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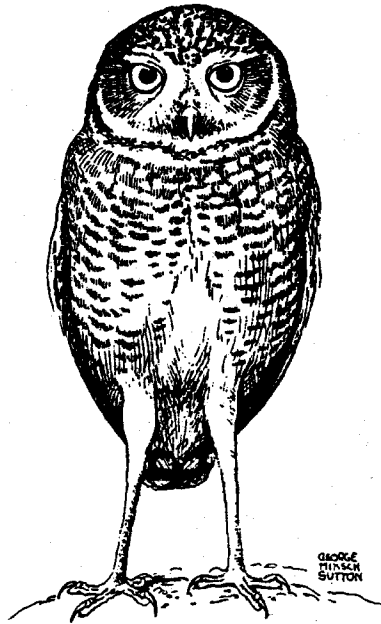
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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, JUNE to JULY, 1999

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INTRODUCTION

First of all, I want to thank Joel Jorgensen for helping write these reports for the last few years. Joel has decided to spend his limited free time on Records Committee matters; he is currently Chairman. Over the last few years, Joel has made significant contributions to Nebraska ornithology, particularly through his meticulous counts of shorebirds in the Rainwater Basin.

This season proved interesting in terms of ranges of breeding birds, as discussed in the accounts. See, for example, Little Blue Heron, the dowitchers, Black-billed Magpie, White-breasted Nuthatch, Sedge Wren, and the towhees. There seems to be an increasing number of "displaced" birds, either early or late migrants or birds just in the wrong places. Could this situation result from an increasingly unstable atmosphere? Very late in spring were Hudsonian Godwit and Wilson's Warbler, while very early in fall were Willet, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Orange-crowned Warbler. Birds in the wrong places were numerous, but significant were a "small race" Canada Goose, ducks such as American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, and Common Goldeneye, Mississippi Kite away from Ogallala, adult Golden Eagle eastward, adult American Golden-Plover in July, westerly Least Terns, northerly Acadian Flycatcher, singing mid-June Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats in Harlan Co, and Henslow's Sparrow in the RWB.

Interesting breeding or possible breeding records involved Eurasian Collared Dove's 2nd breeding location, Long-eared Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Townsend's Solitaire, and MacGillivray's Warbler.

"Good birds" were King Rail, Lewis's Woodpecker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Clark's Nutcracker, Hooded Warbler, and Cassin's Sparrow, and, best till last, the White Ibis, only the state's 3rd report, but first with extant documentation. Finally, where were the Baird's Sandpipers? When was the last time only one was reported for the early fall? Presumably the adults went elsewhere.

CORRECTIONS TO PREVIOUS REPORTS

Not surprisingly, I make a few mistakes in these report, but, I hope, not mistakes that impinge on the status of any species. I am aware (from a limited study in a nearby state) that a significant number of unexpectedly early or late dates reported are in fact reported in error by contributors, many simply typos. I am also sure that many are my fault. Please point out any errors that you see so that we do not introduce false data into the record. I have listed corrections below. I archive all the data from these reports and can check back to verify any corrections.

Dave Heidt pointed out (these scientists are tough!) that 13 Northern Flickers in Dodge Co on 1 January 1998 were not reported by him; in fact, Don Paseka reported them. Dave also pointed out that a Prairie Falcon spotted on 29 March 1998 at Wood Duck Area was not his either; it belonged to Jan Johnson. Finally (for Dave), he boldly claimed a report of 2 Summer Tanagers at Indian Cave SP on 10 August 1997 which I had incorrectly attributed to John Sullivan and then

suggested be deleted (NBR 66:121). Thus this significant record should be reinstated.

Wanda and Glen Hoge noted that instead of 7 Least Bitterns spotted at Funk Lagoon on 2 August 1998, they had seen one there on 9 August; the Marbled Godwit reported on 4 August 1998 was at Funk Lagoon, not Harlan Co Res; and that 1-2 female-plumaged Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were noted at Alma between 24 August and 3 September 1998 and an adult male was seen there on 8 September 1998. Apparently part of this came out as a typo-garble "24 Aug to and Sep- on the latter date...".

I'll try harder!

ABBREVIATIONS

BBS: Breeding Bird Survey; BOL: Branched Oak L, SRA Lancaster Co; Cem: Cemetery; Co(s): County(ies); CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, WPA Phelps Co; Lake; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; RWB: Rainwater Basin, area of potholes southeast, east, and southwest of Grand Island; NC: Nature Center; NM: National Monument; NPNWR: North Platte NWR, Scotts Bluff Co; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; Res: Reservoir; SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoons; SP: State Park; SRA: State Recreation Area; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area.

GAZETTEER

Arbor L: Lancaster Co; Ashfall Fossil Beds SHP: Antelope Co; Ashford Scout Camp: northern Thurston Co; Champion L: SRA Chase Co; Chet Ager NC: Lincoln; Cracker Barrel Marsh: Lincoln; Doc L: Grant Co; Enders Res: SRA Chase Co; Fort Niobrara NWR: Cherry Co; Fort Robinson SP: Dawes and Sioux Cos; Hansen Lagoon: WPA Clay Co; Harvard Marsh: WPA Clay Co; Jack Sinn Marsh: WMA Lancaster and Saunders Cos; Jensen Basin: WPA Kearney Co; Kingsley Dam: forms LM; Kiowa Springs: WMA Scotts Bluff Co; Kissinger Basin: WMA Clay Co; L Alice: part of NPNWR; LaPlatte Bottoms: Sarpy Co; Little Salt Creek Marsh: Lancaster Co; L Ogallala: Keith Co; Long Canyon: Banner Co; Long Pine Area: SRA Brown Co; Mallard Haven: WPA Fillmore Co; Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co; North Hultine Basin: WPA (=Sandpiper) Clay Co; North Lake Basin: WMA Seward Co; Massie Lagoon: WPA Clay Co; Pine Ridge: escarpment in Sioux, Dawes, and Sheridan Cos; Platte River SP: Cass Co; Rock Creek L: SRA Dundy Co; Sacramento-Wilcox Area: WMA Phelps Co; Schramm SP: Sarpy Co; Scotts Bluff NM: Scotts Bluff Co; Sininger Lagoon: WPA York Co; Smiley Canyon: Sioux Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Wehrspann L: Omaha; West Ash Canyon: Dawes Co; Wood Duck Area: WMA Stanton Co; Youngson Basin: WPA Kearney Co.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; B: Nebraska Birdline; BA: Brian Ahern, Temple Terrace, FL; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; CF: Carol Falk, Nebraska City; CNK: Clem N.

Klaphake, Bellevue; EB: Elliott Bedows, Omaha; DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; GW: Gertrude Wood, Elmwood; HS: Harry Schaeffer, Lincoln; JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JS: John Sullivan, Omaha; JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City; LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue; LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MU: Mark Urwiller, Kearney; NK: Nick Komar, Fort Collins, CO; NP: Neva Pruess, Lincoln; RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; TEL: Thomas E. Labeledz, Lincoln; WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma; WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Lincoln.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Common Loon: One to two, including an adult on 20 and 26 June, were reported at L Ogallala, a regular summering place, between 21 and 26 June (JS, BP, LP). Unusual in summer in the east, a bird reported as a juvenile--but possibly more likely to be in first alternate plumage at that location and time--was seen at BOL from 24 to 31 July (JS).

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Eared Grebe: Routine reports.

Western Grebe: Rather late for a migrant was the one seen at FL on 12 June (LR, RH). Summer reports of this species (late June to early August) away from the breeding range are few.

Clark's Grebe: 1 to 3 were noted on either LM or L Ogallala through the period (JS, BP, LP), and reports from elsewhere included at least one spotted at Willy L, near Bingham in Sheridan Co, in late June (BA) and at CLNWR on 5 June (AK). Willy L is a regular breeding location, the only one known away from LM.

American White Pelican: Young birds not of breeding age wander about in summer south of the breeding range; the flocks of 55 found at Harvard Marsh on 13 June (JGJ) and the 40 reported in southwestern Sheridan Co on 10 July (LF, CF) were in this category, although fall migrants may return in July such as the 40 sighted in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ). Summer occurrences in the southeast are rare; none was noted at BOL between 6 June and 25 July (LE).

Double-crested Cormorant: The fairly new colony at Alma continued, with all 34 usable nests occupied on 22 June (GH, WH). Along highway 97 in Cherry Co, 22 were noted on nests on 21 June (BP, LP). The one seen on 17 June at Wehrspann L (B) was rather late; summer reports are few in the south and east.

American Bittern: Summer reports south of the Platte River may be considered peripheral these days, although breeding probably occurs regularly anywhere when conditions allow. Examples included two reported at Jack Sinn Marsh on 2 June (BP, LP) and a single spotted at FL on 16 July (MU). A belated report was of a nest found at either Harvard Marsh or Massie Lagoon in 1984 or 1985 (RH).

Least Bittern: Reports from the RWB have been more numerous recently; breeding probably occurs there as conditions allow. This year one was noted at Kissinger Basin on 6 June (JGJ); 2 were seen at FL 12 on Jun (LR, RH), and one was reported at North Lake Basin on 6 July (BP, LP). One to two were also found from June 10 to July (BP, LP) at the LaPlatte Bottoms, an ephemeral cattail slough which has been carrying water for the last few years.

Great Blue Heron: The best count totaled a moderate 27 at FL on 18 July (LR, RH).

