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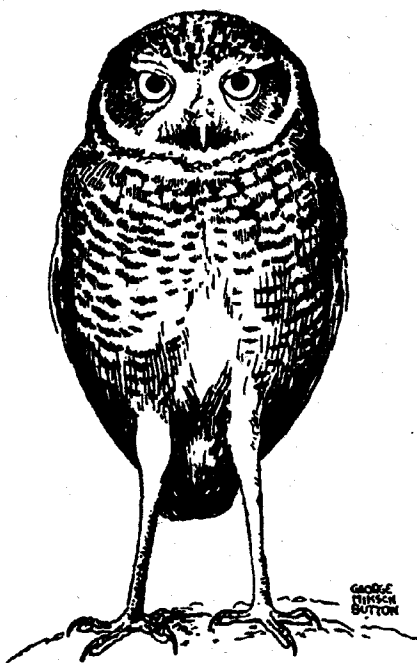
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FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Of interest to many is evidence of northward movement of species which generally summer on the Great Plains. In addition to White-winged Dove and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, both slowly establishing as breeders in Nebraska, significant numbers of Glossy Ibis continue to be found, probably associated with major increases in numbers of White-faced Ibis. Perhaps the biggest surprise this late summer and early fall was the large number of Lesser Goldfinches reported from the southern Panhandle.

Less exciting by far, but worthy of attention were reports of several Mute Swans in the Omaha area, including a duo of juveniles, and a couple of sightings of Monk Parakeets, last known to breed in the state in 1998. Neither would be welcome additions to the breeding avifauna of Nebraska.

Notable western species found in the east included California Gull and Rufous Hummingbird, while Cassin's Kingbird and Cassin's Vireo crept eastward farther than usual. Most surprising in this group, however, was a Pygmy Nuthatch in Lincoln, a very rare vagrant in general. A mention also for Varied Thrush, a rare but annual visitor from way west, of which 3 were reported. Conversely, best eastern bird west was an immature Blackburnian Warbler banded in Scotts Bluff County.

Relative to last year's good numbers, both Red-breasted Nuthatch and Purple Finch were back to normal levels. At the time of this writing, no notable incursions of winter birds had been detected. Among regular migrants, Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, and Orange-crowned Warbler appeared in excellent numbers; the migration period for Orange-crowned Warbler occupied all of 3 months. Strangely, Wilson's Warbler, usually abundant as a migrant in the west, was at a low ebb.

In the category of phenomena, the huge roost of Purple Martins in central Omaha, peaking at 35,000, was unprecedented as far as we know.

Finally, an identification note. Two vireos of the "Solitary" complex were banded, measured, and well-photographed in Scotts Bluff County by Nancy Gobris of Nebraska Prairie Partners. Measurements indicated both were unequivocally Cassin's, but plumage characters indicated at least one may have been a Plumbeous.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co

BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co

Cem: Cemetery

Co(s): County(ies)

CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co

FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co

GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Knox/Cedar Cos

HCR: Harlan Co Res SRA, Harlan Co

L: Lake

LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co

LO: L Ogallala (includes contiguous Keystone L), Keith Co

m. ob.: many observers

NC: Nature Center

NLB: North Lake Basin WMA, Seward Co

NM: National Monument

NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

NWR: National Wildlife Refuge

PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co

Res: Reservoir

RWB: Rainwater Basin, including parts of Phelps, Hamilton, York, Clay, Fillmore, and Thayer Cos

SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co

SHP: State Historical Park

SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)

SP: State Park

SRA: State Recreation Area

WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co

WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area

WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area

WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co

GAZETTEER

Bittern's Call: WMA, Dawson Co

Calamus Res: SRA, Loup and Garfield Cos

Chadron SP: Dawes Co

Forest Lawn Cem: Omaha

Funk Lagoon: WPA, Phelps Co

Harvard Marsh: WPA, Clay Co

Hultine: WPA, North and South units, Clay Co

Oliver Res: SRA, Kimball Co

Ponca SP: Dixon Co

Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central Nebraska

Sutherland Res: SRA, Lincoln Co

Tamora Basin: WPA, Seward Co

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering

ARy: Allan Reyer, Bellevue

BR: Brooks Rownd, Hilo, HI

CG: Carlos Grande, Clay Center y España
CHy: Carr Heaney, Omaha
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue
CS: Carolyn Sonderman, Omaha
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames
DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk
DL: Dan Leger, Lincoln
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn
EB: Elliott Bedows, Omaha
ECT: Edna Claire Thomas, Morrill
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma
GJ: Gerry Jorgensen, Blair
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell
JD: Jeff Drahota, Lincoln
JED: James E. Ducey, Lincoln
JF: John Flavin, Chadron
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha
JS: Jon Strong, Omaha
JW: Jan Whitson, Seward
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha
KC: K. Carnes, Lincoln
KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney
KSc: Kathy Schwery, Plattsmouth
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue
L&CF: Laurence & Carol Falk, Nebraska City
LD: Linda Deeds, North Platte
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton
MCv: Matthew Cvetas, Evanston, IL
ML: Mike Lesnik, Helena, MT
MS: Matthew Sittel, Bellevue
NG: Nancy Gobris, Scottsbluff
NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings
PP: Pat Pourchot, Alaska
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PZ: Penny Zahurones, Omaha
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RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon
RL: Roger Lawson, Curtis

RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha
RSi: Ruben Siegfried, Scottsbluff
RSm: Rod Smith, Gering
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA
SR: Sarah Rehme, Lincoln
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
TR: Tommie Rogers, Mound City, MO
TS: Tom Stehn, Austwell, TX
TSi: Tina Simeon, Ogallala
TSm: Ty Smedes, Urbandale, IA
WF: William Flack, Madison
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: A straggler was in Madison Co 24 Aug (MB).

Snow Goose: The usual stragglers were noted: 8 in all during Aug (JGJ, MB, DSt, LE). Large flocks arrived on time in Nov; tens of thousands were flying south over Washington Co 23 Nov (PP).

Ross's Goose: Routine reports.

Cackling Goose: One at Sutherland Res 30 Aug (MB, DSt) may have summered there; fall arrival begins late Sep.

Canada Goose: Routine reports.

Mute Swan: Currently this species is not established in Nebraska, and so several reports around Omaha were of interest. Two apparently unmarked juveniles were at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 1-23 Nov (JWH photos, PS photos, DL); these were likely fledged in the Omaha area, but may have flown in from some distance. Single adults were reported at Zorinsky L 4-7 Sep (RS), on a pond near 140th and Burt all summer though 29 Nov (CHy), and one on Regency L 14 Nov (JSt). I am unaware of any breeding pairs in the area.

Trumpeter Swan: Routine reports.

Tundra Swan: None were reported; this is a rare fall migrant.

Wood Duck: Rather late females and broods were in Sarpy Co 2 Aug (CNK) and Lancaster Co 21 Aug (LE).

Gadwall: The 1298 in Lancaster Co 20 Oct (LE) was a good count.

American Wigeon: Routine reports.

Mallard: Sutherland Res hosted an impressive (for recent years) 35,000 on 4 Nov (SJD); high fall counts are in the 75,000+ range.

Blue-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Cinnamon Teal: None were reported; these birds become inconspicuous in late summer as males enter eclipse plumage and all birds depart by mid-Sep.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-winged Teal: The past few summers have seen more of this species in the e. RWB, with the first breeding there in 2007; the 2nd breeding record was a female with 2 large but unfledged young at Hultine 23 Aug (JGJ). Despite noticeable numbers (mostly molt migrants?) appearing at many locations in late summer, there are only 4 breeding records south of the Platte River.

Canvasback: The 2-3 at North Platte SL 4 Aug (TJW) were early, as was one there 27 Aug (JGJ); these were likely failed breeders. Such early fall records are scarce.

Redhead: The 20 at North Platte SL 4 Aug (TJW) were likely failed breeders; such early fall reports away from breeding areas are unusual.

Ring-necked Duck: Surprising were the 2-3 taking advantage of excellent water conditions at Bittern's Call 29 Aug-12 Sep (TJW, LR, RH, WF); this species is not known to breed in Nebraska.

Greater Scaup: Routine reports.

Lesser Scaup: Routine reports.

Surf Scoter: At least 4 of this rare fall migrant were at LM 4 Nov (SJD), and another was at Sidney the same day (SJD).

White-winged Scoter: The only report of this rare fall migrant was a juvenile at LM 4 Nov (SJD).

Black Scoter: The 2 reports of this rare fall migrant were from Lancaster Co: 2 females/immatures were at Bluestem L 9 Nov (JGJ) and 2 more females/immatures were at PL 11 Nov (JGJ).

Long-tailed Duck: The only report was of 1-2 in Lincoln 9-10 Nov (JGJ).

Bufflehead: Routine reports.

Common Goldeneye: One in Scotts Bluff Co 18 Oct (AK) was rather early; there are only 5 earlier fall dates.

Hooded Merganser: Routine reports.

Common Merganser: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Merganser: Three in Sarpy Co 31 Oct (CNK) were rather early.

Ruddy Duck: A rare nester in the e. RWB, 2 broods about half-grown were present 23 Aug-11 Oct at or near Straight Water WMA, Seward Co, (JG, JGJ).

Gray Partridge: Two were found 5 Aug nw. of Laurel; the observer (MB) notes that "This area seems to be one of few reliable spots to find this species in northeastern Nebraska in recent years." Since 2000, all reports (except for a small Sioux Co population) are from extreme ne. Nebraska, including Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Thurston, and Wayne Cos.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Numbers appear to be good in the sw. Nebraska range, with reports 15 Oct east to Hayes Co (TJW).

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: Good numbers, 50+ in several coveys, were found at SCP 30 Nov (KP).

Common Loon: Routine reports.

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Horned Grebe: Earliest migrants appear in late Aug; 3 were at Bittern's Call 24 Aug (LR, RH), with 2 there 27 Aug (TH).

Red-necked Grebe: None were reported; this is a rare fall migrant.

Eared Grebe: Routine reports.



This juvenile Brown Pelican was at Harlan County Reservoir 19-23 October (photographed by Kent Skaggs 19th October; Glen & Wanda Hoge); it was Nebraska's sixth documented record.

Western Grebe: LM hosted 2830 on 4 Nov (SJD); 218 were at Sutherland Res the same day (SJD). These are good counts for Nov. Easterly were singles at PL 26 Oct (JGJ) and BOL 21 Nov (JGJ).

Clark's Grebe: Routine reports.

American White Pelican: Best count was 500 at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 5 Oct (WF); no large flocks were seen at HCR, unusual for there (G&WH). A straggler was near Niobrara 27 Nov (MB).

Brown Pelican: A juvenile at HCR 19-23 Oct (KS photo, G&WH details, WF) provided Nebraska's first documented fall record. There are 6 documented spring records, the latest 10 Jul.

Neotropic Cormorant: A non-breeding adult at BOL 26 Aug (LE details) was the 9th documented record for Nebraska. Reports have increased noticeably northward on the Great Plains in recent years.

Double-crested Cormorant: The 12,000 at HCR 5 Oct (G&WH) was a record fall count; all of the high fall counts are from HCR.

American Bittern: Only 3 were reported, during 4-26 Sep, including one flushed from rangeland in Lincoln Co 13 Sep (TJW, WF, JG).

