' Sparrow, Evening Grosbeak.

Observed 5-10 Years: Snow Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Eastern Screech owl, Mountain Chickadee, Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Common Redpoll.

Observed Fewer Than 5 Years: Western Grebe, Mute Swan, Black Duck, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, European Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Chukar, Ring-billed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Herring Gull, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Lewis' Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Jay, Steller's Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Pygmy Nuthatch, Loggerhead Shrike, Marsh Wren, Water Pipit, Northern Mockingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Northern Oriole, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Purple Finch, Cassin's Finch, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Grosbeak.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Winter Bird Populations at Lincoln and Scottsbluff

Species Very Frequently Recorded (at least 40 years, or 80% of counts) at both Scottsbluff and Lincoln: Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Harrier, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, European Starling, Dark-eyed Junco, American Goldfinch, Meadowlark spp., House Sparrow.

Species Regularly Recorded (over 40% of counts) at Scottsbluff, but Rare or Absent at Lincoln: Black-billed Magpie, Townsend's Solitaire, Rough-legged Hawk, American Wigeon.

Species Regularly Recorded (over 40% of counts) at Lincoln, but Rare or Absent at Scottsbluff: Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, Long-eared Owl, Barred Owl, Brown-headed Cowbird.

Most Abundant Species in Lincoln-area Counts (Descending Overall Abundance): European Starling, House Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Dark-eyed Junco, Canada Goose, American Crow, Mallard, American Goldfinch, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-winged Blackbird.

Most Abundant Species in Scottsbluff-area Counts (Descending Overall Abundance): Mallard, Canada Goose, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, House Sparrow, Horned Lark, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, American Robin, Black-billed Magpie, Rock Dove, American Goldfinch.

Increasing Species: Canada Goose (Both), Mallard (Lincoln), Bald Eagle (Both), American Kestrel (Lincoln), Ring-necked Pheasant (Lincoln), Wild Turkey (Scottsbluff), Mourning Dove (Lincoln), Blue Jay (Scottsbluff), American Crow (Both), Black-capped Chickadee (Lincoln), White-breasted Nuthatch (Lincoln), Red-winged Blackbird (Lincoln), Brown-headed Cowbird (Lincoln), House Finch (Both).

Decreasing Species: Bobwhite (Scottsbluff), Horned Lark (Lincoln), Tufted Titmouse (Lincoln), House Sparrow (Scottsbluff).

Average Total Species: Lincoln 45; Scottsbluff, 42.

Average Birds per Party-mile: Lincoln, 187; Scottsbluff, 182.

TABLE 4

Wild Bird Surveys at Lincoln, Nebraska

Inclusive Years (19__)	09,12	46-55	52-64	65-73	74-82	83-91	92-97	Total Birds	Freq.
Great Blue Heron		1			4	8	27	40	15
Snow Goose			1		2	1652	107	1762	12
Canada Goose				1	162	5269	17,661	23093	23
Wood Duck				2	3	5	3	13	7
Mallard		12	183	2696	1097	4242	4766	12996	44
Northern Pintail			2		3	2	11	18	5
Lesser Scaup				8		43	2	53	5
Common Goldeneye				12	2	187	137	338	9
Common Merganser				5		2213	73	2291	17
Bald Eagle						3	4	7	6
Northern Harrier		39	17	11	53	47	37	204	41
Sharp-shinned Hawk		6	11	10	17	35	30	109	36
Cooper's Hawk		7	3	1	7	6	5	29	19

Inclusive Years (19__)	09,12	46-55	52-64	65-73	74-82	83-91	92-97	Total Birds	Freq.
Red-tailed Hawk		37	46	100	205	420	398	1206	49
Rough-legged Hawk		10	6	8	24	15	11	74	35
American Kestrel		37	61	49	110	205	149	611	46
Merlin		3			6	4	4	17	14
Peregrine Falcon		2			1	3	1	7	7
Ring-necked Pheasant		22	49	96	309	447	205	1128	47
Northern Bobwhite		3	4	112	254	107	186	666	30
American Coot				6	1	2		9	5
Killdeer			3	4	2	15	2	26	12
Common Snipe			6	3	13	3	21	46	16
Ring-billed Gull				2	8	414	585	1009	14
Herring Gull					5	86	57	148	10
Rock Dove	Not	Included in	Early	Counts	1480	2371	2926	6777	24
Mourning Dove		25	382	979	1229	799	1056	4470	41
Eastern Screech-owl				14	211	122	47	394	26
Great Horned Owl		50	38	42	139	190	100	559	48
Barred Owl				1	24	25	18	68	22
Long-eared Owl		47	14	1	111	87	40	300	31
Short-eared Owl		6	2	5	6	1		20	34
Belted Kingfisher		3	4	7	44	66	40	164	34
Red-headed Woodpecker			2		56	20	12	90	19
Red-bellied Woodpecker		41	63	49	156	195	145	649	48
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			14	4	11	9	9	47	27
Downy Woodpecker	11	248	207	168	474	724	513	2345	51
Hairy Woodpecker	1	64	39	39	158	146	96	543	51
Northern Flicker	1	141	128	90	302	298	160	1120	52
Horned Lark	95	76	613	969	5459	203	1870	9285	38
Blue Jay	2	85	311	626	1497	2653	1948	7122	51
Black-billed Magpie						3	15	18	5
American Crow	20	1589	2899	1025	2072	4062	5075	16742	52
Tufted Titmouse		51	40	9	5	1		106	20
Black-capped Chickadee	21	845	838	492	2031	3312	1628	9167	53
Red-breasted Nuthatch		68	62	29	86	84	146	475	43
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	60	356	102	380	670	368	1941	49
Brown Creeper	6	139	156	39	119	215	150	824	51
Carolina Wren		1				12	10	23	13
Winter Wren		2			5	6	4	17	14
Golden-crowned Kinglet		86	226	76	174	427	199	1188	46

[illegible]

TOTAL BIRDS *	276	12970	31449	41780	102906	80808	66412	336606	
Averag Total Birds/ Year*	138	1613	4053	4642	27230	12383	13725	10630	
Average Total Species	9	30.6	45.5	44.1	59.6	63.8	66.6	45.2	
Average Total Observers	2	10.3	12.8	12.5	24.7	42.1	32.8	19.5	
Average Party Hours	5	26.7	22.5	32.7	80.1	92.6	110	52.7	
Average Party Miles	?	64	152	218	467	448	521	312	
Average Birds/Party Mile	?	25	27	21	58	27	26	34	
*Excluding Starling									

TABLE FIVE

Winter Bird Surveys at Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Inclusive Years (19__)	49-57	58-66	67-75	76-84	85-93	94-96	Total Birds	Freq.
Great Blue Heron		1		7	16	6	29	13
Snow Goose				5	1	31	37	5
Canada Goose	8	312	902	1791	25588	32218	60819	35
Green-winged Teal	6	132	43	24	109	11	325	16
Mallard	45016	245779	366153	6000	34985	19989		48
Northern Pintail	8	15	64	19	90	10	206	24
Blue-winged Teal			30	8	6		57	5
American Wigeon		5	51	67	480	127	730	21
Common Goldeneye	10	40	75	9	63	145	342	28
Common Merganser	27	184	461	4	7		683	25
Bald Eagle		9	30	13	64	16	132	27
Northern Harrier	27	46	35	13	54	9	176	42
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1	5	1	7	5
Red-tailed Hawk		6	17	20	23	17	31	31
Swainson's Hawk			4	2		2	8	5
Ferruginous Hawk				2	2	4	8	6
Rough-legged Hawk	11	17	17	19	20	8	92	32
Golden Eagle	3	6	17	1	10	6	43	17
American Kestrel	14	38	38	81	89	40	300	42
Merlin	1	5	5	15	6	1	33	22
Prairie Falcon		1	3	7	7		18	12
Ring-necked Pheasant	46	118	43	86	83	10	386	47
Northern Bobwhite	106	176	75	47	29	11	444	21
Wild Turkey		23	19	28	274	165	532	16
Killdeer	25	21	4	48	3	1	89	24

Inclusive Years (19__)	49-57	58-66	67-75	76-84	85-93	94-96	Total Birds	Freq.
Common Snipe	17	21	17	8	9	9	81	26
Rock Dove	Not	Counted	163	963	938	183	2247	24
Mourning Dove	7	77	21	13	2		120	16
Eastern Screech-owl		3	3	1	1		8	9
Great Horned Owl	5	30	20	21	16	10	102	38
Belted Kingfisher	9	14	17	15	17	6	102	41
Downy Woodpecker	79	66	68	71	52	1	346	46
Hairy Woodpecker	22	24	12	12	8	8	79	36
Northern Flicker	152	223	241	309	215	88	1228	48
Horned Lark	374	1365	2657	1008	4310	152	9866	46
Blue Jay	24	50	115	169	417	120	795	44
Black-billed Magpie	484	6 81	350	360	454	141	2470	48
American Crow	28	87	89	422	624	220	1470	41
Pinyon Jay	55	70	391	453	11	12	1022	44
Black-capped Chickadee	372	317	270	331	318	113	1423	47
Mountain Chickadee			7	5		10	22	5
Red-breasted Nuthatch	15	20	6	9	14	20	79	30
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	10	3	2	4		21	11
Brown Creeper	10	9	1	5	1	1	27	16
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	3	3	5	15		28	14
American Robin	696	386	608	1302	220	516	3728	47
Townsend's Solitaire	38	62	44	31	52	67	294	42
Bohemian Waxwing		575	146	31	52	14	818	8
Cedar Waxwing	38		174	30	2		206	10
Northern Shrike	10	26	20	25	25	14	120	39
European Starling	1880	14127	14212	10227	9708	7973	48927	48
American Tree Sparrow	791	1549	941	923	579	242	5025	47
Song Sparrow	12	20	12	8	18	16	86	28
White-crowned Sparrow	131	365	61	85	242	18	902	40
Harris' Sparrow		3	29	32	4		68	14
Dark-eyed Junco	923	1087	647	739	1079	250	4725	47
Red-winged Blackbird	2636	14500	5531	2238	12888	2600	40393	43
Western Meadowlark	321	828	592	164	272	19	2196	43
Brewer's Blackbird	10	23	31				64	6
Common Grackle				8	53	3	65	6
House Finch	24	156	301	676	827	201	1791	39
Common Redpoll	42	16		60			118	5
Pine Siskin	207	305	253	362	426	453	2006	39