Great Egret: Probably the first of the late summer wanderers was one seen at FL on 27 June (LR, RH). Numbers are lowest in mid-June, thus unusual were singles reported in Cass Co on 8 June (GW) and at HCR on 15 June (GH, WH). Three were spotted in Nebraska City on 1 June (LF, CF). Some spring birds may be post-breeding dispersers from southern United States colonies. The best count numbered 22 in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ).

Snowy Egret: Only 6 were reported, all apparently post-breeding wanderers. An adult was spotted at FL on 24 July (JS), 2 were found in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ, BP, LP), and 3 were noted at FL on 28 July (GH, WH).

Little Blue Heron: Most were found in late July in the south and east, as expected: 2 immatures were spotted at Arbor L on 17 July (JS), 1 to 3 were found at Kissinger Basin on 19 July (JG), and 2 were seen in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ). An adult found at Harvard Marsh on 6 June (JGJ) may have been wandering, but reports the last couple of years from Cracker Barrel Marsh are intriguing. An adult was spotted there on 1 June (JS), and an immature on 5 July (LE); could these birds (including those at Arbor L) be breeding somewhere around Lincoln?

Cattle Egret: Of some 44 reported, 37 were noted on 26 June and later, presumably post-breeding wanderers. Always a possibility to nest, no such evidence was found, however, although there were a few earlier June reports: one was seen at Youngson Basin on 6 June (LR, RH); 3 were reported in Hall Co the same day (DH); one was spotted at HCR 12 June (GH, WH); another was seen in southcentral Dixon Co on 15 June (JJ), and one was found in Cass Co in June (GW).

Green Heron: This species is uncommon as far west as Harlan Co, where 3 sightings were made throughout the period around HCR (GH, WH); but it is rare in the southwest, where one was sighted at Rock Creek L on 12 June (MB, DH). There are fewer than 10 Panhandle records, none of breeding.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Breeding apparently occurs at FL, where 1 to 5 adults and immatures were found from 12 June to 28 July, although recently there has been no direct evidence. The only other report was of one seen at Arbor L on 17 July (JS).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Only 2, probably post-breeding dispersers, were found, an adult at FL on 13 July (GH, WH), and an immature at Arbor L on 19 July (JS). The FL record is one of fewer than 10 away from Lancaster and Douglas Cos, but the species probably occurs regularly in late summer in the RWB.

White Ibis: Only the 3rd report for the state, but the first with extant documentation, an immature was spotted at Kissinger Basin between 4 and 25 July (JGJ, m.ob.) The other reports include one seen at Inland Lagoon (=Harvard Marsh) between 12 and 19 June 1916 and a juvenile filmed between 1 and 19 August 1963 near Bassett. The film is now lost, but has been seen and the identification confirmed by Paul Johnsgard.

White-faced Ibis: The few birds reported were found from 27 June--4 spotted at FL (LR, RH)--throughout the period. Others were identified near Antioch in late June (BA), one reported as *Plegadis* sp., probably this species, in Seward Co on 24 July (JG), and another in western Cass Co on 26 July (GW). There are very few late June reports, as most late summer arrivals appear in mid-July.

Turkey Vulture: Routine reports.

Trumpeter Swan: Reports of breeding birds in the western Sandhills included 2 adults with 5 cygnets found in Grant Co on 18 and 25 June (LE) and 9 adults with 5 young spotted at Whitman L (=Doc L) on 21 June (BP, LP). Two birds were also seen east of Hyannis on 21 June (BP, LP). Most unexpected was an unbanded single identified at Hansen Lagoon on 13 June (JGJ); this sighting is apparently the only summer record away from the western Sandhills breeding range.

Swan (Chinese) Goose: An unusual large goose seen at FL on 4 April (LR, RH) was identified as this species (GH). It is virtually certain to be an escaped bird.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 to 3 were noted at FL during the period (m. ob.); 3 were seen there on 4 July (LR, RH). Scattered around the east RWB were 1 to 2 spotted at Harvard Marsh on 6 and 13 June (JGJ); one found at North Hultine Basin on 6 June (JGJ), and another reported in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ). Unusual away from central NE in mid-summer was the one reported at Little Salt Creek Marsh on 6 June (LE).

Snow Goose: A few of this species also linger in summer in the RWB; the best count was 22 registered on 13 June (JGJ).

Canada Goose: Normally migrants, small forms of Canada Goose, which may be split in the future as a separate species, rarely remain into summer. One was seen at Harvard Marsh on 13 June (JGJ),

Wood Duck: Hens with 3 to 4 chicks were noted in central NE between 6 and 20 June (LR, RH).

Green-winged Teal: Rare in June and July away from the Sandhills, the one reported at Youngson Basin on 6 June (LR, RH) was late, and the 7 seen at FL on 18 July (LR, RH) may have been early molt migrants.

Mallard: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Cinnamon Teal: None reported.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: The one identified at FL on 12 June (LR, RH) may have been a late migrant, but another (same bird?) spotted there on 4 July (LR, RH) and the one seen at Harvard Marsh on 6 July (BP, LP) denote rare mid-summer occurrences away from the rather restricted western Sandhills breeding range.

Redhead: Up to 20 (on 27 Jun) were seen at FL during the period (m. ob.), where nesting is regular but uncommon; but the 4 found at Sinninger Lagoon on 13 June (JGJ) may have been late migrants.

Lesser Scaup: Spring stragglers in the first week of June are not unusual, but the one spotted at Harvard Marsh on 13 June (JGJ) was rather late. The one found in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ) and a female reported at Carter P. Johnson L, Fort Robinson, SP, on 25 June (LE) were among very few summer records away from the western Sandhills.

Common Goldeneye: A male found near Antioch in late June (BA) was only the 10th record ever between 3 June and 10 September.

Bufflehead: A male sighted at Youngson Basin on 6 June (LR, RH) was apparently a very late migrant, but a female spotted near Antioch in late June (BA) provided only the 8th summer record away from Garden Co.

Hooded Merganser: Birds which look like females but are probably immatures too young to breed are not unusual in summer, with about 30 records in all. Rather far west, however, was at least one noted near Antioch in late June (BA).

Ruddy Duck: This species may summer anywhere in suitable habitat, although a pair spotted at Alma SL on 17 July (GH, WH) were in an apparently marginal location.

Mississippi Kite: The best count from the regular breeding location at Ogallala numbered 4, 2 adults and 2 immatures, on 25 July (JS). Unexpected was an adult seen over Lincoln on 22 July (Cliff Lemen, fide TEL). This species is very rare away from Ogallala.

Bald Eagle: The only reports were of singles found near Nebraska City on 22 July (CF, LF) and (an adult) flying over the old Niobrara River bridge south of Valentine on 22 June (BP, LP). Summer reports away from known breeding sites are still rare.

Northern Harrier: Most summer reports come from the Sandhills; thus the following sightings were unusual: a pair found in Cass Co (GW, no date given), one spotted near Nebraska City on 5 June (CF, LF), 2 males reported in northern Thurston Co on 18 June (B), and one identified in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: A few probably linger in the pine areas of the Panhandle each year, as did one seen in the Wildcat Hills on 4 July (AK).

Cooper's Hawk: Low numbers occur statewide in summer; reports came from Harlan Co (GH, WH), Thurston Co (B), and Sioux Co (LE). Observers should keep goshawk in mind in Sioux Co, as it breeds in the Black Hills of South Dakota and may also do so in the Pine Ridge on occasion.

Red-shouldered Hawk: The only report was of 2 sighted on 12 June at FF (B), the only known breeding location.

Broad-winged Hawk: The only report was of one spotted flying over Camp Wakonda, Sarpy Co, on 28 June (BP, LP); the species probably breeds every year in the FF area.

Swainson's Hawk: Routine reports.

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: None reported.

Golden Eagle: Apparently only the 3rd summer report away from the Panhandle, and notable as it was an adult, was the one identified 2 miles south of Springview on 25 July (BP, LP).

American Kestrel: The adults present in the observer's yard in southwestern Dixon Co for 3 months were seen feeding 4 fledged young on 6 July (JJ).

Merlin: Unexpected was an immature encountered on grasslands along the Agate BBS route in central Sioux Co on 28 June (JS). There appears to be a very small breeding population in the Pine Ridge with which this bird may be associated. There are fewer than 10 summer records away from the Pine Ridge, most in Sioux Co.

Prairie Falcon: The one noted at Scotts Bluff NM, a known breeding site, on 27 June (B) was the only report.

Peregrine Falcon: None reported.

Gray Partridge: Two reports of 2 birds each were received, both in the heart of the current range: on 2 June east of Creighton (MB) and on 7 July 6 miles west and 4.5 miles north of Wakefield (JJ).

Ring-necked Pheasant: A female with several chicks was found at BOL on 5 July (LE).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: A hen and 8 chicks were reported 5 miles southwest of Campbell on 20 June (LR, RH). The sandy prairie remnants in this general area support a healthy population of these birds.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: Considered surprising by a veteran local observer was the one sighted along Stage Hill Road in the Wildcat Hills on 4 July (AK). Another was found at Gering Cem the same day (CNK). While fair numbers occur in the North Platte Valley to the Wyoming line, few are reported elsewhere in Scotts Bluff Co.

King Rail: The only report was of one identified at the Saline Wetlands, Lincoln, on 2 June (B). Over half of the 50 or so NE King Rail records occur in the period between 26 April and 15 June.

