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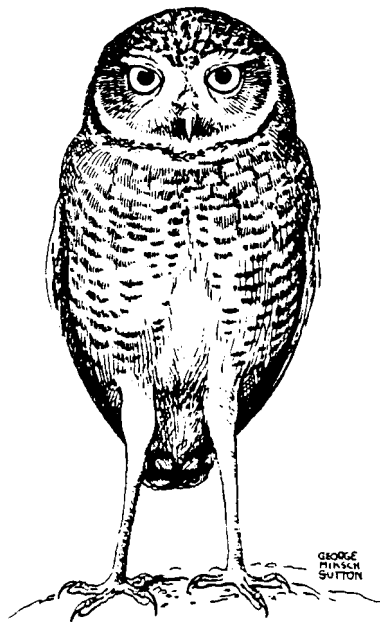
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SPRING FIELD REPORT, MARCH to MAY 1999

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INTRODUCTION

This spring proved an exciting season for several reasons. For warbler fans, it described a dream with lots of birds to look at and a rather incredible species count (for anywhere) of no fewer than 38! Many "eastern" warblers were found westward, especially at "islands" of habitat such as the Geneva Cemetery and similar spots just beyond the western edge of the original eastern woodland region, as well as the Panhandle. For rarity counters, spring included no fewer than 4 first state records: Glossy Ibis, Gray Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Brambling. We make here a special note that the last 3 birds were seen by Steve Dinsmore, who found the flycatcher and warbler himself through his diligent checking of that migrant trap par excellence, Oliver Reservoir. The Glossy Ibis was found by Joel Jorgensen, through his equally diligent checking of the Rainwater Basin (disclaimer: WRS wrote this!). Slightly different types of first state records, but possibly more significant biologically, included the first confirmed breeding records this century (!) for two species: Sandhill Crane and Pileated Woodpecker. Other interesting records for various reasons were a 4th state and 12th North American Common Crane; an amazing 27 Red Knots in one flock; the 6th state White-winged Dove (meanwhile the 4th is still hanging out in Kearney!); the 2nd spring Hammond's Flycatcher; a possible Common Raven; a far out of range Bewick's Wren, and as many as 16 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in the Panhandle. In addition, the spring period saw numerous record counts and rather early spring arrival dates also. All told, quite a spring!!

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City; BOL: Branched Oak L, SRA/WMA Lancaster Co; CCM: Clear Creek Marshes, WMA Keith-Garden Cos; Cem: Cemetery; CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; FF: Fontenelle Forest, Bellevue; FL: Funk Lagoon, WPA Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha-Richardson Cos; L: Lake; LM: L McConaughy, SRA Keith Co; NC: Nature Center; NM: National Monument; NNF: Nebraska National Forest; NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union; NOURC: NOU Records Committee; NPNWR: North Platte NWR, Scotts Bluff Co; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; PL: Pawnee L, SRA Lancaster Co; Res: Reservoir; RWB: area of potholes in southcentral NE, mainly in Phelps, Hamilton, York, Clay, and Fillmore Cos; SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoon; SP: State Park; SRA: State Recreation Area; UNK: University of Nebraska-Kearney; UNL: University of Nebraska-Lincoln; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area.

GAZETTEER

Arbor L: Lancaster Co; Ashfall Fossil Beds SHP: Antelope Co; Ash Hollow SHP: Garden Co; Ayr L: Adams Co; Basswood Ridge: WMA Dakota Co; Black

Island Area: WMA Cuming Co; Bluestem L: Lancaster Co; Boyer Chute NWR: Washington Co; Bruning Dam: Thayer Co; Chadron SP: Dawes Co; Conestoga L: Lancaster Co; Crystal Cove L: South Sioux City; Cunningham L: Omaha; Deep Well Basin: WMA Hamilton Co; DeSoto NWR: Washington Co; Facus Springs: WMA Morrill Co; Fort Niobrara NWR: Cherry Co; Fort Robinson SP: Sioux-Dawes Cos; Freeman L: WPA York Co; Goehner Basin: Seward Co; Grove Lake Area: WMA Antelope Co; Harvard Marsh: WPA Clay Co; Hastings Basin: Adams Co; Johnson Basin: WPA Phelps Co; Johnson L: SRA Dawson-Gosper Cos; Keystone Dam: forms L McConaughy, Keith Co; Keystone L: below Keystone Dam, Keith Co; Kiowa Springs: WMA Scotts Bluff Co; Kirkpatrick Basin: WMA York Co; Kissinger Basin: WMA Clay Co; Lange Basin: WPA Clay Co; Lewis and Clark L: SRA Knox-Cedar Cos; Little Salt Fork Marsh: Lancaster Co; Long Canyon: Banner, Lancaster Co; L Minatare: SRA Scotts Bluff Co; Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co; Neale Woods: Douglas-Washington Cos; Niobrara Marsh: marsh complex including Bazile Creek WMA Knox Co; Niobrara Valley (Nature Conservancy) Preserve: Cherry-Keya, Paha-Brown Cos; North Harvard Basin: Clay Co; North Lake Basin: WMA Seward Co; Oak Glen Area: WMA Seward Co; Offutt (Air) Base L: Sarpy Co; L Ogallala: below Keystone Dam Keith Co; Oliver Res: SRA Kimball Co; Pelican Point Area: SRA Burt Co; Pine Ridge: escarpment of Ponderosa Pine habitat in Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan Cos; Pintail Basin: WMA Hamilton Co; Platte River SP: Cass Co; Ponca SP: Dixon Co; Rakes Creek Area: WMA Cass Co; Redington Canyon: 7 miles s of Redington Morrill Co; Rock Creek L: SRA Dundy Co; (Lillian Annette) Rowe Sanctuary: Kearney Co; Schilling Refuge: WMA Cass Co; Schramm Park: SRA Sarpy Co; Sinniger Lagoon: WPA York Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Spring Creek Prairie: Lancaster Co; Standing Bear L: Omaha; Swanson Res: SRA/WMA Hitchcock Co; Treacy's Slough: Dakota Co; Valentine NWR: Cherry Co; Walnut Creek L: Sarpy Co; Wehrspann L: Sarpy Co; West Ash Canyon: Dawes Co; Whitefront Basin: WPA, Clay Co; Wildcat Hills: escarpment of Ponderosa Pine habitat in Scotts Bluff, Banner, and Morrill Cos; Wild Rose Ranch: Kearney Co; Wilkins Basin: WPA Fillmore Co; Willow Creek L: SRA Pierce Co; Winters Creek L: part of NPNWR; Wolf L: Saunders Co; Wood Duck Area: WMA Stanton Co; Yellowbanks Area: WMA, Madison Co.

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SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Red-throated Loon: One molting into alternate plumage at LM was documented on 16 May (SJD). This sighting will likely be only the 3rd spring record for NE; the 2nd occurred at the same location last year.

Pacific Loon: A single bird in basic plumage was a good find at L Ogallala between 12 and 16 May (SJD, DCE, JFO, m.ob.).

Common Loon: The first reported were 2 at LM/L Ogallala on 28 March (SJD). The high count totaled 8 at LM/L Ogallala on 24 April (SJD). Rare on RWB marshes, a basic-plumaged bird appeared at Pintail Basin on 2 May (JGJ).

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Horned Grebe: Quite early was a single spotted at LM on 8 March (SJD). An excellent count was 47 reported at LM on 28 March (SJD).

Eared Grebe: The earliest reported were 4 at CLNWR on 28 March (SJD), and a record high spring count was 450 there on 12 May (SJD). Late in the south were the 2 seen at HCR on 27 May (GH, WH).

Western Grebe: The first arrivals were the very early 107 birds seen at LM on 28 March (SJD). The high count was 5000+ at LM on 12 May (SJD). Rare in the RWB, the 7 reported at Harvard Marsh, plus singles at both Kissinger Basin and Ayr L, on 24 April (JGJ) came as a surprise. The farthest east were 3 seen at PL on 8 May (JS).

Clark's Grebe: A single was spotted at LM on 28 March (SJD), the 2nd earliest ever. And five appeared there on 12 May (SJD, DCE, JFo) and 4 on 18 May (BP, LP).

American White Pelican: The high counts were 700 at LM on both 27 March (SJD) and on 1 May (SJD).

Double-crested Cormorant: Up to 200 were reported at HCR on 27 May; however, no nesting activity was observed (GH, WH) at this location, where nesting has taken place in recent years.

American Bittern: Up to 11 single birds were found in the eastern third of the state this spring, the species' best showing there in recent memory. The high count totaled 2 birds at CLNWR on 12 May (SJD, DCE, JFo) and 2 at North Lake Basin on 23 April (JG).

Least Bittern: None reported.

Great Blue Heron: A relatively new breeding colony, which is increasing in size, contained 23 birds and 14 nests at Oliver Res on 4 April (SJD).

Great Egret: The earliest were 4 spotted at Pintail Basin on 3 April (JGJ). The high count was 11 at Hastings Basin on 1 May (JGJ). The farthest west was a single seen at Kiowa Springs on 18 May (BP, LP).

Snowy Egret: The 2 reported at HCR on 23 April (BP, LP, GH, WH) and 8 May (GH, WH); the 2 at Harvard Marsh on 1 May (JGJ); and the 1 to 2 at Kissinger Basin between 14 and 16 May (JGJ, mob) account for all the reports for this rare to uncommon migrant.

Little Blue Heron: Total reports for this rare migrant in spring included a single spotted at Treacy's Slough on 21 April (BFH), a loner seen near the Gibbon I-80 exit on 7 May (LR, RH), and 1 to 3 adults noted at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, between 8 and 15 May (JS, mob).

Cattle Egret: The high count was 40 at Pintail Basin on 2 May (JGJ). The farthest west were 4 reported in northwestern Garden Co on 1 May (SJD).

Green Heron: At the western edge of the species' range were 2 noted at LM on 12 May (SJD).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: An excellent high count was 47 at Kissinger Basin on 24 Apr (JGJ).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Rare anytime, an adult was discovered at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, on 31 May (JS).

Glossy Ibis: An adult in alternate plumage was identified in a flock of 28 White-faced Ibis that gathered at Wilkins Basin on 24 April (JGJ). If NOURC accepts the documentation, this sighting will be a 1st state record. This species is very difficult to identify unless it is in high-spring plumage.

White-faced Ibis: This species made an excellent showing in the state this spring. The earliest reported were 7 in the eastern RWB on 18 April (JGJ). The high counts included 28 observed at Wilkins Basin on 24 Apr (JGJ) and 27 seen at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD). The farthest east were a single at Treacy's Slough from 20 to 24 April (BFH) and 4 at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, on 8 May (JS). Tardy were 3 spotted at Goehner Basin on 29 May (JGJ).

Turkey Vulture: The earliest reported included singles at Nebraska City (LF, CF), Lewellen (SJD), and CCM (SJD) on 27 March. The high count was 18 in northeastern Chase Co on 30 May (LR, RH).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Late birds included 2 to 5 spotted at FL between 14 and 16 May (SJD, BP, LP), 2 at Ayr L throughout May (JGJ, SJD, BP, LP), and a single at Harvard Marsh throughout May (JGJ).

Snow Goose: The typical huge numbers gathered in central NE in March. Many remained in the RWB into May, too many to mention all.

Ross's Goose: The best count, and a bit late, were 60 reported at LM on 24 April (SJD).

Canada Goose: Late migrants were the 1 to 2 individuals of small subspecies seen at FL on 13 and 16 May (SJD) and a single small bird identified at Harvard

Marsh on 14 May (SJD). Any birds of the small races are in all likelihood migrants in NE; residents are of large races.

Tundra Swan: Rare in spring, a single was reported at PL on 4 April (JS).

Wood Duck: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: The high count was 450 at NPNWR on 6 April (LK).

American Black Duck: A drake (details provided) was identified at Winters Creek L on 27 March (SJD). This sighting represents the 8th Panhandle report, the 4th in spring. The only other report this spring (details also provided) was of a single at Niobrara Marsh from 6 to 20 March (MBR, JGJ, BFH).

Mallard: The high count tallied 15,125 at NPNWR on 10 March (LK).

Blue-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Cinnamon Teal: This species went unreported in the far east and was more difficult than usual to find in the eastern RWB (JGJ). The earliest spotted were 2 at FL on 11 March (GH, WH), a very early date. A record high count was 16 at Kiowa Springs on 19 April (SJD).

Northern Shoveler: The high count was 500 at FL on 6 March (LR, RH).

Northern Pintail: A superb high count was the 12,000 observed at FL on 6 March (LR, RH).

Green-winged Teal: The high counts--perhaps underscoring the timing of the species' peak late March movement through the state--were 1,800 at Kissinger Basin on 28 March (JGJ) and 1,200 at LM on 27 March (SJD).

Canvasback: An excellent count was the 400 noted at HCR on 12 March (LR, RH). A single drake identified at Hartford Sandpit, northwest of Fremont, on 12 May (JP, DP) was rather late.

Redhead: The high count was 2750 at NPNWR on 10 March (LK). Typical of this species propensity to appear well south of the breeding range in late May were 2 reported at Alma SL on 27 May (GH, WH), although this sighting represents the 2nd latest away from a known breeding location.

Ring-necked Duck: The high count totaled 312 at Kissinger Basin on 28 March (JGJ). Unusually late were singles discovered at FL on 22 May (LR, RH) and Ayr L on 27 May (JGJ).

Greater Scaup: Good high counts, 22 and 21, came from L Ogallala on 8 and 28 March (SJD) respectively. A late bird appeared there on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP). Another group of 11 were noted at Winters Creek L on 27 March (SJD). Rather late (but with details provided) were 2 reported at FL on 1 May (LR, RH).

Lesser Scaup: The high count was 213 at L Ogallala on 1 May (SJD). Late were the 4 birds reported in Clay Co on 29 May (JGJ).

Oldsquaw: Rare in spring, an unusual number were reported: a single was observed at L Ogallala on 8 March (SJD), 2 were spotted at Walnut Creek L between 2 and 5 April (BP, LP), and 2 immatures were noted at L Ogallala on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP), the latter a very late date.