Inclusive Years (19__)	49-57	58-66	67-75	76-84	85-93	94-96	Total Birds	Freq.
American Goldfinch	448	266	342	499	413	238	2206	45
Evening Grosbeak	10	139	9	48	3	136	345	12
House Sparrow	3201	13505	8617	7438	4659	1374	38794	48
Average Total Birds*	13367	52163	38957	31425	65947	48069	33212	
Average Total Birds/Year*	1485	5907	4328	3492	7327	16023	6427	
Average Total Species	28	43	42	43	45	50	45	
Average Total Party Hours	22	30	29	29	20	17	24	
Average Total Party Miles	93	192	206	237	187	176	182	
Average Birds/Party Mile	43	21	19	15	39	91	35	
*Excluding Mallard								

SUMMER FIELD REPORT, JUNE-JULY, 1998

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INTRODUCTION

First, some housekeeping is in order. We have used several reports from observations submitted to NEBIRDS; in addition, numerous reports reached us by email. We ask that all observers include their email addresses in their reports so that if questions arise, communication becomes very easy. Please submit reports and comments to Ross Silcock by email at silcock@sidney.heartland.net. We also gather sightings reported to the Nebraska Birdline, operated by Loren and Babs Padelford at Bellevue; these reports are placed on the Internet through BIRDCNTR, a service of the National Bird Hotline Cooperative. Note that this Seasonal Report contains a few unverified observations as well as documented observations; in general, if a report is of some significance, we indicate if it is unverified.

You will also notice the new order of species (AGAIN!!), reflecting the latest American Ornithologists' Union Checklist, published this spring. The most noticeable change concerns the placement of shrikes and vireos between flycatchers and corvids; but the order of species within some genera also differs, especially among the waterfowl, where, for instance, swans now follow the geese.

And now let's turn to the birds! As in most summers, many species went about their business in routine fashion, hence the notation "Routine Reports" for many.

We encourage observers to note and to forward evidence of breeding for all species, including dates for nests, eggs, and young. These data help us document changing patterns for various species. Interesting developments this summer in terms of breeding populations include the expansion of the Eurasian Collared-Dove "colony" at the Newcomb residence in Kearney; the continued presence of an

outlying population of Chuck-will's-widow at Morse Bluff; further evidence of the northward spread of Acadian Flycatcher in the Missouri Valley; expansion of the Cordilleran Flycatcher population in the western Pine Ridge; continuation of the outlying Say's Phoebe group in Dixon Co; an increased population of Cassin's Kingbird and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in the Panhandle, and expansion (probably temporary) of Cassin's Sparrow into the southwest Sandhills. In addition, three species of shorebirds arrived early: Baird's Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. A noticeable number of warblers also migrated late, including Orange-crowned and Nashville (both 2nd latest ever), Blackpoll, Black-and-white (possibly breeding), and Wilson's. While few rarities reached us, those that did were of interest: the 3rd documented White-winged Dove at Dove City (Kearney), and the 3rd record Cave Swallow--all banded by Charles Brown in the Keith Co area--as well as a Laughing Gull at Keystone L, Nebraska's 8th documented record.

Read on and enjoy. And please forward us any constructive criticism.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm; BBS: Breeding Bird Survey Route; BOL: Branched Oak L; BSC: Boy Scout Camp; Cem: cemetery; CLNWR: Crescent L NWR; Co(s): County (ies); FF: Fontenelle Forest; FL: Funk Lagoon; HCR: Harlan Co Res; ICSP: Indian Cave SP; L: Lake; LM: L McConaughy; m. ob.: many observers; NC: Nature Center; NE: Nebraska; NM: National Monument; NNF: Nebraska National Forest; NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee; NPNWR: North Platte NWR; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; OPPD: Omaha Public Power Division; Res: Reservoir; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; sp: species; SRA: State Recreation Area; WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area.

GAZETTER

Arbor Day Farm: Nebraska City; Ashford BSC: Thurston Co; Basswood Area: WMA, Dakota Co; Bluestem Basin: WPA, Kearney Co; Branched Oak L: SRA, Lancaster Co; Cemetery Gulch: canyon adjacent to Gering Cemetery, Scotts Bluff Co; Chadron SP: Dawes Co; Cracker Barrel Marsh: Lincoln, Lancaster Co; Crescent L NWR: Garden Co; Crystal Cove L: South Sioux City; Fontenelle Forest: Bellevue, Sarpy Co; Fremont Lakes: SRA, Dodge Co; Funk Lagoon: WPA, Phelps Co; Harlan Co Res: SRA, Harlan Co; Johnson Lagoon: WPA, Phelps Co; Johnson Res: SRA, Dawson-Gosper Cos; Keystone L: adjoins L Ogallala, Keith Co; Kingsley Dam: forms L McConaughy; Krimlofski Tract: extreme southeast Washington Co; La Platte Bottoms: marsh 2 miles east of La Platte, Sarpy Co; L McConaughy: Keith Co; L Ogallala: below Kingsley Dam, Keith Co; Limestone Bluffs: WMA, Franklin Co; Long Canyon: 9 miles west and about 3 miles south of Harrisburg, Banner Co; Mansfield Marsh: Dawes Co; Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co; Neale Woods: Douglas Co; OPPD Wetlands: Otoe Co; Ponca SP: Dixon-Dakota Cos; Rainwater Basin: region of natural wetlands in south central NE; Redington Canyon: about 7 miles south of Redington, Morrill Co; Sandhills: native

grassland region in north central NE; Schilling Refuge: Cass Co; Schramm SP: Sarpy Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Stagecoach L: SRA, Lancaster Co; Union Pacific Area: SRA, Buffalo Co; Wagon Train L: Lancaster Co; Wehrspann L: Omaha, Sarpy Co; Wildcat Hills NC: Wildcat Hills SRA, Scotts Bluff Co.

OBSERVERS

Nebraska Birdline (B); Russ Benedict (RB), Lincoln; John Dinan (JD), Lincoln; Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Fort Collins, CO; Larry Einemann (LE), Lincoln; Carol Falk (CF), Nebraska City; Laurence Falk (LF), Nebraska City; Joseph Gubanyi (JG), Seward; Carolyn Hall (CH), Bassett; John W. Hall (JWH), Omaha; Robin Harding (RH), Gibbon; Glen Hoge (GH), Alma; Wanda Hoge (WH), Alma; Bill F. Huser (BFH), South Sioux City; Jan Johnson (JJ), Wakefield; Joel G. Jorgensen (JGJ), Blair; Alice Kenitz (AK), Gering; Clem. N. Klaphake (CNK), Bellevue; John Kozak (JK), Kearney; Tom Labedz (TL), Lincoln; Randy Lawson (RL), Chadron; Larry K. Malone (LKM), Deming, NM; Wayne Mollhoff (WM), Lincoln; John Murphy (JM), Kearney; Babs Padelford (BP), Bellevue; Loren Padelford (LP), Bellevue; Don Paseka (DP), Ames; Janis Paseka (JP), Ames; Kevin Poague (KP), Lincoln; Lanny Randolph (LR), Gibbon; W. Ross Silcock (WRS), Tabor, IA; John Sullivan (JS), Lincoln; Mark Urwiller (MU), Kearney; Zachary Urwiller (ZU), Kearney; Gertrude Wood (GW), Elmwood.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Common Loon: Up to 3 immatures were at L Ogallala/Keystone L, on 10 and 12 June (BP, LP, JS). Another immature was observed at Union Pacific Area, between 7 June and 12 July. (LR, RH, MU, m.ob.)

Pied-billed Grebe: Breeding in the east and south is local and irregular year to year due to water conditions. Breeding in these regions was noted at FL where an adult with 2 young was found on 2 July and at LaPlatte Bottoms where 3 nests and 9 adults with 3 young were found on 26 July (BP, LP).

Fared Grebe: Birds away from breeding areas include 2 at the Gering SL, Scotts Bluff Co, on 23 June (AK) and singles at both FL on 2 June (LR, RH) and Johnson Lagoon on 22 June (LR, RH). In addition, 90-100 nests were counted at a lake east of Lakeside in Sheridan Co. on 12-14 June (WRS, JS, BP, LP).

Western Grebe: As is usual, all reports came from the west. At LM, 120 were tallied on 17 June (BP, LP).

Clark's Grebe: A single was a mild surprise at FL on 14-21 June (LR, RH); details were provided. Elsewhere, 3 adults, one with 2 young on its back, were found at Willy L, 1 mile east of Bingham, Sheridan Co, on 12 June (WRS, JS). This is only the 3rd report of breeding in the state and the first away from the west end of LM.

American White Pelican: Summering birds are found at favored locales throughout the survey area, such as the 23 at HCR on 24 June (GH, WH). At FL, the 15 reported on 24 June (JWH) grew to 100 by 18 July (LR, RH).