Virginia Rail: Reports from rather unexpected locations included one bird seen at the Chet Ager NC on 2 June (B) and 2 calling at Rock Creek L on 12 June (MB, DH).

Sora: Southeasterly reports included one bird seen at Chet Ager NC (B) and at least one spotted in Cass Co on 18 June (GW). Regular in the east RWB in summer, 3 were counted there on 17 July (JGJ).

American Coot: Nesting occurred in Cass Co (GW), an area of the state with restricted breeding habitat.

Sandhill Crane: One of only a few--but apparently increasing (see Spring Report)--recent summer records in the RWB, one crane was heard at Massie Lagoon on 20 July (MU).

American Golden-Plover: A single, apparently injured (JGJ), alternate bird was spotted at Kissinger Basin between 17 and 25 July (JGJ, GH, WH). This species is far less numerous in fall than in spring; most fall birds are juveniles. This record marks only the 7th for the July through August period, when most if not all would be adults.

Semipalmated Plover: The earliest reported were 3 seen at FL 13 July (GH, WH), a rather early date. Only about 8 were reported for the period.

Piping Plover: At LM, 6 adults and a young bird were spotted at Martin Bay on 20 June (BP, LP), and on the same day 6 adults were reported at the nesting enclosure at the north end of Kingsley Dam (JS). The only other report was of a migrant found at FL on 18 July (LR, RH).

Killdeer: The best count tallied 65 at FL on 27 June (LR, RH), presumably a summering population. Fall flocks appear in mid-July.

Mountain Plover: Now regular in disked fields south and southwest of the Kimball Airport, one was counted for the 4th year on the Kimball BBS route on 27 June (JS), and another was spotted in the same area on 4 June (B).

Black-necked Stilt: The only reports (possibly of the same birds) were of one spotted near Antioch in late June (BA) and 2 found at the regular location east of Lakeside on 5 June (AK).

American Avocet: A small summering group is present most summers at FL; this year, up to 6 were found on 4 July (LR, RH). Tallies of 8 and 10 were made in the east RWB on 17 and on 25 July (JGJ), apparently most at Kissinger Basin, where 10 were found on 25 July (JGJ, BP, LP). These were probably early fall migrants.

Greater Yellowlegs: The earliest fall (yes; latest spring date on record is 31 May) migrants included singles found at FL on 25 and 27 June (LR, RH), possibly the

same bird; 3 identified there on 5 July (LR, RH); and one spotted in Clay Co also on 5 July (JGJ). The best count totaled 8 at Kissinger Basin on 18 July (JS).

Lesser Yellowlegs: The one seen at Cracker Barrel Marsh on 6 June had to be a rather late spring migrant. The first fall birds were the 17 counted at FL on 27 June (LR, RH). And the best count registered 70 in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ).

Solitary Sandpiper: The earliest reported was the one spotted southwest of Lowell on 4 July (LR, RH), and the best count reached 6, both at Cracker Barrel Marsh on 11 July (LE) and in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ).

Willet: The only report from the summer range was of the one sighted at CLNWR on 5 June (AK). The first migrants arrived very early, 9 spotted at FL on 27 June (LR, RH), the 2nd earliest ever. The best count reached 10 at FL on 5 July (LR, RH), an excellent count as Willets are rather scarce in fall.

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Upland Sandpiper: No large groups were noted; the best count was only 7, at FL on 4 July (LR, RH).

Long-billed Curlew: Young were noted at CLNWR on 5 June (AK).

Hudsonian Godwit: The last to leave for spring were the 2 seen in the east RWB on 6 June (JGJ), the 2nd latest ever reported after a 12 June 1910 specimen from Saunders Co.

Marbled Godwit: The few reports of this early fall migrant included 6 identified at FL on 27 June (LR, RH), another seen there on 5 July (LR, RH), one found at LM on 25 July (JS), and another reported in Brown Co the same day (BP, LP).

Sanderling: None was reported, not necessarily a surprise as adults are few in fall and juveniles mostly arrive in August. Stay tuned!

Semipalmated Sandpiper: The last for spring were 2 seen in the east RWB on 6 June (JGJ), a rather late date. The first for fall was one found in Clay Co on 4 July (JGJ), record early (by one day). The best counts totaled 111 in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ) and 81 at FL on 18 July (LR, RH).

Western Sandpiper: The earliest were "more than one" spotted at FL on 16 July (MU). And the best count tallied an excellent 32 at FL on 18 July (LR, RH).

Least Sandpiper: The first were 11 found at Cracker Barrel Marsh on 11 July (LE), and the best count reached 133 in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ).

White-rumped Sandpiper: A late spring migrant, its numbers can remain good well into June; 52 were found at FL on 12 June (LR, RH), and 37 were reported at Harvard Marsh on 13 June (JGJ), the latest for the spring. Numbers drop rapidly into June, as exemplified by the count of 182 in the east RWB on 6 June, when 2816 were counted a week earlier (JGJ). This species does not occur in NE in fall.

Baird's Sandpiper: Rather incredibly, only 3 were reported, 2 in spring. Obviously, adult Baird's Sandpipers bypassed NE this fall. Interestingly, few were also reported last year in July. The only fall bird this year was a single spotted in Lancaster Co on 25 July (LE). The two spring birds were very late: one seen on 6 June in the east RWB (JGJ) and another, 3rd latest ever, spotted on 12 June at FL (LR, RH).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The last for spring included 3 seen at FL on 12 June (LR, RH), one found there on 8 June (GH, WH), and 2 spotted in the east RWB on 6 June (JGJ), all rather late. The 12 June birds tied for 4th latest ever. First in fall were 7 identified in southwest Sheridan Co on 10 July (LF, CF). And the best count registered 61 in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ).

Stilt Sandpiper: Arriving in force, the first were 91 counted in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ), also the best count.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Mildly surprising, none had arrived by period's end.

Dowitcher species: The relative abundance of dowitchers in July is uncertain; the earliest arrivals are likely to be Short-billed; however, as the earliest documented (by call) Long-billed in NE is 19 July, observers should be careful identifying dowitchers in July, as most if not all July birds are adults, which are difficult to identify by plumage in fall due to feather wear. Calls should be heard for confident identification. We hope an accurate database of relative abundance of the two species can be built. Reports submitted as unidentified dowitchers included one seen as early as 27 June at FL (LR, RH), one found at Kissinger Basin on 11 July (LR, RH), and another spotted at FL the same day (LB).

Short-billed Dowitcher: See the preceding **Dowitcher species** description. This year was very good for this species, with two excellent counts of 35 on 13 July at FL (GH, WH) and 24 in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ). The earliest was one found at Kissinger Basin on 7 July (GH, WH). Observers used a combination of calls and plumage characters to identify these birds.

Long-billed Dowitcher: See the preceding **Dowitcher species** report. The earliest was one identified as an adult female at FL on 18 July (LR, RH). Few others were reported, not a surprise as this species probably does not occur in numbers until early August. The best count totaled 8 in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ), and the only other reports were of one sighted in Rock Co on 25 July (BP, LP) and 4 seen at Nebraska City on 31 July (LE).

Common Snipe: Reports from the breeding range included CLNWR on 5 June (AK) and 6 birds seen along highway 70 in Wheeler Co on 12 June (DH). About a month prior to the usual appearance of migrants were singles identified both at Sacramento-Wilcox Area on 13 July (GH, WH) and at FL on 18 July (LR, RH). These may have been local breeding birds, as breeding has occurred previously south of the Platte River.

American Woodcock: None reported.

Wilson's Phalarope: Probably part of a small breeding population in the RWB, a male was seen at FL on 27 June (LR, RH), and "more than one" was reported there on 16 July (MU), a very early date for fall migrants. The four sighted north of Pierce on 30 June (B) were also within the breeding range. The best counts numbered 30 in Rock Co on 25 July (BP, LP) and 22 in the east RWB on 25 July (JGJ).

Franklin's Gull: Last spring migrants were the 55 seen east of BOL on 2 June (BP LP). As usual, a few appeared in mid-summer: a basic-plumaged bird was spotted at FL on 12 June (LR, RH) and 5 were found there on 5 July (LR, RH). Fall migrants usually arrive in July, but no flocks were reported.

Ring-billed Gull: As with Franklin's Gull, a few hang around in mid-summer, such as the one located in Cass Co on 8 July (GW). The first fall flock numbered 300+ at HCR on 31 July (GH, WH); the 6 counted there on 13 July (GH, WH) may have summered.

California Gull: The only report was of one found at L Ogallala on 26 June (JS). This date is usually the low point of the year for numbers of this species, this sighting representing only the 7th report for the period from 1 June to 23 July.

Caspian Tern: Recently there have been several mid-summer reports, this year's being a single located at L Ogallala on 26 June (JS) and 4 in alternate plumage spotted at L Alice, NPNWR, on 30 June (NK).

Forster's Tern: Up to 4 were seen at HCR from 2 to 20 June (GH, WH, LR, RH), presumably lingering immatures, although no age was given. The latter date, 20 June, when 2 were present, is one of only 16 away from the breeding range in the period between 14 June and 10 July. Migrants appeared in the east RWB by 17 July, when 16 were counted (JGJ). The best count totaled 25 at BOL on 25 July (LE).