Least Bittern: Only 3 of this generally scarce species were reported; singles were in w. Seward Co 14 Aug (JG) and York Co 20 and 28 Aug (LE), and another was a window strike in Hastings 23 Sep (PD). The last is rather late with only 5 later dates.

- Great Blue Heron:** Good water conditions and the large rookery along the Platte River allowed for large numbers in se. Sarpy Co, with 62 counted 9 Aug (CNK) and 50-100 estimated 16 Aug (ARy).
- Great Egret:** Best e. RWB count was 80 in w. Seward Co 7 Sep (JGJ), while the 43 in se. Sarpy Co 9 Aug (CNK) was a good count there.
- Snowy Egret:** Reports were mostly from the e. RWB through 7 Sep, with best count 7 on 9 Aug (JGJ, JG). The only other report was from BOL 2 Oct (LE).
- Little Blue Heron:** The only reports of this uncommon species were of immatures in Fillmore Co 9 Aug (JGJ) and Knox Co 28 Sep (MB).
- Cattle Egret:** Best count was a moderate 60 at Harvard Marsh 15 Sep (WF). One in w. Seward Co 9-12 Nov (JW) was the second-latest on record.
- Green Heron:** Routine reports.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** An immature near Niobrara 28 Nov (MB) was 4th-latest on record; there are 2 records for Dec and one for early Jan. The 24 at NLB 12 Sep (LE) was a good tally.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** More than usual were reported: a juvenile was at Funk Lagoon 2 Aug (KS) and 3 birds were there 23 Aug (JGJ), a juvenile was in Adams Co 4 Aug (PD), and an adult was in w. Seward Co 23 and 28 Aug (JGJ, LE).
- Glossy Ibis:** The assault on Nebraska by this species continues apace, with 5-6 reported; one observer (JGJ) noted that it is "ridiculous how ho-hum they have become this year". There are now about 24 records, all but 3 of these in 2006-2008. Singles were at NLB 3 Aug (CNK), in se. Sarpy Co 3 Aug (MCv), at Straight Water WMA, Seward Co, 9-16 Aug (JGJ), and Tamora Basin 23 Aug (JG). Two were found in the e. RWB 24 Aug (JGJ); these may be some of the birds listed above.
- White-faced Ibis:** Large numbers were reported, continuing the trend of recent years. Best counts were 85 in the e. RWB 16 and 23 Aug (JGJ), 70 there 9 Aug (JGJ), and 50 at Tamora Basin 20 Sep (JGJ).
- Turkey Vulture:** A roost with 60 birds was near Alma 30 Sep (G&WH). Highest fall counts are of flyover migrants.
- Osprey:** The usual 3-month fall migration period was stretched to the limit by early birds along the Lower Platte River 9 Aug (JGJ) and near Ashland 15 Aug (JGJ), and late singles in Buffalo Co and at LO on 4 Nov (SJD). Best count was 6 at LO 20 Sep (JGJ).
- Mississippi Kite:** The 3 at Ogallala 27 Aug (JGJ) were expected at that breeding location, but surprises were singles in Deuel Co 30 Aug (MB) and in Howard Co 1 Sep (MB, DSt). The latter were likely fall wanderers; southward movement occurs in Sep.
- Bald Eagle:** Routine reports.
- Northern Harrier:** Routine reports.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Northern Goshawk:** The only report was of a "great look" at a juvenile hunting pigeons around buildings at 144th and Dodge in Omaha 7 Sep (MB); this is record early by about a month. Fledglings begin migration first, as early as late Aug and Sep (*Birds of North America Online*).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** None were reported; this species' tenuous existence as a Nebraska breeder is in jeopardy, with at least one regular observer believing breeding no longer occurs at FF (EB).

Broad-winged Hawk: Two juveniles over n. Omaha 21 Aug (JR) may have been fledged locally; migration begins in late Aug, but this is an early date. Best count was 17 at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 24 Sep (L&BP). A few are reported from the west; singles at Alliance 13 Sep (KD) and in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Sep (fide AK) were only the 10th and 11th fall Panhandle records. Westerly were an immature at Hastings 6 Sep (PD) and an adult at Kearney 17 Sep (TH).

Swainson's Hawk: A good count was the 94 in a combined soybean field near Axtell 4 Oct (KS); highest fall counts are in the thousands, however.

Red-tailed Hawk: First Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk was, appropriately, reported from Harlan Co 25 Oct (TH). Another, but with reddish tints in the tail, seen over Omaha 26 Oct was thought to be a Harlan's X Red-tailed (Western) cross (JR).

Ferruginous Hawk: Easterly was one in Adams Co 15 Sep (WF), near the regular e. limit for this species.

Rough-legged Hawk: First reported was in Lancaster Co 27 Oct (LE), about on time.

Golden Eagle: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: A surprising concentration was the 38 in Long Canyon, Banner Co, 21 Sep (JGJ).

Merlin: Singles in Dawes and Sioux Cos 17-18 Aug (MB) may have been rare local breeders, although migration begins in mid-Aug. Both long-distance migrant *columbarius* and short-distance migrant and winter visitor *richardsonii* were reported in Custer Co Oct-Nov (TH). A very dark bird was in Saunders Co 10 Oct (MB); although such birds resemble western *suckleyi*, they may be the darkest individuals of *columbarius* (Sibley).

Prairie Falcon: One in Cedar Co 9 Nov (L&BP) was farther east than usual, as were singles in Knox Co 18 Oct and 8 Nov (MB).

Peregrine Falcon: A juvenile in Adams Co 4 Aug (PD) was about 5th-earliest on record away from known breeding areas.

Black Rail: A small black bird flushed at SCP 26 Sep, seemingly too late to be a juvenile of any rail species, was identified more or less by default as this species (ARY, KP, details submitted to NOURC, but considered inconclusive); such sightings are frustrating, but it seems reasonable that Black Rails occur during migration despite the presumably low numbers that might breed in n. Nebraska and farther north. Interestingly, the only other dated fall report for Nebraska was 20 Sep.

Virginia Rail: At least one pair with downy chicks was at Tamora Basin 30 Aug-7 Sep (JG, JGJ, photo), only the third confirmed breeding record for the RWB. This species is surprisingly uncommon in the RWB, as noted by two very active observers (JGJ, PD); it was suggested that the numerous Soras might be a factor (JGJ). As migrating rails do, one appeared in an Omaha nursery building 28 Sep (JR).

Sora: Migrants may appear in late Jul; thus 7 in Adams Co 4 Aug (PD) and one in Sarpy Co the same day (L&BP) were likely migrants.

American Coot: The 2111 in Lancaster Co 16 Oct (LE) was a good count.

Sandhill Crane: Peak numbers were noted 15-31 Oct (m. ob.); "hundreds to thousands" flew over Curtis 18 Oct (RL).

Whooping Crane: Unusually far east were 2 in Thayer Co 31 Oct (JGJ, video) and 2 in Johnson Co 27 Oct (JGJ, photo), the latter the easternmost on record for fall. A lone juvenile lingered near Alma from 15 Oct until its pond froze 4

Dec and it departed 5 Dec (fide TS), the latest on record for the state by 2 days.

Black-bellied Plover: Two adults, scarce in fall, were at Tamora Basin 9 Aug (JGJ); other reports, presumably juveniles, were in the period 1 Sep-18 Oct (LR, RH, PD), including a good count of 24 in Clay Co 18 Oct (RE).

American Golden-Plover: A record fall count was the 420 at Tamora Basin 3 Oct (JD); also a good fall count was the 109 in Seward Co 2 Oct (LE). Rare westerly, one was at LM 20 Sep (JGJ).

Semipalmated Plover: Routine reports.

Piping Plover: Routine reports.

Killdeer: Best count was 340 in Adams Co 4 Aug (PD); highest fall counts are 700 (twice).

Mountain Plover: None were reported; in recent years small flocks have been reported in Sep.

Black-necked Stilt: In contrast with the past 3-4 years, no young were produced in the e. RWB, although breeding activity had been noted this spring and as many as 5 were at Tamora Basin (JGJ, JG, RE). The 7 birds at Bittern's Call 27 Aug included a newly-fledged juvenile likely produced there (JGJ). Best count was an excellent 35 at Lakeside 31 Aug (MB, DSt). Until this year there had been only 7 records after mid-Aug, but 5 lingered at Tamora Basin rather late 17 Sep (RE), and one was at Bittern's Call 12 Sep (WF). The only later date on record is 21 Sep.

American Avocet: Uncommon easterly, 3 were in Sarpy Co 10 Aug (CS).

Spotted Sandpiper: Fourth-latest on record was one at PL 1 Nov (JGJ, CG); most leave by mid-Oct.



A nice photograph of a juvenile Western Sandpiper in Adams County 25 August, taken by Paul Dunbar.

Solitary Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: Singles at North Platte SL (TJW) and in Buffalo Co (WF), both on 3 Nov, were tardy; latest dates are in mid-Nov.

Willet: Routine reports.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Routine reports.

Upland Sandpiper: One in Custer Co 20 Sep (TH) was tardy; there are fewer than 20 records for Oct.

Long-billed Curlew: Routine reports.

Marbled Godwit: Reports east of Keith Co in fall are uncommon, with only 22 prior to this fall, most in the RWB. This year there were 3: one in Adams Co 4 Aug (PD), 2 at Kenesaw WPA, Adams Co, 15 Sep (WF), and one at Tamora Basin 20 Sep (JGJ).

Ruddy Turnstone: The only report was of a single in Lancaster Co 6 Aug (LE); fall reports are few, this only the 22nd on record.

Sanderling: Three in Knox Co 15 Nov (MB) were latest on record by one day.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Western Sandpiper: A surprising number of reports was received; although more often reported in fall, numbers are usually low, and adults are rare. About 30 birds were found 23 Aug (JGJ) through 9 Sep (WF). The former was a juvenile, as were the 7 near Juniata 25 Aug (PD, photo), and it is likely therefore that all reports were of juveniles. Best count was the 10 scattered through Dawson, Perkins, and Lincoln Cos 30 Aug (MB, DSt).

Least Sandpiper: Routine reports.



This juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher was nicely photographed by Paul Dunbar in Adams County 25 August.

Baird's Sandpiper: One near Niobrara 22-27 Nov (MB) was 5th latest on record; there are 4 records for Dec.

Pectoral Sandpiper: The 300 in the e. RWB 9 Aug (JGJ) was a good count.

Dunlin: Generally a late migrant in fall, not expected before Sep, the only reports were of one at Tamora Basin 11 Oct (JGJ) and 2 juveniles at LO 4 Nov (SJD).

Stilt Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Most of the 13 reported were juveniles 23-30 Aug (JGJ, PD, LE, MB), as expected. Three others, 2-6 Aug (CNK, RBa), would likely be adults, although they were not identified as such.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Routine reports.

Wilson's Snipe: Routine reports.

American Woodcock: The only report was of one in Omaha 25 Oct (PZ); the limited data available suggest peak migration is in the latter half of Oct.

Wilson's Phalarope: Routine reports.

Red-necked Phalarope: Easterly was one in Adams Co 15 Sep (WF).

Black-legged Kittiwake: None were reported; 1-2 are usually found in Nov.

Sabine's Gull: The only report of this regular large-reservoir migrant was of 2 at BOL 9 Oct (LE).