Bufflehead: The high count was 229 at L Ogallala on 24 April (SJD). The last to leave were the 14 there on 16 May (SJD).

Common Goldeneye: Late was a group of 6 observed at L Ogallala on 12 May (SJD) and a single spotted there on 19 May (BP, LP), the latter a very late date.

Hooded Merganser: Five female immature types were found in late May in the east, most in the RWB. Birds in this plumage, and only in this plumage, have been showing up in late May to June for the past several years, and there clearly

appears to be a pattern. If these birds were indeed adult females would they not be associated with prime breeding habitat (wooded streams, etc)? Many of these birds are, however, found on prairie wetlands and are more likely non-breeding first-year males and/or females. Perhaps they are forced out of breeding areas to the east and disperse westward during the prime breeding season.

Red-breasted Merganser: The earliest reported were 2 at Cunningham L on 7 March (JGJ). Late was a female spotted at L Ogallala on 13 May (SJD).

Common Merganser: May reports included 5 at L Ogallala on 13 May (SJD) and 2 at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD).

Ruddy Duck: Routine reports.

Osprey: The earliest spotted was a single at FF on 11 April (BP, LP). The high count totaled only 2, at HCR on 24 April (GH, WH).

Mississippi Kite: The only reports were of a single adult seen at Ogallala on 16 May (SJD) and 2 noticed there on 19 May (LP, BP).

Bald Eagle: Routine reports.

Northern Harrier: A good sum was 10 seen in southwestern Kimball Co on 4 April (SJD).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: This species is very rare as a breeder in the state, and therefore of special interest was a single observed regularly in display flight near Alma from 12 to 29 April (GH, WH).

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: The only report was of a single spotted at FF on 7 April (BP, LP).

Broad-winged Hawk: The high count was 3 in Dodge Co on 3 April (JP, DP), a rather early date. Farthest west was a single observed at Streeter Park, Aurora, on 7 May (JGJ).

Swainson's Hawk: The high count was 24 at Whitefront Basin on 24 Apr (JGJ).

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: Very far east was a single seen at North Lake Basin on 20 March (JG). Nesting reports are always welcome. A pair and a possible nest were found in southwestern Cheyenne Co on 28 March (SJD). A single and a nest were also reported south of Antioch on 1 May (SJD).

Rough-legged Hawk: As many as 8 were observed in southwestern Kimball Co on 4 April (SJD), and 2 remained there until 17 April (SJD).

Golden Eagle: A pair and a nest were found in southeastern Kimball Co on 28 March (SJD).

American Kestrel: Perhaps underscoring peak migration period were the 29 counted at Harvard Marsh on 24 April (JGJ).

Merlin: Ten reports were received, all in the period from 9 March to 11 May (SJD). Seven of the 11 spotted were found at LM and points to the west, all of the prairie subspecies, *richarsonii* (SJD).

Prairie Falcon: The farthest east was a single observed near Gibbon on 9 March (SJD). A pair performed courtship flights at Scotts Bluff NM on 27 March (SJD).

Peregrine Falcon: A whopping 25 were reported in the period between 17 April (JGJ) and 17 May (BP, LP), 16 of the 25 in the RWB.

Gray Partridge: A single was found northwest of Fremont on 29 March (JP, DP).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Reports from the southern Panhandle, where the species is not especially numerous but appears to be establishing itself, included 5 in western Banner Co on 17 April (SJD); 3 in northwestern Kimball Co on 17 April (SJD); and 1 in central Banner Co on 14 April (SJD).

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: At West Lawn Cemetery, Gering, 2 were found on both 19 April (SJD, RK, DCE) and 12 May (SJD, DCE, JFo).

Yellow Rail: Several "possible" birds were reported from Dodge Co on 16 May (DP). Reporting "possible" Yellow Rails has limited value record-wise, but it is of much interest for those searching for the species in the state. Yellow Rail is perhaps the toughest (presumably) regular species to find in the state. Very few good records exist, and there are certainly more questions than answers regarding that status of this species in NE.

Virginia Rail: Early were 2 observed at Oliver Res on 16 May (SJD). The high count was 3 at a small marsh just north of L Ogallala on 24 April (BP, LP).

Sora: Routine reports.

American Coot: The high counts totaled 1400 at FL on 18 April (LR, RH) and 800 at NPNWR on 19 April (LK).

Sandhill Crane: Breeding was detected in the eastern RWB this spring for the first time in NE this century. Two adults tending 2 chicks were found on 29 May (JGJ, GJ) at Harvard Marsh. Adults had been observed on and off in the eastern RWB between May and August for the past 4 years; and it now appears that family groups found in August of both 1996 and 1998 in Clay Co (JGJ) almost certainly involved local breeding. The nearest known breeding location is eastern Iowa, nearly 600 miles away, although breeding was attempted in central Missouri in 1996 (Joe Lloyd, fide JGJ).

Whooping Crane: None reported.

Common Crane: A cooperative, but at times difficult to find, adult was seen in Kearney Co, approximately 10 miles south of the I-80 Gibbon exit between 6 and 26 March (Tammy Ver Cauteren, mob). This sighting represents the fifth record for NE--the previous 4 coming in the period from 16 March to 1 April--and about the 12th for North America. This bird shared a pale plumage with a bird found last fall in Delta Junction, Alaska, and is very likely the same bird.

Black-bellied Plover: The earliest noted was a single at HCR 20 on April (GH, WH). The high counts included 66 in Dodge Co on 21 May (JP, DP), 38 in the eastern RWB on 15 May (JGJ), and 33 at Kissinger Basin on 14 May (SJD).

American Golden-Plover: The earliest spotted was a single at Sinninger Lagoon on 3 April (JGJ). The high count was 104 in the eastern RWB on 1 May (JGJ). The 57 at Treacy's Slough on 1 May (BFH) represents another good count, perhaps the best away from the RWB in recent memory.

Snowy Plover: Singles were found (and documented) at Wilkins Basin on 8 May (LP, BP) and North Harvard Basin on 30 May (JGJ). Another single observed at FL on 13 May (SJD) was joined by a second bird the following day. This species has been found in the RWB each year since 1993 and is no doubt a regular spring visitor.

Semipalmated Plover: The earliest were 3 reported at HCR on 10 April (GH, WH). The rather low high count was the 23 observed at LM on 1 May (SJD).

Piping Plover: Intriguing was the discovery of a pair seen courting and digging nest scrapes at Swanson Res on 13 May (SJD). As this species is not known to

breed in the Republican R drainage, these birds may have transferred from the Platte R or LM; the latter has experienced high water during the last several years and thus limited habitat.

Killdeer: Routine reports.

Mountain Plover: Up to 6 were found in southwestern Kimball Co on 4 April (SJD), and 5 remained there on 17 April (SJD). A nest with 3 eggs was also monitored between 11 and 17 May (SJD, JFo).

Black-necked Stilt: Likely breeders were the pair spotted west of Lakeside on 1 May (SJD). Easterly migrants appeared below HCR between 21 and 23 April (GH, WH) and at Kissinger Basin on 20 May (JGJ).

American Avocet: The earliest was a single reported at CLNWR on 28 March (SJD). And the high counts totaled a spring record 151 at LM on 24 April (SJD), 120 at HCR on 23 April (BP, LP) and 75 at Ayr L on 24 April (JGJ).

Greater Yellowlegs: Quite early was a single spotted at Niobrara Marsh on 6 March (JGJ, MBr). The high count was 152 in the eastern RWB on 3 April (JGJ).

Lesser Yellowlegs: The earliest were 6 found in the eastern RWB on 28 March (JGJ). And the high count was 454 in the eastern RWB between 17 and 18 April (JGJ).

Solitary Sandpiper: Fewer birds than usual were reported.

Willet: The earliest was a single sighted in Clay Co on 11 April (JGJ). The high counts were 87 in the eastern RWB on 24 April (JGJ), 51 at HCR on 23 April (BP, LP), 50 at North Lake Basin on 23 April (JG), and 28 at LM on 24 April (SJD). Late were the 2 seen at Harvard Marsh on 23 May (JGJ) and the 4 reported at HCR on 27 May (GH, WH).

Spotted Sandpiper: The high count was 19 recorded at LM on 12 May (SJD).

Upland Sandpiper: The earliest was a single spotted in Clay Co on 18 April (JGJ). And the high count was 4 north of Keystone L on 12 May (SJD, DCE, JFo).

Whimbrel: All reports, as usual, occurred in a narrow window, this year from 12 to 18 May: 3 were seen at Oliver Res on 12 May (JFo, SJD, DCE); 1 was discovered at Swanson Res on 13 May (SJD); 11 were sighted at Harvard Marsh on 15 May (JGJ), and a single was discovered at LM on 18 May (BP, LP).

Long-billed Curlew: Pairs seen in southwestern Kimball Co and southwestern Scotts Bluff Co on 17 April (SJD) were in an area where the species is not known to breed, but at a time when breeding could be underway. The 15 noted at HCR on 3 May (GH, WH) were surprisingly late for migrants.

Hudsonian Godwit: Poor numbers were reported this spring. The high count was 25 near Bruning Dam on 14 May (SJD, JGJ). The last to leave was a single seen at Sinniger Lagoon on 30 May (JGJ).

Marbled Godwit: Excellent high counts were 134 in Keith Co on 24 April (SJD) and 50 at HCR on 5 May (GH, WH).

Ruddy Turnstone: The high count was an excellent 18 reported at Sinniger Lagoon on 8 May (BP, LP). Five other singles were found in eastern NE between 3 and 22 May.

Red Knot: Amazing was the 27 documented at Ayr L on 20 May (JGJ). There are only 2 previous documented spring records.

Sanderling: The high counts were 37 at LM on 12 May (SJD) and 30 at Swanson Res on 13 May (SJD).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Numbers were low this spring. The high counts were 326 at FL on 13 May (SJD) and 200 at Sinniger Lagoon on 8 May (BP, LP).

Western Sandpiper: Rather uncommon in spring, singles were found at LM (SJD) and Sinninger Lagoon (JGJ) on 1 May and at FL on 13 May (SJD).

Least Sandpiper: The high counts were 300 at Johnson Basin on 1 May (LR, RH), 187 in the eastern RWB on 1 May, and 59 at LM on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP).

White-rumped Sandpiper: The earliest were 2 reported in Clay Co on 24 April (JGJ), and the high count was 2,816 in the eastern RWB on 30 May (JGJ).

Baird's Sandpiper: The first reported were 104 in the eastern RWB (JGJ) and a single at CCM (SJD) on 28 March. The high counts were 506 in the eastern RWB on 11 April (JGJ) and 200 at LM on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The earliest were 11 spotted in the eastern RWB on 28 March (JGJ); and the high count was 182 there on 1 May (JGJ).

Dunlin: The earliest was a single seen at Freeman L on 3 April (JGJ). The high counts were 22 at Ayr L and 11 at Harvard Marsh, both on 8 May (BP, LP). Rare in the west, a single was found at LM on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP).

Stilt Sandpiper: The earliest were 2 spotted at LM (SJD) and a single reported at Kissinger Basin on 24 April (JGJ). The high counts were 605 in the eastern RWB on 20 May (JGJ) and 277 at FL on 13 May (SJD).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: A total of 366 were found this spring, all but one in the eastern RWB. The exception was a single spotted in Dodge Co on 14 May (JP, DP). The high count was 139 in the eastern RWB between 6 and 7 May (JGJ).

Short-billed Dowitcher: A total of 57 were found in the state and in the eastern RWB this spring, all in the period between 6 and 24 May. The best counts were 18 at Sinninger Lagoon on 20 May (JGJ) and 10 near Denman, Buffalo Co, on 8 May (LR, RH).

Long-billed Dowitcher: The earliest were 20 spotted in the eastern RWB on 28 March (JGJ). The best count was 1,363 in the eastern RWB between 1 and 2 May (JGJ). Late were the 3 noted in Clay Co on 30 May (JGJ).

Common Snipe: The high count was 87 in the eastern RWB on 3 May (JGJ). The 4 seen at Valentine NWR on 29 May (JTU) were likely breeders.

American Woodcock: A single was noted at ADF on 8 March (LF, CF).

Wilson's Phalarope: The earliest was a single found in Clay Co on 17 April (JGJ). The high counts were 1,534 at L Ogallala on 1 May (SJD) and 939 in the Lakeside-Antioch area the same day (SJD).

Red-necked Phalarope: The earliest were 2 in the eastern RWB on 6 May (JGJ). And the high count was 9 at L Ogallala on 12 May (SJD).

Franklin's Gull: The earliest was a single reported at Cunningham L on 7 March (JGJ). The high count was 800 at LM on 1 May (SJD).

Bonaparte's Gull: The earliest was a single spotted at LM on 27 March (SJD). The high count was 277 at LM on 24 April (SJD, BP, LP).

Ring-billed Gull: The high count was 2,400 at L Minatare on 7 March (SJD).

California Gull: The only reports were of a single seen at Johnson L on 9 March (SJD), 3 to 4 spotted at LM between 13 and 16 May (SJD), and a 2nd winter bird noted far to the east at Kiwanis Park, Omaha, on 18 April (WRS), the 4th record for eastern NE.

Herring Gull: Up to 270 remained at Johnson L until 9 March where as many as 1,000 were found in February (LR, RH, JGJ). A single first-year was a rare find for the location, Harvard Marsh, on 11 April (JGJ). Late were both the 4 spotted at Swanson Res on 13 May (SJD) and the 2 sighted at LM on 16 May (SJD, BP, LP).

Thayer's Gull: Up to 5 were seen at L Ogallala on 8 March (SJD), and a single first-year bird was noted at LM on 27 March (SJD).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: A single 4th-basic bird was reported at L Ogallala on 8 March (SJD).

Glaucous Gull: The small adult found at LM in February remained until 28 March; there was some speculation (WRS, who else?) that this might have been an individual of the small race *barrovianus*, but it had a yellow (rather than reddish-purple) orbital ring (SJD and his high-powered scope). Another first-year bird was discovered at Johnson L on 9 March (SJD).