Least Tern: Birds found at unexpected locations included one spotted near Antioch in late June (BA) and 2 located at Champion L which had been present at least a week prior to 11 June (MB, DH). At Martin Bay, LM, 3 nests were noted on 20 June (BP, LP); and at the north end of Kingsley Dam, 6 adults were nesting on 26 June (JS), indicating a minimum of 6 nests (12 adult birds). The only other report was of one bird seen near Black Island Area along the Elkhorn River on 5 July (DH); there is a small population of breeding birds along this river.

Black Tern: The last spring migrant was one found at Wood Duck Area on 17 June (DH), and the first in fall were 300 counted in the east RWB on 17 July (JGJ). This species is scarce away from breeding areas in the period from mid-June through early July.

Rock Dove: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Probably to become a regular comment here, a new breeding location was reported this summer. A pair present most of the summer in Pierce was accompanied by 2 young around 23 July (fide MB). This sighting identifies the 2nd breeding location for NE. Up to 5 were present at the Kearney breeding location (LB, B), although no report was received of fledglings.

Mourning Dove: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: There have been few reports in recent years, and only about 7 birds were reported this period. The westernmost was one seen south of Benkelman on 12 June (DH); it breeds throughout the Republican Valley.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Barn Owl: None reported.

Eastern Screech-Owl: None reported.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: The best count reached 12 at Fort Niobrara NWR on 21 June (BP, LP), also the most easterly reported.

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: One bird reported on the south side of Enders Res on 11 June was seen on a post and hunting (MB), suggestive of local breeding. This sighting is the first summer record for Chase Co, where there are no confirmed breeding records. Breeding has been reported virtually statewide, and there are 2 summer records for adjacent Perkins Co.

Short-eared Owl: None reported.

Common Nighthawk: Surprisingly, none was noted at Alma between 5 June and 28 July (GH,WH). Elsewhere, reports were routine.

Common Poor-will: None reported.

Chuck-will's-widow: None reported.

Whip-poor-will: Still singing in late July were the 4 found in Cass Co (GW).

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: Reports arrived from expected summering locations east to West Ash Canyon, where birds were seen between 11 and 13 June (WM). The best count totaled 7 at Soldier Creek, Fort Robinson, on 20 June (LE).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Numbers are low in summer; the only reports were of singles seen in Cass Co on 18 June (GW) and at Papillion on 16 June (B).

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: Rather rare in the breeding season, encouraging reports arrived from locations where breeding has not been noted in recent years. Although breeding was not confirmed in either case, at least one bird was located in West Ash Canyon from 11 June through late June (WM, BA), and another was spotted in the Soldier Creek area, Fort Robinson SP, on 22 and 25 June (LE). It appears that very low numbers occur each year in the Pine Ridge, but the frequency of breeding is unknown.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Numbers were low through the period in Lancaster Co (LE). It may be that starlings cause some problems with this species.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Although it breeds throughout the Republican Valley, numbers are lowest in the west, where 2 were seen at Rock Creek L on 12 June (MB, DH) and one was located southeast of Parks, Dundy Co, on 12 June (DH).

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Pileated Woodpecker: Wrapping up the first-of-the-century breeding occurrence on North Stream Trail, FF, 2 young were noted on 17 June (BP, LP); and by 10 July, the young and adults had left the area (B). An adult was noted along the railroad tracks at FF on 12 June (B).

Western Wood-Pewee: The easternmost spotted were in West Ash Canyon in late June (BA) and at CLNWR on 5 June (AK), the latter about as far east as regular breeding occurs.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: The westernmost reported was one spotted at Alma on 20 June (GH, WH). Harlan Co identifies the western edge of the bird's range in the Republican Valley.

Acadian Flycatcher: Rather far north was a pair located at Ashford Scout Camp on 3 July (B).

Willow Flycatcher: Reports of this statewide breeder occurred west only as far as FL, where as many as 11 singing birds were found on 12 June (LR, RH).

Least Flycatcher: The last for the spring migration were a single banded at Bellevue on 1 June (RG) and another found in Cass Co on 8 June (GW). The latter bird may have been attempting to summer, a rare occurrence in that area. Such birds should be monitored for evidence of breeding activity, of which there is little in NE.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: The best count totaled 5 in Sowbelly and Monroe Canyons on 27 June (JS). Numbers reported are up in recent years, and reports were received as far east this year as West Ash Canyon, where one was located on 22 June (LE).

Eastern Phoebe: One was noted with young on 13 July at Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co (KP).

Say's Phoebe: Happy news was of at least one bird spotted at the southwest Dixon Co site throughout the period (JJ). Hopefully another was there to maintain

this easternmost outpost for the species. A count of 6 was made in northwest Sioux Co on 21 June (LE).

Great Crested Flycatcher: Although it breeds throughout the Republican Valley, numbers are low west of Harlan Co, where territorial birds were noted at 8 locations (GH, WH). Westward, singles were spotted at the Rock Creek L and the nearby fish hatchery on 12 June (MB, DH). Far to the northwest, but at a regular location, were 2 identified in Monroe Canyon on 24 June (LE).

Cassin's Kingbird: Rather common in certain locations in the Panhandle, 3 were found in Long Canyon on 4 June (B) and 4 were located in Smiley Canyon on 20 June, with one of the latter carrying nesting material; and 6 were seen there on 25 June (LE).

Western Kingbird: Numbers are low in the extreme east, but 2 were spotted in southeastern Otoe Co on 5 June (LF, CF), and one was located in Cass Co on 8 June (GW).

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One was noted on a BBS route 3 miles south of Sumner, Dawson Co, on 5 June (TEL). This sighting represents one of about 15 summer records since 1980 scattered statewide and not associated with breeding evidence.

Loggerhead Shrike: Routine reports.

Bell's Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: Routine reports.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: Usually rather inconspicuous in summer, a "raucous feeding group" of 10 was located in Smiley Canyon on 20 June (LE), and at least one bird was noted in Monroe Canyon in late June (BA).

Clark's Nutcracker: A rare sighting was one spotted in Sowbelly Canyon on 24 June (LE). Apart from a couple of major invasions when birds remained into summer from the previous winter, there are only about 5 reports of summer birds, all but one (Wildcat Hills) in the Pine Ridge.

Eurasian Jackdaw: A black bird with a gray head, larger than a robin, appeared at a Lincoln feeder on 22 July (HS), but it was suggested (NP, others) that it was probably a molting juvenile Common Grackle. The latter can appear very gray at this time of year. If indeed a jackdaw, it would almost certainly be an escaped pet.

Black-billed Magpie: At the eastern edge of the range were 2 birds seen near Hoskins on 3 July (LF, CF) and one found at Pierce Creek L on 19 June (B). An update on the eastern edge of the range includes Cuming and Dodge Cos, where it now occurs year-round (LE). The eastern edge of breeding now passes from Dakota Co south to Cuming, Dodge, and Clay Cos, possibly including Lancaster Co.

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Rather unusual was a family group of 4 Horned Larks, including 2 fledglings, with a fledgling juvenile Brown-headed Cowbird found in Cuming Co on 18 July (LE). Peter Lowther (Bull Kansas Ornith Soc., 35:25, 1984) cites records of Horned Lark parasitism, although these are apparently not common.

Purple Martin: Good numbers now summer in Alma, where it has nested the last 2 years (GH, WH); and the species is also doing well in Bellevue, with 125 banded, the most for the observer in any season (RG).

Tree Swallow: This species is unevenly distributed throughout the state, nesting wherever suitable habitat occurs, as well as in nestboxes. It is most numerous in the east, and probably least numerous in the Republican Valley and the Sandhills. The species was identified at CLNWR on 5 June (AK); 6 were seen 11 miles west of Tryon, Keith Co, on 12 June (DH), and it was spotted along Highway 2 in Sheridan Co on 18 June (LE). In Harlan Co, 4 were found on 20 June (LR, RH), and a few summered at Alma, with young being fed on 25 June (GH, WH).

Violet-green Swallow: Reports arrived from known breeding locations in June: West Ash Canyon (WM), northwest Sioux Co (LE), and Scotts Bluff NM (B).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: The best count reached 1,250 at FL on 18 July (LR, RH). Massive flocks occur in the RWB at this time of year.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: Routine reports.

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

White-breasted Nuthatch: This species does not occur statewide in summer; it is most numerous in the Missouri Valley and along the Niobrara River to the Pine Ridge. It is common at Alma (GH, WH) and breeds throughout the Republican Valley, although rare westward. A pair located near Gibbon 20 June was the only sighting for the summer there (LR, RH); it is uncommon to absent in the Platte Valley west of Grand Island. Observers should report summer sightings of this species away from northern and eastern NE.

Pygmy Nuthatch: The only report was of 3 birds sighted in Sowbelly Canyon on 24 June (LE).

Brown Creeper: Singing birds were seen at FF on 6 June (BP, LP) and 12 June (B), a known breeding location.

Rock Wren: Routine reports.

Carolina Wren: All reports came from expected locations in southeastern NE.

Bewick's Wren: The singing bird which appeared at Ashfall Fossil Beds SHP in mid-May was still present at least through 5 July (B).

House Wren: Routine reports.