Bonaparte's Gull: Best count was 70, rather early at Bittern's Call 24 Aug (LE).

Franklin's Gull: Large numbers were at BOL, best count the 14,200 there 2 Oct (LE); highest fall counts on record are 85,000+ however.

Mew Gull: A 2nd-year bird was at Alma SL 29 Nov (PD photo); this is the 11th fall record, 22nd overall.

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Reports eastward away from LM seem to be increasing in recent years; prior to this fall there were only 7 reports from the east. However, this year there were 4-5 birds found: one un-aged at Capitol Beach L, Lincoln, 10 Nov (LE) may have been one of the two adults there 28 Dec (JGJ), a 1st-winter bird at Oak L, Lincoln, 24 Nov (JGJ), and another 1st winter at GPD 27 Nov (MB). Best count at LM was 19, all adults, 4 Nov (SJD).

Herring Gull: Routine reports.

Thayer's Gull: Usually late to appear in fall, the only report was of a 1st-winter bird about on time at GPD 15 Nov (MB).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: There were 2 reports of this now-regular migrant: a 3rd-year bird was at LM 20 Sep (JGJ) and a 2nd-year was at Alma SL 29 Nov (PD).

Least Tern: Routine reports.

Caspian Tern: The only report of this low-density migrant was of one in se. Sarpy Co 15 Sep (CNK).

Black Tern: Routine reports.

Common Tern: The only report of this uncommon migrant was of a single at Chappell L, Deuel Co, 30 Aug (MB, DSt).

Arctic Tern: A report with identification details was received, but while the bird may have indeed been an Arctic Tern, the details were not conclusive.

Forster's Tern: Routine reports.

Parasitic Jaeger: A surprise was a fly-by juvenile at Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co, 10 Sep (D&JP, details, subject to NOURC acceptance).

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.



This interesting photograph of a near-adult Mew Gull (left) and a Ring-billed Gull provides an excellent comparison of mantle colors and outer primary patterns; it was taken by Paul Dunbar at Alma 29 Nov.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Now that this species is ubiquitous in Nebraska, we resort to reporting large fall and winter counts; best were a flock of 80 in Broken Bow 14 Nov (TH) and 50 in Valley Co 25 Oct (WF). The 4 highest counts to date (77-200) are in the period mid-Nov through mid-Feb.

White-winged Dove: Now being reported regularly in small numbers in every season except winter, this fall's contribution was the 4 in a Chadron yard by the end of Aug (JF), suggestive of breeding there. Only one was present 13 Sep (JF).

Mourning Dove: The 299 in Lancaster Co 13 Aug (LE) was a good count.

Inca Dove: One was reportedly present in Brule for "some time" prior to 7 Nov (fide CWH); no details were received, however.

Monk Parakeet: Whether this species is nesting in Omaha or nearby is conjectural; the last known nests were at Freedom Park, Omaha, in 1998. This fall saw the first reports for some time, a single at an Omaha feeder 28 Sep-2 Nov (LH), and one in cen. Omaha 30 Oct (JR).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Last reported was at FF 1 Oct (ARy), a bit tardy.

Black-billed Cuckoo: The only report of this uncommon species was of one in Lancaster Co 10 Aug (JGJ).

Barn Owl: One in a cut-bank hole in Sioux Co 17 Aug (MB) was northerly; there are very few records in the n. Panhandle. A nest in a grain elevator at Stella had 2 nearly-fledged young 15 Aug (JGJ).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Snowy Owl: An indication of a potentially good winter for this species was the arrival of one in Saunders Co on the rather early date of 20 Nov (fide TSm, photo seen).

Burrowing Owl: The Scottsbluff Landfill continues to be a good site; 30 individuals, 75% of them juveniles, were there 3 Aug (KD). Easterly was a road-killed bird in Clay Co 9 Aug (JGJ), and 2 adults with 5 juveniles were in Keya Paha Co 8 Sep (CH).

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: None were reported; wintering birds begin to arrive by early Nov.

Short-eared Owl: Only 5 were reported, all singles, in York Co 15 Oct (WF), Kearney Co the same day (WF), Dodge Co 16 Oct (D&JP), at SCP 9 Nov (D&JP), and in Johnson Co 25 Nov (TEL).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A call heard after dark near North Platte 3 Nov was described as a "repeated, one-note, bell-like call" (LD) and identified as from this species. Although there are few fall records, banding data show that southward movement takes place in Oct-Nov.

Common Nighthawk: Routine reports.

Common Poorwill: None were reported; most depart in Sep.

Whip-poor-will: None were reported; most depart in Aug and early Sep.

Chimney Swift: Excellent counts were the 200 flying over Forest Lawn Cem 15 Oct (JR) and 186 in Douglas Co 27 Aug (RG). Oct 15 is a rather late date for large numbers; last reported was one over FF 16 Oct (PS).

White-throated Swift: None were reported; most leave in Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: This species is being reported more often in the Panhandle in fall; one was at WSR 22-23 Jul and 2 more were noted during Aug (HKH). A female was near Mitchell 11-12 Sep (KD). A hummingbird unidentified to species was at a Bassett feeder 20 Oct; at this date, vagrant western species are likely. Last dates for Ruby-throateds are Oct 10, 11, 11.

Calliope Hummingbird: Now regular in the w. Panhandle in small numbers, 3 were reported; one remained at WSR 16 Jul-13 Aug (HKH), a female was near Mitchell 11 Aug (KD), and one was in Scottsbluff 12-19 Aug (RSi).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: A normal fall for this species had at least 5 Panhandle sightings 16 Jul-2 Sep (HKH, KD, MB, DSt, WRS).

Rufous Hummingbird: At least 6 were reported as expected from the Panhandle 16 Jul-6 Sep (HKH, KD, WRS). Unexpected was one in se. Otoe Co 14 Sep (L&CF, details), there are about a dozen records from the east.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: Reports are few away from a couple of Panhandle breeding locations; thus a surprise was one w. of Valentine NWR in Cherry Co 18-20 Sep (GJ), only the 2nd report in fall away from Ponderosa Pine habitat.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: At least 16 were reported, a good showing, 25 Sep (L&CF) through 17 Nov (LE); all were in the east except for a juvenile at LO 4 Nov (SJD).

Red-naped Sapsucker: The only report was of one banded at WHNC 24 Sep (NG); this is the 8th documented fall report, 7 of these in the Panhandle 13-27 Sep, the other easterly at LO 26 Oct-2 Nov.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: A "red-shafted" form was early at North Platte 1 Oct (TJW).

Pileated Woodpecker: The only report was of 2 at FF 18 Aug (CNK).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Western Wood-Pewee: The 50 at WSR 30 Aug was a record fall count (KD).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: One at FF 8 Oct (MS) was rather late; there are 4 later dates, all in Oct.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: A rather late bird was at Brownville 5-6 Oct (TR); this is 2nd-latest on record, 3 days earlier than one banded in Sarpy Co.

Acadian Flycatcher: None were reported; departure is complete by mid-Sep.

Willow Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Least Flycatcher: One in Merrick Co 3 Nov that was watched by a careful observer for 5 min. (PD) was record late by about a month. Tardy, but comparative pickers, were singles in sw. Dixon Co 20 Sep (JJ) and at ADF 18 Sep (L&CF).

Hammond's Flycatcher: The 2 reports (25th and 26th for fall) were of one at Dix Cem 26 Aug (JGJ) and 2 at WSR 2 Sep (WRS, details).

Dusky Flycatcher: The only report was of one at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 2 Sep (WRS), the 25th fall record.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: More than usual were reported; there are few records of migrants. Singles were at WSR 30 Aug (KD) and 2 Sep (WRS, details) and near Mitchell 5 Sep (KD). Another, submitted as "Western" due to the difficulty of separation from Pacific Slope, even in the hand, was banded at WHNC 10 Oct (NG); it was latest on record by about a month.

Eastern Phoebe: One in Buffalo Co 4 Nov (KS) tied the 3rd-latest date ever.

Say's Phoebe: Routine reports.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Cassin's Kingbird: Peak migration, or at least fall flocking, occurs in late Aug and early Sep; 52 were in the s. Panhandle 26 Aug (JGJ) and 26 were there 24 Aug (JGJ). Last reported was rather late in Banner Co 21 Sep (JGJ). A surprise so far east was one in w. Cherry Co 16 Aug (MB), only the 3rd fall record e. of the Panhandle.

Western Kingbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Kingbird: One in Sarpy Co 27 Sep (RS) was rather late.

Loggerhead Shrike: One in Perkins Co 15 Oct (TJW) was tardy. Now rather rare in the e. RWB, one was there 16 Aug (JGJ).

Northern Shrike: Routine reports.

Bell's Vireo: None were reported; most depart by the end of Aug.

Yellow-throated Vireo: One at FF 26 Sep (JR) was tardy.

Plumbeous Vireo: A migrant was at Oliver Res 31 Aug (MB, DSt). Two interesting vireos were banded at WHNC 10 and 26 Sep (NG, photos). The excellent photos suggest that the 10 Sep bird is a Plumbeous Vireo (notable absence of greenish color on the folded secondaries) and the 26 Sep bird a Cassin's (obvious greenish secondary edging), but measurements indicate both were Cassin's (there is no overlap in exposed culmen, and wing minus tail measurements between the two species). Many fall migrants in the Panhandle are difficult to separate based only on plumage; indeed Floyd (*Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America*) states that Plumbeous may have greenish coloration in the secondaries in fall.

Cassin's Vireo: See discussion above. In addition, singles were at Oliver Res 31 Aug (MB, DSt) and surprisingly far east in Dawson Co 30 Aug (MB, DSt), the latter one of only 5 records e. of the Panhandle.

Blue-headed Vireo: Excellent numbers were reported, a total of about 35; the 8 counted in a Bellevue yard 4-29 Sep was the most in a single fall by the veteran observers (L&BP). Last was one at FF 29 Oct (PS), 5th-latest on record, while the 5 at FF 27 Sep (JR) was an excellent one-day tally.

Warbling Vireo: One banded at WHNC 25 Sep (NG) was 4th-latest for the Panhandle, where departure is earlier than in the east.

Philadelphia Vireo: About 6 were reported from the east 6 Sep-5 Oct (m. ob.), a good showing; the last reported, 5 Oct at Brownville (TR), was 5th-latest on record.

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: Sometimes hard to find, the 2 reports involved 22 birds in expected locations: 10 were on the Pine Ridge in Sioux Co 17-18 Aug (MB, DSt), and 12 in Lawrence Fork canyons s. of Redington (JGJ).

Black-billed Magpie: Distribution remains patchy; only one was seen in several days in w. Nebraska in late Aug (JGJ), while they may be "coming back" in Lincoln Co (TJW). Seven near the e. edge of the range in Madison Co 9 Aug (DH) was encouraging.

American Crow: Best count was a moderate 292 in Lancaster Co 20 Oct (LE); peak migration is Oct-Nov.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: This species forms large aggregations prior to fall migration, but likely unprecedented in Nebraska was a huge roost in mid-town Omaha which was first noted 20 Aug, when at least 1700 were seen (JED). Numbers increased dramatically until an amazing 35,000 were present 2 Sep (JR, JED). Numbers declined rapidly to 1100 by 14 Sep and only 65 remained 26 Sep (JR, JED). Two at Forest Lawn Cem 3 Oct (JR) were rather late.