Caspian Tern: Few were reported. And the best count was 2 at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD).

Common Tern: All reports are as follows: a single spotted at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD); 4 with 60 Forster's Terns at HCR on 6 May (GH, WH); 2 at Ayr L on 15 May (JPr, JGJ); and a single seen at North Harvard Basin on 24 May (JGJ).

Forster's Tern: The high counts included 60 at HCR on 6 May (GH, WH) and 44 at LM on 24 April (SJD).

Least Tern: Rare away from either breeding areas or major watercourses, a single was seen at a pond 5 miles southeast of Seward on 18 May (JG).

Black Tern: The high counts totaled 700 at L Ogallala on 16 May (SJD) and 300 at North Platte SL the same day (SJD).

Rock Dove: Routine reports.

White-winged Dove: The one that appeared in a Creighton yard from 22 to 27 April (MB) marks only the state's 6th report, 4th documented. The prior record was still hanging around Kearney, having being seen from 8 July 1998 through at least 21 May this spring (fide LR, RH).

Mourning Dove: the earliest in the west were 2 seen south of Gering on 4 April (AK); most leave that area for the winter.

Ringed Turtle-Dove: The one spotted at Cody Park, North Platte, on 29 May probably escaped from the "menagerie" there (JTU).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Normally a late arriver, the first was rather early at Wood Duck Area on 12 May (DH), followed by one noted at FF on 20 May (BP, LP) with singles seen at Neale Woods (B) and Basswood Ridge (BFH) the next day. Reports of this species have been few in recent years; only 5 were reported this season.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: As with the previous species, one beat the bunch by several days; this time one was spotted at Lange Basin on 1 May (JGJ). Next were singles sighted at Oak Glen Area on 10 May (JG) and Geneva Cem on 14 May (JGJ). The best count was 16 at ICSP on 23 May (WRS). None was reported from the Panhandle.

Barn Owl: The earliest were 2 reported north of Minden on 20 March (RG), followed by one discovered at a traditional nest site north of CCM on 27 March (SJD). One was also spotted at a possible road cut nest site in southwestern Garden Co on 12 May (SJD).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Nests with young were reported in the period from 2 to 24 April (JJ, GH, WH); 2 young with primaries emerging were seen in a nest near Redington on 24 April (WM).

Burrowing Owl: The earliest were a single reported at Facus Springs on 27 March (SJD) and 2 found in southern Cheyenne Co the next day (SJD). An amazing

count was 41 in southwestern Scotts Bluff Co on 19 April (SJD). Five nests were located on 8 May at Fort Niobrara NWR (fide CH), along with a single noted in Keith Co on 12 May (SJD), the only reports from east of the Panhandle.

Barred Owl: Farthest to the west were one seen at BOL on 21 March (B) and a juvenile found at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 15 May (LE).

Long-eared Owl: Observers should follow up on April or later sightings to see if nesting takes place. Examples included singles reported at Conestoga L on 8 April and 8 May (JS, B) and one spotted at CLNWR on 1 May (SJD). The two reported at BOL on 21 March (B) were probably wintering there, but nesting sometimes occurs in the vicinity of winter roosts. Most presumed wintering birds depart by April.

Short-eared Owl: The earliest was one seen in Kimball Co on 14 March (NK). Another was reported as far northeast as the Creighton area on 21 March (B)--a record count was 9 there on 21 March (B). Non-wintering birds return in March, and eggs are laid in April. One noted in Clay Co on 12 May (GH, WH) was likely nesting nearby.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: An exciting report was of one singing at 2:30 a.m. on 21 May at the West Ash Canyon campground (WM). While this species is known to summer in the Pine Ridge, there are as yet no confirmed records of breeding.

Common Nighthawk: The earliest was one sighted at Papillion on 4 May, followed by singles spotted at South Sioux City (BFH) and Fremont (DP, JP) on 12 May. The earliest in the west was one seen south of Benkelman on 13 May (SJD). No concentrations were reported.

Common Poorwill: The earliest were 2 discovered at Ash Hollow SHP on 12 May (SJD). Two had returned to last year's nest site in West Ash Canyon on 23 May (WM), and 4 were spotted at NNF, Halsey, by 31 May (JS).

Chuck-will's-widow: Singles had returned to edge-of-range outposts at Wolf L on 7 May (fide TH), a rather early date, and north of Willis on 12 May (BFH). These birds are now hard to find at former locations nearer the core of their NE range in the mid and lower Missouri Valley where encroaching housing developments occur.

Whip-poor-will: The first noted were 7, also the best count, spotted in southeastern Otoe Co on 25 April (LB). Northwestern reports were of 3 seen north of Willis on 12 May (BFH), 2 reported at Yellowbanks Area on 24 May (DH), and one seen at Oak Glen Area on 10 May (JG). The latter two suggest that this species occurs some distance westward, at least as a migrant. It is a fairly common breeder in the central Niobrara Valley.

Chimney Swift: The first were 6 reported at Alma on 20 April (GH, WH). The best count was 20 at UNK (LR, RH). This species occurs statewide in towns and cities; 3 were also reported at Gering on 2 May (AK).

White-throated Swift: The earliest was record early at Scottsbluff NM on 17 April, with numbers building there to 14 on 19 April and 30 on 12 May (SJD). At least one was reported at West Ash Canyon on 23 May; nesting was thought not to have started (WM). Another easterly report was of one spotted in the Courthouse and Jailhouse Rocks area of Morrill Co on 30 May (AV). Reports are few east of Scottsbluff Co in the North Platte Valley.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: The earliest was sighted at an Omaha feeder between 30 April and 1 May (B), followed by one spotted in Keya Paha Co on 9 May (CH), the latter the furthest west reported this spring.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: Although rarely reported in spring, there were 2 sightings: a single was found 5 miles west of Bushnell on 20 May (KF), a rare sighting away from Ponderosa Pine habitat, and "a pair" was seen in West Ash Canyon on 23 May (WM). In recent years most reports have come from the Pine Ridge.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Recently this species has been reported less often. Comments from observers on numbers in their areas would be of interest. Larry Einemann noted that they were scarce during the spring period in Lancaster Co, and I found few this spring in FF, whereas starlings were ubiquitous. Is there a cause-and-effect here? The earliest was one noted at Alma on 24 April (GH, WH).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: A good count was 18 tallied in southeastern Otoe Co on 25 April (LB). An interesting westerly breeding report was of 2 feeding young in a nest hole in Chase Co on 30 May (LR, RH). The species has spread westward in the Republican Valley rather recently, reaching Colorado in the 1960's as a breeder.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: The only report was of one discovered in the observers' Bellevue yard on 12 April (BP, LP). This species moves through eastern NE in low numbers.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine Reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine Reports.

Northern Flicker: The latest "red-shafted" flicker in the east was reported at ADF on 13 April (LF, CF). Spring flickers in the Panhandle are a very mixed bag: the 3 birds seen south of Gering on 6 April included one with very yellow shafts, one pale reddish, and one very orange (AK), while it was noted that at the end of May "red-shafted" birds tended to be in pines and "yellow-shafted" birds in deciduous habitat (JTU). Most summering flickers in the Panhandle tend to be "salmon-shafted" introgressants.

Pileated Woodpecker: After a few scattered reports in the last few years from FF, this year described a bonanza. Following a January sighting (JK, SK), one was seen from the new blind at Great Marsh on 7 April (PW), and "suspicious drumming" was heard in the same area on 18 April (JT). Then, on 25 April, a surprising 3 to 4 birds were located, 1 to 2 to the east of Hidden Lake and 2 just north of the deer enclosure on North Stream Trail (WRS). All birds seen were territorial in their actions (WRS), but it soon became clear that a mated pair on North Stream Trail was beginning to nest (CNK, RB, m.ob.). The birds were carefully observed on 25 April defending a nest hole from Wood Ducks (CNK), excavating on 2 May (JT), and copulating on 4 May (BFH). This report marks the first documented NE nesting; prior to 1895, nesting was "not uncommon" in the lower Missouri Valley, and the bird "probably used to breed," but no nesting had been reported (Bruner et al, 1904: Birds of Nebraska).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The earliest was found at Elmwood Park, Omaha, on 1 May (CEJ), a very early date, and singles were sighted there on 8 and 9 May (CEJ). No others were noted until singles appeared at Ponca SP (JJ), Spring Creek Prairie (R), Schramm Park (JS), and BOL (LE) on 16 May. The last reported were singles found at Ponca SP on 28 May (JJ) and Elmwood Park on 30 May (CEJ). None was reported west of BOL.

Western Wood-Pewee: The earliest was one seen at Rock Creek L on 13 May (SJD), also the easternmost reported. The others reported were in breeding habitat in the Panhandle (JTU, AK).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: The earliest spotted was very early, at FF on 26 April (DP, JP, JG), followed by one found on 8 May at HCR (B). The best count was 8 at ICSP on 23 May (WRS). The farthest west reported, apart from the HCR bird, was one heard singing on River Trail at Fort Niobrara NWR on 30 May (JTU).

Empidonax sp.: Observers should provide identification details for any Empidonax flycatcher that is not a Least before 12 May or so, for early arrival dates for this group of species in NE are poorly documented. Equivocal sightings should be reported as "Empidonax sp." Into this category fell a single spotted at Oliver Res on 1 May--thought to be probably a Least (SJD); 2 seen at CLNWR on 2 May (SJD); and a single sighted at FF on 8 May thought not to be a Least based on its structure (bill size, primary extension, not large-headed) but possibly a Willow (WRS).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 2 reports arrived of this regular but rarely-reported migrant. One was reported without details on the rather early date of 8 May in Pierce Co; the earliest documented NE record is 24 May, but there are other undocumented reports as early as 8 May. The earliest Iowa records, however, are May 4, 7, and 7 (Kent and Dinsmore, Birds in Iowa). The other was located at Twin Lakes Area, Seward Co, on 21 May (MO), a rather westerly location for this species.

Acadian Flycatcher: None reported.

Alder Flycatcher: Only 4 were reported, the first at Schramm Park on 16 May (JS). Others were seen at Wehrspann L between 22 and 23 May (B) and Crystal Cove L on 26 May (BFH).

Willow Flycatcher: The earliest reported was one spotted and identified by its "fitzbew" song in Dixon Co on 2 May, which ties the earliest record ever. Next were singles found in Clay Co on 12 May (GH, WH) and at FL on 16 May (MU). The best count was 4 tallied at Twin Lakes Area, Seward Co, on 21 May (MO). One was banded at Wehrspann L on 27 May (RG).

Least Flycatcher: The earliest and about on time were a single seen near Gibbon on 1 May (LR, RH), 3 reported in Dixon Co on 2 May (JJ), and one located at FF also on 2 May (JT). The best counts totaled 15 at Twin Lakes Area, Seward Co, on 21 May (MO) and 12 at FF on 6 May (DP, JP). The last reported were singles spotted in Dixon Co on 26 May (JJ) and at FF the same day (BP, LP). The only Panhandle report was of one found in Scotts Bluff Co on 8 May (AK), where it is a regular migrant.

Hammond's Flycatcher: This species may prove to be a regular Panhandle migrant in spring as well as in fall, as observations accumulate. A documented report arrived of one found at the Visitors' Center at Scotts Bluff NM between 11 and on 12 May (SJD, Jfo, DCE). This sighting is the 2nd spring record for NE, the other a specimen collected in Lincoln on 14 May 1917 (UNSM ZM10559). This specimen, although not conclusively labelled as to its specific identity, is essentially identical in all structural respects, notably bill and primary extension, to an 11 September 1911 specimen (UNSM ZM10557) collected near Crawford (WRS, JGJ).

Gray Flycatcher: A first state record, a bird observed at Oliver Res on 17 May, was documented (SJD, BP, LP). There is a late April specimen from southwest Kansas (Thompson and Ely, Birds in Kansas), and there are 8 spring records for the northeastern Colorado plains, most close to the foothills, however (Andrews and Righter, Colorado Birds). I suspect that the western empids which are likely to reach NE (Hammond's, Dusky, Gray) will prove to have been grossly

under-reported to date; for example, Tony Leukering (personal communication to WRS) found that as many as 55% of the empids he banded at Barr Lake in eastern Colorado (on the plains but near the foothills) after 20 August were Dusky Flycatchers.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: None was reported. There are, in fact, no documented records for spring away from the known breeding locations.

Eastern Phoebe: Very early, but not unprecedented, was one found at ADF on 13 March (LF, CF), followed by one spotted in western Lancaster Co on 20 March (LE). The first in the west, where the species is less common, was one reported at CLNWR on 1 May (SJD). Of interest was a good total of 8 observed in northeastern Chase Co on 29 May (LR, RH). While it breeds statewide, the lowest density occurs in the southwest.

Say's Phoebe: The earliest included singles sighted in southwestern Cheyenne and southeastern Kimball Cos on 28 March (SJD). Easterly reports consisted of 3 birds seen north of Orleans on 11 April, which did not remain in the area (GH, WH), and, continuing an attempt to establish an easterly breeding outpost, one which was reported 3 miles west and 4.5 miles north of Wakefield between 30 and 31 May (JJ). Only one was found in Chase Co at the end of the period, whereas 8 Eastern Phoebes were counted (LR, RH), the opposite of what one would expect in that part of the state.

Great Crested Flycatcher: The earliest was one found at FF on 26 April (JG). In the west, one was spotted at L Ogallala on 12 May (SJD), and several were reported at Fort Robinson SP by the end of the period (JTU). This species has become a regular breeder in northwest NE since the first nestings in the early 1960's.

Cassin's Kingbird: Reports came from that intrepid wanderer of the Panhandle, SJD, who found one in Long Canyon on 11 May and 4 in southwestern Kimball Co on 12 May; 2 were also spotted in Kimball Co on 17 May (BP, LP).