Sedge Wren: Many reports arrived of this species with its unusual movements and time of breeding. It is least numerous from mid-June through early July, when most have passed through northward, and migrants have not returned. Returning migrants that have not bred successfully apparently will breed in NE and Kansas if conditions are suitable, usually in mid-July through August. Most June to July records occur in the east, although this year 1 to 2 were again present throughout the period in prairie near Gibbon (LR, RH), where a small "colony" has recently established itself. "Many" were singing west of Bellevue on 13 June (B). All other reports were from early June, the last 2 in Lancaster Co on 6 June (LE). No others were reported in Lancaster Co until 11 July (LE), the same day a few were found in the east RWB (LR, RH), and about when 20 singing birds appeared on the Keystone Trail, Omaha, on 13 July (BP, LP). By 25 July, the species had become numerous again, with 31 reported in the east RWB that day (JGJ). Evidence of timing of nesting would be valuable.

Marsh Wren: A singing bird spotted at LaPlatte Bottoms on 10 July (BP, LP) was located about as far southeast as one can be in NE and find suitable breeding habitat.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: A persistent group has established itself along Stage Hill Road, Wildcat Hills, where 2 were found on 27 June (JS). This species is expanding its range significantly into southeastern Wyoming and southwestern NE.

Eastern Bluebird: Rather far west, where it is uncommon in the western Republican Valley, were 9 found below Enders Res dam on 12 June (DH).

Mountain Bluebird: Five young were seen on 24 June in north Sioux Co (LE), and birds were present in west Ash Canyon in late June (BA).

Townsend's Solitaire: The only report was of one bird seen in Sowbelly Canyon on 27 June (JS), where it is a only a casual breeder.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: A rather late migrant appeared in Cass Co on 3 June (GW).

Swainson's Thrush: The latest spring records for the state are from the northwest, in mid-June. This year one was identified at CLNWR on 5 June (AK), and another was spotted in West Ash Canyon between 11 and 13 June (WM).

Wood Thrush: The only report came from southeastern Otoe Co on 7 June (LF, CF). Observers should report sightings of this species, as it is a good indicator of woodland status.

American Robin: Routine reports.

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: This species is now hard to miss in summer in the Panhandle and south of the Platte Valley. Elsewhere, 2 were seen in Seward Co on 2 June (B), and singles were located in Cass Co on 6 June (GW) and in Omaha on 11 June (B).

Brown Thrasher: A good count was 27 tallied in Adams Co on 6 June (LR, RH).

European Starling: Flocks of juveniles form as early as mid-June; a flock of 65 was noted in Lancaster Co on 13 June (LE).

Cedar Waxwing: Breeding birds are scattered statewide; a nesting pair was located at Rock Creek L on 12 June (MB, DH), and birds carrying nesting material were found at 2 locations in Alma on 20 June (GH, WH). And as many as 10 were spotted at Alma on 22 June (GH, WH).

Blue-winged Warbler: Two territorial singing males were reported: one at FF on 11 June (JG), and another along the north shore of the Niobrara River between Cornell Dam and Berry Bridge on 18 June (PK). These are only the 3rd and 4th reports for NE later than 3 June.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Rather incredible was the report of one seen near FL on 28 July (GH, WH), although there is precedent, as one was reported by Rosche in Keith Co on 19 July 1977. This species may arrive early in fall, as early dates are August 10,11,12.

Northern Parula: The only report was of 2 found singing in FF on 18 June (BP, LP).

Yellow Warbler: Routine reports.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: Reports arrived from the summer range in June in West Ash Canyon (WM) and northern Sioux Co (LE).

Yellow-throated Warbler: The only report was of one bird singing at FF on 18 June (BP, LP).

Cerulean Warbler: None reported.

Black-and-white Warbler: The two reports came from the breeding range: singles were spotted at Long Pine Area on 22 June (B) and in Sowbelly Canyon on 24 June (LE).

American Redstart: Reports arrived from the usual breeding range in June in Cass Co (GW), West Ash Canyon (WM), and northern Sioux and Dawes Cos (LE); but a pair found on the northern edge of Scottsbluff on 9 July (AK) is one of very few such reports away from the Pine Ridge in the west.

Prothonotary Warbler: None reported.

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Two reports were received, one from Platte River SP on 22 July (LF, CF), a known breeding location, and another from a rather northerly location in northern Thurston Co on 18 June (B). The latter is the northernmost summer record for this species.

Kentucky Warbler: The two reports came from the current breeding range: two birds seen at Hummel Park, Omaha, on 20 June (B) and one found at Schramm SP on 4 July (B).

MacGillivray's Warbler: Two birds were reported at Gilbert-Baker Campground, Monroe Canyon, on 25 July; although not certain, the observer suspected that one was a young bird (EB). This sighting is about a month early for fall migrants and raises the possibility of breeding there. The species breeds in the higher Black Hills, but there is no evidence that it ever bred in NE.

Common Yellowthroat: The abundance of this species in suitable habitat was emphasized by a count of 100 along only 60 yards of dike at FL on 12 June (LR, RH). As the observers asked, "how many in all" are at FL in the summer?

Hooded Warbler: A still-hopeful male was singing along the stream at the northern edge of Hummel Park, Omaha, on 20 June (JT). It had not relocated as of 26 June (BP, LP, MB).

Wilson's Warbler: A very late migrant was singing along the southern side of Enders Res on 13 June (MB). This sighting represents the latest of 8 early June reports for the state, most from the west.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Three birds seen along the southern side of HCR on 20 June (LR, RH) provide what appears to be the only report of this species in the Republican Valley for many years. It has essentially been extirpated in eastern NE and only occurs in numbers in the north and west. Any other records from the Republican Valley would be very interesting.

Summer Tanager: None reported.

Scarlet Tanager: A pair spotted at Schramm SP on 4 July (BP, LP) was the westernmost reported, but still within the regular range.

Western Tanager: Routine reports.

Eastern Towhee: The one spotted on the southern side of HCR on 20 June appeared at the western edge of the breeding range, which extends along the Republican Valley to the Orleans area. Hybrids predominate from there westward.

Spotted Towhee: Both towhee species occur in "pure" form in Harlan Co, as well as hybrids. Spottedds were more numerous there this summer, with 7 counted along a 5-mile stretch of road (GH, WH). Up to 4 summered near Gibbon (LR, RH), also at the eastern edge of the summer range.

Cassin's Sparrow: Reports arrived from the usual range in southern Dundy Co: 3 birds were located 4 miles west and a half mile south of Benkelman on 12 June

(MB), and 8 were counted west of Benkelman on the Benkelman BBS route on 26 June (JS). No others were reported.

Chipping Sparrow: This species is least numerous south of the Platte River and west of Grand Island, and in the Sandhills, for which areas breeding evidence is spotty; although present the last 2 summers in Alma, nesting has not yet been noted (GH, WH).

Brewer's Sparrow: Reports arrived from the usual breeding range in the western Panhandle, along the Wyoming border in Sioux Co in late June (BA, LE); and one was counted on the Kimball BBS route on 27 June (JS), where it had been noted for the first time in 1998.

Field Sparrow: Uncommon westward south of the Platte Valley, 3 were sighted at Enders Res on 8 June (DH). A good count as far west as Harlan Co was 10 found on 20 June along the southern side of HCR (LR, RH).

Vesper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Routine reports.

Savannah Sparrow: The only report of this rare summering bird was of 3 seen at LM on 29 June (CNK). There are scattered summer records for the Panhandle and in northern NE.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Good numbers occupy sandy outliers south of the Platte River in northern Kearney Co: 5 were counted on 12 June and 14 on 18 July (LR, RH). This species is abundant in drier grasslands, most of which are in central and western NE.

Henslow's Sparrow: A singing bird spotted at Nine Mile Prairie, Lincoln, on 2 June (JS) fits the pattern of recent prairie-remnant-related sightings in southeastern NE; but unexpected was the report of one bird singing on 25 July at Harvard Marsh (JGJ).

Song Sparrow: As many as 30 were seen at FL on 12 June (LR, RH). This species is slowly establishing itself throughout the RWB; one was noted 3 miles northwest of Holstein, Kearney Co, on 6 June (LR, RH), and 2 were found at Jensen Basin on 6 June (LR, RH).

Swamp Sparrow: All reports arrived from the growing population at FL, where the best count reached 20 on 5 July (LR, RH, LB), a new high for the location.

Dark-eyed Junco: None reported.

McCown's Longspur: Several reports were received from the summer range in the western Panhandle. Five birds were found along the Wyoming border in Sioux Co on 24 June (LE), as many as 17 were counted on the Agate BBS route in central Sioux Co on 28 June (JS), and 6 were found on the Kimball BBS route in southwestern Kimball Co on 27 June (JS).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Good numbers of this species were also found in the Panhandle; 51 were counted on the Agate BBS route in central Sioux Co on 28 June (JS) and 13 on the Kimball BBS route in southwestern Kimball Co on 27 June (JS).

Northern Cardinal: Breeding occurs throughout the Republican Valley, but numbers are low westward. Enders Res hosted 4 to 5 in the period from 7 to 12 June (DH), and a pair was located at Rock Creek L on 12 June (DH).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Three appeared in the observers' yard near Gibbon from 4 June through the period (LR, RH); no Black-headed Grosbeaks were noted there.

Black-headed Grosbeak: Routine reports.

Blue Grosbeak: As many as 5 singing males were found in northern Thurston Co on 18 June (B), a good count for the east.

Lazuli Bunting: Routine reports.

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: Rather uncommon westward, especially early in summer, 6 were counted between Imperial and Enders Res on 7 June (DH).