Double-crested Cormorant: The colony at HCR flourished this year, with an amazing count of 70 birds on nests on 24 June (GH, WH).

American Bittern: The 2 noted at CLNWR on 6 June (AK) appeared at an expected location, but singles at FL on 12 and 23 July (MU, JK, JM, GH, WH,) are interesting; breeding has not been reported in the Rainwater Basin.

Least Bittern: Up to 3 possible breeders were spotted at La Platte Bottoms from 17 to 28 June (JS, BP, LP). Elsewhere 1 to 2 were noted on three occasions at FL between 12 and 24 June (LR, RH, GH, WH, JG), where the species has been reported in summer for the last 3 years.

Great Blue Heron: The high count was 40 at FL on 29 June (LR, RH). Also, several were noted at the rookery north of Mitchell, Scotts Bluff Co, on 27 June (AK).

Great Egret: Birds began appearing by the end of June with 3 at FL on 24 June. (JWH). High counts for the period include 16 at the OPPD Wetlands on 29 June (BP, LP); 12 at HCR on 28 July (GH,WH); and 10 at FL on 19 July (GH, WH).

Snowy Egret: Seven reports were received, 4 of which came from FL where 1 to 2 egrets appeared between 6 and 10 June (MU, JK); and as many as 4 were seen between 23 and 25 July (LR, RH, GH, WH). Elsewhere, singles were noted at Schilling Refuge from 26 to 29 July (BP, LP, GW) and at La Platte Bottoms on 22 July (LP, BP).

Little Blue Heron: At least 8 different birds (6 adults, 2 immatures) were found at Cracker Barrel Marsh from 11 June to 18 July (JS, KP, BP, LP).

Cattle Egret: Few were reported, with the largest flock numbering 40 at a roost at FL on 23 July (GH, WH).

Green Heron: Nebraska City, Otoe Co, registered a good count of 5 on 9 July (LF, CF); and to the west, a single appeared at the Alma SL, Harlan Co, on 15 and 28 July (GH, WH).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: The 26 at FL on 29 June (LR, RH) grew to 100 by 12 July (MU, JK, ZU). Breeding at FL seems a possibility, but none was reported there before 29 June. Elsewhere, the 5 in a flooded pasture in Colfax Co on 11 June (JGJ) marked a good early summer count for eastern NE.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: More reports than usual came in. An adult and an immature were found at FL on 28 June (LR, RH), and 2 immatures were spotted there on 11 July (JS). In the east, 2 immatures were found at Schilling Refuge on 22 July (LP, BP).

White-faced Ibis: All reports came from FL, where 3 were found on the very early date of 29 June (LR, RH), one on 12 July (MU, JK, ZU), and 2 on 19 July (GH, WH).

Turkey Vulture: Routine Reports.

Snow Goose: The report of 23 at FL on 7 June (LR, RH) was very late, although only 2 remained by 13 July (LR, RH). A straggler was also noted at Crystal Cove L on 9 June (BFH).

Canada Goose: Routine reports.

Trumpeter Swan: Two adults with 4 cygnets were at Wolfenberger Lakes west of Hyannis, Grant Co, on 12 June (JS, WRS).

Wood Duck: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Although breeding occurs in the Rainwater Basin, no birds were observed at FL until 21 June, when a single appeared (LR, RH); however, as many as 6 were spotted there 28 June (LR, RH).

American Wigeon: The only reports from the south or the east came from FL, where 4 birds were seen on 14 June (LR, RH). Most leave the state in summer.

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Cinnamon Teal: A pair was found 4 miles north of Kearney on 1 June (LR, RH).

Singles graced Mansfield Marsh on 13 June (WRS, JS) and FL on 4 July (LR, RH).

Northern Shoveler: Reports from the south and the east--where most depart in midsummer--include 15 at FL on 28 June (LR, RH), and singles at Wagon Train L on 14 June (LE) and at Crystal Cove L on 13 June (BFH).

Northern Pintail: The only reports from the east or the south, where this species is unusual in midsummer, came from FL, where 5 were spotted on 5 June (LR, RH).

Green-winged Teal: Only one breeding record south of the Platte River--in Clay Co in 1995 (RH)--has been recorded; so the reports from FL are of special interest, including 4 to 10 birds between 7 and 28 June (LR, RH); prior to last year, the observers had not seen this species in summer. Earliest fall arrivals appear in August.

Canvasback: None reported.

Redhead: The 3 spotted at FL on 7 June (LR, RH) were away from known breeding areas, as were the 22 in a flooded field in Kearney Co on 11 July (LR, H), and the 3 at the Alma SL, Harlan Co, on 28 July (GH, WH).

Lesser Scaup: The only reports were of singles, one at Stagecoach L on 20 June (LE) and another--identified as "scaup spp." but presumably this species--and another at Cracker Barrel Marsh, on 10 June (KP). Scaup away from the Sandhills are rare in midsummer.

Hooded Merganser: All three reports apparently involve female immature birds, likely too young to breed. Up to 3 were at FL between 10 and 22 June (MU, JK, LR, RH), and singles appeared at Wagon Train L on 14 Jun (LE) and Cracker Barrel Marsh on 22 June (JS).

Common Merganser: The 21 spotted at L Ogallala on 21 June (BP, LP) were probably either "molt migrants" or summering birds. The presence of 2 males at HCR on 25 July (GH, WH) is of interest, for males are rarely seen in summer.

Ruddy Duck: Reports from the east and the south, where it is rare in midsummer, include 15 at FL on 7 June (LR, RH), where it nested for the first time in 1996; 12 at Johnson Lagoon on 22 June (LR, RH); 2 at La Platte Bottoms on 22 July (BP, LP); and a single at Wagon Train L on 7 June (LE).

Mississippi Kite: While the adult that appeared at Ogallala on 10 June (BP, LP) and the 2 others spotted there on 11 July (JS) came as no surprise, the single reported north of Mitchell, Scotts Bluff Co, between 30 May and 3 June (Steve Kerr) was very unexpected.

Bald Eagle: None reported.

Northern Harrier: A single was noted in Cass Co on 1 June (GW), where the species is rather uncommon in summer.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: A single was observed at Limestone Bluffs on 3 July (LR, RH). Details were provided. This species is a casual breeder statewide; the majority of the few reports come from the east and north.

Cooper's Hawk: Singles were found at FL on 21 June (LR, RH), near Alma, Harlan Co, on 27 June and on 8 July (GH, WH), and along the Platte R near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, on 4 July (LR, RH). This bird is a fairly common breeder statewide.

Red-shouldered Hawk: None reported.

Broad-winged Hawk: A single was reported from south Lancaster Co on 20 June (LE). Summer reports are few, and most originate from along the Missouri R corridor, making this report noteworthy; however, no details on possible breeding activity were provided.

Swainson's Hawk: The singles spotted at FL on 7 June (LR, RH) and at Johnson Lagoon on 22 June (LR, RH) appeared in areas where breeding has not been recorded in recent times.

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: The handful of June reports all came from Sioux Co, as expected.

Golden Eagle: As expected, the two reports received were from northwest Sioux Co.

American Kestrel: Routine Reports.

Peregrine Falcon: The pair at the Woodmen Tower in Omaha reportedly raised 5 young (KP), a large brood for this species. Must be lots of fat, slow Rock Doves around!

Prairie Falcon: None reported.

Gray Partridge: None reported.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: None reported.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: None reported.

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: From the far west, a single was found in the Gering Cemetery, Scotts Bluff Co, on 9 July (AK). This species is fairly common as far west as the Wyoming border in the North Platte Valley.

Virginia Rail: The observation of 2 adults with 4 chicks at FL on 4 July (LR, RH) is one of the few actual breeding records and the first from FL, although summering birds were found there in 1995 and 1996. The 3 at Crystal Cove L on 6 June (BFH) may have been breeding as well.

Sora: A single at Crystal Cove L on 6 and 13 June (BFH) may have been a breeder, but the single at Bluestem Basin on 25 July (LR, RH) was probably an early migrant.

Common Moorhen: Last year's reports were among the very few in the last ten years; and this year, breeding was recorded at the excellent cattail marsh at La Platte Bottoms, where at least one adult, on 13 July (BP, LP), and 6 juveniles, on 25 June (JS), were seen. This is only the 6th breeding record for the state since 1957, a reflection of the lack of consistent habitat.

American Coot: An adult with 5 young was found at La Platte Bottoms on 26 July (BP, LP).

Black-bellied Plover: The single reported at Nebraska City, Otoe Co, on 5 June (LF, CF) was a late spring migrant.

Semipalmated Plover: The earliest were 4 at Wagon Train L on 26 July (LE), and, along with 4 at Schilling Refuge on 31 July (BP, LP), provided the season's high count.

Piping Plover: An adult with 3 nearly fledged chicks at a sandpit north of Ashland, Saunders Co, on 30 July (KP) was obviously a breeder, likewise the single seen at a sandpit in Saunders Co on 30 June (DP, JP). There were apparently 11 nests at the enclosure at the north east corner of LM during the summer (Roger

Knaggs, fide SJD). The 4 spotted at Schilling Refuge on 31 July (BP, LP) were probably migrants.

Killdeer: The season's high count was 45 at La Platte Bottoms on 25 July (BP, LP). Flocking begins in late July.

Mountain Plover: A single was found 3.7 miles south of I-80 and 1.4 miles west of Highway 71 (BP, LP), Kimball Co, and a pair was found in a field southwest of the Kimball Airport on 11 June (BP, LP). A breeding population has become established in this area in recent years, utilizing freshly-disked wheat fallow ground.