Western Kingbird: Very early, surprisingly from the east and undocumented, but not unprecedented, was one observed in the Eppley Airfield, Omaha, area on 21 April (B). Next were 3 reported at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD). The best count was 12 seen in southwestern Hall Co on 8 May (LR, RH).

Eastern Kingbird: The arrival date for this species was clearly 1 May, when 1 to 3 were reported from 6 different locations west to Long Pine (JWH, CH, LR, RH, JGJ, KP, LF, CF). The best count totaled 49 in Pierce Co on 8 May (fide DH). The only Panhandle report consisted of one seen south of Gering on 12 May (AK).

Northern Shrike: the last to leave were singles observed in central NE on 3 April (LB) and in southwestern Dixon Co on 2 April (JJ).

Loggerhead Shrike: The earliest included singles found in southeastern Otoe Co on 23 March (LF, CF), Platte Co on 27 March (DH), and in southern Lancaster Co (LE). This species does well in the western parts of NE, as exemplified by excellent counts of 29 in Keith Co on 24 April, 29 in the Panhandle on 25 April, and 24 in Kimball Co on 11 May (SJD). One was spotted on a nest in Dixon Co on 23 May (JJ).

White-eyed Vireo: This year was good for this rare species in NE. Since 1981 there have been only 15 reports; this year, however, there were 4, probably of 3 birds. Singles were reported at Schramm Park on 2 May (B), at FF on 5 May (BP, LP) and on 11 May (B)--possibly the same bird as that reported on 5 May--and at Elmwood Park, Omaha, on 8 May (CEJ). No details were provided for the 2 May and the 11 May sightings.

Bell's Vireo: The earliest included singles reported at Arbor L on 8 May (LE) and at ADF on 9 May (LE). The best count numbered 23 in Chase Co on 30 May (LR, RH).

Blue-headed Vireo: The two spotted at Wehrspann L on 1 May (JWH) were the first noted, followed by 3 seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS). The best count was 6, at FF on 8 May (WRS) and at Forest Lawn Cem, Omaha, on 11 May (JGJ). The last reported were 2 found at Hormel Park, Fremont, (DP, JP) and one in northern Lancaster Co (LE), all on 16 May. All reports came from the east.

Plumbeous Vireo: Migrants are rarely noted, but 3 were found at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD, BP, LP). Four were seen in Ponderosa Pine breeding habitat at Chadron SP and Fort Robinson SP on 30 May (JTU).

Yellow-throated Vireo: The first reported were singles found in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (LF, CF) and at Schramm Park (MUs). The best count totaled 3 at Ponca SP on 16 May (JJ). None was reported west of Lancaster Co.

Warbling Vireo: Arrival was on 2 May, tying the 2nd-earliest ever, with 4 observed in southeastern Otoe Co (WRS) and singles spotted at ADF (LF, CF) and BOL (LE). The best count was 14 noted at Ponca SP on 16 May (JJ). And the farthest west was one seen at Alma on 7 May (GH, WH).

Philadelphia Vireo: This vireo also was reported in good numbers, with 9 found, all singles. These were identified at ADF on 2 May (LF, CF); at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 11 May (JGJ); at FF on 11 May (B) and 15 May (NOU field trip); at Schramm Park on 13 May (JG); at Seward on 18 May (JG); and rather far west for this species, at Geneva Cem on 14 May (SJD) and 16 May (JGJ), and at McMurtrey Marsh on 17 May (JGJ).

Red-eyed Vireo: Early arrivals were reported statewide: one at CCM on 1 May (SJD), two in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), and singles spotted the same day at CLNWR (SJD) and ADF (LF, CF). The best count tallied a moderate 5 at Boyer Chute NWR on 22 May (DH).

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: At least one was observed in Redington Canyon on 24 April (WM), and fledged young-of-the-year were seen there on 23 May (WM). The only other report (these birds are rather secretive in the breeding season) was of one identified in the "cliff forests" of Fort Robinson SP on 30 May (JTU).

Black-billed Magpie: This species seems to be more in evidence at the southeastern edge of its range the last few years, notably in Saunders and Lancaster Cos. Nesting has been known in the Prague area for at least 20 years; this year nesting was noted 2 miles south and 5 miles west of Prague, and the birds were eating dogfood (!) (DP, JP). One was seen a few miles west of Ceresco (no date reported, KP). Also at the eastern edge of the range were 2 observed on the Stanton-Cuming Cos line on 15 May (DH).

American Crow: Routine Reports.

Common Raven: Occurrence of this species in NE this century is poorly documented, even though a few birds might reasonably be expected to occur, especially in the southwestern Panhandle area, as there are breeders in the Cheyenne area of Wyoming and the Pawnee Grasslands of Colorado. Thus of interest is a report from Fort Robinson SP on 30 May, based, however, solely on calls heard (JTU). At this date, any Common Ravens present in this vast, well-cliffed park would likely be breeding.

Horned Lark: An adult with a fledgling capable of flight was seen at CCM on 24 April (SJD).

Purple Martin: The first reported were spotted in the southcentral part of the state: singles appeared at Alma on 7 April (GH, WH) and at Kearney on 8 April (LR, RH). None was reported further west, or in northcentral NE. The best count was 19 observed in Kearney on 22 April (LR, RH).

Tree Swallow: The earliest reported included 1 spotted at FF on 20 March (B) and 2 found in Lancaster Co the same day (LE), tying the 2nd-earliest date. A report from south of Long Pine on 1 May (CH) came from an area where the species is not numerous. The best count numbered 40 at Wood Duck Area on 8 April (DH).

Violet-green Swallow: The earliest of the reports, all from the western Panhandle, was one discovered at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 11 May (SJD), followed by 6 seen at Scotts Bluff NM on 12 May (SJD). In breeding habitat were 12 observed at Fort Robinson SP on 30 May (JTU).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: The earliest arrivals were rather early: at least one was reported at Walnut Creek L on 9 April (B), followed by 75 sighted at FF on 11 April (WRS), 2 seen at Nebraska City the same day (LF, CF), and one found in Harlan Co also on 11 April (GH, WH). The best count was 250 spotted at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 5 April (DP, JP). In the west, 8 appeared west of Scottsbluff on 29 April (AK).

Bank Swallow: The first was one reported at Offutt Base L on 27 April (BP, L P). And the best count was 50 seen at Black Island Area on 15 May (DH), but few were reported in all, none in the west.

Cliff Swallow: The first was a single seen in Harlan Co on 11 April (GH, WH), followed by 25 observed at Nebraska City on 29 April (LF, CF). The best count totaled 200 at the Highway 10 bridge over the Platte River on 1 May (LR, RH). A group of 75 must not have liked a Lincoln bridge on 16 May, as they had departed by 4 June (LE).

Barn Swallow: The first was reported at Walnut Creek L on 9 April (B), followed by 2 observed at FF on 11 April (WRS) and one reported in Harlan Co the same day (GH, WH). The best count was 50 observed in Dixon Co on 2 May (JJ). The first in the west were 2 seen at Gering SL on 21 April (AK).

Black-capped Chickadee: Routine reports.

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Few were reported away from breeding habitat, the last being 2 spotted at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD, BP, LP) and singles seen at the Bushnell Cem on 17 May (SJD) and in Cherry Co near Valentine on 20 May (JG). The last reported in the east were observed in Seward on 10 May (JG) and in the Fort Calhoun Cem on 11 May (JGJ). Individuals have been seen in Seward in May and June in 1998 and 1999 (JG). At least one was found in Redington Canyon on 24 April (WM), possibly late wintering birds; the eastward extent of breeding in the Wildcat Hills is uncertain. A female banded at NNF, Halsey, as a 1-year-old was recaptured there as a 5-year-old this spring (RG).

White-breasted Nuthatch: The two spotted at HCR 3 on April (LB) may have been winter visitors, as breeding birds in the central and western Republican Valley are scarce.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Nesting was reported at 3 previously-known locations: 2 were seen investigating nest holes at Wildcat Hills NC on 27 March (SJD), and nests were found on 23 May in West Ash and Monroe Canyons (WM). The best count totaled 6 found in Chadron SP on 30 May (JTU).

Brown Creeper: Wintering birds depart by mid to late April; the last such birds reported consisted of 2 seen at Wehrspann L on 24 April (JWH) and one found in western Lancaster Co (LE). The reproductive status of two birds observed at DeSoto NWR on 8 May (JT) is of interest; suitable breeding habitat occurs there, although no evidence of such was noted. Nesting in recent years has been regularly noted only at FF, where one was spotted carrying nesting material on 18 April (JT) and 2 were seen together, one singing, on 26 May (BP, LP). Numbers of wintering birds and migrants are lowest in the west, where singles were noted in Sowbelly Canyon on 7 March (SJD) and at Oliver Res on 4 April (SJD).

Rock Wren: The earliest noted was one seen at Scotts Bluff NM on 19 April (SJD). None was reported east of Chase Co, where 2 were found between 28 and 29 May (LR, RH).

Carolina Wren: This species was common in the southeast, with good counts of 7, including a pair with fledglings reported at ICSP on 23 May (WRS) and 4 observed at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, between 15 and 16 May, where fledglings were also noted (SJD). The two sighted at Cauble Creek, Blair, appeared at the most northern regular location in the state (JGJ). Farthest west was one found at the Community College at Hastings on 24 March (B), and another was reported in the west at Iron Horse Trail in Pawnee Co on 2 April (B).

Bewick's Wren: Far out of range was a singing male that established a territory around the Rhino Barn at Ashfall Fossil Beds SP around 15 May (Loren Blake, m.ob.). Its upperparts were brownish rather than gray, suggesting that it belonged to the expected central race *pulichi* whose range extends north to northcentral Kansas (Pyle 1997, Identification Guide to North American Birds). It still sang loudly at the end of the period.

House Wren: Rather early were one spotted at ADF on 12 April (LF, CF) and 3 reported at FF on 18 April (JT). The species became abundant by early May, when 75 were counted at FF on 8 May (WRS) and 46 at DeSoto NWR the same day (JT). And an amazing 351 were tallied on the Pierce Co Migration Count on 8 May (DH).

Winter Wren: All reports came from the Missouri Valley; the last were 5 reported at FF on 25 April (WRS) and 3 found south of Nebraska City the same day (LB).

Sedge Wren: The earliest was one seen at FF on 28 April (BP, LP). Several sang at various points in the RWB on 1 May (JGJ), and a concentration of 11 was found at Little Salt Fork Marsh on 2 May (LE). A good count at a westerly location was 12 reported at Harvard Marsh on 16 May (JGJ). Most spring birds are migrants and depart by late May, and so the several singing south of Bellevue (B), the 4 at Willow Creek L (DH), and the one in Dixon Co (JJ), all reported on 28 May, may have been attempting to breed.

Marsh Wren: The first spotted were 2 found at FL on 21 March (LR, RH), a very early date suggestive of wintering there or nearby. Migrants appear in early to mid-April. Migrants departed from Arbor L, where breeding does not occur, on 16 May (LE).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: One seen at a Bellevue feeder between 2 and 4 March (B) was probably wintering, although early migrants usually appear in mid-March. The last reported in the east was one spotted at Willis on 24 April (BFH), but one was seen at Bushnell Cem as late as 11 to 12 May (SJD). Record late dates are in mid- and late May.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: This species was widely-reported and in significant numbers; The high counts numbered 47 on 11 April at FF (WRS) and 35 in southeastern Otoe Co on 25 April (LB). The earliest reports included 6 at UNK on 9 March (LR, RH), a record early arrival; the previous early date was 12 March. Next earliest was one reported in the west at CLNWR on 28 March (SJD). The last was one seen at FF on 11 May (BP, LP).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: This species also was widely-reported in good numbers, most notably in the Panhandle, where the increasing numbers of birds there appear to be related to a significant expansion on the western Great Plains. The earliest in the Panhandle were a surprising total of 7 observed on 11 May: one in southwestern Kimball Co, and 3 each at Oliver Res and at the northern Wildcat Hills (SJD). Two were seen at the latter location on 13 May (SJD). Amazingly, at least 6 others were reported, for a total of at least 16: singles were seen in southern Garden Co and at Oliver Res on 12 May (SJD); at Enders Res on 13 May (SJD); in southwestern Kimball Co on 17 May (SJD); at Bushnell Cem on 17 May (BP, LP); at the top of Scotts Bluff NM on 20 May (KF)—and perhaps more than one appeared at the same location on 30 May (AV). Elsewhere, farthest west was the earliest, a single sighted 3 miles south of Harvard Marsh on 17 April (JGJ). The best count totaled 4 in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), at Hummel Park, Omaha, on 11 May (JGJ), and at FF on 19 May (DH). A nest was being built at ICSP on 11 May (GH, WH). Reports came from northern to southern Dixon Co, where one was found on 1 May (JJ).

Eastern Bluebird: The first migrants arrived in the east at Ames on 2 March (DP, JP) and at Bluestem L on 5 March (MO). The best count was a moderate 10 observed in southeastern Otoe Co on 25 April (LB). The only Panhandle reports consisted of 2 spotted at Oliver Res on 11 May (SJD) and 2 found at Fort Robinson SP on 30 May (JTU).

Mountain Bluebird: The earliest migrants were noted on 7 March in the Panhandle, when 30 were counted at various locations (SJD). The best count was 38 in southwestern Kimball Co on 4 April (SJD). A somewhat overlooked wintering location is the cedar forested canyons in southeastern Lincoln Co, where as many as 400 have been counted (GHO). The birds farthest east were found in Redington Canyon on 24 April (WM), where breeding has not yet been reported, although suitable habitat exists.

Townsend's Solitaire: The only eastern report was of 2 seen in the cedar hills south of Lewis and Clark L on 20 March (B). These, along with one observed north of Scottsbluff the same day (AK) and at least one reported in Redington Canyon on 24 April (WM) were probably wintering or migrants. A single spotted at the top of Scotts Bluff NM as late as 20 May (KF) was not in apparently suitable breeding habitat, but another observed the same day in Sowbelly Canyon (KF) was.