Tree Swallow: The 400 at BOL 2 Oct (LE) was a good tally.

Violet-green Swallow: Routine reports.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: Routine reports.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: As with Black-billed Magpie, distribution is still spotty, notably in s.-cen. and se. Nebraska; 4 in Webster Co 11 Sep (PD) and one in Lincoln 31 Oct (LE) were considered noteworthy; none have been seen in Adams Co since early 2003 (PD).

Mountain Chickadee: The only report of this rare winter visitor was of one in Gering 15 Nov (R&AB fide AK).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Following last winter's influx, and despite one summering in Lincoln (RE), numbers were down noticeably this fall, with only about 20 reported. Early arrivals appear in Aug; one was in Bellevue rather early 8 Aug (KCR).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Pygmy Nuthatch: This species almost never strays from Ponderosa pines, and so one as far east as Pioneers' Park, Lincoln 1-4 Nov (JGJ photo, LE) was a

major surprise. Of only 4 records away from Ponderosa Pine, strangely 2 are from Lincoln, the other of up to 4 birds which were present in pine and pin oak woodland 13 Dec 1961-3 Feb 1962.

Brown Creeper: Routine reports.

Rock Wren: Routine reports.

Carolina Wren: Reports from the outer edge of the Nebraska range included singles at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 21 Sep (MB), Polk Co 2 Oct (WF), York Co 13 Sep (MB), and HCR 22 Nov (KS). One was incubating as late as 27 Aug in Bellevue (KCR), and adults were feeding nestlings 26 Aug in Cass Co (KSc).

House Wren: Two juveniles were begging in Seward Co as late as 13 Sep (SR).

Winter Wren: Westerly were singles at West Lawn Cem, Gering, record early 2 Sep, where only casual in occurrence (WRS, details), and at HCR 22 Nov (KS).

Sedge Wren: Westerly were 1-2 singing in "diverse wet meadow grassland" nw. of North Platte 6 Aug, the observer's first for Lincoln Co (TJW). This, and a single Keith Co record in May, are the westernmost records for Nebraska. One in Hall Co 24 Oct (WF) was rather late.

Marsh Wren: Late summer (Aug-Sep) singing involved both eastern and western song types (WF); no evidence of breeding by these birds was reported, however.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Routine reports.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Arrival is about 10 days earlier in the west than in the east; one at Oliver Res 31 Aug (MB, DSt) was about on time, whereas one at Hastings 6 Sep (PD) was a bit early. The 25 at Forest Lawn Cem 3 Oct (JR) was a good count.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Reports are now virtually statewide; n.-cen. Nebraska has the fewest reports, but 2 were at Fort Falls, Cherry Co, 18 Aug (MB). The 12 in Long Canyon, Banner Co, 24 Aug (JGJ) tied the high fall count. Last was one banded at WHNC 18 Sep (NG).

Eastern Bluebird: Routine reports.

Mountain Bluebird: The presence of a family group of 5 in se. Lincoln Co, where the species winters, was intriguing (TJW); breeding is not unprecedented away from nw. Nebraska, as a pair nested at Red Willow Res., Frontier Co, in 1992.

Townsend's Solitaire: Routine reports.

Veery: None were reported; this is a regular but rare migrant.

Swainson's Thrush: Routine reports.

Hermit Thrush: Routine reports.

Wood Thrush: Routine reports.

American Robin: Routine reports.

Varied Thrush: Numbers have been up in recent years. This fall 3 were reported: one at ADF 24 Sep (L&CF), 4th earliest on record, another in w. Sheridan Co 21 Oct (ML), also rather early, and the third in Ogallala 26 Nov through the period (TSi, photo).

Gray Catbird: A nest with 3 eggs and a cowbird egg in Dixon Co 8 Aug (JJ) was rather late.

Northern Mockingbird: Routine reports.

Sage Thrasher: A total of 6 was reported, 4 of them in a single tree at Oliver Res 26 Aug (JGJ); the others were at WSR 30 Aug (KD) and in Kimball Co 31 Aug (MB, DSt).

Brown Thrasher: Last reported was at PL 28 Nov (LE).

European Starling: Routine reports.

American Pipit: One was very early in Polk Co 17 Aug (LR, RH); there are only 7 reports for Aug.

Sprague's Pipit: The only report was of 2 in a recently-planted Lancaster Co wheat field 27 Oct (LE), a rather late date.

Cedar Waxwing: Routine reports.

Golden-winged Warbler: Three of this casual fall migrant were reported: one at FF 6 Sep (PS), a female there 7 Sep (ARy), and 2 at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co 13 Sep (SR, JG). Including these reports, there are only 27 in all for fall. A Brewster's Warbler, hybrid between Blue-winged and Golden-winged, was at Oak Grove WMA, Seward Co 13 Sep (JG, SR, details); there is one spring record and one other fall record of this hybrid.

Tennessee Warbler: Two at FF 18 Aug (CNK) were rather early. Few were reported.

Orange-crowned Warbler: This was a long migration window for this species, essentially 3 months. Earliest were 2 at FF 18 Aug (CNK), one of the earliest fall dates on record for the east. Latest was one in Lincoln 8 Nov (RE), 7th latest on record. Best counts were 40 at FF 1 Oct (ARy) and 35 there 27 Sep (JR).

Nashville Warbler: This species put on an amazing showing, with around 170 reported. A huge push on 27 Sep had 60 at FF (JR), by far a record fall count, and "dozens" in Saunders Co (D&JP). Earliest was rather early at FF 18 Aug (CNK) and latest was at Pioneers' Park, Lincoln, 23 Oct (BR).

Northern Parula: One at FF 27 Sep (RS, WF, LE) was rather late. Another or the same was reported there the day before (JR). Few are reported in fall.

Yellow Warbler: Routine reports.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Only 7 were reported, 4-14 Sep (L&BP, PS, LE).

Magnolia Warbler: None were reported, surprisingly so.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: Migrants were reported in the Panhandle 24 Aug (JGJ), rather early away from breeding areas, through 30 Sep (NG, banded).

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: First reported was banded at WHNC 9 Sep (NG), and two were at Forest Lawn Cem 19 Nov (JR). Best count was 60 at Hastings 11 Oct (PD).

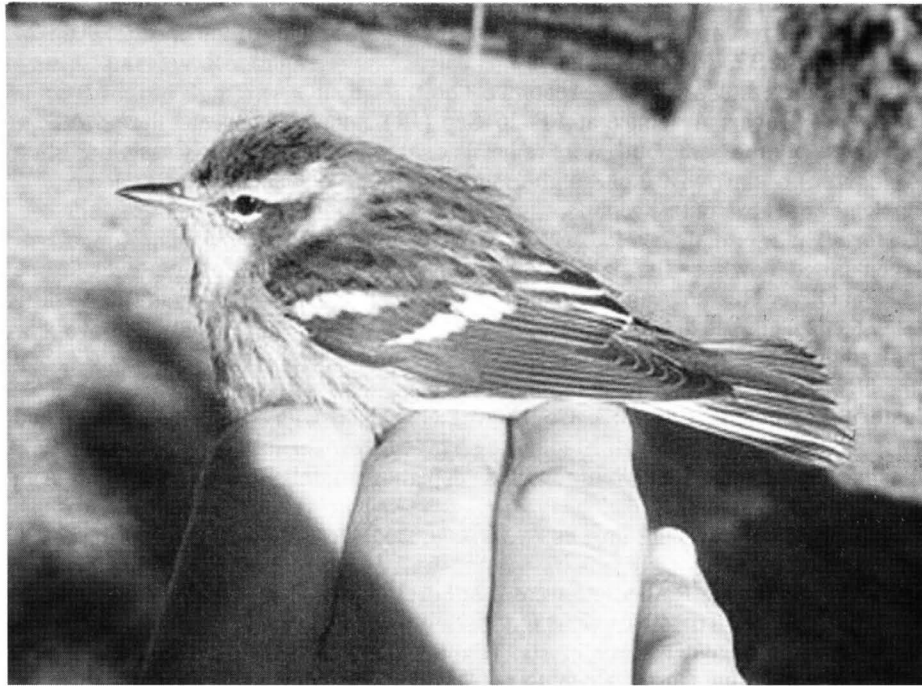
Black-throated Green Warbler: This was a good showing for this species, with 10 reported, including 3 in a Bellevue yard 27 Sep (L&BP). One at Pioneers' Park, Lincoln, 23 Oct (BR) was rather late.

Townsend's Warbler: Three were reported, one at Bushnell 1 Sep (WRS) and two banded at WHNC 8 and 27 Sep (NG).

Blackburnian Warbler: Only 2 were reported in the east, singles in Lincoln 29 Aug (LE) and at FF 26 Sep (JR). However, a major surprise was the female banded at WHNC 13 Sep (NG, photo), only the 7th Panhandle record.

Yellow-throated Warbler: Rarely noticed in fall, one was at FF 9 Sep (ARy) and another in a Bellevue yard 26 Sep (L&BP), the latter 3rd-latest in fall except for 2 extraordinary Dec records.

Pine Warbler: This species is rare in Nebraska and pops up at the most unexpected times and places, especially in fall. Only the 23rd and 24th fall records were one banded at WHNC 25 Sep (NG, photo), the 4th Panhandle record, and one at Pioneers' Park, Lincoln, 1 Nov (CG, JGJ, photo).



This female Blackburnian Warbler was only the 7th Panhandle record for the species. It was banded by Nancy Gobris and photographed by Larry Snyder, both of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, in Scotts Bluff County 13 September.

Palm Warbler: Only a casual migrant in fall, one was in a Gering yard 6 Nov (RSm, details, fide AK), only the 5th Panhandle record and 38th overall for fall. The details indicated it was of the eastern subspecies *hypochrysea*, the 3rd fall record of this subspecies.

Bay-breasted Warbler (probable): Two birds at Forest Lawn Cem 12 Sep were conservatively reported as "baypolls" (JR); Bay-breasted is far more likely in e. Nebraska than Blackpoll in fall.

Black-and-white Warbler: Routine reports.

American Redstart: Routine reports.

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Northern Waterthrush: One in Saunders Co 27 Sep (NOU) was rather late. The only other report was of one at Oliver Res 1 Sep (WRS), where uncommon.

Louisiana Waterthrush: None were reported; migrants depart by early Sep.

Kentucky Warbler: None were reported; migrants depart by mid Sep.

Mourning Warbler: Routine reports.

MacGillivray's Warbler: Routine reports.

Common Yellowthroat: Routine reports.

Wilson's Warbler: Numbers in the west were notably low for this usually numerous migrant; only 8 were found in the Panhandle 27 Aug (JGJ) and 10 on 2 Sep (WRS).

Canada Warbler: This was another good showing for this species, continuing the trend in recent years. At least 5 were found, all singles in the east, 25 Aug-27 Sep (L&BP, ARy, RS, LE).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Routine reports.

Summer Tanager: A female at FF 26 Sep (JR) and another heard there 27 Sep, possibly the same bird, were rather late, as was a male in ne. Cass Co 27 Sep (KSc).

Scarlet Tanager: Routine reports.

Western Tanager: One banded at WHNC 1 Oct (NG) was rather late.