Black-necked Stilt: Two adults and five chicks were spotted on 14 June (BP, LP) east of Lakeside, and thus east of the traditional (or traditionally-searched) breeding locale at Mile Marker 106 between Lakeside and Antioch, Sheridan Co. This sighting represents one of only a handful of breeding records for NE. Possibly more noteworthy, due to its location, was a report of a pair breeding at the Grand Island Sewage Treatment Plant, Hall Co., during late June (Gary Lingle, fide TL). Further information provided by LR and RH indicated that as of 12 July the nest was successful.

American Avocet: Possible late spring migrants include a single north of I-80 Exit 279, Adams Co, on 1 June (LR, RH) and another loner at FL 7 June (LR, RH). Up to 12 adults and 2 young were reported at Mansfield Marsh on 13 June (JS, WRS). A pair was out of place at a sandpit near Valley, Douglas Co, on 29 June (KP). The 10 at FL on 19 July (LR, RH) were early migrants.

Greater Yellowlegs: Very early fall migrants were 2 at Mansfield Marsh on 13 June (JS, WRS), the 3rd earliest on record, and 2 at FL on 22 June (LR, RH). The last spring dates are at the end of May, and the earliest fall dates are June 10, 11, and 13.

Lesser Yellowlegs: A single north of I-80 exit 279, Adams Co, on 1 June (LR, RH) was the last reported in spring. The first back and the season's high count were the 30 at FL on 29 June (LR, RH).

Solitary Sandpiper: The first back was a single at ADF on 14 July (LF, CF), followed by another at Wagon Train L on 26 July (LE).

Willet: The first migrant was noted at FL on 29 June (LR, RH), a very early date, and was followed by another at a sod farm in Sarpy Co on 22 July (BP, LP). In general, this species is much more difficult to find in the east in fall than in spring.

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine Reports.

Upland Sandpiper: Reports from locations where the species is uncommon include 5 in Dixon Co on 2 June (JJ); 7 in south Franklin Co on 3 July (LR, RH); 2 in Dodge Co on 24 July; and 4 seen during the summer in Harlan Co (GH, WH). In addition, 4 adults with young were found in Sioux Co on 27 June (AK, m.ob.).

Long-billed Curlew: All reports came from Sioux Co and include 9 on the Agate BBS route on 13 June (JS, WRS) and 9 with young on 27 June (AK, m.ob.).

Marbled Godwit: The first south-bound migrants were 2 rather early at FL on 21 June (LR, RH); and 2 were there on 11 July (JS).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: The last in spring were 6 at Wagon Train L on 7 June (LE) and 2 at Stagecoach L on the same day (LE). The first back were a single at Schilling Refuge (LP, BP) and 50 at FL, both on 13 July (LR, RH); the latter sighting also represents the season's high count.

Western Sandpiper: As expected, only small numbers were reported during the season. These reports include 2 at FL 11 on July (JS), 2 at FL on 25 July (LR, RH), 3 at Schilling Refuge on 26 July (DP, JP), and one in Dodge Co on 27 July (DP, JP).

Least Sandpiper: The first back was a single at Schilling Refuge (LP, BP) and 3 at FL (LR, RH), both on 13 July. The high counts were 57 at Schilling Refuge on 29 July (BP, LP) and 30 at Wagon Train L on 26 July (LE).

White-rumped Sandpiper: The last in spring were 12 at Little Salt Fork Marsh, Lancaster Co, on 2 June (BP, LP) and 10 at Wagon Train L on 7 June (LE).

Baird's Sandpiper: The first fall migrants were a single at FL, a record early date, on 24 June (JS), and 2 there on 13 July (LR, RH). In general, very few were reported.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Not really known as late migrant in spring, this year 6 appeared at Little Salt Fork Marsh, Lancaster Co, on 2 June (BP, LP), and 4 at Nebraska City, Otoe Co, on 5 June (LF,CF), a rather late date. The earliest returnees were 7 at Schilling Refuge on 22 July (BP, LP).

Stilt Sandpiper: The earliest was as single at FL on 13 July (LR, RH), and the 40 seen there on 25 July (LR, RH) was the season's high count.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: This species was well-reported toward the end of the season. The first, and the 2nd earliest on record, were 2 at a sod farm in east Sarpy Co on 22 July (BP, LP). Remaining reports include 2 at a sod farm in Sarpy Co on 29 July (BP, LP); 17 at a sod farm northwest of Plattsmouth, Cass Co, on 29 July (KP, JD); 20 in an alfalfa field in Dodge Co on 24 August (DP, JP); and 30 at a sod farm west of Ames, Dodge Co, on 27 August (JS).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Singles identified as this species appeared at FL on 13 July (LR, RH), at a sod farm in Sarpy Co on 22 July (BP, LP), at Nebraska City, Otoe Co, on 25 July (LF, CF), and at Schilling Refuge on 31 July (BP, LP). In addition, a group of 4 was spotted at FL on 25 July (LR, RH). These observations, along with similar ones last year, suggest that this species may be more likely in July than the Short-billed Dowitcher, which was unreported this July. Such a conclusion goes against conventional wisdom. Any dowitcher in July in NE should therefore be carefully identified, as our knowledge of the relative occurrence of these two species at that time of the year is scanty; but specimens indicate that Short-billed is more likely. July dowitchers are adults and can be difficult to identify, even in alternate (breeding) plumage, which is worn and faded at this time of the year. Calls, however, are diagnostic. Dowitchers molted into basic (winter) plumage are essentially impossible to identify as Long-billed, unless calls are heard.

Common Snipe: None reported.

American Woodcock: Breeding observations for this species are few and far between. This year, an adult with 4 young were observed in late June crossing a road at Fremont Lakes (KP).

Wilson's Phalarope: A few of the 80 reported at Mansfield Marsh on 13 June (WRS, JS) and the 9 seen at FL on 22 June (LR, RH) were probably local breeders. Certainly migrants, and rather early away from a breeding location, were the 2 spotted at a sod farm in Sarpy Co on 22 July (BP, LP).

Red-necked Phalarope: A well-described single at Schilling Refuge on 30 and 31 July (GW, BP, LP) provided only the 5th July record; fall arrival is usually in mid-August.

Laughing Gull: The 2nd documented record for summer was a 2nd summer individual at Keystone L on 14 June, 1998 (JS, WRS). This is the 8th documented report in NE of this increasingly-observed species. Records are spread throughout the year.

Franklin's Gull: Several were reported through the period. High and somewhat surprising counts include 130 in fields west of L Ogallala on 10 June (BP, LP); 170 in south Lancaster Co on 4 June (LE); and 40 at FL on 22 June (LR, RH).

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: The only report was of 2 adults at L Ogallala on 12 June (JS, WRS), only the 6th report in the mid-summer period between 1 June and 23 July.

Caspian Tern: A single reported at Wagon Train L on 4 June (LE) was probably a late migrant. Few mid-summer reports come, but this year singles were found at Mansfield Marsh on 13 June (JS, RS) and at HCR on both 27 June and 3 July (GH, WH).

Common Tern: The only report was of 2 rather late at Keystone L on 14 June (WRS, JS).

Forster's Tern: The single seen at Stagecoach L on 14 June (LE) was slightly out of range for that time of year.

Least Tern: With a total of 58 birds tallied, this species was well reported.

High counts include 20 at a sandpit in Saunders Co (DP, JP); 15 at a sandpit north of Ashland, Saunders Co; and 8 at the enclosure at the north end of Kingsley Dam (JS, WRS). Birds found away from breeding areas include 5 at FL on 10 June (DP, JP); a single at Stagecoach L on 14 June (LE); 2 at FL on 7 July (MU, JK, ZU); 1 at BOL on 13 July (JS); 1 at La Platte Bottoms on 25 July (JS); and 5 at Schilling Refuge on 29 July (BP, LP).

Black Tern: Routine reports.

Rock Dove: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: As many as 7 birds are now present in Kearney around the Roger Newcomb residence, including 4 adults and 2 young; 2 of the adults were probably the birds fledged there on 19 May (Roger Newcomb fide LR, RH, m.ob.). A single bird was seen 3 miles east of Superior, Nuckolls Co, on 11 July (DCE), for the 3rd location on record for this species after Shelton and Kearney.

White-winged Dove: Part of a dispersal northward of this species in 1998 was a single hanging out with the Eurasian Collared-Doves in Kearney, the Columbid Capital of Nebraska, through at least 25 July (Roger Newcomb fide LR, RH, Gary Lingle fide CNK, m.ob.) This sighting is the 3rd documented record of this southwestern species for the state, and the 5th report in all.

Mourning Dove: The count of 100 at FL on 28 June (LR, RH) no doubt included many young of the year.

Black-billed Cuckoo: All reports originated from the Missouri Valley and Dixon Co. Most are indeed found in eastern and northern Nebraska, with few elsewhere. This species is generally much less numerous than Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: A nest at Schramm SP had 3 eggs on 31 May and 4 on 7 June (WM).

Barn Owl: None reported.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: Easternmost reports included one a mile east of Johnson Lagoon on 21 June (LR, RH) and at least one at a prairie dog town "4 miles west of the Holdrege I-80 exit," Phelps Co, on 17 June (B).

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: None reported.

Short-eared Owl: None reported.

Common Nighthawk: Routine reports.

Common Poorwill: Common in its western habitat, 12 were singing in Sowbelly Canyon on 13 June (JS). Near the eastern edge of its regular breeding range, one was at NNF, Halsey, on 4 July (B). A nest with 2 eggs in Dawes Co on 13 June was close to the site of a nest in 1997 (WM).