Veery: The one reported from Dodge Park, Omaha, on 12 April (JT) was undocumented; it would be by far the earliest on record. Otherwise, one seen at FF on 7 May (B), unidentified to subspecies, was the only other eastern report. However, 2 were reported in the Panhandle, both, as expected, of the western race *salicicolus*; one was seen at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 11 May (SJD, JFo), the other at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD, BP, LP).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: This spring was fairly good for this species, with about 15 reported. There were 2 very early reports, neither documented: singles were observed at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 12 April (JT) and at FF on 18 April (B). Next

was one seen at Lange Basin on 1 May (JGJ), and last reported was one spotted at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 17 May (JS). One was seen singing at FF on 8 May (WRS). Farthest west was the one reported at Seward on 18 May (JG).

Swainson's Thrush: First for this statewide migrant were singles found at FF on 26 April (JG) and 7 birds observed at various locations from ADF (LF, CF) to southwestern Kimball Co (SJD) on 1 May. The best counts included 19 at Geneva on 14 May (SJD) and 11 at both Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD) and FF on 8 May (WRS). Last was a single seen in Chase Co on 28 May (LR, RH).

Hermit Thrush: The earliest was spotted in Elmwood Park, Omaha, on 31 March (CEJ), and the latest in the east was one seen at Lange Basin on 1 May (JGJ). However, in the west, where it is a rare migrant, a rather late single was found at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 12 May; details were provided for the identification (SJD). In all, about 13 birds were reported, only an average spring.

Wood Thrush: The earliest included 4 found at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 5 May (DP, JP) and one observed at ADF on 6 May (LF, CF). An excellent count was 13 at Hormel Park on 16 May (DP, JP). None was reported farther west.

American Robin: The best counts totaled 577 on the Pierce Co Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH) and 304 in Lancaster Co on 27 March (LE).

Gray Catbird: The earliest reported consisted of singles spotted at Bellevue on 30 April (B) and at ADF on 1 May (LF, CF). The best count totaled 26 at Wood Duck Area on 12 May (DH). The farthest west were one seen in Harlan Co on 7 May (GH, WH) and one located near Johnstown on 9 May (SW).

Northern Mockingbird: The earliest were 2 spotted in Clay Co showing signs of territoriality on 1 May (JGJ) and 2 seen south of Valley on 2 May (B). Reports were statewide.

Sage Thrasher: There have been few spring records until recently, when it became clear that a few birds migrate through the Panhandle in spring. The 3 reports this spring bring the total to about 13. One was seen in southern Kimball Co on 28 March (SJD), 3 were observed in the same area on 4 April (SJD), and one was sighted west of Bushnell the same day (SJD).

Brown Thrasher: One seen at ADF on 5 April (LF, CF) was the earliest, followed by another reported in Omaha on 20 April (B) and 18 observed in southeastern Otoe Co on 25 April (LB). The best count numbered an amazing 201 in Pierce Co for the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). One arrived south of Gering on 8 May (AK), the first in the west.

European Starling: The best counts were 1,000 at two locations, Nebraska City on 5 March (LF, CF) and at Big Red Farms in Dixon Co on 6 March (JJ).

American Pipit: The first were 2 seen at LM on 27 March (SJD); the best count totaled 26 at CCM on 24 April (SJD), and the last reported was a single located at LM on 12 May (SJD). The only other report was of 3 spotted in Pierce Co on 8 May (fide DH).

Sprague's Pipit: None reported.

Bohemian Waxwing: None reported.

Cedar Waxwing: The best counts included 500 at HCR on 23 April (GH, WH); 287 at the Niobrara Valley Preserve on 3 May (SW); and 250 to 300 birds in Kearney on 3 April (TEL). A few remain statewide to summer; the latest this spring were 22 counted at Ponca SP on 16 May (JJ).

Blue-winged Warbler: Two of this casual migrant were reported, singles at Schramm Park on 6 May (B) and at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 16 May (SJD). No

details were provided for either report; sight confirmation of this bird and the Golden-winged Warbler are needed, as identification by song alone is insufficient due to hybrids of the Golden-winged Warbler and phenotypically pure birds of each species' singing songs of the other.

Golden-winged Warbler: This spring was excellent for this uncommon species; 9 were reported. The earliest was one seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), record early, followed by one observed at FF on 4 May (B), tying the previous early date. The last reported were singles spotted in Wilderness Park, Lincoln, (SJD), and at ADF (LF, CF), both on 16 May. The best count was 2 in FF on 11 May (B). Westerly was one located in the Geneva Cem on 14 May (SJD, JGJ).

Tennessee Warbler: The earliest were 2 seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), and an excellent total of 34 appeared at FF the same day (JT). The best counts were 50+ at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 11 May (JGJ) and 39 at FF on 15 May (SJD). The last was a single observed in Bellevue on 26 May (BP, LP). Unexpected was one discovered in Kimball on 17 May (SJD), where it is a rare migrant.

Orange-crowned Warbler: This statewide migrant was present in excellent numbers, with best counts of 42 along Stage Hill Road, Scotts Bluff Co, on 1 May (SJD), 42 in FF on 2 May (JT), and of 41 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). The first reported were singles observed at Chet Ager NC, Lincoln, on 24 April (LE) and at ADF on 25 April (LF, CF); and the last sighted was a single in Seward on 18 May (JG).

Nashville Warbler: The earliest included one seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), 5 reported in FF the same day (JT), and another found at Arbor L also the same day (LE). The best count was 12 at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 5 May (DP, JP), although "lots" were in Lincoln on 17 May, also the last reported (MUs). The farthest west for this generally eastern migrant were 2 seen at HCR on 8 May (GH, WH).

Northern Parula: This spring was good for this species, with reports coming from many locations and totalling about 25 birds, including a surprising 4 from the Panhandle: singles spotted at CLNWR on 1 May (SJD), at Oliver Res on 11 May (SJD), at Bushnell Cem on 12 May (SJD), and at Swanson Res on 13 May (SJD). These reports represent only the 11th through the 14th spring Panhandle records. Elsewhere, the earliest arrival was one seen at FF on 18 April (WRS); and the best count totaled 6 at FF on 25 April (WRS), although "several" were observed in extensive sycamore stands east of Rakes Creek Area on 22 May (GW et al).

Yellow Warbler: The earliest was a single found at FL on 1 May (LR, RH), followed by about 16 sighted at various locations on 2 May. The best counts totaled 21 at FF on 8 May (WRS) and 19 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). The first in the west was one located in Scotts Bluff Co on 8 May (AK).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: This spring was excellent for this eastern migrant, with about 43 reported. Farthest west weewwone spotted at Lange Basin on 14 May (JGJ) and up to 3 seen at Geneva Cem between 15 and 16 May (JGJ). Elsewhere, the earliest reported was one seen at FF on 6 May (BP, LP). And best counts were 6 at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 16 May (DP, JP) and 5 at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 15 May (LE). The last reported was one found at ADF on 21 May (LF, CF).

Magnolia Warbler: About 25 of this eastern migrant were reported, including a best count of 4 as far west as Geneva Cem on 15 May, where 3 were found the day before (JGJ). Other westerly reports included 2 at Lange Basin on 14 May (JGJ) and one at McMurtrey Marsh on 15 May (JGJ). The earliest was one spotted in

southern Dixon Co on 1 May (JJ), and the last was a single found at FF on 20 May (BP, LP).

Cape May Warbler: This species is a rare migrant in NE, but may be overlooked as it prefers conifers--which are tedious to search and yield few other species for birders--and tends to migrate through in a very narrow "window" of time. Since 1982, there have been only 13 records including the 4 this year, all in the period from 10 through 21 May. This year 3 of the 5 reported, all in the very short period between 16 and 18 May, were discovered in either spruces or balsams. A male was found on 16 May in a spruce at Geneva Cem after much "glaring into spruces" (JGJ). Two birds were also located in balsams with a high aphid population in Lincoln between 17 and 18 May (MUs, JS, LE). The other reports were of singles spotted at Bellevue on 16 May (B) and east of Cunningham L on 16 May (B).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Only one of this rare migrant was found, a singing male located in FF on 7 May (BP, LP), only the 9th spring record since 1982 and about the 21st spring record in all.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: The one observed at FF on 26 April with large numbers of "Myrtle" warblers was well-described (JP, DP) and marks only the 4th record for the east. An excellent count was 13 in Kimball Co on 17 May (SJD), obviously migrants. The only other reports consisted of one seen in Dawes Co on 25 April (RG); one rather late for a migrant noted at Gering Cem on 28 May (BP, LP); 2 seen at Chadron SP on 30 May (JTU), and 2 found at Fort Robinson SP on 30 May (JTU)--the latter two reports came from breeding locations.

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: The earliest reports for this statewide migrant were 2 found at Wolf L on 20 March (TH) and 2 observed at BOL on 21 March (JS); the next sightings were reported on 10 April (JWH, KP). The best count totaled 100+ at FF on 7 May (CNK). And the last included one seen in Lancaster Co on 16 May (LE) and 3 found (specified Myrtles) in Kimball Co on 17 May (SJD).

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Another 1st state record, at least the first documented, a male was found at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD). There have been 7 prior reports, lamentably none documented. Of 3 prior spring reports, only one is at a likely place and time, on 19 May, 1974, in Scotts Bluff Co; but the others, on 11 May 1971 in Adams Co and on 11 May 1975 in Lancaster Co are not unprecedented. There are 6 records on the eastern Colorado plains (Colorado Birds: Andrews and Righter), and it has been recorded twice in Iowa (Birds in Iowa: Kent and Dinsmore).

Black-throated Green Warbler: Few were reported, about 9 in all, most in western NE. The earliest were 2 spotted each day at Geneva Cem on 14 and 15 May (JGJ, SJD). All reports were in the very short period, from 14 to 17 May, the last one at Seward on 17 May (JG).

Blackburnian Warbler: A good spring, about 19 were reported. The earliest was one seen at Bellevue on 3 May (B), and last one was spotted at Crystal Cove L on 26 May (BFH). The farthest west was one located at Lange Basin on 14 May (JGJ).

Yellow-throated Warbler: The first was one observed at FF on 18 April (WRS), and the most was the 3 found there on 25 April (WRS) and 4 May (BFH). The only reports away from FF were a surprisingly far west single reported at Geneva Cem on 14 May (JGJ, SJD) and another at a more expected location, the Krimlofski Tract of Neale Woods (B).

Pine Warbler: The only report of this apparently very rare migrant was of a female seen at FL on 16 May; some details were provided, but were not sufficient to change the status of this species in spring from hypothetical to accidental. This sighting represents the 17th spring report for NE, but as yet none is adequately documented; some no doubt are correct.

Prairie Warbler: The only report of this rare species in NE was of one located at Wild Rose Ranch on 7 May (JT). Documentation has been provided to the NOURC. This report denotes the 14th spring report for the state.

Palm Warbler: Numbers of this species were high, with a total of about 46 reported. The earliest included one found at Wehrspann L on 1 May (JWH), 3 located near Gibbon (LR, RH), and 4 observed at Spring Creek Prairie (KP), all on 1 May. The best count was 7 in Dixon Co on 2 May (see below) and in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). And the last reported was one found in Neale Woods on 13 May (B). Available data suggest that most Palm Warblers in NE are of the western race *palmarum* with whitish underparts. However, recently, as observers note the color of underparts, it appears that eastern *hypochrysea*, with yellow underparts, may occur regularly along the eastern edge of the state. There were 2 reports, one seen in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS) and a group of 7 "all very yellow" found in Dixon Co (JJ) the same day. These sightings bring the total reports of *hypochrysea* to 4; the others occurred on 27 April 1997 at BOL (JS) and on 10 May 1997 in Hall Co, the latter rather far west.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Generally rare in spring, the 4 birds reported made this season a good one: reports included singles discovered at Schramm Park on 9 May (B), at FF the same day (JS), at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 17 May (JS), and in Bellevue on 18 May (B).

Blackpoll Warbler: This species, normally fairly common in spring statewide, but becoming rare in the west, was present in good numbers, with high counts of 31 at Geneva on 14 May (SJD) and 8 at FF on 6 May (B). A total of about 87 was reported. The first were singles observed at FF (B) and at Crystal Cove L (BFH), far to the north, on 2 May. The last spotted were 2 at Ponca SP on 23 May (JJ). The farthest west was one identified near Valentine on 16 May (JG).

Cerulean Warbler: As usual, only a few were reported, as far north as Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, on 8 May (BFH) where summering birds have occurred the last few years. The usual 1 to 2 birds were reported at FF, although they did not seem to be as conspicuous as usual there and may not have stayed. Singles were reported at FF on 8 May (JS) and on 10 May (B). The only other report was of one spotted at Pelican Point Area on 5 May (B).

Black-and-white Warbler: Of interest was an adult male banded on 27 May at Wehrspann L (RG): this date is rather late for a migrant, but recent evidence for breeding in the Missouri Valley is inconclusive. The earliest reported was one seen at Seward Cem on 30 April (JG), and the best count totaled 6 at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 5 May (DP, JP). The last reported, except for the preceding 27 May bird, was one observed at Seward on 18 May (JG). The farthest west was one located at CLNWR on 1 May (SJD).

American Redstart: The earliest was one noted in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS) and best counts included 17 at Ponca SP on 16 May (JJ) and 15 at Smith Falls, Niobrara Valley Preserve, on 30 May (JTU), both breeding locations. Breeding currently is limited to the Missouri and Niobrara Valleys and the Pine Ridge; the last migrants, therefore, were singles found at Seward on 18 May (JG)

and Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 17 May (LE). Do redstarts summer at Wilderness Park?

Prothonotary Warbler: As expected, most reports originated from the lower Missouri Valley, but farther west than expected were one seen at Conestoga L on 22 May (JS) and another spotted near the Wood River I-80 exit on 5 May (JT). At FF nesting was underway on 29 May when one was seen carrying nesting material (JWH). The first reported was one found at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 4 May (JGJ), and best count totaled 3 at FF on 8 May (WRS).