Bobolink: This species was widely reported this summer, including sites south of the Platte Valley. In June, young were noted at 2 locations in Cass Co (GW), and birds were seen in eastern Otoe Co (GW, LF, CF) and at Jack Sinn Marsh on 2 June (B). July reports are likely to be of migrants; the 22 in a flock in Cuming Co on 17 July (LE) provided a clear example, but single birds or small family-sized groups in July are equivocal as to their status. Examples of the latter are one bird spotted at Mallard Haven on 6 July (BP, LP) and 3 reported at Sacramento-Wilcox Area on 13 July (GH, WH).

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Rarely reported from south of the Platte Valley and westward, one was singing at FL on 12 June (LR, RH). Are there other summer sites west of Grand Island and south of the Platte Valley?

Western Meadowlark: Routine Reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Most southerly were the 45 birds seen at FL, a regular summer location, on 12 June (LR, RH), and a few present all summer near Nebraska City (LF, CF).

Brewer's Blackbird: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: Young were noted at FL, a regular breeding location, on 11 July (LB). The species continued at the far western outpost, Kiowa Springs, near where 4 were seen on 22 June (AK). Other sightings, of small numbers, were scattered around Lancaster Co on 6 June and 25 July (LE) and in Otoe Co between 12 June and 1 July (LF, CF).

Common Grackle: Flocks form by mid-July, such as one of 280 birds spotted in Cuming Co on 17 July (LE).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Reports were routine, but see the preceding Horned Lark report.

Orchard Oriole: Adults were seen feeding unfledged young at LM on 29 June (CNK).

Baltimore Oriole: A male spotted at Champion L on 12 June (DH) was rather far west, although "pure" birds occur in summer statewide except for the Panhandle.

Bullock's Oriole: Gering Cem is a good place for this species; 2 pairs were found feeding young there on 4 July, with one brood fledged and the other still in the nest (CNK). As many as 13 were counted in northern Sioux and Dawes Cos between 19 and 25 June (LE). The two located on the Agate BBS route on 28 June (JS) must have looked hard to find a tree!

House Finch: Routine reports.

Red Crossbill: This species was common on the Pine Ridge (LE), with "loads" reported in Monroe Canyon and "at least a truckload" observed in West Ash Canyon between 11 and 13 June. (WM). How many Red Crossbills are there in a load??? Ten appeared in the observers' yard on 13 June (AK), a time when young are fledged and birds wander around in flocks.

Pine Siskin: An adult male (ASY-M for you banders) was spotted rather late at Bellevue on 1 June and was promptly banded (RG). Few others were reported, the 2 sighted in Monroe Canyon representing the only ones seen on a trip through the Pine Ridge (LE); and at least one was seen at Gering Cem on 4 July (CNK).

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.

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The Ultraviolet Birds of Nebraska

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That the visual range of at least some birds extends into the ultraviolet region has been known since the early 1970s, when it was first discovered in hummingbirds and pigeons. The ultraviolet region is that energy consisting of light waves shorter than violet, and thus beyond human perception. Although UV perception has long been recognized to occur in many insects and other invertebrate groups, scientists had doubted that either birds or mammals have this ability. Instead, it was generally assumed that the vertebrate cornea provides a protective block to ultraviolet waves, perhaps because UV energy can do damage to the living cells of the retina. Similarly, melanin in the dead mammalian cells of the skin's surface layer provides such a block for preventing UV light from reaching living cells underneath.

However, recent studies (Bennett and Cuthill, 1994; Burkhardt, 1989; Burkhardt and Finger, 1991; Chen et al., 1984; Derim-Oglu & Maximov, 1994; Parrish et al., 1984) have shown that UV perception occurs in many birds, perhaps even most. It might prove useful to birds in several ways. One is that, although most vegetation does not reflect UV, some fruits and seeds do, and thus they may be more obvious to fruit- and seed-eating birds when foraging. Additionally, some insects reflect UV as well, and this might also be significant in foraging by insectivores. Perhaps most importantly, UV perception may alter the way that birds see other birds of their own or other species. Thus, strong UV reflections might help make an individual more attractive to a potential mate, as has been shown in several recent studies (Bennett et al., 1996; Andersson & Amundsen, 1997). On the other hand, a plumage that does not reflect UV might allow a bird to blend into its background and thus make it less conspicuous to an enemy having similar UV visual sensitivity. Other suggested advantages of UV sensitivity in birds include its possible application in achieving celestial orientation when navigating over unfamiliar territory (Parrish et al., 1984), or for use by predators in following the spoor or scent marks of prey animals that leave UV "tracks" behind them (Koivula et al., 1997).

Intrigued by these thoughts, I recently obtained a research-quality source of UV light (much more effective than the "black light" bulbs that are readily available commercially, although these might also serve for school science projects). I then examined some study specimens of Nebraska birds, using it as a sole source of illumination. Many of the birds, perhaps most, showed no apparent change in the colors we perceive under normal incandescent or so-called "white"

light. However, some changes were quite remarkable. The bluish to black colors of the Corvidae were especially impressive. An American Crow literally shimmered in its violet iridescence, whereas a Gray Jay was transformed into a strange, rather unworldly greenish hue. Blue Jays and Steller's Jays were more intensively bluish and generally more brilliant. Their blue feather colors are produced by a combination of typical light refracting metallic iridescent hues and the so-called "Tyndall effect." This latter results from a light-scattering of the shorter blue-to-violet light waves by extremely small melanin granules at or near the feather surface. The same visual effect is also responsible for the seemingly blue sky above us, and is caused by similar light-scattering by atmospheric dust particles. Scattering of even shorter light waves can produce ultraviolet reflectance.

Other visual effects that I noticed were equally remarkable. The reflectance levels of a male Common Grackle and of a male Brown-headed Cowbird were high, but those of a female Cowbird were nil, as one might expect from a bird that often remains hidden in vegetation while looking for nests to parasitize. The ruby gorget of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird became more intense and violet-tinted, and it is likely that many hummingbirds use the UV end of the spectrum for important gorget-related signaling (Goldsmith, 1980; Bleiweiss, 1995). The green head of a male Mallard seemed as it were lit up from within, and Mallards are also among those bird species now known to see into the ultraviolet. Even more remarkably, the large, seemingly black, spots on the scapulars and inner wing feathers of a Mourning Dove strongly reflected a beautiful purplish-violet cast, as did the small oval dark marks on its lower cheeks. Many other doves and pigeons have similar blackish head spots or neck markings that might be equally reflective of UV light, and perhaps these areas are of special behavioral importance to doves and pigeons generally. The bronzy iridescence on the necks of Mourning Doves and Rock Doves were also much more conspicuous under UV light, and these areas are very conspicuous during display calling.

All of these observations make me believe that our human eyesight does not allow us to perceive the world as most birds do, and that they at times might be responding to visual clues literally beyond our ken. For example, are the ultraviolet "tear-drops" on the cheeks of a Mourning Dove an important visual "target" for close-up courtship, or are they perhaps important for stimulating preening by its mate? It would be interesting to modify or eliminate these small marks, and see what behavioral effects might result. Two individual male birds that, to human eyes, might appear identical, may be of quite differing attraction to females, depending upon their feathers' levels of UV reflectance. It has also been found that putting UV-reflectant leg bands on a bird can have social effects on other birds in ways we might not anticipate (Hunt et al., 1997; McGraw et al., 1999). The potential importance of recognizing the possible effects of avian UV light perception should not be under-estimated by students of bird behavior hoping to understand and perhaps experimentally manipulate their research subjects.

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COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT

(March 1999 - May 1999)

(An edited version of the United States Department of the Interior report follows.)

A peak population of 182 (164 adult/subadult and 18 juvenile) whooping cranes was reported at Aransas during the winter of 1998-99. An adult plumaged whooping crane, which wintered with sandhill cranes about 90 miles northeast of Aransas in Fort Bend County, was the record 183rd bird in the wintering flock. No birds are known to have been lost at Aransas during the winter. A 1986 color-marked female with a broken leg, last observed at Quivira NWR on December 29, 1998, was not reported during the spring migration, and is assumed to be dead. An estimated 183 whooping cranes migrated north in the spring of 1999, a net increase of 2 birds from the 181 present in spring, 1998. Departures from Aransas were about one week ahead of average. All cranes had migrated by April 21.

The first dates recorded for confirmed observations of migrating whooping cranes were March 4 in the United States and April 9 in Canada. The last sighting date was May 24. Sightings were reported from Oklahoma (2); Kansas (5); Nebraska (14); Iowa (2); North Dakota (6); Saskatchewan, Canada (13); and Manitoba, Canada (2). No confirmed sightings were reported in either Texas or South Dakota.

The peak of the migration in the United States appeared to be between April 2 and 15. An adult plumaged crane, probably the bird which wintered in Fort Bend County, Texas, was observed along the Platte River in central Nebraska from March 4 to March 23.

Major storms within the migratory corridor occurred on April 1 to 2, April 8, and April 14 to 15. Heavy snow fell across parts of North and South Dakota on April 1 to 2. On April 8, an intense low pressure area moved northeast across Nebraska, producing severe storms and strong west to northwest winds from Kansas northward. In all likelihood, the confirmation of nine whooping cranes in western Iowa on April 9, a sighting in Manitoba of two birds on April 14, and other sightings of birds east of the migration corridor were the result of the April 8 storm. Another storm on April 14 to 15 produced heavy rain and strong northwest winds. Persistent cloudy, cool weather with north winds from April 23 to 28 slowed the migration, and resulted in prolonged stopovers in Nebraska and Kansas.