Chuck-will's-widow: Possibly the most reliable location for this low-density species is the woodland around the Morse Bluff sandpits, Saunders Co, where one was heard and seen on 24 June (DP, JP, JS). None was found at ICSP on 20 June (JS, WRS). Edge habitat preferred by this species is also prime housing development habitat; a small population in Washington Co has disappeared in the last 2 to 3 years, probably due to encroachment of new houses (JGJ).

Whip-poor-will: At the western extent of its NE range was one at Morse Bluff, Saunders Co, on 30 June (DP, JP).

Chimney Swift: Its presence in Panhandle towns has become routine; it appeared in Scotts Bluff Co in 1966.

White-throated Swift: Routine reports.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: None was noted in Otoe (LF, CF) or Lancaster (LE) Cos, where they usually are, although one appeared at the observers' (DP, JP) yard in Dodge Co on 6 June, where it usually does not appear until migration in August. This species is generally an uncommon breeder in NE. The only other report--in Cass Co on 15 July (GW)--may have been a migrant.

Belted Kingfisher: A nest reported in Sarpy Co on 1 June contained several young, from 1 to 2 weeks old (WM). There are few NE breeding data.

Lewis' Woodpecker: Although difficult to find, a few still persist at the Deadhorse Burn just west of Chadron SP; the only report was of one there on 10 July (JS). No other nesting locations are known in NE; however, nesting should occur in the Fort Robinson burn.

Red-headed Woodpecker: A good count of 17 was made in Dixon Co on 31 July (JJ). It would be interesting to discover whether such groups include juveniles and are therefore post-breeding family groups.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Downy Woodpecker: Not quite routine were 5 in the observers' yard on 6 June (LR, RH), probably a family group. See comments under Red-headed Woodpecker.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The last spring migrant in the east was noted in Lancaster Co on 7 June (LE); and 3rd latest on record was spotted south of I-80 Exit 1, Kimball Co, on 12 June (BP, LP). The latest spring dates occur in the west, where the species is a rare migrant.

Western Wood-Pewee: Routine reports.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Routine reports.

Acadian Flycatcher: Only 2 were reported, neither from ICSP. One was singing as far north as Ashford BSC on 13 June (BFH), apparently the northernmost

record for the state. Another, which arrived at Neale Woods on 19 May, appeared where one was noted last year and also remained through at least 19 June (B).

Since about 1990, this species has reappeared in summer in southeast NE, where none had been reported since the 1960s.

Alder Flycatcher: The last spring migrants were at ADF between 3 and 4 June (LF, CF) and at Lancaster Co on 5 June (LE). Late spring dates are generally undocumented, but there is a 4 June specimen and there are reports of singing birds through 5 June.

Willow Flycatcher: This species was widely reported west to FL, where as many as 4 were reported on 7 June (LR, RH); and the latest report of a singing bird took place on 28 June (LR, RH). Willows breed statewide.

Least Flycatcher: None was reported; summering birds are rare, and the last migrants apparently pass through in early June. The status of this species in June in NE remains unclear.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: The last few years, since about 1996, have seen an apparent expansion in numbers of this species. It is being reported in good numbers from several western Pine Ridge locations, in contrast to earlier reports which came only from Sowbelly Canyon after its discovery there by Rosche in 1973. This year as many as 3 pairs were reported in Neale Woods on 7 June and 2 pairs in Monroe Canyon on 8 June (RB).

Eastern Phoebe: Routine reports.

Say's Phoebe: One appeared at the same location where 3 were present last year, 3 miles west and 4.5 north of Wakefield, Dixon Co; it remained there from at least 14 to 19 June (JJ). This is the easternmost report in recent years and is perhaps indicative of an establishing outlying population, although only one bird was noted and one of the 3 seen last year was later found dead.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Cassin's Kingbird: A total of 11 were found on 11 July, 7 birds in Redington Canyon and 4 birds south of I-80 Exit 1 (JS). Four were seen in Long Canyon on 13 June (JS). This species is consistently reported in these locations.

Western Kingbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Loggerhead Shrike: Good numbers were noted south of I-80 Exit 1, Kimball Co, on 11 July when 16 were counted (JS).

Bell's Vireo: Good numbers appeared at Limestone Bluffs on 3 July, where 9 were counted (LR, RH).

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: Routine reports. 1 to 2 were noted in Sowbelly and Monroe Canyons between 13 June and 10 July (JS).

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: Routine reports.

Black-billed Magpie: Interesting but gruesome was the sight of a magpie killing a medium-sized rabbit almost as large as itself in Cemetery Gulch (JS, WRS). None was reported at the eastern edge of the breeding range.

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Hatching success was reported as "big" in Cass Co (GW).

Purple Martin: More were noted in Nebraska City, Otoe Co, than last year (LF, CF).

Tree Swallow: Numbers of this local breeder were in evidence at Wagon Train L, where 40 were counted on 14 June (LE). There is little information from the Republican Valley, and so of interest were reports of singles below the HCR dam on 2 June (GH, WH) and 12 miles west of HCR on 21 June (GH, WH). One was at CLNWR on 6 June (AK), where it has bred for some time with the aid of nest boxes.

Violet-green Swallow: Rather local as breeders in the Panhandle, the 5 birds seen south of Gering on 24 July (AK) were probably migrants.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: Early departure in fall of this species is illustrated by the presence of 300 at the Nebraska City-Missouri River bridge colony on 5 June and only 12 remaining there on 24 July (LF, CF). Best count was 400 at FL on 7 June (LR, RH).

Cave Swallow: The 3rd state record was a report from the Internet of the 3rd banded by Charles Brown in the LM area; this one, as were the previous two, was a juvenile banded at Keystone L on 1 July (post to COBIRDS by Nick Komar). Brown has suggested (NBR 60:36) that these juveniles hatch in Texas in March and fly north with "our" Cliff Swallows.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: Routine reports.

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: The only reports originated from known breeding locations in Keya Paha Co on 1 July (CH) and NNF, Thomas Co, on 28 July (LR, RH).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: This species is probably a rare breeder on the Pine Ridge, but there are few reports during the breeding season. One such was a single spotted at Chadron SP on 14 June (JS,WRS).

Rock Wren: Routine reports.

Carolina Wren: Routine reports.

House Wren: Routine reports.

Sedge Wren: As many as 6 were present near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, throughout the period (LR, RH); these birds are the westernmost reported as summering, although 2 were found between Johnson Lagoon and FL on 21 June (LR, RH). Reports in June are unusual, based on past data which indicate that most spring birds depart by the end of May, but become numerous again after mid-July. Additional June reports this season were of one singing at Gifford Farm, Sarpy Co, between 1 and 13 June (B), and singles at Salt Creek, Lancaster Co, on 27 June (LE) and on the Thurston BBS on 29 June (BFH). Fall arrivals, which often nest, were led by 5 at FL on 25 July (LR, RH).

Marsh Wren: Summering birds south of the Platte Valley are rare, but suitable habitat is also rare. Perhaps because of unusually good cattail habitat at LaPlatte Bottoms, 3 were singing there on 26 July (LP, BP). No location was given for one in Cass Co on 30 July (GW). Retaining water most summers, FL hosted at least 3 for the period (LR, RH).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: The status of this species in the Panhandle is changing. There were no reports prior to a sighting of one in Timber Pines in west Kimball Co

in 1993 (WRS), followed by another there in 1995 (WRS) and one in Box Butte Co in 1996 (LKM). In 1998, reports have been numerous, including as many as 13 in spring, beginning on 8 May (see *Spring Seasonal Report*). The group on Stage Hill Road, Scotts Bluff Co, continued, with 3 there on 13 June (JS, WRS); these birds may have been breeding, as 2 were an apparent pair aggressively attending a Blue Jay which was exploring their neighborhood (WRS, JS).

Eastern Bluebird: The westerly breeding population at the WHNC nestboxes included at least 3 pairs and a fledgling on 13 and 14 June (JS, AK, WRS). This species is uncommon and local in summer in the Panhandle.

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Townsend's Solitaire: One of the very few summer reports was one at Pants Butte, Sioux Co, on 13 June (LP). This species is a casual breeder on the Pine Ridge.

Swainson's Thrush: The last migrants are usually reported from the northwest; this year was no exception, with a single in Monroe Canyon on 8 June (RB).

Wood Thrush: Routine reports.

American Robin: Flocks began to form at Nebraska City, Otoe Co, on 31 July (LF, CF).

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: Best counts were 5 on the Dundy Co BBS on 12 June (JS, WRS) and 4 south of I-80 Exit 1, Kimball Co, on 11 July (JS).

Brown Thrasher: Routine reports.

European Starling: Routine reports.

Cedar Waxwing: While summering birds occur uncommonly statewide, reports are fewest in central NE. Thus, the 5 at Alma, Harlan Co, through the period were unexpected (GH, WH), as were 4 to 7 near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, through 1 June (LR, RH).

Orange-crowned Warbler: The 2nd latest ever appeared at FL on 7 June (LR, RH); the latest was one reported in Boone Co on 14 June, 1959.

Nashville Warbler: The 2nd latest ever was at Wehrspann L on 6 June (JWH); the latest was a specimen collected at Inland, Clay Co, on 9 June in 1917.

Northern Parula: Northernmost was at Ashford BSC on 13 June (BFH), while rather far west was another singing outside the restroom at the Valentine City Park, Cherry Co, on 4 July (NR).

Yellow Warbler: Routine reports.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Rather late was one at Bellevue, Sarpy Co, on 5 June (B). There are 6 later reports through 19 June.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: The only report came from within the breeding range; 5 "Audubon's Warblers" were spotted at Chadron SP on 14 June (JS, WRS). In recent years, few reports have come from east of Sioux Co.