Worm-eating Warbler: An excellent total of 4 was reported; singles were spotted to the west at Lange Basin on 1 May (JGJ) and at Hormel Park, Fremont, on 5 May (DP, JP) and in the east at Hummel Park, Omaha, on 16 May (B), and at FF on 20 May (B).

Ovenbird: The first was one observed in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (LB). Reported numbers were not very high, perhaps because observers did not include their sightings of this fairly common species. The farthest to the west included one seen near Halsey on 15 May (JG) and another found 6 miles north of Johnstown (SW).

Northern Waterthrush: The earliest were 1 to 2 located at FF on 26 April (JG, DP, J P); the best count numbered 6 at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 11 May (JGJ). And the last one was spotted at Seward on 18 May (JG). Panhandle sightings, where the species is rare, included singles at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD, BP, LP) and at CLNWR on 1 and on 12 May (SJD).

Louisiana Waterthrush: The first to arrive were 2 located at FF on 7 April (BP, LP); this species is usually among the first warblers to arrive in spring. At least one remained at FF until 25 May (BP, LP). Reports away from FF were of singles in found in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), at the Platte River SP on 15 May (JS), at ICSP on 23 May (WRS), and at Schramm Park on 23 May (BP, LP), all likely breeding locations.

Kentucky Warbler: Four were reported, all in breeding habitat: 1 to 2 were spotted at Schramm Park on 9 May and again on 23 May (BP, LP), and singles were seen at ICSP on 23 May (WRS) and at Rakes Creek Area on 22 May (GW et al).

Connecticut Warbler: Two were reported, about an average spring. No details were provided for one identified at Schilling Refuge on 10 May (B) and a singing male appeared at Schramm Park on 16 May (JS).

Mourning Warbler: There were a good number of reports for this fairly common late-spring migrant. None was reported west of Harvard Marsh, where one was seen on 16 May (JGJ). The earliest were singles located at Schramm Park (B) and FF (JS) on 9 May; the best count totaled 3 at Geneva Cem on 16 May (JGJ, SJD). And the latest singles were reported at CSP (WRS) and Schramm Park (BP, LP) on 23 May.

MacGillivray's Warbler: Reports of one spotted at Scotts Bluff NM on 11 May (SJD) and 2 observed at Oliver Res 17 May (SJD) are from the part of the state where the species is now expected in migration; but the one well-studied at Geneva Cem on 15 May (JGJ) marks one of only 4 spring reports from eastern NE.

Common Yellowthroat: The earliest in the east was one seen at FF on 26 April (DP, JP), and in the west one was identified in southwestern Kimball Co on 1 May (SJD); 2 were also spotted at Oliver Res and 2 at CLNWR the same day (SJD). The best count was 17 in Dixon Co on 16 May (JJ).

Hooded Warbler: This rare spring overshoot migrant was reported twice: singles were noted at Geneva Cem on 6 May (JGJ) and near FL on 16 May, a male (fide MU). These sightings were somewhat farther west than expected, but this species has, surprisingly, been reported in the Panhandle no fewer than 8 times. This year saw something of an invasion northward, with reports coming from Colorado, South Dakota, and northwestern Iowa.

Wilson's Warbler: The earliest for this statewide migrant were singles sighted in Scotts Bluff Co on 1 May (SJD) and at FF on 2 May (JT). The last was one seen at FF on 22 May (DH). Not as many as usual were reported, totalling only about 21 birds.

Canada Warbler: Eight sightings were reported of this uncommon migrant, all in the short period between 11 and 16 May. The farthest west included a single identified at Geneva Cem on 14 May (SJD), "a pair" found at Hastings Cem on 16 May (EHe), and one observed at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, on 15 May (SJD); these reports represent only the 11th through the 13th records away from the Missouri Valley. The earliest this spring was one found at FF on 11 May (BP, LP) and the last consisted of singles identified at Bellevue on 16 May (B) and at Schramm Park the same day (JS). The other report was of a single found at Neale Woods on 12 May (B).

Yellow-breasted Chat: As is usual in recent years, essentially none was reported east of central NE; farthest to the east were singles spotted at Geneva on 14 and on 16 May (SJD, BP, LP), at McMurtrey Marsh on 15 May (JGJ), and at Harvard Cem on 15 May (JGJ). The earliest were singles seen at Rock Creek L on 8 May (DCE) and in Scotts Bluff Co the same day (AK).

Summer Tanager: A few reports arrived from locations other than Schramm Park, still the only known breeding location. A female spotted at FF on 6 May (B) was the first to arrive; a 1st spring male was identified rather far north in Boone Co on 9 May (B); a male was found at Doane College, Crete, on 12 May (MO); and one was located at ICSP on 12 May (LF, CF).

Scarlet Tanager: Reports originated mostly in the Missouri Valley, the earliest being a single observed at Schramm Park on 8 May (JS), with the exception of a female found near Valentine on 16 May (SW).

Western Tanager: The 3 reports came from the Panhandle; the earliest occurred near Gering on 10 May (AK).

Green-tailed Towhee: The 3 reported were all in the Panhandle, as expected: singles were found in southwestern Kimball Co on 11 May (SJD), at West Lawn Cem, Gering, on 12 May (SJD), and south of Gering on 15 May (AK).

Eastern Towhee: The first arrivals were 2 reported at FF on 9 April (JS) and singles located both at Spring Creek Prairie on 10 April (KP) and at Dodge Park, Omaha, on 12 April (JT), all rather early dates. The best count was 7 at Ponca SP, close to the western edge of the summer range for pure Easterns, on 16 May (JJ). Migrants appear west of the summer range; apparently in this category was the bird spotted at McMurtrey Marsh on 15 May (JGJ). Just west of the western edge of the range for Eastern Towhee was one found just north of Grove Lake Area on 31 May; it sang an Eastern song but had some limited spotting on its wings (WRS). Pure Easterns breed west to the Cedar Co area, and hybrids occur in a zone west of there.

Spotted Towhee: The last in the east was a female observed at FF on 8 May (JS), a rather late departure date for the southeast. The best count registered 30

in Hall Co on 8 May (LR, RH), suggesting a migration peak. One noted at UNL-East on 16 March (LE) may have wintered nearby, but the first migrant was probably one located in Buffalo Co on 17 April (LR, RH).

Cassin's Sparrow: None reported.

American Tree Sparrow: The last was a single spotted at FL on 4 Apr (LR, RH). And the best count was 75 at BOL on 13 March (LE).

Chipping Sparrow: A very early individual was seen at the Rowe Sanctuary feeder on 24 March; it had not been present earlier (fide DR). Elsewhere, next to arrive were singles spotted near Ames on 7 April (DP, JP), 2 found near Gibbon the same day (LR, RH), and another seen and heard at FF also on 7 April (BP, LP). The best counts included 164 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH), and 62 in Lancaster Co on the same day (LE).

Clay-colored Sparrow: The earliest were several found in Buffalo Co on 17 April (LR, RH). The best count numbered "hundreds" in western NE between 11 and 14 May (SJD); and the latest included 2 seen in Dixon Co (JJ), 8 found at BOL (LE), and 3 identified at Willow Creek L (DH), all on 16 May.

Brewer's Sparrow: The only reports were of one found in southwestern Kimball Co on 1 May and 4 seen there on 2 May (SJD).

Field Sparrow: Early spring reports, before 10 April, especially in the southeast, may be of either wintering birds or early migrants. This year, however, several were reported in early April, including one spotted at ADF on 27 March (LE), suggesting that migration began then. Farthest west was one observed below Keystone Dam on 12 May (SJD); this species is rare in the Panhandle.

Vesper Sparrow: The earliest were singles found north of L Ogallala on 28 March (SJD) and in Dodge Co on 2 April (B). The best count totaled 40 in southeastern Gosper Co on 25 April (LR, RH).

Lark Sparrow: The first were 2 found southeast of Norfolk on 19 April (DH), and the best count of apparent migrants numbered 78 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). Summering birds are abundant in the west; 900 were reported in Chase Co between 28 and 30 May (LR, RH).

Lark Bunting: The first was one identified in Sioux Co on 8 May (AK). Rather far east was a male found near Massie Lagoon on 16 May (SJD, BP, LP). Other easterly birds included a male observed at FL 16 on May (MU), one molting to summer plumage in Harlan Co the same day (GH, WH), and another male spotted 6 miles south of Valentine NWR on 19 May (LF, CF). Numbers reached summer levels by 31 May in Chase Co, where 800 were estimated present (LR, RH).

Savannah Sparrow: Record early was one reported with details at a feeder in Dixon Co on 10 March (JJ), followed by singles seen at Little Salt Fork on Marsh 27 March (LE) and Deep Well Basin the same day (JG). The best count was 160 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). The last were 6 located at Twin Lakes Area, Seward Co, on 21 May (MO) and one spotted in southeastern Otoe Co on 30 May (LF, CF). Late May reports may be of birds attempting to summer.

Baird's Sparrow: The last couple of years may be altering the conservative thought that this species is a fairly late spring migrant, essentially restricted to native mid-length grasslands, a habitat found in western NE. There are now 3 records, probably of 2 birds, of individuals sighted along roadsides near RWB potholes adjacent only to non-native grasses such as brome. This spring, one was photographed at Kissinger Basin on 24 April (JGJ). Another, which was somewhat elusive and considered only a "possible," was observed at Kirkpatrick Basin on 29

April (JG). And a report at DeSoto NWR on the Migration Count on 8 May was undocumented. The Kissinger Basin bird is the earliest documented record, suggesting that this species may move through the state earlier than previously thought, at about the time as and in habitats occupied by hordes of Savannah Sparrows. There are now 7 documented spring records, all in the short period from 24 April to 11 May, most in central NE, but including one in Cass Co.

Grasshopper Sparrow: The earliest was seen very early at Spring Creek Prairie on 12 April (KP), followed by 2 found in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), and one observed at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lincoln, the same day (LE). This species reaches high levels of abundance in grasslands in western NE, although an estimate of 900 in Chase Co on 30 May (LR, RH) is extraordinary.

Henslow's Sparrow: A small population apparently persists at Meadowlark Lake, where one was found on 10 May (JG), and another small group was noted just north of Spring Creek Prairie on 16 and again on 21 May (KF, JS, KP).

LeConte's Sparrow: Only 2 were reported, a low number, even though this species is harder to find in spring than fall. One was identified at Harvard Marsh on 1 May (JGJ) and the other was spotted at Wilkins Basin on 14 May (SJD).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: The only report of this rare migrant was of one seen at Arbor L on 16 May (LE).

Fox Sparrow: Reports were primarily from the east, with the farthest west report of 3 coming from just east of Valentine in the Niobrara Valley on 2 April (B). Elsewhere, the first were 2 seen at Wood Duck Area on 3 March (DH); the best count was 25 there on 2 April (DH). And the last was one reported without details on what would be a record late date of 8 May in Pierce Co on the Migration Count (fide DH). Otherwise, the latest was one found at FF on 18 April (WRS).

Song Sparrow: The best count (estimate?) totaled an excellent 200 at FL on 18 April (LR, RH). Rare in the west, the only report was of one spotted in Scotts Bluff Co on 8 May (AK).

Lincoln's Sparrow: The earliest were 2 found near Rowe Sanctuary on 10 March (GH, WH)--likely birds which wintered nearby--and singles noted both in Lincoln on 29 March (LE), also a very early date, and at ADF on 1 April (LF, CF). The best count numbered 15 at ADF on 3 May (LF, CF), and last was one spotted there on 23 May (LF, CF).

Swamp Sparrow: The one seen at Neale Woods as early as 5 March (B) must have wintered nearby. First of the migrants were singles found at FL on 28 March (MO), a very early date, and at Pawnee L on 4 April (JS). None was reported west of Clay Co, where 2 were found on 12 May (GH, WH).

White-throated Sparrow: The bird spotted at Krimlofski Tract, Neale Woods, on 5 March (B) may have wintered nearby; wintering occurs rarely in the southeast. Most are migrants, the earliest identified at Forest Lawn Cem, Omaha, on 27 March (B), followed by 2 located at FF on 11 April (WRS). The best count was 26 in southeastern Otoe Co on 2 May (WRS), and last was one observed at Black Island Area on 14 May (DH). Rare in the west, 2 appeared at CLNWR on 1 May (SJD), and 2 were identified at L Ogallala on 13 May (SJD).

White-crowned Sparrow: One which apparently wintered nearby appeared at a Bellevue feeder between 2 and 4 March (B). Migrants showed up in early April, with one spotted at FL on 4 April (LR, RH) and 2 found at FF on 9 April (JS). Not many were reported; and the best count was only 10, in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH). The last was one sighted at Crystal Cove L on 26 May

(BFH). Of birds specified to subspecies, a black-lored (presumably eastern *leucophrys*) individual was seen at FF on 8 May (WRS), and 4 were spotted near Gibbon on 1 May (LR, RH), rather far to the west for this subspecies. A pale-lored (*gambelii*) bird was identified in Kimball Co as late as 17 May (SJD). *Gambelii* occur statewide in migration, and *leucophrys* appear mostly in the eastern third of the state.

Harris's Sparrow: The best counts tallied an excellent 369 on the Pierce Co Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH) and 95 in Dixon Co on 2 May (JJ). Last was one seen in southwestern Dixon Co on 23 May (JJ).

Dark-eyed Junco: The best count totaled 92 at BOL on 7 March (LE), and last were singles spotted at Ponca SP on 2 May (JJ) and at Oliver Res on 1 May (SJD). A "slate-colored" junco was banded at NNF, Halsey, on 30 April (RG), a fairly late date for the subspecies. Two "White-winged" juncos were identified in Dawes Co on 25 April (RG), about their normal arrival time.

McCown's Longspur: Amazing numbers of migrants appeared in southwestern Kimball Co: 322 were seen there on 4 April and a record high 1,893 were counted there on 17 April (SJD).

Lapland Longspur: The best count (estimate?) tallied 1,000 in Dixon Co on 10 March (JJ), and the last reported were 100 found in Kimball Co on 14 March (NK).