Please contact Mr. Wally Jobman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if observation details are desired (203 West Second Street, Federal Building, Second Floor, Grand Island, NE, 58801; commercial telephone: (308) 382-6468, ext. 16; FAX (308) 384-8835; or e-mail, wally_jobman@mail.fws.gov).

Confirmed
Spring 1999 Whooping Crane Sightings in the U.S.A.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
NE 99A-1	03/04-23/99	1	Buffalo, Hall, and Hamilton Cos., 3 miles south and 2 east of Gibbon, T9N, R13W, S32, E2; 6 miles west and 1 south of Doniphan, T9N, R10W, S18, NW4; Platte River, 0.75 miles upstream from Hwy 34 bridge southeast of Grand Island, T10N, R9W, S1, SW4, SW4.
NE 99A-2	03/21/99	1	Buffalo Co., 2 miles south and 2 west of Gibbon I-80 interchange, flying. T8N, R14W, S11.
NE 99A-3	03/21-23/99	1	Hall Co., Platte River, 2 miles south and 2 west of Wood River I-80 inter-change, T9N, R12W, S23, NW4, SE4.
NE 99A-4	03/29/99	1	Buffalo Co., 1 mile south, 2 west, and 0.75 south of Shelton I-80 interchange, T8N, R13W, S4, SE4.
ND 99A-5	04/01-02/99	2	Mountrail Co., 5 miles south of Ross. T155N, R92W, S18.
NE 99A-6	04/02-08/99	2+1	Rock Co., 3 miles east, 3 north and 0.5 east of Bassett. T31N, R18W, S30, SE4.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
NE 99A-7	04/03/99	2	Phelps Co., 2 miles south of Overton I-80 interchange, 1.5 miles east, and 0.5 south. T8N, R19W, S17, N1/2. W-nil; BwB-nil.
NE 99A-8	04/03/99	2	Phelps Co., Funk Lagoon WPA, 1.5 miles east and 2 north of Funk. T6N, R17W, S10, NW4, SE4; S15, NE4, SW4; S15, SE4.
NE 99A-9	04/06/99	2	Hall Co., flying 1 mile east of Grand Island. T114, R9W, S24.
NE 99A-10	04/02-08/99	2	Holt Co., 5 miles east, 6 north, and 0.25 east of Newport. T31N, R16W, S5, SW4.
NE 99A-11	04/06-08/99	2	Loup Co., 5 miles west, 1.5 north, and 0.5 east of Taylor. T21N, R19W, S13, NW4, SE4.
NE 99-A12	04/09-11/99	2+1	Antelope Co., 5 miles west and 1 north of Clearwater. T26N, R8W, S29, 32. G-GwG.
IA 99A-13	04/09-12/99	6	Harrison Co., 2 miles west of Hwy 30/I-29 inter-change, 2.5 south, and 1 east. T72N, R45W, S36. HS-W.
IA 99A-14	04/09-12/99	2+1	Page Co., 2.4 miles north of Essex. T70N, R39W, S14, NW4.
KS 99A-15	04/11/99	2	Phillips Co., 2 miles east of Phillipsburg. T3S, R17W, S29.
ND 99A-16	04/11/99	2	Burke Co., 3 miles south and 7 west of Coteau. T160N, R91W, S8, SE4.
ND 99A-17	04/14-19/99	3	Burleigh Co., 2 miles north and 0.5 east of Moffit. T137N, R76W, S4; T138N, R76W, S33, 34. Nil-HS.
ND 99A-18	04/14/99	2	Burke Co., 6 miles north and 5 east of Bowbells. T162N, R88W, S5.
NE 99A-19	04/12/99	4	Buffalo Co., flying 8 miles west of Ravenna. T12N, R15W, S7.
OK 99A-20	04/07/99	6	Custer Co., flying over Washita NWR hqtrs., 6 miles west and 1 north of Butler. T14N, R20W, S26.
OK 99A-21	04/07-08/99	8	Custer Co., 5 miles south and 1 west of Thomas. T14N, R15W, S24.
ND 99A-22	04/15-17/99	5	Sargent Co., 4.5 miles west of and 0.5 north of Havana. T129N, R56W, S28, NW4.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
ND 99A-23	04/14/99	2	Sheridan Co., 3 miles south of Martin. T150N, R74W, S26.
NE 99A-24	04/24-30/99	4+1	Phelps Co., 1 mile north and 1.5 east of Funk, Funk WPA. T6N, R17W, S15, NE4, SW4; S15, E2; S16, NE4, SW4.
KS 99A-25	04/19/99	3	Pratt Co., 1.25 miles east and 1 south of Pratt, flying. T28S, R13W, S1.
KS 99A-26	04/20/99	8	Rush Co., 6 miles north and 4 west of Pawnee Rock, flying. T19S, R16W, S36.
KS 99A-27	04/25-26/99	8	Norton Co., 6 miles west and 2.5 south of Norton. T3S, R24W, S14, NE4, SW4.
NE 99A-28	03/15/99	2	Buffalo Co., Platte River, 2.5 miles upstream (west) from the Gibbon Platte River bridge, Rowe Audubon Sanctuary. T8N, R14W, S10, SW4.
KS 99A-29	04/26-30/99	2	Reno Co., 5 miles south, 2 west, and 0.5 south of Hutchinson. T24S, R6W, S15, NW4.

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1998 NEBRASKA NESTING REPORT

Wayne J. Mollhoff
1817 Boyd Street
Ashland, NE 68003

INTRODUCTION

Following a hiatus of nearly a decade, this report on the nesting birds of Nebraska reinstates a Nebraska Bird Review tradition that began with an anonymous compilation (apparently by the editor) of the notes from two observers in the 1955 breeding season (Anonymous 1956). By 1965, with the inception of the Cornell Nest Record Card Program, data was collected on standardized cards, with the completed cards being forwarded to Cornell University in New York.

I accepted responsibility for the program several years ago; but by mutual agreement with the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union leadership, I have delayed work until the Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas Project was completed. With that task largely finished, I plan to rebuild the network of cooperators who contributed so much time and expertise in the past.

The bulk of this report consists of statements of goals, explanation of format, guidance for future work, explanation of standards, etc. It is followed by a

report of my own nesting observations for 1998, and a request for assistance by interested observers in the future.

Since major changes in content, format, and direction are planned, a draft was circulated to NOU Directors with whom I had been working, as well as a variety of researchers, authors, editors and potential users, to obtain their input. Their comments and discussion proved very useful and made significant improvements in the report. Their valuable contributions are very much appreciated.

BACKGROUND

The first several nesting reports were published in written, essay-type format, and included many interesting and valuable details. As the number of contributors and records grew, however, the report soon assumed an abbreviated, almost telegraphic style (Pritchard & Pritchard 1958). This allowed the reporting of virtually every record of every species in every area of Nebraska, but precluded the inclusion of such important details as dates and locations. Nest record cards were sent directly to Cornell without retaining a copy here; hence, the information readily available to local researchers has been restricted to the limited information published in the annual nesting report.

Rather than continuing the abbreviated, tabular format used recently (e.g. Bennett 1990), my plan is to use an open, essay-type format which includes more details. Species data reported will include name, date, observer, what was observed, and a brief location. This format will allow publication of nearly complete basic data on selected species. Routine reports of common, well-reported species will be mentioned only briefly but their full data will be added to our database, forwarded to the Cornell database (Baicich & Harrison 1997), and selected species will be accessioned into the Natural Heritage Program database at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC).

DOCUMENTATION

Insufficient documentation is a problem that has plagued the study the birds of Nebraska since the first reports were published more than a century ago. A recent note was published in American Birds reporting the first Nebraska nesting record of Marbled Godwit (Grzybowski 1990), but it lacked a date and listed the location only as Dawes County. Until further details are available, I believe this format is inadequate, especially to document a first record of breeding. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. A century ago, Bates (1899) reported that Pinyon Jays had been found breeding north of Rushville in Sheridan County in 1897. Most later authors have repeated that report, while adding a few new ones, all without specific details or conclusive evidence of breeding (Cary 1902; Bruner et al. 1904; Haecker et al. 1945; Rapp et al. 1958, 1971; Johnsgard 1979a, 1979b; Rosche 1982). Only Bruner (1901) and Johnsgard (1980, 1998) were more cautious and did not assume breeding. In fact, in the century since Bates first reported breeding, but without providing detailed, conclusive evidence, there has still not been a published report of an active Pinyon Jay nest in Nebraska, and definitive proof of breeding by the species in the state has yet to be published. I mention this simply as an example of our woeful lack of knowledge about a species

that we all "know" has been breeding in the state for at least the past century. However, in the absence of complete details and definitive proof of breeding, its breeding status must remain hypothetical. We must not assume anything, about this species or any other. Dr. Robert Wolcott's gold standard, "We must know what we know, and record only what we know we know" (1899), is as applicable today as when he wrote it.

DOCUMENTATION STANDARDS

For more than a century, an adequately documented ornithological record, whether a written record or a specimen, has included at minimum: 1) the identity of the bird, 2) date, 3) location, 4) name of observer / collector, and, 5) what was observed / collected. While the bulk of such records have shifted from specimens to written records, the basic requirement for supporting data has not decreased; if anything, it has increased. A century ago Elliott Coues exhorted his colleagues to record at least a dozen items with each specimen collected. He then added, "But this [the specimen] is not enough; indeed, I am not sure that an ably conducted ornithological journal is not the better half of your operations." (Coues 1903). Without adequate supporting data, the usefulness of any record is severely limited.