Yellow-throated Warbler: The usual summering report from FF was received, one near the Gifford Farm parking lot, Sarpy Co., on 27 June (BP, LP); the population at FF probably consists of only 1 to 2 pairs. Of interest in terms of possible range expansion was the presence of one singing at Krimlofski Tract on 12 June (B) where habitat appears suitable for breeding.

Blackpoll Warbler: Latest ever was one at Wehrspann L on 21 June (JWH), while one singing at Kingsley Dam on 10 June (BP, LP) was the 5th latest. No others were reported in June.

Cerulean Warbler: Following the single report of a solitary bird at FF in spring, none was reported.

Black-and-white Warbler: Three were reported, two from locations where breeding probably occurs, and the third a singing bird, possibly a late migrant, in the observers' yard at Bellevue, Sarpy Co, on 9 June (BP, LP); breeding is undocumented in the Missouri Valley, but a few summer reports occur. Singles were reported at Fort Niobrara, Knox Co, on 19 July (B) and Monroe Canyon on 13 June (JS, WRS), both locations where breeding occurs regularly.

American Redstart: Breeding occurs along the Missouri Valley and throughout northern NE. Reports came from this range, including good counts of 9 at Ashford BSC on 13 June, where it was more numerous than at Ponca SP (BFH), and 4 in Sowbelly Canyon on 27 June (AK). The two reported at CLNWR on 6 June (AK) may have been late migrants, although scattered summer reports come from the Sandhills and Loup drainage.

Prothonotary Warbler: Only 2 were reported, both in suitable breeding habitat within the known breeding range: one sang at FF on 24 June (BP, LP) and another at Krimlofski Track between 12 and 19 June (B).

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: The only report was of one at FF on 6 June (BP, LP). A rare breeder in the lower Missouri Valley, a waterthrush unidentified to species was in south Lancaster Co on 7 June (LE); at this date, Northern Waterthrush would be a late migrant, but this location is rather westerly for Louisiana Waterthrush.

Kentucky Warbler: The only report of this rare Missouri Valley breeder was of single singing bird at Neale Woods on 12 June (B).

Mourning Warbler: The only representative of this late-migrating species which made it into June was at FF on 6 June (BP, LP). Latest records of spring migrants are on 12 and 15 June. An *Oporornis* warbler unidentified to species was at FL on 7 June (LR, RH).

Common Yellowthroat: Routine reports.

Wilson's Warbler: Late migrants (but not unprecedented) were singles at FF on 6 June (BP, LP) and FL on 7 June (LR, RH).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Routine reports.

Summer Tanager: Following the encouragingly more widespread than usual reports this spring, none was reported.

Scarlet Tanager: Reports all originated in the Missouri Valley, where it breeds regularly.

Western Tanager: The two seen at Chadron SP on 14 June (JS, WRS) were at the eastern edge of the regular breeding range, which extends to King's Canyon, just east of Chadron SP.

Spotted Towhee: Reports from the eastern part of the breeding range--which extends east to about Cedar, Dodge, Platte, Hall, and Harlan Cos--were of one summering in the Gibbon area (LR, RH) and another at HCR dam on 18 July (GH, WH). From the hybridization zone in Ponca SP came a report of 2 males, both with mantle spots, one singing a western song and the other an intermediate song (BFH).

Eastern Towhee: The northern edge of the breeding range is in Cedar Co in northeast NE, where unspotted males singing eastern songs were reported both at Ponca SP on 7 June (BFH) and at Basswood Area on 6 June (BFH).

Cassin's Sparrow: This species was much in evidence in Dundy Co on the BBS there; 12 were noted on the route on 12 June (JS, WRS). Cassin's Sparrows

probably visit Dundy Co most years, but numbers are erratic; last year, for example, none could be found (JS, WRS). Much more unusual this year was a singing bird in Arthur Co on the BBS there pm 11 June (BP, LP). This latter report, the northeasternmost for NE, suggests that there are scattered birds in "good years" in at least the southwestern Sandhills; a small breeding group was found in Keith Co just north of LM in 1993 (Bock and Scharf, Journal of Field Ornithology 65:472). It has bred with some regularity in the Kilpatrick L area of southern Box Butte Co (Richard Rosche); these NE populations are the northernmost in this species' breeding range.

Chipping Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: Reports came as expected from the west Panhandle, but the 5 birds along Pink Schoolhouse Road, Sioux Co, on 28 June (AK) were somewhat to the east of their usual summer range.

Field Sparrow: A good locality for this species in southern NE, 13 were found on 3 July (LR, RH) at Limestone Bluffs.

Vesper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Routine reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: This species continues to be abundant in the western NE grasslands, both native and CRP (WRS, JS). A good count from further east was 60 in Franklin Co on 3 July (LR, RH).

Henslow's Sparrow: The small group discovered by Gubanyi at Meadowlark L in northeast Seward Co in late May (see Spring Report) was seen and heard again on 2 June with 2 birds noted (BP, LP).

Song Sparrow: The recently established population (1995) at FL continues to do well; 13 were there on 11 July (LR, RH). Away from the Missouri and lower Platte Valleys this species is a local and recently established breeder. Breeding was first recorded in Lancaster Co by Cink as recently as 1974 (Cink, NBR 43:3, 1975). It was noted throughout the period in Lancaster Co (LE).

Swamp Sparrow: Summer distribution of this species is closely tied to cattail marshes, so most breeding colonies reside in northcentral NE. An outlying population was reported at FL, where as many as 7 were singing near the kiosk in July (JS, WRS). A possible new colony was located at FL about a mile and a half southeast of the kiosk, where two were found on 12 July (MU).

Dark-eyed Junco: None reported.

McCown's Longspur: An easterly report came from Pink Schoolhouse Road, Sioux Co, on 27 June (AK).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The best count numbered an excellent 48 on the Agate BBS route, Sioux Co, a good count even there, on 13 June (WRS, JS). A few were noted somewhat to the east on Pink Schoolhouse Road, Sioux Co, on 27 June (AK).

Northern Cardinal: An update suggests the small westernmost breeding population in the North Platte Valley just east of Scottsbluff is doing well; a male, a female, and 2 young were reported (AK).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Because almost all Panhandle reports document spring migrants, the one spotted at a feeder 4 miles northeast of Chadron on Bordeaux Creek on 20 June was a rare find (RL). The westerly summering birds

continued near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, with up to 4, including a juvenile noted on 14 July (LR, RH). This location is about as far west as "pure" birds breed in the Platte Valley.

Black-headed Grosbeak: A 1st-year male hung out all summer, apparently attempting to infuse non-Rose-breasted genes into the grosbeak gene pool, near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, where Rose-breasts seem to hold sway at present (LR, RH). The adult male reported at Limestone Bluffs on 3 July (LR, H) appeared a little east of its usual summer range in the Republican Valley; few occur east of HCR.

Blue Grosbeak: Not unexpectedly, a few were scattered along the eastern edge of the state, but best numbers occurred in the west; the best count numbered 7 on the Scottsbluff BBS on 19 June (AK).

Lazuli Bunting: The best count was 5 south of Gering on 1 June (AK).

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: Generally less numerous westward, it was considered "very common" in Harlan Co (GH, WH). Numbers probably decline noticeably further to the west.

Bobolink: Generally less common southeastward, 3 were in northeast Otoe Co on 2 June (LF, CF).

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Breeding populations in southeastern NE are small and often transient where suitable habitat exists. Arbor L, Lancaster Co, offers such a location and hosted 4 birds on 27 June (LE).

Brewer's Blackbird: None reported.

Common Grackle: Flocking had begun by early July in Otoe Co (LF, CF); most such flocks consist of juveniles.

Great-tailed Grackle: Amazing numbers occur at FL, a stronghold for this species; at least 80 were there between 19 and 23 June (GH, WH). Most wetlands in southeastern NE attract summering birds; up to 10 appeared at Cracker Barrel Marsh on 3 July (BP, LP); 2 were at LaPlatte Bottoms on 28 June (BP, LP); and 3 were spotted at Arbor L, Lancaster Co, on 27 Jun (LE). Far to the west, one was noted at Kiowa Springs, Scotts Bluff Co, on 19 June (AK), where breeding initiated in the spring (see Spring Report).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Routine reports.

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: At the western edge of its summer range, 2 were at a nest in Garden Co between Oshkosh and Crescent L pm 6 June; the nest was high in a cottonwood, and the male "looked all Baltimore" but the female was not well seen (AK). Breeding of apparently pure Baltimore Orioles has been reported statewide except for the Panhandle, although this sighting is west of the center of the hybrid zone according to Short (NBR 29:2), a line extending from Valentine, Cherry Co, to Big Springs, Deuel Co. Quite a sight must have been the 50, presumably migrants, in the observers' yard near Gibbon, Buffalo Co, on 6 June (LR, RH).

Bullock's Oriole: Routine reports.

House Finch: Among the last areas of the state to be colonized by this species is the central Sandhills; one was at NNF, Halsey, on 28 July (LR, RH).

Red Crossbill: A subadult male at Alma, Harlan Co, on 1 July was most unexpected; its crossed mandibles were carefully noted (GH, WH). Breeding occurs

early in the year, so this bird presumably was a wandering immature. A large mixed-age flock first noted at the WHNC feeders in spring persisted at least until 13 June, when as many as 50 were present (JS, WRS).

Pine Siskin: This species nests on occasion almost everywhere in the state, although usually only after major invasion years. Thus, the presence of adults at an Elmwood, Cass Co, feeder on 30 and 31 July (GW) was unexpected; however, no evidence of breeding was reported. As many as 40 visited the feeders at WHNC on 13 June (JS, RS). Although no documentation exists, nesting probably occurs in the Wildcat Hills.