Smith's Longspur: The only report of this elusive migrant was of a male molting into alternate plumage that was repeatedly flushed and heard "rattling" at Little Salt Fork Marsh on 12 April (JS). This sighting represents only about the 10th spring record; all come from the southeastern corner of the state, east of a line running from Washington to Webster Cos.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Somewhat easterly was one found northwest of Grand Island on 14 March (B), a very early date. At a more expected location were 14 reported in southwestern Kimball Co on 28 March (SJD), and "a few" sighted there on 4 April (SJD).

Snow Bunting: The only report was of a few flushed along I-80 near York on 12 March (B), a very late date for this species.

Northern Cardinal: A pair remains at their usual spot just east of Scottsbluff (fide AK), and a female wintered until 17 March at the Dean and Phyllis Drawbaugh feeder in Scottsbluff (fide AK); this species slowly becomes established in the area. Near the northwestern edge of its range was the one observed at the Dismal River bridge on highway 83 on 30 May (JTU).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Migrants appear rather far west of the summer range, becoming casual in the Panhandle; one was noted at Gering on 10 May (AK) and another was sighted at Oliver Res on 17 May (SJD). Elsewhere, the earliest was spotted at a feeder near Talmage on 30 April (Mbi), and singles were seen near Gibbon (LR, RH) and at Spring Creek Prairie (KP) the next day. The best count totaled 16 at Ponca SP on 16 May (JJ). The one found in Harlan Co on 8 May was the observers' first in the area (GH, WH); regular summering occurs west to about Orleans.

Black-headed Grosbeak: The earliest were singles found in Harlan Co on 8 May (GH, WH) and as far north as Fort Niobrara NWR the same day (B). Few were reported.

Blue Grosbeak: The earliest was one seen northwest of Alma on 9 May (GH, WH). One was spotted carrying nest material in southeastern Cuming Co on 30 May (LE).

Lazuli Bunting: Easterly was one observed at McMurtrey Marsh on 15 May (JGJ), but farthest east included the singles found at Conestoga L on 8 May (KP) and in Lincoln, a bird scoped at a feeder, on 9 May (KP). These sightings represent the 9th and 10th records from the east. The Conestoga bird was the earliest this spring; first in the west was one seen at Wildcat Hills on 11 May (SJD). The best count was 3 reported at Smith L, Sheridan Co, on 18 May (SW).

Indigo Bunting: The earliest were 2 sighted at FF on 2 May (JT). The farthest west was one noted in Chase Co on 29 May (LR, RH). This species breeds throughout the Republican River drainage.

Dickcissel: The earliest was a single reported near Gibbon on 5 May (LR, RH). The best count totaled 15 between Beatrice and Auburn on 11 May (GH, WH). Westerly were as many as 7 seen in extreme western Hayes Co on 29 May (LR, RH).

Bobolink: The earliest included one spotted at Little Salt Fork Marsh on 2 May (LE) and 4 found in northeastern Otoe Co on 3 May (LE). Three were observed near Raven, Brown Co, by 8 May (SW). The best count totaled 16 in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH).

Red-winged Blackbird: The best count numbered 8000 near Gibbon on 6 March (LR, RH).

Eastern Meadowlark: The earliest identified to species was spotted at ADF on 16 March (LF, CF); some birds winter in this area, and this sighting may merely indicate the start of singing. Far to the west, where wintering does not occur, one was found singing at CCM on 27 March (SJD). A good count of 21 along the dam face at Standing Bear L was made on 29 March (NR). The observers' first record for their Dodge Co farm, where the species is not common, was made on 29 March (DP, JP).

Western Meadowlark: One bird had reached Gering by 4 March (AK), although wintering occurs in that area, and this sighting may indicate the start of singing there. An excellent count was 551 reported in Pierce Co on the Migration Count on 8 May (fide DH).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: The earliest were singles spotted in the FL area on 20 March (B) and on 26 March (GH, WH). The best count numbered 1000+ at North Lake Basin on 23 April (JG).

Rusty Blackbird: Rather far west, where the species is rare, were 1 to 2 observed at CCM between 27 and 28 March (SJD). The best count was 24, surprisingly observed at a feeder, in Omaha on 8 March (B). The last reported were 2 seen at Arbor L on 25 April (LE). Few were reported.

Brewer's Blackbird: Rare in winter in the east, 3 appeared in Kearney Co on 9 March (GH, WH), and a single spotted at Arbor L on 20 March (LE) may have wintered nearby. A flock of 30 reported in western Banner Co on 17 April (SJD) were migrants. The best count totaled 100 2 miles north of Kirkpatrick Basin on 29 April (JG).

Great-tailed Grackle: A flock of 41 spotted near Niobrara on 6 March (JGJ) may have wintered there; a similar-sized flock was reported there in December. On the other hand, 25 appeared at FL as early as 7 March (B) and 130, the best count for the season, were seen there by 10 March (GH, WH). The small group in the Panhandle at Kiowa Springs persists, with 3 there on 17 April and 7 counted 19 April (SJD); and 2 were observed at Facus Springs from 11 to 12 May (SJD). Two had reached Dakota Co by 21 April (BFH). It looks as though the entire state will be

colonized soon, although as yet essentially no reports have come from the vast amount of seemingly-suitable habitat in the Sandhills.

Common Grackle: 2 migrants appeared near Gibbon on 6 March (LR, RH). The best count was a moderate 400 reported near Gibbon on 24 April (LR, RH).

Brown-headed Cowbird: The first were 3 reported at Arbor L on 13 March (LE). Few were reported, none from the west.

Orchard Oriole: The earliest was one seen at ADF on 2 May (LF, CF), but the first in the west did not appear until 21 May south of Gering (AK). It is abundant in summer in the southwest; 400 were estimated in Chase Co between 28 and 30 May (LR, RH), many of which were probably migrants.

Baltimore Oriole: A hybrid with Bullock's Oriole was reported from Neale Woods without details on 13 May (B); this sighting is rather far east, even for a migrant, as obvious hybrids are rare east of central NE. The earliest Baltimores included a single noted at Spring Creek Prairie on 30 April (KP) and 4 found at ADF on 1 May (LF, CF), which just beat the bunch; arrival in force occurred on 2 May, with 6 reports. One observer (JJ) noted that the 10 seen in Dixon Co on 2 May were males. The first females noted were sighted near Gibbon on 5 May (LR, RH) and in Omaha the same day (NP). There were no reports west of central NE.

Bullock's Oriole: The first was one seen south of Gering on 20 May (AK). A male sighted at Fort Niobrara NWR on 30 May (JTU) was rather far east for a non-hybrid. No others were reported.

Brambling: Perhaps "The Bird of the Season" was a female that put in a brief stint at the Dean and Phyllis Drawbaugh feeder in Scottsbluff between 14 and 19 April (fide AK, SJD). This sighting denotes the first state record of this species, and was the southeasternmost report of several sightings which were described as an "irruption" in British Columbia and the western USA (Wildlife Information Scrapbook at www.visionfoundation.org/birdindex.htm). This irruption involved about 17 birds in the period from 28 October to 24 April. A female or immature male appeared at a Sturgis, South Dakota, feeder from 4 to 5 April; it may have been the same bird that appeared in Scottsbluff.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: The only report was of 15 seen in southwestern Sioux Co on 7 March (SJD), the last of the season.

Purple Finch: None reported.

Cassin's Finch: The only report was of a well-described female observed at Wildcat Hills NC on 12 May (DCE, JFo, SJD).

House Finch: Routine reports.

Red Crossbill: The only reports away from the Panhandle included a male observed at a feeder near Kearney from 13 to 17 May (MU), 1 to 2 spotted at Alma between 13 and 21 April (GH, WH), and 2 to 4 reported at the Niobrara Valley Preserve on 3 May (SW). At least 60 were seen in Sowbelly Canyon on 7 March, including a very recent fledgling (SJD). Breeding usually occurs very early in this species. About 40 observed in Monroe Canyon on 7 March were singing on territory, indicative of breeding birds (SJD). Adults also fed fledged young-of-the-year in West Ash Canyon on 23 May (WM). In the Wildcat Hills, individuals were found east to Redington Canyon on 24 April (WM), and 3 were sighted at the top of Scotts Bluff NM on 30 May (AV).

Common Redpoll: None reported.

Pine Siskin: the latest away from known breeding locations included one at an Alma feeder until 13 May (GH, WH) and one at the observers' feeder in Bellevue on

15 May (BP, LP). The best count was 51 in Dawes Co, where it breeds, on 25 April (RG).

Lesser Goldfinch: One was reported in Cedar Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co, on 26 May (RB, JH). No details are available at this writing; but this time and location are expected, and if verified, would mark the 4th documented and 7th overall report for the state.

American Goldfinch: Routine Reports.

Evening Grosbeak: Reports arrived of 2 females at Wildcat Hills NC on 27 March (SJD) and 20 out of 35 to 40 birds were banded in Dawes Co on 25 April (RG). One was reported (without details) at Fort Niobrara NWR on 8 May (B), one of a handful of May dates east of the Panhandle.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.

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Book Review by Linda R. Brown

Brown, Charles R. 1998, Swallow Summer, by Charles R. Brown. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1978. (371 p. \$16.95) ISBN 0-8032-6145-4

Swallow Summer is a first-person, day-to-day account of Charles and Mary Bomberger Browns' fourteenth field season studying Cliff Swallows in western Nebraska. This story also concerns the three bright undergraduate field assistants who shared the experience of the summer of 1995. Charles communicates their discoveries of Cliff Swallow colony behavior in an everyday conversational manner. It was easy for me to catch the excitement they feel in "discovering the questions." I felt their wonder when as this very cold late breeding season slowly progressed, these researchers discovered that indeed many of the swallows were not breeding at all. This rather large contingent of non-breeders in bright plumage seemed to cruise through many colonies, perhaps checking to see where they might have reproductive success in the future. I am "in awe" at what can be learned when over half the individuals in many of the study colonies are banded. During this summer the 80,000th swallow was banded, and two eleven-year-old adults were recaptured.

I liked learning about the "food squeak." This distinctive sound is made only on cloudy days and cooperatively calls other swallows to food, making for a real advantage to living in a large colony. On the other hand, infestations of swallow bugs transported by the birds' feet may be a real limitation to living in a large colony. I am haunted by photos of the differences in development between swallow babies infested with bugs and those who are not. Charles fumigated one colony extensively to study what happens when that site has a lower bug population.

I was pleased that they had done baseline studies of colonies living on natural cliffs as well as colonies living on man-made bridge and culvert structures. They learned that all colonies exhibit similar patterns of behavior regardless of nest site.

This book inspired me and others to try a "Swallow Weekend." In consultation with Charles and Mary, we banded 92 Cliff Swallows off bridges in the Grand Island-Kearney area before the wind forced us to close the nets. None of the now over 100,000 Cliff Swallows banded by the Browns in their Keith County study area was among the birds we banded in the Kearney area. I wonder how far west we need to go to get one of the birds they banded? Participants in Swallow Weekend-1999 included John Dinan, Jeff Runge, Mark Humpert, Laurel Badura, Bill Taddicken, Barb and Paul Tebbel, John Holm, Joan and Chuck Dummer, Neva Ickes, Jo D. Blessing, Paul Johnsgard, Kevin, Kay and Nolan Church, Jackie Canterbury, and Linda Brown.

Swallow Summer is "must reading" for students contemplating field study. Birders, banders, and other field researchers will be fascinated. Anyone who likes to read natural history will savor Swallow Summer.

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Neotropic Cormorant at Sutherland Reservoir

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On 2 May, 1998, I observed a Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) at Sutherland Reservoir in Lincoln County, Nebraska. When I arrived at the lake, I noticed a large number of gulls and cormorants resting on some dead logs near the northwest end of the lake. I scanned the cormorants several times and kept returning to one cormorant that seemed smaller than the nearby Double-crested Cormorants. The bird was sleeping, so size was the only mark I could see well. I studied the bird from 1:54-2:20 p.m. I estimated the body was at least 25% smaller than a Double-crested Cormorant. A couple of times, the bird raised its head, and I noted that the bill was darker, thinner, and shorter; and there was no bright orange throat pouch. Finally, I succeeded in getting some of the birds to take flight.

The bird in question would not fly, but it did change its position so that the tail was visible. From the back, the tail was nearly as long as the bird's body, making the bird much longer-tailed than a Double-crested Cormorant. The bird was also much browner than the other cormorants, especially on the mantle, upperwings, and tail. At times, the throat pouch appeared to have a dull yellow color, but it mostly appeared dark-colored. There was no white border to the throat pouch. The underparts were a uniform dull brown except that the foreneck

was slightly paler. The bill and feet were black. The bird eventually flew off with several Double-crested Cormorants. In flight, this bird was smaller, longer-tailed, and flew with more rapid wingbeats. I aged the bird as a first-alternate on the basis of the color of the underparts and the facial pattern.

This is the fifth record of a Neotropic Cormorant in Nebraska. The other records are 2 October, 1982, at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln County (specimen; Wright 1983), 4 September, 1993, at Hackberry L., Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Cherry County (Gubanyi 1996a), 19 July, 1995, at Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Cherry County (Gubanyi 1996c; NBR 63:71), and 20 to 30 May, 1996, at Chambers County (Brogie 1997). I thank W. Ross Silcock for providing information about other records of Neotropic Cormorants in Nebraska.

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NOU FALL FIELD DAYS COUNT, 1998; MAY NAMC COUNT, 1999

The NOU count during Fall Field Days, October 16 through 18, focused on areas in and around the Nebraska National Forest and includes reports from 5 counties: Forest, Blaine, Brown, Cherry, and Thomas. This year's species count, owing in part to inclement weather, registered only 92, far behind the previous year's NOU Fall Field Days record of 122 species.

The North American Migration Count (NAMC) for Pierce County is also included in this report. A total of twelve people in five parties took part in this year's count. The count registered one hour walked and 380 miles covered in 43.5 hours of driving. The dozen individuals tallied 10,301 birds and 113 species.