Green-tailed Towhee: The only report of this rare to casual fall migrant was of one at Oliver Res 26 Aug (JGJ); there are now 20 fall records, this the earliest by 5 days.

Spotted Towhee: Earliest in the se. was one rather early in Sarpy Co 27 Sep (NOU).

Eastern Towhee: One in Polk Co 17 Aug (LR, RH) was a bit west of the usual summer range.

Cassin's Sparrow: None were reported; departure in fall is early, with few Aug reports.

American Tree Sparrow: Two in sw. Dixon Co 8 Oct (JJ) were the first reported, about on time.

Chipping Sparrow: Rather late were 2 at Forest Lawn Cem 13 Nov (JR) and one in Lancaster Co 14 Nov (LE).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Three in sw. Dixon Co 9 Nov (JJ) were rather late. The "hundreds" in Custer Co 6 Sep (TH) tied the high of "hundreds" there in 2004.

Brewer's Sparrow: The only report was of 2 in Kimball Co 31 Aug (MB, DSt).

Field Sparrow: Routine reports.

Vesper Sparrow: "Huge numbers" were in Lincoln Co 9 Oct (TJW).

Lark Sparrow: One at ADF 4 Nov (L&CF) was 5th-latest on record.

Lark Bunting: Routine reports.

Savannah Sparrow: Routine reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: One at SCP 18 Oct (EB) was rather late.

Baird's Sparrow: A bird seen ne. of McCook 9 Oct was identified as this species, although the observer described it as "possible" (TJW, details). Date and location are appropriate; little is known about movement of this species through Nebraska. There are 3 documented fall records covering the wide period 17 Aug-15 Oct.

Henslow's Sparrow: None were found 19 Aug in a prairie in Pawnee Co that had been grazed through the winter; there were 31 birds there 19 Aug 2007 (WRS). No others were reported.

Le Conte's Sparrow: Good numbers were reported, including a record fall count of 50 at SCP 18 Oct (EB).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Two in Antelope Co 1-2 Oct were a first county record (MB); reports farther west are few. About 8 in all were reported 27 Sep-28 Oct (m. ob.); the latter date, 2 in Lancaster Co (WF), is 3rd-latest on record.

Fox Sparrow: Good numbers were reported, about 36, including one with features suggestive of the "slate-colored" subspecies *schistacea* that frequented the observer's Lincoln yard 29 Oct-5 Nov (LE). There are 3 inconclusive reports of *schistacea* apart from the subspecies' Type Specimen collected in Nebraska.

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Routine reports.

Swamp Sparrow: Routine reports.

White-throated Sparrow: One in Buffalo Co 18 Sep (WF) was rather early.

Harris's Sparrow: Routine reports.

White-crowned Sparrow: Most move through the state rather than winter; the reports fit this pattern, with all in the period 20 Sep-9 Nov (m. ob.). Most are the gray-lored subspecies *gambelii*, but a few black-lored birds are reported; one of the latter, only the 2nd noted there, was in a yard near Mitchell 4 Oct (KD, photo).

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: None were reported.

Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco: One with "thin" white wing-bars in Buffalo Co 17 Sep was thought be a juvenile of this form (WF); a few juveniles may indeed show weak wing-bars, but size and color fairly easily separates them from true White-winged Juncos.

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco: An "Oregon" in Scotts Bluff Co 21 Sep (JGJ) was 5th-earliest on record, and a "pink-sided" in Lincoln Co 15 Oct (TJW) was a bit early also.

McCown's Longspur: The only report was of 20 in cen. Sioux Co 18 Sep (HKH); flocking begins in Sep and most depart by late Oct.

Lapland Longspur: Routine reports.

Smith's Longspur: The only report was of 2 at SCP 18 Oct (EB); of the 20 fall records, half are in the period 9-29 Oct.

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

Snow Bunting: There were more sightings than usual before 30 Nov, suggesting a good showing this winter. Tying the 4th-earliest date was one in Dodge Co 28 Oct (D&JP), and additional singles were in Dixon Co 13-14 Nov (JJ), near Niobrara 22 Nov (MB), and at PL 22 Nov (JGJ).

Northern Cardinal: Westerly was one in Morrill 28 Nov (ECT); there is a small population established along the North Platte Valley in Scotts Bluff Co. Very late for begging young was an adult feeding one in Bellevue 5 Oct (CNK).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Routine reports.

Black-headed Grosbeak: One in Scotts Bluff Co 20 Sep (AK) was tardy.

Blue Grosbeak: A juvenile at Broken Bow 2 Oct (TH) was 5th-latest on record.

Lazuli Bunting: Routine reports.

Indigo Bunting: One in Harlan Co 20 Sep (WF) was rather late away from the Missouri River Valley, where late dates are in mid-Oct; last there were singles in sw. Dixon Co 5 Oct (JJ) and at Brownville the same day (TR).

Dickcissel: Numbers were seen in plum thickets in the cedar canyons of se. Lincoln Co 30 Aug; most were juveniles (TJW). More have been seen westward in recent years.

Bobolink: This species becomes inconspicuous in fall during molt and as males assume the female-like basic plumage; a "beautiful buffy flock of 80-100, some still molting" was at Ayr L, Adams Co, 6 Sep (PD).

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Routine reports.

Rusty Blackbird: This species is in a serious decline, but more than usual, about 30, were reported 20 Oct-1 Nov. Singles were in Hamilton Co 20 Oct (WF)

and Broken Bow 25 Oct (TH), 4 were at BOL 27 Oct (LE), one was at FF 7-29 Oct (PS), 2 at PL 29 Oct (LE), 7 at Sacramento-Wilcox WMA, Phelps Co, 29 Oct (WF), and 9-10 at FF 30 Oct-1 Nov (L&BP).

Brewer's Blackbird: Good numbers appeared in the east, where this species is an uncommon migrant: 200 were estimated at each of 2 Lancaster Co locations 27 Oct (LE), and 30 were in Lancaster Co 29 Oct (LE). A loner was at SCP 18 Oct (EB).

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: Begging young were seen in North Platte 4 Aug (TJW), where the species has summered for a few years now.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Routine reports.

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: The 22 at Hastings 8 Sep (PD) was a record fall count, and quite a sight, as must have been the 17 orioles at the observer's Mitchell feeder 21 Aug; included were Baltimores, Bullock's, and hybrids (KD).

Bullock's Oriole: An immature near Mitchell 25 Sep (KD, photo) was the latest documented record. Adult males leave early to molt elsewhere; last male seen near Mitchell was 13 Jul (KD).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: None were reported; arrival is in early Nov.

Purple Finch: There were a few reports, all of low numbers, following last year's incursion; total reported was about 18, earliest 3 at FF 21 Oct (PS), not particularly early.

House Finch: Routine reports.

Red Crossbill: There were reports from only 2 locations, both in the east: up to 12 were at Forest Lawn Cem 28 Oct-24 Nov (JR, JGJ) and 22 were in Lincoln 28 Oct (LE).

Common Redpoll: None were reported; in winters when present, arrival is in Nov.

Pine Siskin: Reports were widespread, but not in numbers until late Nov, when best count of 45 was made in Nebraska City 27 Nov (L&CF). First to show up away from the summer range was one in sw. Dixon Co 20 Sep (JJ).

Lesser Goldfinch: The last few years have seen increased numbers of this species in the s. Panhandle, but an amazing showing took place this fall, with no fewer than 17 reported in 6 reports. Of 26 total reports for the species, 10 were in 2008. A pair was at WHNC 8 Aug (AK), with at least one lingering until 9 Sep, when it was banded (NG). A black-backed male was at Wright's Gap, Scotts Bluff Co, 24 Aug, where the species was present last year (JGJ), and another was in sw. Kimball Co 31 Aug (MB, DSt). Rather amazing was the group of 6 in Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co, 26 Aug; included were a black-backed male, 2 green-backed males, and 3 females (JGJ). In the same category were 6 birds at 3 locations in s. Scotts Bluff Co 20 Sep (KD). A rather late single was ne. of Scottsbluff 18 Oct (AK).

American Goldfinch: A rather late nest with 3 eggs and a cowbird egg was at PL 16 Aug (KC).

House Sparrow: Routine reports.

THE 2007 NEBRASKA NEST REPORT

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Rains returned to most of the state this breeding season, with the notable exception of almost the entire Panhandle and the western Sandhills, where the 8-year drought continues. In the western Sandhills some early rains began to restore water levels in the potholes and lakes, but levels fell again as the summer wore on. While recovering water levels in much of the Rainwater Basin brought renewed breeding activity by at least some of the marsh and water birds, continued dry conditions in the western Sandhills curtailed breeding by many water bird species there, with reduced or no breeding by grebes and avocets noted at a number of regular breeding locations. The exception to generally poor water conditions in that area was at Crescent Lake NWR where water levels are controlled on some lakes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NGPC-Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; NWR-National Wildlife Refuge; SP-State Park; SRA-State Recreation Area; WCT (Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust); WMA-Wildlife Management Area; WPA- Waterfowl Production Area.

A total of 1375 breeding records of 122 species was reviewed for this report. A number of these records were gleaned from Bird Atlas Project reports. No doubt other notable records remain to be found in other Atlas Project reports that have not yet been reviewed.

Species for which breeding activity was reported but that are not included in the species accounts: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged

Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Killdeer, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Yellow Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Bullock's Oriole, and House Sparrow.

Redhead: A nest found at Harvard WPA, Clay Co., held 16 eggs on 2 June 2007 (PD). When checked on 5 June 2007, 18 eggs were present (WM).

Common Merganser: In only the second reported breeding in the state, 2 broods of flightless young were found on 2 July 2007 in the Niobrara River at the Norden Bridge in Brown/Keya Paha Co. on the Nature Conservancy's Niobrara Valley Preserve. One brood consisted of 4 half-grown untended young; the other brood was of 8 small downy young attended by an adult female (JL, DH).

Gray Partridge: A hen with 6 half-grown chicks was seen feeding on the highway shoulder 0.5 mi. east of Royal, Antelope Co., on 9 July 2007 (WM).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: A nest with 8 eggs was found on 11 May 2007 at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., (MFr).

Eared Grebe: Although not found breeding at several of the usual sites in Sheridan Co., presumably due to low water levels, nest-building was noted at Harvard WPA, Clay Co., on 28 May 2007 (PD). A nest with 3 eggs was found at Funk WMA, 2 July 2007 (DPf). These low numbers are in stark contrast to the usual colonies that number in the dozens to hundreds in the western Sandhills when water levels are adequate.

Double-crested Cormorant: Birds occupied 11 nests in one dead tree and 5 nests in another snag in the heronry on Gimlet Lake near Crescent Lake NWR headquarters, Garden Co., on 8 May 2007. At Smith Lake on the same refuge, birds moved into goose nest tubs after the Canada Geese hatched and left the tubs. Nests held 1, 1, 2, and 4 eggs on 8 May 2007; and 2, 4, and 4 young on 19 June 2007 (WM).

American Bittern: A nest with 6 eggs was reported at Harvard WPA, Clay Co., on 28 May 2007 (PD).

Great Blue Heron: Herons occupied 6 nests in the heronry on Gimlet Lake near Crescent Lake NWR headquarters, Garden Co., on 8 May 2007. Four isolated nests with 3, 3, 3, and 3 nearly-grown young were found in dense cattails scattered among the nests of a mixed colony of Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and White-faced Ibis in Smith Lake on the same refuge on 19 June 2007 (WM).