House Sparrow: Routine Reports.

Corrections from *Spring Field Report* (Vol. 66 No. 2): Mississippi Kite, "Steve Kerr fide AK"; Herring Gull, "Hitchcock"; Bell's Vireo: "Lilley Sandpits" are in Hall Co--see also Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, and White-throated Sparrow for same corrections; White-crowned Sparrow: "black-lored" and "pale-lored."

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Book Review by John Janovy, Jr.

Johnsgard, P. A. 1998. Baby Bird Portraits by George Miksch Sutton: Watercolors in the Field Museum. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK. 81p. \$19.95

George M. Sutton's baby bird portraits are his most captivating works. The subjects are isolated against a stark, raw-paper background, and they stare out at the viewer with eyes typically naive but alert. Sutton's artistic mastery of the foot is integral to the underlying biology in these pictures: sturdy and sure against the table for a ruffed grouse, curled inward and near useless for a gallinule on dry land, and almost casually clutching a twig, the hallux resting loosely, for a newly-fledged grosbeak. The match between these pictures and Paul Johnsgard's text is perfect. In his first two paragraphs, Johnsgard gives us a small taste of what it is like handling almost sacred materials (in this case the watercolors) in the hidden depths of a major museum's most secure rooms. And throughout the text, Johnsgard seems to respect the paintings as much as the birds themselves. Few other writers could bring such a breadth of literary and artistic experience to the task of making "Doc" Sutton's work available, in a very special way, to the general public.

The short essays accompanying each picture are a mixture of ornithology, personal encounter with the subjects, and commentary on Sutton's field notes, all supplemented with suggestions for additional reading. The result is a highly unusual bird book, possibly Johnsgard's best, and certainly a collector's item. Benjamin Williams, special collection librarian at the Field Museum, provides unusual background on the paintings' history, acquisition, and preservation. The reproductions are excellent, including those that were enlarged. Sutton's drawing and watercolor techniques are consequently revealed, but not necessarily to the extent they can be copied successfully. Both the paintings and the text need to be

savored repeatedly and completely. The rewards range from Sutton's penciled notes, his rare use of white opaque, and near erasures that reveal an artist's decisions (indigo bunting), to Johnsgard's habit of checking his home town libraries for favorite childhood books, his recollection of Sutton's story of cardinals feeding goldfish, and the record of Sutton's ashes being scattered over the Black Mesa. Even the dust jacket is beautiful. This book is a truly elegant production that should be given as a gift to everyone who loves birds.

About the Author: A faculty member of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since 1966, Dr. John Janovy is the Varner Professor of Biological Sciences and the Director of the Ceder Point Biological Station. The author of 60 papers and 10 books, including Foundations of Parasitology for which he was co-author, John Janovy took all of Sutton's courses at the University of Oklahoma in the 1960's and had the pleasure of handling many of Sutton's watercolors.

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1998 Midwinter Eagle Survey for Nebraska including summary tables for the 1980-1998 period from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. By John J. Dinan, Nongame Bird Program Manager

Mild temperatures were prevalent in the weeks prior to this year's survey; however, temperatures cold enough to form a thin layer of ice on some reservoirs and lakes occurred between aerial surveys. Three of the aerial surveys were conducted on the 6th and 7th of January and one was conducted on the 13th. The survey route that includes the Platte River from Kearney to Plattsmouth and the Loup River was not surveyed this year because of persistent foggy conditions.

Temperatures recorded during the 1998 survey were variable, ranging from 5 to 40 degrees F. The Niobrara River was 50 to 99% ice-covered from the Newport bridge and downstream. Above the Newport bridge, ice coverage ranged from 0 to 40%. The unchanneled portion of the Missouri River was 40% ice-covered. The channelized portion of the Missouri River was 50 to 65% ice-covered with floating ice in the channel. The Republican River was open although the upper reaches had some slush. The "southwest" reservoirs and reservoirs along the Republican River had 75% "new" ice-cover that was formed the night before the survey. The Platte River west of Kearney and the North and South Platte rivers were all open as were the lakes and reservoirs along these rivers.

During the 1998 Nebraska survey, a total of 1430 bald and 9 golden eagles were observed. This is the highest statewide total for the 1980 to 1998 period of the record. The previous high was recorded in 1992 with 1292 bald eagles when observed. The bald eagle total includes 435 birds observed along the Missouri River. The 1998 total represents a 39% increase from the 1997 census of 1030 bald eagles, an 88% increase from the 1980-97 statewide average of 759, and a 64% increase from the previous 5-year average of 872. Twenty-seven percent of

the bald eagles that were identified to age (adult vs. Immature) in 1998 were immature, representing a 1% increase from the previous 5-year average.

Aside from the statewide totals provided, data are also reported to the Department of the Interior's Biological Resources Division for 4 standardized reporting segments. These include; 1) the North Platte River, Keystone to Lewellen area including Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala, 2) the North and South Platte rivers, Maxwell to the Lincoln/Keith county line, including Southerland Reservoir, 3) the Republican River, Alma to Naponee area including Harlan County Reservoir and 4) the Platte River, Darr to Elm Creek area including Johnson and Elwood Reservoirs. Bald Eagle use of these areas was up 89%, down 39%, up 392%, and down 15%, respectively from the 1980 to 1997 average.

TABLE 1

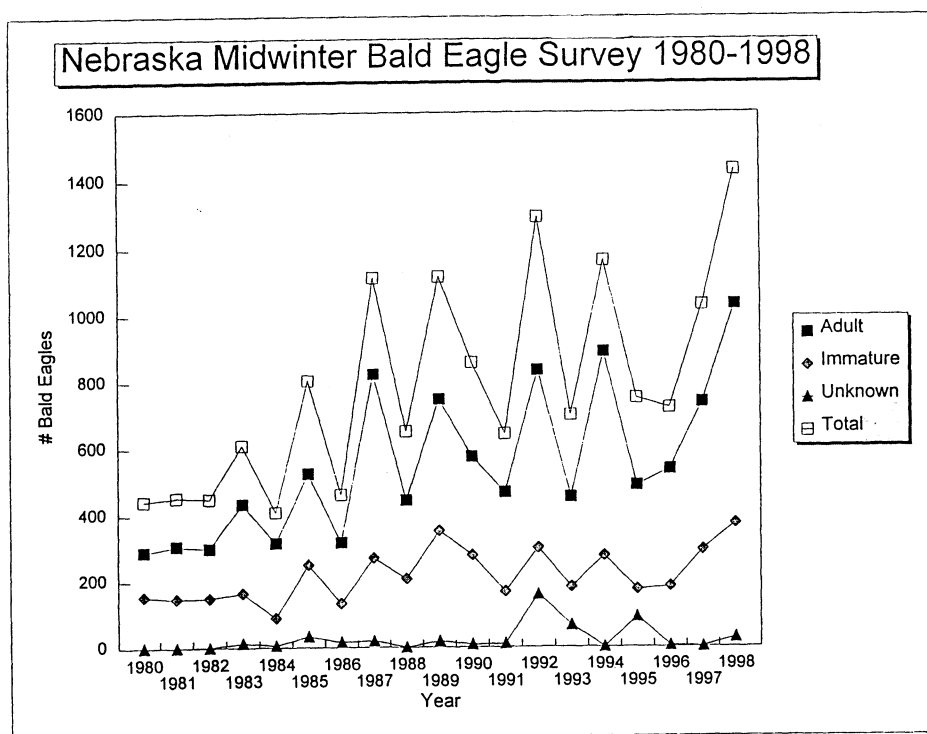


TABLE 2

NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

STATEWIDE EXCLUDING MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	279	149	0	428
1981	299	140	0	439
1982	204	120	1	325
1983	279	145	13	437
1984	271	83	6	360
1985	414	225	33	672
1986	279	127	15	421
1987	586	227	19	832
1988	322	178	0	500
1989	607	293	7	907
1990	416	223	7	646
1991	311	145	10	466
1992	653	281	19	953
1993	336	158	65	559
1994	659	221	0	880
1995	380	144	9	533
1996	379	150	2	531
1997	582	261	1	844
1998	673	294	28	995
1980-97 AVERAGE	403	182	12	596
1993-97 AVERAGE	467	187	15	669
1994-98 AVERAGE	535	214	8	757
1980-98 AVERAGE	417	188	12	617

TABLE 3

NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	9	5	0	14
1981	7	7	0	14
1982	95	29	0	124
1983	154	18	0	172
1984	44	5	0	49
1985	110	23	0	133
1986	37	4	0	41
1987	238	43	1	282
1988	122	28	0	150
1989	139	58	12	209
1990	157	53	1	211
1991	155	21	0	176
1992	181	18	140	339
1993	117	22	0	139
1994	229	54	0	283
1995	107	28	81	216
1996	156	31	1	188
1997	154	32	0	186
1998	357	78	0	435
1980-97 AVERAGE	123	27	13	163
1993-97 AVERAGE	153	33	16	202
1994-98 AVERAGE	201	45	16	262
1980-98 AVERAGE	135	29	12	177

TABLE 4

NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

GRAND TOTAL--INCLUDING MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	288	154	0	442
1981	306	147	0	453
1982	299	149	1	449
1983	433	163	13	609
1984	315	88	6	409
1985	524	248	33	805
1986	316	131	15	462
1987	824	270	20	1114
1988	444	206	0	650
1989	746	351	19	1116
1990	573	276	8	857
1991	466	166	10	642
1992	834	299	159	1292
1993	453	180	65	698
1994	888	275	0	1163
1995	487	172	90	749
1996	535	181	3	719
1997	736	293	1	1030
1998	1030	372	28	1430
1980-97 AVERAGE	526	208	25	759
1993-97 AVERAGE	620	220	32	872
1994-98 AVERAGE	735	259	24	1018
1980-98 AVERAGE	552	217	25	794