Table 1. The following chart lists species confirmed from the NOU Fall Field Days' report, which includes the Nebraska National Forest (NNF) and surrounding counties. The North American Migration Counts (NAMC) included Pierce County; the Pierce County statistics indicate the number of individual species seen. X = species present.

Five NOU Fall Field Days Counties

NAMC

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Pied-billed Grebe	X	X	X	X	X	2
Eared Grebe				X	X	
Western Grebe				X		
American White Pelican			X	X		
Double-crested Cormorant		X	X	X		36
American Bittern				X		2
Great Blue Heron		X	X	X		
Great Egret		X				
Cattle Egret						2
Snow Goose						1
Canada Goose		X		X		27
Wood Duck	X		X		X	38
Green-winged Teal			X	X		
Mallard		X	X	X	X	53
Northern Pintail			X	X		3
Blue-winged Teal			X	X	X	129
Northern Shoveler				X		19
Gadwall			X	X		4
American Wigeon			X	X		16
Canvasback				X		
Redhead				X		3
Ring-necked Duck			X	X		1
Lesser Scaup						53
Bufflehead			X	X		
Ruddy Duck			X	X		
Turkey Vulture						1
Osprey	X				X	

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Northern Harrier	X	X	X	X	X	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	X			X		
Cooper's Hawk		X				
Accipiter sp.				X		
Broad-winged Hawk						1
Swainson's Hawk						17
Red-tailed Hawk	X	X		X	X	8
Ferruginous Hawk				X		
Rough-legged Hawk		X				
Golden Eagle	X			X	X	
American Kestrel	X	X		X	X	18
Prairie Falcon			X			
Gray Partridge						2
Ring-necked Pheasant		X	X	X		17
Greater Prairie-Chicken	X	X		X	X	
Sharp-tailed Grouse	X	X		X	X	
Wild Turkey				X		
Northern Bobwhite						9
Sora						2
American Coot			X	X		160
Sandhill Crane	X	X	X	X	X	
Killdeer				X		73
Greater Yellowlegs		X		X		2
Lesser Yellowlegs						10
Solitary Sandpiper						3
Willet						3
Spotted Sandpiper						1
Upland Sandpiper						16
Hudsonian Godwit						1

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Western Sandpiper						1
White-rumped Sandpiper						1
Baird's Sandpiper				X		4
Long-billed Dowitcher						33
Dowitcher sp.				X		
Common Snipe		X		X	X	3
Wilson's Phalarope						47
Franklin's Gull						445
Bonaparte's Gull						1
Ring-billed Gull			X	X		2
Forster's Tern						7
Rock Dove				X		23
Mourning Dove		X			X	510
Great Horned Owl	X					5
Chimney Swift						4
Belted Kingfisher				X		
Red-headed Woodpecker						18
Red-bellied Woodpecker						3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	X					
Downy Woodpecker	X	X				7
Hairy Woodpecker						2
Northern Flicker	X			X	X	93
Least Flycatcher,						1
Empidonax sp.						7
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher						1
Western Kingbird						6
Eastern Kingbird						49

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Horned Lark		X	X	X		24
Purple Martin						1
Tree Swallow						22
Northern Rough-winged Swallow						8
Cliff Swallow						27
Barn Swallow						189
Blue Jay	X					203
Black-billed Magpie	X					9
American Crow	X	X	X	X	X	127
Black-capped Chickadee	X			X		42
Red-breasted Nuthatch	X					
White-breasted Nuthatch	X					4
Marsh Wren						2
House Wren						351
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	X					3
Eastern Bluebird	X	X				2
Townsend's Solitaire	X					
American Robin	X	X	X	X	X	577
Gray Catbird						5
Brown Thrasher						201
American Pipit				X		3
Bohemian Waxwing						
Cedar Waxwing	X	X			X	22
Northern Shrike				X		
Loggerhead Shrike						1
European Starling				X	X	428
Red-eyed Vireo						1

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Tennessee Warbler						4
Orange-crowned Warbler	X					41
Nashville Warbler	X					
Yellow Warbler						19
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X			X		138
Palm Warbler						7
Common Yellowthroat						5
Northern Cardinal	X				X	32
Spotted Towhee	X			X	X	
Towhee sp.						2
American Tree Sparrow		X	X	X		
Chipping Sparrow	X				X	164
Clay-colored Sparrow						34
Field Sparrow	X				X	146
Vesper Sparrow	X			X	X	13
Lark Sparrow						78
Savannah Sparrow		X	X	X		160
Grasshopper Sparrow	X				X	25
Fox Sparrow				X		1
Song Sparrow	X	X		X		65
Lincoln's Sparrow						11
White-throated Sparrow	X	X		X	X	3
White-crowned Sparrow	X		X	X	X	10
Harris' Sparrow					X	369
Dark-eyed Junco	X	X		X	X	
Bobolink						16

Species	Forest	Blaine	Brown	Cherry	Thomas	Pierce
Red-winged Blackbird		X	X	X		1788
Western Meadowlark	X	X	X	X	X	551
Yellow-headed Blackbird			X			15
Brewer's Blackbird						27
Common Grackle						937
Brown-headed Cowbird				X		802
Baltimore Oriole						24
House Finch	X				X	11
Red Crossbill	X					
Pine Siskin	X	X				
American Goldfinch	X	X	X	X		10
House Sparrow		X			370	
TOTAL SPECIES: 92						113

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Clark's Nutcracker at Lake McConaughy

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On 1 November 1998 I observed a Clark's Nutcracker along the north shore of Lake McConaughy in Keith County. Specifically, the bird was along the road of the Cedar Vue Recreation Area, just east of the main boat ramp. I studied and photographed the bird from 11:32 to 11:50 a.m. I was driving along the entrance road to Cedar Vue when I spotted a bird perched in a dead tree. As I approached the tree, I was thinking about stopping when the bird suddenly took flight. The flight silhouette resembled that of a flicker, although the undulating flight and slower wingbeats didn't seem quite right. The bird landed in a large pine tree not too off the road, so I decided to walk over and have a closer look. I was quite surprised when I discovered the bird was a nutcracker. The bird was roughly the size of a flicker, except that it was a bit chunkier. The head, underparts, and mantle were

light gray. On a couple of occasions, I noted what appeared to be a light brown wash around the base of the bill. The eye was dark, and there was a faint white eye ring. The bill was black, stout at the base, and pointed. The legs were black. The wings were jet black except for a white patch along the trailing edge of the secondaries. The tail appeared black when the bird was perched, but in flight I noted that the outer feathers were white. The flight was slow and undulating with deep wingbeats. In fact, it was the distinct flight behavior that caused me to take a closer look at the bird in the first place. I did not age the bird, although I wondered if it was an immature because of the appearance of some brown color on the face.

This sighting is unusual because of the easterly location. Most Nebraska records of this species are from the Panhandle, especially the Pine Ridge area of northwestern Nebraska. However, there are at least six records of birds east of the Panhandle, all in the period 29 September through 18 February (W. R. Silcock, pers. comm.). Interestingly, all of these records are from Nuckolls County eastward. This record is also unusual because it did not occur in an eruption year when larger-than-normal numbers of Clark's Nutcrackers move east of their normal range.

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Roseate Spoonbill in Otoe County

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On 5 August 1997, W. Ross Silcock and I were birding the heron roost at the Waubonsie Wildlife Area in Fremont County, Iowa. We were hoping to see the Roseate Spoonbill I found there on 4 August (see Dinsmore 1998), and thought there might be a chance it would fly into Nebraska upon leaving the roost. At 5:53 a.m., the bird left the roost. It flew directly over us (in Iowa) and headed to the north with a Great Egret. We continued to watch the bird as it gained altitude and was joined by a second Great Egret. The birds were now flying northwest. After a couple minutes, all three birds turned suddenly to the west, and were soon over Nebraska. They then turned south and appeared to be following the bluffs along the Nebraska side of the Missouri River. At this time, they were barely visible through a 20x spotting scope. We watched them fly south over Nebraska City and eventually disappear to the south. When we last saw them, they were flying west of the Otoe County Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) power plant stack, clearly over Nebraska. We lost sight of the birds at 6:15 a.m. The Roseate Spoonbill was very distinctive because of the color and bill shape. It was slightly smaller and shorter-legged than a Great Egret, and flew with more rapid wingbeats. The bill was long, laterally compressed, and had a spatulate shape. The head, neck, and body were white. The wings were pink, and in flight the primaries had dusky tips. The tail was also pink. The legs were pinkish with darker knees. On the basis of the mostly white head and neck and the dusky wingtips, I aged the bird as an immature (first-fall plumage). On 15 August 1997, I briefly observed the spoonbill in flight over the wetlands near the OPPD plant in Otoe County.

This sighting represents the fourth record of a Roseate Spoonbill in Nebraska. Other records are on 5 June 1932 in Buffalo County (Bray et al 1986), 2 on 20 August 1966 near Hastings, Adams County (Mauder 1966), and 1 on 16 September 1884 in Lancaster County (Bray et al 1986).

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Red-throated Loon at Lake McConaughy

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On 8 May 1998 I observed a Red-throated Loon at Lake McConaughy in Keith County, Nebraska. I was scanning Arthur Bay when I spotted a small loon swimming with several Western Grebes. I immediately recognized the bird as a Red-throated Loon in basic plumage. I studied and photographed the bird from 2:25 to 3:13 p.m. The bird was slightly larger and shorter-necked than a Western Grebe. The plumage was quite plain. The throat, cheek, foreneck, and underparts were white. The forehead, crown, nape, mantle, and wings were dark gray with a few pale spots on the mantle. The bill was very short and thin and the lower mandible was angled upward, giving the bill an upturned appearance. The area surrounding the eye was white. The bird also held its head tilted slightly upward. The distinction between dark gray and white on the head and neck was less clear-cut than on a Pacific Loon. I concluded that the bird was probably an adult in basic plumage because of the dark-backed appearance, although it is possible the bird was molting from first-basic to first-alternate plumage.

This sighting is the first documented spring record of a Red-throated Loon in Nebraska. There are seven other spring reports in the period between 6 April and 3 May; at least some of these are probably correct. This represents only the second record from western Nebraska, the other from ca. fall 1900 in Frontier County (Swenk, M.H. 1933. A Brief Synopsis of the Birds of Nebraska. I. Loons. Nebraska Bird Review 1: 87-90.). I thank W. Ross Silcock for providing information on other records of Red-throated Loons in Nebraska.

* * * * *

Two Poems by Don Welch. Drawings by Mark Sanders.

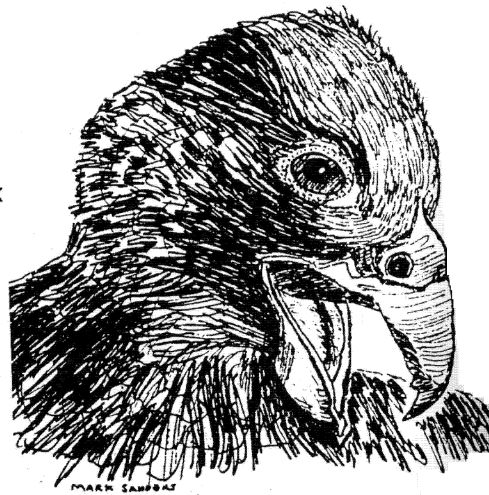
The Hawk

Somewhere years from now
I hope I'm saying this
to my sons. Why the hawk
had hit the trap I couldn't guess.
In the face of it
It was pointless.

But it had hit the trigger
dead center with both feet,
for a moment lifting
that fatal weight
before the blind torque
of the trap had sprung.

After that its wings had clawed
at the sand for hours,
its cries had gradually sunk back
into its throat, although
its beak, thrust defiantly
at the stream, held on
to its animal yellow.

Then it had pulled everything in,
for a moment the hawk
and only the hawk's turn.
In that blind and beautiful light,
trying to hold on,
as the trap held on,
to what it was.



Baltimore Oriole

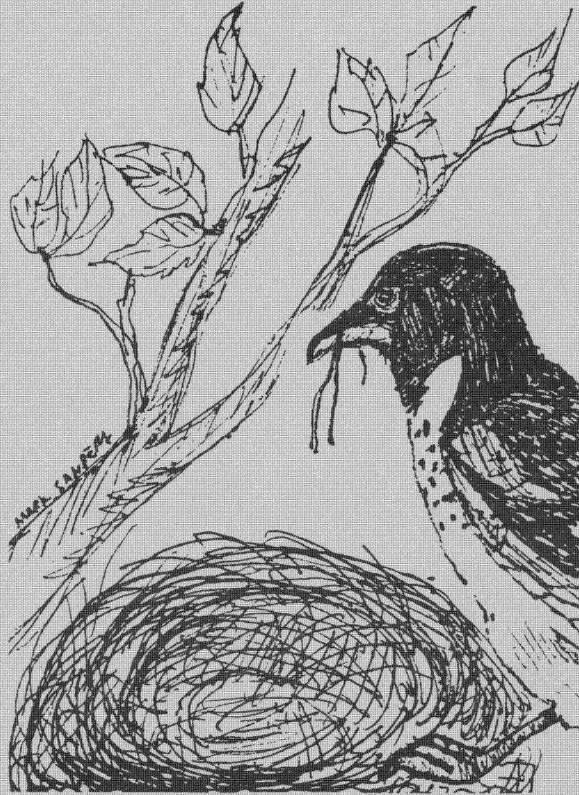
This morning the oriole
is a good carpenter,
working itself
for the sake of its nest.

Hounding the right bits of grass,
it has turned flight
into a muscular blossoming.

The air is something
it keeps slipping into;
it is what it beats
into breath with its life.

Tonight the sky will be hung
with migrational stars;
it will be the dark hunting
ground of owls, the briefer tomb
of anything sleeping.

But tomorrow the oriole
will be at its work again,
and it will be singing.



For further information about Don Welch and his considerable contribution to Nebraska literature consult the listing of material at the following internet location: <http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/welch.htm>

And to learn more about Mark Sanders' art and poetry consult the following internet location: <http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/sanders.htm>.

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