Snowy Egret: A photo was submitted of an unfledged flightless young bird that was photographed near its nest on Smith Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co. in June 1989. A check of the refuge's annual report for that year also shows a copy of the picture, along with a comment that it was the first nesting recorded for that species on the refuge (GW, NP). This appears to be the most recent report of nesting and may be the only extant documented evidence. The only other recent record of breeding was of a pair of birds seen repeatedly during the early summer of 1985 at the WCT property 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. On 26 June 1985 that pair was seen with a young bird (Bennett 1986, Gary Lingle pers. com., Mollhoff 2001).

Cattle Egret: A nest with 3 small young, less than a week old, was found on 19 June 2007 in the mixed-species colony on Smith Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., mentioned above (WM).

Green Heron: The colony found last year at Two Rivers SRA, Venice, Douglas Co., had nests with 1, 4, 4, 4, and 5 eggs on 14 May 2007 (WM).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: On 8 May 2007 a check of a small area of the mixed colony on Smith Lake, Crescent Lake NWR found nests with 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 4, and 4 eggs. A revisit on 19 June revealed nests (not the same nests) with 1 & 2 eggs, and 1, 2, 2, and 3 young (WM).

A check of a portion of a mixed colony (that included White-faced Ibis) on Beem Lake, on Avocet WMA, just east of Hyannis, Grant Co., on 23 June 2007 found 6 nests in the dense stands of cattails. Two nests held eggs, three nests held eggs and just-hatched young, and one nest held young birds. Clutch sizes ranged from two to four. The water level at Beem Lake was nearly a half meter higher than at the same date last year, but still lower than more 'normal' levels, due to the extended drought (WM).

White-faced Ibis: A colony located in a bulrush stand at Harvard WPA, Clay Co., had nests with 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, and 2 eggs on 2 June 2007, with more nests under construction (PD). When visited on 5 June, nests held 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, and 4 eggs (WM). The colony was later abandoned, apparently due to disturbance by cattle (PD).

Birds occupying part of the mixed-species colony in dense cattails at Smith Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., on 19 June 2007 had nests with 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, and 4 eggs (WM).

A colony in dense cattails on Beem Lake, Avocet WMA, east of Hyannis, Grant Co., had nests with 1, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, and 4 eggs on 23 June 2007. Two other nests held both eggs and just-hatched young, and two more nests held 3 and 4 young (WM).

Turkey Vulture: A nest with 2 eggs was found in an unused barn on an occupied farmstead near Scribner, Dodge Co., on 21 May 2007. Two small young were noted on 15 June and were still in the nest 17 August. The last young fledged on 24 August (JPo,LPo).

A nest northwest of Litchfield, Sherman Co., also in an unused barn, held two well-grown young when photographed on 5 July 2007. The young fledged on 25 August (JK).

Bald Eagle: Occupied nests were noted ~15 mi. north of Taylor, Loup Co., on 27 February 2007 (CH); 1.5 mi. west of Greenwood, Lancaster Co., on 27 February 2007 (WM); 1 mi. east, 1 mi. south of Clarks, Merrick Co., on 22 March 2007 (WM); on Hackberry Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., on 27 March 2007 (WM); 8 mi. southwest of Wood River, Hall Co., on 28 March 2007, (WM); and 3 mi. southwest of Odessa, Buffalo Co., on 28 March 2007 (WM).

Northern Harrier: A nest with 6 eggs was found in dry cattails at Walgren Lake SRA near Hay Springs, Sheridan Co., on 21 May 2007 (WM).

Cooper's Hawk: Nest-building was underway in a roadside shelterbelt at Cornhusker Farm WMA west of Grand Island, Hall Co., on 7 May 2007 (MT). The nest held 2 eggs on 12 May but was abandoned by 18 May (WM).

A nest at Hall County Park south of Grand Island held 4 eggs on 18 May 2007 (MT,WM).

A nest in Wilderness Park in southwest Lincoln, Lancaster Co., held 5 eggs on 24 May 2007 (LE,WM).

Swainson's Hawk: After a lack of observations last summer that was commented on by several observers, it was heartening to find 7 nests with eggs under incubation on a single day (21 May 2007) in Sheridan Co. Three of the nests were along a 1.5 mile stretch of road that also included a successful Great Horned Owl nest between two of the hawk nests, a density likely found because those were the only trees seen for a number of miles. The nests held 1, 1, 3, 3, 3, and 3 eggs, with the seventh nest proving inaccessible due to the height and a strong wind. Another nest found that day near Ashby, Grant Co., held a surprising clutch of 4 eggs.

A nest being incubated in Garden Co. 16 mi. south of Antioch held 2 eggs on 19 June 2007 (WM).

Golden Eagle: A long-established aerie near the Niobrara River southwest of Harrison, Sioux Co., held 2 eggs on 25 March 2007. Two young were noted by 10 May and were still in the nest on 21 June. While the young were under observation on 9 and 21 June, snakes were the only prey item brought to the nest to feed them. When checking the vacated nest on 30 September, prey item remains found below the nest included: jackrabbit (*Lepus* sp.), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), a small canid - probably a swift fox (*Vulpes velox*) or a young coyote (*Canis latrans*), and prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*) (MF,WM).

Prairie Falcon: One young falcon was testing its flight skills near the home butte while two smaller siblings still seemed confined to the nest ledge near the Niobrara River SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., on 20 June 2007 (MF,WM).

Sandhill Crane: A pair with 2 chicks was noted at Facus Springs WMA 8 mi. west of Bridgeport, Morrill Co., in early May 2007. One of the young appeared sick on 26 July and was found dead of unknown causes on 28 July. The other chick was first seen in flight on 1 August (D&RK, fide KD).

Other intriguing reports were received of a bird 1 mi. west of Burwell, Garfield Co., on 20 May 2007, and 12 mi. NW of Ericson, also in Garfield Co., on 5 June 2007. Both reports were of single birds seen in wet meadow areas near extensive areas of brushy riverine swamp (MU,LK). Given the proven ability of the

birds to remain undetected during the breeding season and that both sightings were in suitable habitat, it would seem further investigation should be made whenever the species is found in suitable habitat during the April - August breeding season.

Virginia Rail: A nest with 7 eggs was found in a wet meadow study plot at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co., on 23 May 2007 (TH).

Piping Plover: Three nests, with 2, 3, and 3 eggs, were found on an artificial island in Goose Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., on 8 June 2007. Small young, 2-3 days old, were found in the area on 22 June (MFr). This is a first breeding record for the Refuge and appears to be the first reported nesting in the Sandhills since a nest with eggs was found on the Middle Loup River in Blaine Co. on 28 May 1987 during the first atlas project (Mollhoff 2001).

Black-necked Stilt: Five nests were reported at Perrin Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co. A nest on 23 May 2007 held 4 eggs; by 8 June it held 1 egg plus 3 young. A second nest in the colony held 4 eggs on 23 May and 8 June. A third nest held 3 eggs on 1 & 8 June. A fourth nest held a single egg on 3 & 8 June. A fifth nest held 3 eggs on 8 June (MFr).

A pair of agitated adults was found by a nest with 2 eggs at Funk WPA, Phelps Co., on 5 June 2007 (WM). Another (or possibly the same) nest with 2 eggs was reported there on 7 July 2007, with young being noted on 12 July (DPf).

American Avocet: A colony on an artificial island in Goose Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., had 20 nests, each with 1-4 eggs, when first checked on 27 May 2007. On 8 June the colony contained 26 nests. On 15 June the colony comprised 33 nests but tracking individual nests became impossible because the birds were removing some of the marker flags (MFr).

A growing colony on Perrin Lake on the same refuge had 18 nests with 1-4 eggs each when visited on 23 May 2007 and grew to 26 nests by 8 June (MFr).

Willet: Four nests with eggs were found at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co. A nest with 4 eggs was found on 18 May 2007; one with 4 eggs was found on 21 May; one with 3 eggs was found on 24 May; and another with 4 eggs was found on 7 June (MFr).

Upland Sandpiper: Sixteen nests with eggs were found at Crescent Lake NWR during the period 17 May - 5 June 2007. Eggs were noted in the nests 17 May through 13 June. Young were noted by 27 May (MFr).

Nests were found on 25 May, 5 June, and 29 June 2007 on the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. The three nests held 3, 4, and 3 eggs, respectively. One of the nests also held 2 Brown-headed Cowbird eggs (TH, KB, DK).

Long-billed Curlew: A nest with 4 eggs was found at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., on 24 May 2007. The 4 eggs were still under incubation when visited on 4 June (MFr).

Wilson's Snipe: A nest with 4 eggs was found at Audubon's Spring Creek Prairie near Denton, Lancaster Co., on 1 May 2007 (KP).

Wilson's Phalarope: Two nests, each with 4 eggs, were found at Harvard WPA, 3 mi W of Harvard, Clay Co. on 14 and 28 May 2007 (PB).

Following an experimental regimen whereby cattle were removed after two weeks of intensive grazing, dense new growth that mimicked grassland response to a burn attracted 'swarms' of phalaropes to breed in the lush growth at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co. Monitoring of two such wet meadow study areas found a total of 48 nests with eggs during the period 11 May through 8 June, with 33 nests holding the usual full clutch of 4 eggs. An exception was one nest with 7 eggs, very likely the result of 'dumping.' Young were noted by 30 May (MFr).

Black Tern: Widely-dispersed nests on Beem Lake, Avocet WMA, just east of Hyannis, Grant Co., held 1, 2, 3, 3, 3, and 3 eggs on 23 June 2007. In contrast with the more usual colonial grouping, the nests were scattered among stands of cattails, with each nest separated by 50-100 meters from the next closest nest (WM).

A flightless young bird was found at Funk WPA, Funk, Phelps Co., on 17 July 2007 (DPf).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Even though the species is now found in towns statewide and increasingly reported in rural areas, few detailed reports of nesting have been received. A nest with 2 eggs was found in the top of a ponderosa pine in the exposed northwest corner of a cemetery in Ashland, Saunders Co., on 21 March 2007. On 29 March a single young, less than a week old, was in the nest, but was found dead of exposure on 3 April following several days of strong northwest winds and sub-freezing temperatures (WM).

A nest found at a rural building site at Sacramento-Wilcox WMA on 4 June 2007 held 2 eggs (WM).

Barn Owl: Two nest boxes placed on windmills at Crescent Lake NWR held 1 and 6 eggs on 8 May 2007; eggs in both were being incubated when checked (WM).

A nest under a bridge north of Big Springs, Deuel Co., held 3 eggs on 26 May 2007. On 27 June the nest held 7 eggs plus 3 young birds that were just a few days old. Ten young were present on 18 July. Seven young were present on 8 August, with 6 young still remaining on 12 August (WM).

Eastern Screech-Owl: A nest cavity in residential Ashland, Saunders Co., still empty on 29 March 2007, held the full clutch of 5 eggs on 16 April, tended by a protective parent. On 24 April the cavity held a single egg, 1 still-wet hatchling, and 3 other small young (plus, of course, the still-irate parent). Prey items noted in and below the nest included American Robin (young), Common Grackle (young), Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, and House Finch. A young bird was noted outside the nest cavity at dawn on 23 May, being mobbed by a mixed flock of Blue Jays, American Robins, Northern Cardinals and Common Grackles (WM).