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF WINTERING BALD EAGLES DURING MIDWINTER SURVEYS
 Number of Eagles Observed by Standardized Report Location and Location's
 Proportion of Statewide Total (excluding Missouri River)

	North Platte/R Keystone-Lewellen		N. S. & Platte rivers Maxwell-Linc/Keith Co.		Republican R. Alma-Naponee		Platte River Darr-Elm Creek		Statewide	All Four Concentrations	
	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	#Eagles	%
1980	52	12%	21	5%	51	12%	70	16%	428	194	45%
1981	26	6%	8	2%	83	19%	61	14%	439	178	41%
1982	48	15%	12	4%	44	14%	24	7%	325	128	39%
1983	25	6%	29	7%	110	25%	83	19%	437	247	57%
1984	6	2%	71	20%	16	4%	64	18%	360	157	44%
1985	40	6%	205	31%	86	13%	71	11%	672	402	60%
1986	28	7%	27	6%	28	7%	46	11%	421	129	31%
1987	52	6%	31	4%	169	20%	85	10%	832	337	41%
1988	25	5%	55	11%	65	13%	104	21%	500	249	50%
1989	69	8%	127	14%	80	9%	145	16%	907	421	46%
1990	53	8%	49	8%	30	5%	81	13%	646	213	33%
1991	66	14%	27	6%	18	4%	66	14%	466	177	38%
1992	11	1%	14	1%	272	29%	49	5%	953	346	36%
1993	149	27%	64	11%	16	3%	25	4%	559	254	45%

Table 5 (Continued)

	North Platte/R Keystone-Lewellen		N, S. & Platte rivers Maxwell-Linc/Keith Co.		Republican R. Alma-Naponee		Platte River Darr-Elm Creek		Statewide	All Four Concentrations	
	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	#Eagles	%
1994	44	5%	53	6%	114	13%	142	16%	880	353	40%
1995	27	5%	46	9%	75	14%	17	3%	533	165	31%
1996	23	4%	41	8%	24	5%	64	12%	531	152	29%
1997	110	13%	57	7%	194	23%	43	5%	844	404	48%
1998	89	9%	32	3%	403	41%	79	8%	995	604	61%
Average 80-98	50	8%	51	8%	99	16%	69	11%	617	269	44%
Average 80-97	47	8%	52	9%	82	14%	69	12%	596	250	42%
Average 80-89	37	7%	59	11%	73	14%	75	14%	532	244	46%
Average 90-98	50	8%	51	8%	99	16%	69	11%	617	269	44%
Average 94-96	51	7%	49	7%	102	15%	67	10%	697	269	39%
Average 95-97	53	8%	48	8%	98	15%	41	6%	636	241	38%
Average 96-98	74	9%	43	5%	207	26%	62	8%	790	387	49%
Max. numb.	149		205		403		145		995	604	
Max %		27%		31%		41%		21%			61%

* * * * *

**BALD EAGLE COUNTS AT TWO FACILITIES OWNED AND OPERATED BY
THE CENTRAL NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER AND IRRIGATION DISTRICT**
by Mark M. Peyton and Rodger Knaggs, Central NE Public Power & Irrigation
District, P.O. Box 188, Gothenburg, NE 69138-0188

INTRODUCTION:

Since 1988 the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (Central) has provided, free to the public, a bald eagle viewing facility in its Johnson #2 Hydroelectric Plant south of Lexington, Dawson County, and since 1990 a facility near the outlet of the Kingsley Hydroelectric Plant at Lake Ogallala in Keith County.

Central provides binoculars and viewing scopes at both locations as well as personnel to answer questions and provide assistance. These individuals also conducted daily eagle surveys at the facilities.

METHODS:

Central personnel, using binoculars and/or spotting scopes, counted the number of eagles visible from the viewing site. Counts were made at 8:00 AM local time with age of the birds and weather conditions at the time of the count noted.

The number of people using the facilities was determined from registration books maintained at each site.

RESULTS:

The J-2 Powerhouse was open from 20 December 1997 to 22 February 1998, and the Kingsley Eagle Viewing building from 26 December 1997 to 1 March 1998.

At the J-2 Powerhouse, 2,025 people registered. Of that number, 1,333 were in attendance on the 22 regularly scheduled days (average of 61/day) and 692 registered on an additional 16 days as part of school groups.

The Kingsley viewing site was open 41 days (38 regularly scheduled days and three additional days for schools groups) with 2,033 people registering for an average attendance of 50 people per day.

Peak eagle counts from the facilities were 33 eagles on 13 January at J-2 and 117 on 27 January at Kingsley. The average daily count of 12 eagles from J-2 was slightly above the eight-year average of 11.1 per day. At Kingsley the average count 32 eagles per day was well below the 56 per day eight-year average. Table 1 shows the average number of eagles counted per day at both facilities for the past eight years.

Table 1: The average number of eagles counter per day from the J-2 Power Plant and the Kingsley Viewing Facility from 1991-1998

Year	J-2 Plant	Kingsley Center
1990-1991	11	21
1991-1992	8	42
1992-1993	4	87
1993-1994	13.6	114
1994-1995	11	17
1995-1996	16.5	64
1996-1997	13	74
1997-1998	12	32
Eight Year Daily Average	11.1	56.4

DISCUSSION:

While the number of eagles visible from the J-2 Plant on a given day was somewhat consistent with previous years, those visible from the Kingsley site were well below the average of previous years. This may be attributed to the mild weather, which resulted in Lake McConaughy remaining at least partially open and free of ice all season long.

The mild weather may have two effects on the concentrations of bald eagles near the viewing site. First may be the availability of other feeding areas during warmer weather and secondly the reduced winter stress on fish in Lake McConaughy which may have resulted in fewer fish traveling through the hydroelectric plant and thus becoming available as food below the plant.

Central will be opening the two facilities this year on December 19th. Photography blinds are available and may be reserved by contacting the Central office at Holdrege (308) 995-8601 or the Kingsley office at (308) 284-2332.

* * * * *

Nebraska Bird Count for 1997 Addendum

Owing to organizational disorder, the following NBC count did not appear in the March (Volume 66 Number 1) edition of the Bird Review.

Omaha

Site and Party Data: Sarpy Co; 15-mile diameter circle, centered at Offutt AFB Lake, to include Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa State Park (Iowa), Plattsmouth State Game Refuge, and portions of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. 3 Jan., 7:30 a.m. To 4:45 p.m. Temp. 37 to 20 ° F; north wind at 5-15 mph. No snow.

Observers: Betty Grenon, compiler. 34 observers plus 3 at feeders. Betty Allen, Roland Barth, Warren Bielenberg, Mani Bunnimit, Sharon Draper, Nelli Falzgraf, Bob Fuchs, Dick Gilson, Ruth Green, Betty Grenon, Essie Grill, Sam Grill, Craig Hensley, Noah Hensley, Debbie Hunsberger, Clem Klaphake, Janet Korpi, Ray Korpi, Jim Kovanda, Steve Lamphere, Don MaAs, Sue Mattix, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Dick Rasmussen, Neal Ratzlaff, Judi Rettich, Kathleen Rose, Rick Schmid, Eric Scholar, Greg Stoiber, Julie Wilking, Alexander Wilson, and Edith Wilson.

Total Species: 53

Total Individuals: 8,648

CW Birds: Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Herring Gull, Ross' Gull, Eastern Screech-owl, Winter Wren.

1997 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FOR OMAHA			
Species	Num.	Species	Num.
Snow Goose	251	Canada Goose	866
Mallard	1,623	Gadwall	32
Redhead	4	Common Goldeneye	133
Hooded Merganser	3	Common Merganser	128
Bald Eagle	82	Adult	51
		Immature	31
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Red-tailed Hawk	51
Bueto, sp.	1	American Kestrel	16
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Wild Turkey	62

American Coot	4	Ring-billed Gull	6
Rock Dove	81	Mourning Dove	19
Great Horned Owl	1	Barred Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	4	Red-headed Woodpecker	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	55	Downy Woodpecker	88
Hairy Woodpecker	7	N. Yellow-shafted Flicker	35
Blue Jay	57	American Crow	633
Black-capped Chickadee	300	Tufted Titmouse	32
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	White-breasted Nuthatch	98
Brown Creeper	5	Carolina Wren	1
Eastern Bluebird	2	American Robin	1
Cedar Waxwing	116	European Starling	2,128
Yellow Rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	2	Northern Cardinal	93
American Tree Sparrow	118	Song Sparrow	6
White-throated Sparrow	1	Harris' Sparrow	4
Dark Eyed (slate-col.) Junco	574	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	5
Red-winged Blackbird	65	Meadowlark, sp.	36
Common Grackle	3	Purple Finch	7
House Finch	41	Pine Siskin	114
American Goldfinch	186	House Sparrow	457

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Table of Contents

A Half Century of Winter Bird Surveys in Lincoln and Scottsbluff.....	74
Summer Field Report, June to July, 1998, Introduction.....	84
Species Accounts.....	86
Book Review: <u>Baby Bird Portraits by George Miksch Sutton</u>	100
1998 Midwinter Eagle Survey and Ten-Year Summary Tables.....	101
Central Nebraska Public Power Facilities Eagle Count.....	108
Nebraska Bird Count for 1997 Addendum.....	110

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