With that in mind, observers are encouraged to use the Cornell Nest Record Cards to ensure the collection of complete information in a standardized format. Whether submitted on a nest record card or in a written note, for a report to be adequately documented, it MUST include at least: 1) species name, 2) date of observation, 3) a reasonably precise, identifiable location (my preference would be a legal description including township, range, section), 4) name of the observer, and 5) what was observed (e.g. nest building, nest with eggs/young, dependent non-mobile young, etc.) Additional supporting details also requested on the card include comments on habitat, nest height and location, support plant/structure, etc. If you suspect nesting by a hybrid pair, a rare or unusual species but cannot find conclusive confirmatory evidence, send in a report anyway; it may lead eventually to the confirmation of an accidental breeder, or add a new species to our breeding list.

DATA PROCESSING

Once complete, the cards will be used to compile the annual nesting report and entered into a database. After entry in the local database, records on certain species will also be accessioned into the Nature Conservancy's Natural Heritage

Program database maintained by NGPC. Finally, all completed records will then be forwarded to the database at Cornell University.

USES FOR NESTING DATA

Despite the continuous publication of our observations for a century, many of our regular breeders still have very few specific, complete data published, lacking such critical details as egg dates, dates of hatching and fledgling, location (except for the name of the county), and other details critical for researchers in

need of specific information. A prime example of the need for such data arose during the Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas Project, when I was unable to provide a list of "safe dates" when each species could be expected to be breeding (as opposed to migrating, for example). Most atlas projects provided such a list; we were unable to do so because data on egg dates, hatching and fledging were, and are, simply not available for Nebraska.

A careful reading of Ducey's exhaustive summary of breeding records (1988) reveals many of the gaps in our knowledge. The Breeding Bird Atlas Project, 1984-1989, helped close many distributional gaps; but the report, while containing much new information on timing, clutch size, habitat, etc., also points out numerous remaining gaps in our knowledge of Nebraska's breeding avifauna (Mollhoff, in press).

1998 NESTING REPORT (All records included in this report were from data collected by the author.):

In response to a researcher's request for information from another researcher, and following the previously stated goals, I briefly collected data in 1998 on House Finch breeding activity. A total of 21 active nests with eggs (NE) or nests with young (NY) were found, as follows: Cass Co. (NE) from 3 to 10 May; Saunders Co. (NE) between 2 and 12 May; Lancaster Co. (NE) between 4 and 18 May; Polk Co. (NE) on 8 May; Lincoln Co. (NE, NY) on 17 May. In addition, occupied nests without eggs were noted in Madison, Nance and Platte counties on 8 May, and Scotts Bluff Co. on 15 May. With such a tight range of dates, it appears that breeding is closely synchronized across the length of the state, despite the fact that we may be dealing with two formerly separated populations. The reported nest sites included: blue spruce (17), white spruce (2), white fir (2), and 1 in an open building. Other readily available sites to choose from included ponderosa pine, scotch pine, red cedar and a variety of other conifers and deciduous trees and shrubs, porches, garages, picnic shelters, etc. Nests were usually placed in the dense growth of small, ornamental conifers 8 to 15 feet in height, but were also occasionally found in the lower branches of mature trees. Most nests (14) were placed 6 to 10 ft. up, with extremes of 4 and 14 ft. There were frequently 1 to 3 old nests in the same tree in varying stages of disrepair, suggesting that the same tree is often re-used even when additional identical trees are available only a few feet away. No re-use of old nests was noted.

Other species reported (also by the author):

Common Poorwill: A nest with 2 eggs was found atop a ridge in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co., on 12 June, just a few yards from where a nest with 2 eggs was located between 30 and 31 May 1997.

White-throated Swift: A nest with 4 eggs was found in a cliff in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co., on 13 June.

Lewis's Woodpecker: A bird was noted defending territory and occupying a hole 58 ft. up a 70 ft. dead pine snag on 22 May, but when checked again on 12 June, the nest was still empty and the birds were absent. However, an old hole 20 ft. lower

in the same snag held an American Kestrel nest with 5 eggs on the first visit, and 5 young on the latter date.

Pinyon Jay: I previously reported finding used nests south of Redington, Morrill Co., on 16 May 1998, in the immediate vicinity of adults with fledged young of the year (Silcock & Jorgensen 1998). However, further study of nests in museum collections convinces me that they were not Pinyon Jay nests, and the nests remain unidentified. Furthermore, despite extensive searching, the location of the flock's nesting territory has not yet been found.

Pygmy Nuthatch: A nest in a pine snag in Monroe Canyon, Sioux Co., held a clutch of 10 eggs on 23 May. It was near another snag with a nest that held 7 eggs on 31 May 1997.

Brewer's Blackbird: In a canyon south of Redington, Morrill Co., a nest with 3 eggs was found in a cliff niche on 17 May; while nearby, another nest with 1 egg was found 10 ft. up in a ponderosa pine on the same day. On 24 May, in the badlands north of Redington, 2 ground nests with 3 and 4 eggs were found hidden beneath clumps of aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) [=skunkbush sumac (*R.a. trilobata*)].

TARGET SPECIES

As mentioned earlier, an effort will be made to focus attention on selected species. Priority will be given to documenting species which have not previously or recently been found breeding in the state (e.g. Eurasian Collared-Dove, Sandhill Crane). It will include species undergoing range changes, in an effort to document expansion or contractions (e.g. Cattle Egret, Great-tailed Grackle). It will also include species whose breeding status is undetermined, rare, or irregular (e.g. Clark's Nutcracker, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Sparrow). Also included will be those species which are probably regular breeders, but which have few detailed reports on record (e.g. Red Crossbill, Violet-green Swallow, Western Tanager), as well as those with very limited distribution (e.g. Black-necked Stilt, Mississippi Kite). Unfortunately, a large percentage of our breeders fall into one or more of the above groups.

I am requesting all available reports, regardless of how old, on breeding by Cattle Egrets, Great-tailed Grackles and House Finches. I am particularly interested in observations in the past two decades, documenting when and where breeding has occurred and when it was first noted. Complete information would be ideal, but even incomplete reports that indicate breeding will be helpful in understanding the dynamic range expansions undergone by these species. If you have any observations in your old notes, please report them so they can be added to the data base.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS NEEDED

Do you have Violet-green Swallows nesting in your nest boxes? There are virtually no details on breeding in Nebraska, probably because they often choose inaccessible nest sites. However, they sometimes nest in bluebird boxes. Especially needed are dates for eggs and/or young in the nest, and fledgling dates, as well as nest location. In addition to the examples listed previously, detailed reports are needed on Cassin's Kingbird, Western Tanager, Dark-eyed (White-

winged) Junco, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler, Plumbeous Vireo, and Red Crossbill.

Finally, anyone finding evidence of breeding by wild birds (nest building, nests with eggs or young, adults feeding young or carrying fecal sacs, etc.) is invited to submit the information for inclusion in the annual nesting report. Interested observers are encouraged to contribute information on the Cornell Nest Record Cards and are invited to request the necessary nest record cards. A separate card is needed for each nest. Information on breeding, reports, requests for cards and completed cards may be directed to me. All observers who contribute data will be listed in the annual nesting report in a way similar to that used in the seasonal occurrence reports.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special appreciation is extended to NOU board members Neal Ratzlaff, Clem Klaphake, Thomas Labedz, and Bill Clemente, and also to Esther Bennett, previous nesting report compiler for many years, to Paul Johnsgard and Ross Silcock, and to Mike Fritz of NGPC. They were kind enough to review an early draft of the article and provide valuable discussion and guidance. Finally, special thanks to Thomas Labedz for reviewing a later draft.

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Three Poems by Roy Scheele

At the Kitchen Window

Before the snow added its wavy lines
of big wet heavy sideways-falling flakes
to the occluded light, I saw a creeper
climb wagging up the burr oak's pleated bark.
Had I not seen him when he landed there
I doubt I would have made him out at all,
so suited were his markings to the tree.
And then he left the tree, flew toward the house,
and landing on the brick beyond the grass
resumed his waddling ascent, looking in
(or seeming to look in). I held my breath
and stood stock-still, watching him climb and peer;
I saw his tiny eyes and upturned bill.
Then he was off again, back to the tree,
taking up his quick and restive progress,
his dark back feathers blending with the bark
until at last I lost him, and the snow
began, and the cold north wind to blow.

Prodigal

The cardinal's clear, repeated call,
like water gushing from a spring,
drenches the leaves of the cherry tree
with its fresheting.

Something in those unstoppered notes,
a thread of silver like a rill,
runs off glittering on its own
in a rambling trill

before it trails off in the air,
the echo thinning into mist,
leaving a scar like mercury
at the singing's crest.

The Patience of the Hawk

He perches on a fencepost in the fog
beside the road, his range restricted now,
his talons' raking balance on the wood
much like the falcon's on the falconer's glove
after the securing of the hood.

Roy Scheele is Poet in Residence and Professor of English at Doane College and has published numerous poems in a variety of journals, including *The American Scholar*, *Bulb*, *Interim*, *Northeast*, *Pivot*, and *Whole Notes*. His most recent publication is a beautifully illustrated chapbook, "Keeping the Horses," published by Windflower Press. For further information on Roy Scheele, see the following internet address:
<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/scheele.htm>

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