Barred Owl: A pair using a nest box built for them in Elkhorn, Douglas Co., had already laid their two eggs when the box was checked on 12 March 2007. Two small young were noted on 14 April (DS).

Long-eared Owl: A nest at Smith Lake WMA south of Rushville, Sheridan Co., held 4 eggs on 12 April 2007. On 9 May it held 2 eggs, 3 small young, and the remains of 2 kangaroo rats. Five young were present on 21 May (WM).

Common Poorwill: A brooding adult and 2 small downy young were found in the limber pines area 10 mi. SW of Bushnell, Kimball Co., on 29 June 2007 (WM).

Chimney Swift: A nest with 5 eggs was photographed in the crumbling chimney of a long-abandoned farmhouse 15 mi. S of Maxwell, Lincoln Co., 6 June 2007 (WM).

Western Wood-Pewee: A nest still under construction on 9 June 2007 at the Gilbert-Baker WMA campground 5 mi. NW of Harrison, Sioux Co., held 3 eggs on 21 June.

A nest in the limber pines 10 mi. SW of Bushnell, Kimball Co. held 3 eggs on 28 June (WM).

Cordilleran Flycatcher: A nest in a rotted-out cavity in a pine snag at Gilbert-Baker WMA 5 mi. NW of Harrison, Sioux Co., first discovered in 2005, was being refurbished by a pair on 9 June 2007. On 21 June a bird was incubating 4 eggs (WM).

Say's Phoebe: A nest with 3 eggs was found in a hole in the side of a butte southwest of Harrison, Sioux Co., on 10 May 2007. A similar nest nearby that held 2 eggs (and 2 Brown-headed Cowbird eggs) on 20 June might have been a second clutch. A nest in a concrete culvert east of Harrison held 5 eggs on 9 June.

A nest in the ceiling light fixture in the living room of a long-abandoned farmhouse 15 mi. S of Maxwell, Lincoln Co., held 4 eggs and a single just-hatched young on 6 June.

A nest beneath a rural bridge northwest of Kimball, Kimball Co., on 29 June 2007 held a second clutch of 2 eggs. Five recently-fledged young of the first clutch still remained nearby.

A similar nest 9 mi. S of Culbertson, Hitchcock Co., with 3-4 young on 16 July 2007 was probably also a second clutch (WM).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: In only the second record of the species reported in Nebraska, a territorial bird found in the limber pines area 10 mi. SW of Bushnell, Kimball Co., on 28 June 2007 led to the first report of breeding in the Panhandle area. A bird was still on territory on 10 July and one of the pair repeatedly fed begging fledged young nearby on 18 July. Also on 18 July, an empty nest consistent with the species was found in the territory occupied by the pair (WM, MB, JG).

Cassin's Kingbird: On 29 June 2007, three nests with 2, 3, and 3 young were found in the limber pines area 10 mi. SW of Bushnell, Kimball Co. Also in Kimball Co., a nest with 4 eggs was found the same day 15 mi. NW of Bushnell in ponderosa pine woodland (WM).

Loggerhead Shrike: A nest with 5 young less than a week old was found at Walgren Lake SRA southeast of Hay Springs, Sheridan Co., on 31 May 2007.

A nest with 5 young was found 4 mi. SW of Macon, Franklin Co., on 4 June.

On 28 June a nest with 6 well-feathered young was found in the limber pines area 10 mi. southwest of Bushnell, Kimball Co. A mile away was an empty nest with 3 recently-fledged, stub-tailed young still hanging around nearby (WM).

Bell's Vireo: A nest with 3 eggs was found on 26 May 2007, 15 mi. N of Johnstown, Brown Co. (GW).

Another nest with a single egg was found on 1 June 2007, 5 mi. S of Norden, Keya Paha Co. (GW).

Yellow-throated Vireo: One of the few nests ever reported in detail in Nebraska was found on 13 May 2007 in Wilderness Park on the SW edge of Lincoln, Lancaster Co. A pair was at the nest and it appeared to be still under construction (LE). On 24 May the pair was present and giving vocal notice of their irritation at being disturbed by the two observers holding a mirror over the 36'-high nest to view the 4 eggs (LE,WM).

An adult was noted carrying food 5 mi. S, 2 mi. E of Vesta, Johnson Co., on 3 July 2007 (CK).

Blue Jay: Construction was already underway on the earliest nesting activity ever reported in Nebraska when found on 29 March 2007 in Ashland, Saunders Co. Construction was interrupted by days of sub-freezing temperatures and high winds, but by 16 April the nest held a single egg. On 19 April the full clutch of 4 eggs was present (WM).

Black-billed Magpie: With the severe decline in numbers in recent years, it was heartening to find a nest with 2 eggs and 5 tiny young two mi. N of Big Springs, Deuel Co., on 26 May 2007 (WM).

A nest discovered in a thicket at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co., held 5 eggs when found on 26 May 2007. On 30 May the nest held 3 eggs and 1 young bird (DK).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: A nest found in a dry road cut 12 mi. S of Maxwell, Lincoln Co., held 5 eggs on 6 June 2007 (WM).

Bank Swallow: A colony in a dry blowout bank 6 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., had nests with 2, 4, and 5 eggs on 8 June 2007. When revisited on 20 June, nests held 3, 3, 4, 4, and 5 eggs, while a sixth nest had at least 3 small young (WM).

Pygmy Nuthatch: Incubation was apparently not yet underway on a nest near the campground at Gilbert-Baker WMA 5 mi. NW of Harrison, Sioux Co., when found on 11 May 2007, even though it already held 7 eggs (WM). Clutch sizes previously reported in the Pine Ridge area have been of 7-10 eggs (Mollhoff 1997, 1999).

Marsh Wren: A nest in a phragmites stand at Ballards Marsh WMA, 19 mi. S of Valentine, Cherry Co., held 5 eggs on 10 June 2007 (WM).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: A nest in a ponderosa pine in Rocky Hollow, 15 mi. NE of Kimball, Kimball Co., held 3 tiny young on 29 June 2007 (WM).

Cedar Waxwing: Of three nests under construction when found on 9 June 2007 at Gilbert-Baker WMA 5 mi. NW of Harrison, Sioux Co., ultimately only one was completed. It held 3 eggs and a newly-hatched chick on 21 June (WM).

Ovenbird: A nest with 5 young was found 9 mi. N of Bassett, Rock Co., on 1 June 2007 (GW).

Common Yellowthroat: A nest found at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. on 31 May 2007 contained 5 eggs. A second nest found there on 25 June also held 5 eggs (JAZ, BS).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Two nests were found at Bordeaux Creek WMA, 5 mi. E of Chadron, Dawes Co., on 22 June 2007. One nest held 4 eggs, while the other held 3 eggs plus 2 just-hatched young (WM).

Field Sparrow: Two nests found on 24 and 29 May 2007 at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co., held 5 and 3 eggs respectively (DK).

Vesper Sparrow: A nest with 5 eggs was found 6 mi. NW of Ames, Dodge Co., on 15 May 2007. On 22 May five young were present. The nest was empty when checked on 31 May (DP, JP).

A nest found 9 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., held 4 eggs on 20 June 2007 (WM).

A nest just north of Cedar Bluffs, Saunders Co., held 4 young when discovered on 11 July 2007. The young had fledged and the nest was empty when revisited on 16 July (JM).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Dozens of nests were again found by researchers at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. Nests with eggs were found from 21 May through 20 August 2007 (KB, KtB, KC, AG, TH, DK, MP, RR, TR, BS, JAZ).

Henslow's Sparrow: A nest containing a single egg was found at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co., on 20 May 2007. A second nest with 4 eggs was found there on 7 June (BS).

Swamp Sparrow: A nest with 4 eggs was found at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co., on 29 May 2007 (DK).

McCown's Longspur: A focused nest search on 30 May 2007 turned up 5 nests in a single square mile of Kimball Co. rangeland, 13 mi. S, 3 mi. W of Kimball. The nests contained 1, 2, 3, 3, and 4 young. Another nest with 4 young was found on the same date 2 mi. E of Kimball. On 4 June another Kimball Co. nest with 4 young was found 2 mi. N, 3 mi. W of Bushnell (LS,CS).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: A nest with 3 eggs was found in shortgrass prairie in Sioux Co. 16 mi. N of Scottsbluff, on 4 June 2007 (HH).

Two nests, with 1 and 4 young, were found on 30 June 2007 in one of the few sections of native prairie still remaining in the area during the above-mentioned longspur nest search (LS,CS).

Dickcissel: A nest with 4 young was reported 27 June 2007 at the Audubon's Spring Creek Prairie, 2 mi. S of Denton, Lancaster Co., (KP).

Dozens of nests were again found by researchers at the WCT 5 mi. S of

Alda, Hall Co. Nests with eggs were found from 19 May through 30 July 2007 (TH, MP, TR, BS, JAZ).

Bobolink: Dozens of nests were found by researchers at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. Nests with eggs were reported from 21 May through 12 July 2007 (KB, AG, TH, DK, RR, TR, JAZ).

Western Meadowlark: Dozens of nests were found by researchers at the WCT 5 mi. S of Alda, Hall Co. Nests with eggs were reported from 11 May through 30 July 2007 (KB, KtB, KC, AG, TH, DK, MP, RR, TR, BS, JAZ).

Brewer's Blackbird: Only a single nest with one egg was found at a long-established colony 12 mi. E of Harrison, Sioux Co. when visited early in the season on 11 May 2007.

Most young had already fledged at a colony established in cavities in badland outcrops 10 mi. SW of Harrison, Sioux Co., on 20 June 2007. One nest held at least 3 half-grown young, while 6 more nests were already abandoned by the fledged young (WM).

Great-tailed Grackle: Nest-building was just getting underway at the growing colony 4 mi. SW of Waverly, Lancaster Co., on 13 April 2007, with five nests well underway on 20 April. On 25 April, six nests with 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, and 4 eggs were noted. Three nests were still under construction on 4 May, while thirteen more nests with 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, and 5 eggs were found, and another nest held 2 eggs plus one just-hatched young (WM).

A nest was under construction at Harvard WPA, 3 mi. west of Harvard, Clay Co., on 28 May 2007 (PD).

A nest with 1 egg was found at Walgren Lake SRA, southeast of Hay Springs, Sheridan Co., on 31 May 2007 (WM).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Nests parasitized by cowbirds included Upland Sandpiper, Say's Phoebe, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and Western Meadowlark. Nests with cowbird eggs were noted from 11 May through 30 July 2007.

House Finch: In an early nesting attempt during sub-freezing weather on 1 April 2007, a pair repeatedly added material to a site atop a porch light in Ashland, Saunders Co., only to have their work blown away by the wind. Despite persistent attempts, the pair gave up after several days and refocused their efforts in some blue spruce across the street.

While one nest held 4 eggs when found, five more nests were still under construction at Mahoney SP southeast of Ashland, Cass Co., on 26 April 2007 (WM).

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Fall Field Days at Ashland

The Fall Field Days were held southeast of Ashland at the Carol Joy Holling Conference Center September 26-28. Field trips to Platte River and Schramm State Parks, Louisville and Memphis SRAs, Jack Sinn WMA, Fontenelle Forest, and Spring Creek Prairie were led by Kevin Poague, Clem Klaphake, Larry Einemann, Rick Schmid, and Don and Janis Paseka.

Hawk migration was in full swing, and we observed 10 species, including a number of Broad-wings and Swainson's. An American Golden-Plover was a standout among the dozen shorebird species, and 10 warbler species were found, including Black-throated Green and Canada. Total species count was 126.

Our speaker on Friday night was NOU member Dr. Daniel Leger, Professor of Psychology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. His presentation was entitled, 'How Many Bird Species are there and How Do We Know?' His answer was that there are around 10,000 species right now, that number is increasing, and we probably will never know how many species there are. He spoke about "cryptic" species, ones that were there all along but were never noticed because we lacked crucial behavioral, vocal or genetic data. Dr. Leger's work has included uncovering some cryptic species and will eventually result in the Bright-rumped Attila and the Ochre-bellied Flycatcher each being split into multiple species.

On Saturday night, Dr. Robert Gibson, Professor of Biology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, spoke about avian lek behavior. Several hundred species of birds exhibit lek behavior, in which clustered males engage in sometimes spectacular courtship behavior while the females are allowed a relatively unhindered choice of a mate. Dr. Gibson's studies have shown that females favor males in groups and prefer certain lek hotspots that are close to nesting sites. Only a few of the males actually mate, but the others may have more chance of mating if they display at a known lek site. Another advantage is that an individual bird stands a greater chance of survival during a predator attack in a group than it does if it is alone.

Fall Field Days at Ashland

	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Cackling Goose			x	
Canada Goose	x	x	x	x
Wood Duck		x	x	x
Mallard	x	x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x	x
Northern Shoveler		x		
Ring-necked Pheasant			x	x
Wild Turkey	x		x	
Pied-billed Grebe	x	x	x	x
American White Pelican	x		x	
Double-crested Cormorant	x	x	x	x
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x
Great Egret				x
Green Heron		x		x
<i>Plegadis sp.</i>		x		x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x
Osprey	x	x	x	x
Bald Eagle	x		x	
Northern Harrier	x	x	x	x
Sharp-shinned Hawk		x	x	x
Cooper's Hawk	x	x	x	
Broad-winged Hawk	x		x	
Swainson's Hawk	x			
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x
American Kestrel	x	x	x	x
Black Rail * (see note below)		x		
Sora	x	x		x
American Coot	x	x	x	x
American Golden Plover				x
Killdeer	x	x	x	x
Greater Yellowlegs				x
Lesser Yellowlegs				x
Spotted Sandpiper			x	x
Semipalmated Sandpiper				x
Least Sandpiper		x		x
Baird's Sandpiper				x
Pectoral Sandpiper		x		x
Stilt Sandpiper		x		

Fall Field Days at Ashland

	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Long-billed Dowitcher			x	
Wilson's Snipe		x		x
Franklin's Gull	x	x	x	x
Ring-billed Gull	x	x	x	
Forster's Tern	x			
Rock Pigeon	x		x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove			x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			x	
Common Nighthawk	x			x
Chimney Swift	x		x	x
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		x		
Belted Kingfisher	x	x	x	x
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x	x	x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x	x
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x	
Hairy Woodpecker	x	x	x	
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x
Eastern Wood-Pewee	x		x	
Eastern Phoebe	x	x	x	x
Eastern Kingbird			x	
Loggerhead Shrike				x
Blue-headed Vireo			x	x
Warbling Vireo				x
Philadelphia Vireo			x	
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x
American Crow	x	x	x	
Horned Lark			x	x
Tree Swallow		x	x	x
N. Rough-winged Swallow			x	
Bank Swallow				x
Cliff Swallow				x
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x		x	
Tufted Titmouse	x		x	
White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x	x	x
Carolina Wren	x		x	
House Wren	x	x	x	x

Fall Field Days at Ashland

	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Sedge Wren			x	x
Marsh Wren		x	x	x
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		x	x	x
Eastern Bluebird	x	x	x	x
American Robin	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird	x	x	x	x
Brown Thrasher		x	x	x
European Starling	x	x	x	x
American Pipit		x		
Cedar Waxwing	x	x	x	
Orange-crowned Warbler		x	x	x
Nashville Warbler	x	x	x	x
Northern Parula			x	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x		x	x
Black-throated Green Warbler			x	
American Redstart			x	
Northern Waterthrush				x
Common Yellowthroat		x	x	x
Wilson's Warbler		x	x	
Canada Warbler			x	
Scarlet Tanager			x	
Spotted Towhee			x	
Eastern Towhee		x	x	
Chipping Sparrow	x		x	x
Clay-colored Sparrow			x	
Field Sparrow		x	x	
Vesper Sparrow		x		x
Lark Sparrow		x	x	x
Savannah Sparrow		x		x
Grasshopper Sparrow		x		
Le Conte's Sparrow		x		x
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow		x		x
Song Sparrow		x	x	x
Lincoln's Sparrow		x	x	x
Swamp Sparrow		x	x	
White-throated Sparrow			x	
Harris' Sparrow				x
White-crowned Sparrow				x

Fall Field Days at Ashland

	Cass	Lancaster	Sarpy	Saunders
Northern Cardinal	x	x	x	x
Indigo Bunting	x		x	x
Dickcissel		x	x	
Red-winged Blackbird		x	x	x
Eastern Meadowlark			x	x
Western Meadowlark		x	x	x
Common Grackle	x	x	x	x
Great-tailed Grackle			x	x
Brown-headed Cowbird		x	x	x
Baltimore Oriole	x			
House Finch	x	x	x	
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x
Total species: 127	58	75	94	84

* Subject to NOURC acceptance.

Remembering Everett Gross and Lee Morris

Everett Gross, NOU member since 1966, passed away on March 5, 2008, at the age of 88. Mildred, his wife of 65 years, preceded him in death by only a few months [see June 2007 *NBR*, p. 62]. Both were regular participants at the NOU spring and fall gatherings until about two years ago, when failing health began to keep them home.

Everett was born in Burwell and graduated from Ord High School at the age of 15. He earned a BS in education from Nebraska State Teacher's College in 1957, and masters degrees from UNL in physics (1960) and economics (1978).

He served in the Army Air Corps during WWII, being discharged as a 1st Lieutenant in 1944. Everett's varied jobs across his life included farming, television repair, air



Everett Gross

traffic control, bricklaying, and teaching. In the career he held for most of his life, he taught courses at in physics at Doane College in Crete.

Everett and Mildred raised three children, Daniel, Donna, and Damon, while teaching and continuing their own education.

Everett's interests and hobbies included music, woodworking, physics, and economic theories concerning poverty and taxation. He played several musical instruments, especially the flute and piccolo. A tinkerer and inventor, he was the architect of numerous challenging brain-teaser puzzles made with metal, wood, and rope. He was known to NOU members for his quiet sense of humor and could always be counted on for a joke or two.



Lee Morris

Lee Morris of Benedict was another loyal, longtime member of the NOU. Lee was 86 when he passed away on July 14, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Shirley, sons James, Steve (also an NOU member), and Tom, and daughter Linda. Lee was an NOU officer in the 1960s, and he and Shirley hosted the fall NOU meeting at Harlan Co. Reservoir in 1964.

Lee was a World War II Air Force veteran, but for most of his life he was a farmer. It was this occupation which allowed and encouraged him to observe birds on his farm in York County, as the following note dated May 2, 1961, shows:

"It has been so dry that most of our ponds are dried up so the shore birding hasn't been nearly as good as usual. Jim and I took a drive last Sunday to the Shickley ponds and saw quite a lot of things (including) an American (Great) Egret. We hadn't seen one before. It flew up and sat on a muskrat house while we watched. I also saw my first Yellow-crowned Night Heron last week. It was an adult in full plumage. I usually carry my binoculars while running the tractor in the spring and they really come in handy at times. Yesterday I saw eight birds light close by and they turned out to be (American) Golden-Plovers." (NBR Vol. 29 No 3 July 1961)

In the 1970s, Lee reported that he was seeing large numbers of Buff-breasted Sandpipers as he went about his spring field work. It had been known previously that "Buffies", cryptically-colored and preferring uplands rather than wetlands, stop over in the Eastern Rainwater Basin of Nebraska during migration, but until this time, researchers had no idea how pivotal the area was for this species. Thanks to Lee's careful observations and reporting, studies were initiated, and it was eventually determined that nearly the entire population of Buffies visit Nebraska each spring.

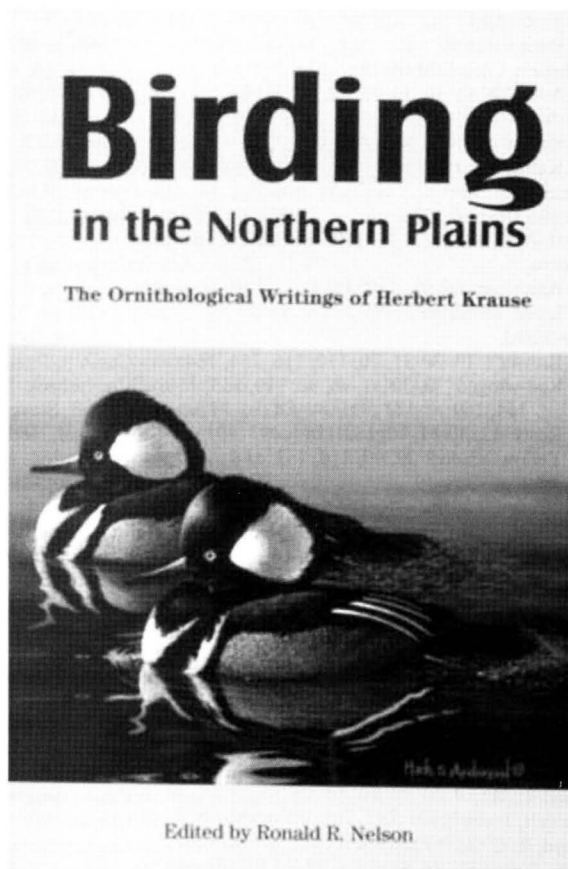
BOOK REVIEW

Paul A. Johnsgard

Birding in the Northern Plains: The Ornithological Writings of Herbert Krause. Ronald R. Nelson, editor. 2008. The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College Sioux Falls, SD. 252 pp. USBN No. 978-0-9312170-87-4. Price: \$27.50.

Herbert Krause was a native of Minnesota who spent most of his life in South Dakota, teaching at Augustana College from 1938 until his death in 1976. During that time he wrote extensively on South Dakota birds, much of which appeared in *South Dakota Bird Notes*, the journal of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. This book, assembled and edited by his long-time friend Ronald Nelson, brings together a collection of many of Krause's published writings. These writings include the account of the McCown's Longspur that appeared in A. C. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds*, a description of nesting by a pair of Canada Warblers that was published in *The Living Bird*, forty-four articles reprinted from *Bird Notes*, various book reviews, and regional summaries of seasonal sightings appearing in *Audubon Field Notes* from 1957 to 1960. Krause also published three novels, as well as various short stories, plays, poetry and essays, and helped establish the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College. He twice served as president of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union during the 1950's and 1960's.

A copy of the book has been deposited in the N.O.U. library.



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