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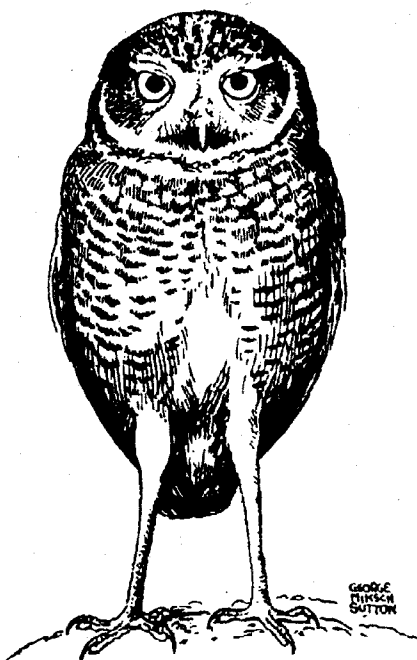
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# ***The Nebraska Bird Review***

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## NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION TREASURER'S REPORT December 31, 2008

	General Funds	Breeding Bird Atlas	Scholarship Fund	Endowment Fund	Total
<b>CHECKING</b>					
Jan. 1, 2008 Balance - Checking	\$1,147.12	(\$137.96)	\$25.00	\$175.00	\$1,209.16
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Donations-NBR	375.00				375.00
Donations-General	100.00	74.00		130.00	304.00
Memberships	2,355.00				2,355.00
Subscriptions	285.00				285.00
Spring Meet-Scottsbluff-2008	3,612.00				3,612.00
Fall Meet-Ashland-2008	3,285.00				3,285.00
NG&P Atlas Grant		9,979.26			9,979.26
Transfer from Endow CD	195.00				195.00
Transfer from Savings 2/9/08	600.00				600.00
Transfer from Savings 9/24/08	904.52	215.38	380.10		1,500.00
Sub-total Receipts	\$11,711.52	\$10,268.64	\$380.10	\$130.00	\$22,490.26
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>					
Spring Meet-Scottsbluff-2008	3,479.36		141.10		3,620.46
Fall Meet - Ashland - 2008	3,509.36		264.00		3,773.36
NBR-Printing-V75 #3 & #4,V76#1	2,542.80				2,542.80
Newsletter - Printing	515.88				515.88
Postage	619.07				619.07
Insurance	300.00				300.00
Reimb Mollhoff-Atlas #2		9,830.68			9,830.68
Contract-Rehme-Atlas #2		300.00			300.00
Transfer to CD				195.00	195.00
Sub-total Disbursements	\$10,966.47	\$10,130.68	\$405.10	\$195.00	\$21,697.25
Dec. 31, 2008 Balance-Checking	\$1,892.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$110.00	\$2,002.17
<b>SAVINGS</b>					
Jan. 1, 2008 Balance - Savings	\$5,846.60	\$520.10	\$1,755.30	\$-	\$8,122.00
Interest	105.92				105.92
Transfer to checking	(1,504.52)	(215.38)	(380.10)		(2,100.00)
Interest from Endowment	1,795.85				1,795.85
Dec. 31, 2008 Balance - Savings	6,243.85	304.72	1,375.20	\$-	\$7,923.77
<b>CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT</b>					
Jan. 1, 2008 Balance - CDs	\$5,325.46	\$6,702.93		\$35,242.19	\$47,270.58
Principal Additions				195.00	195.00
Transfer to Savings				(1,795.85)	(1,795.85)
Transfer to Checking				(195.00)	(195.00)
Interest Received	182.21	261.97		1,227.63	1,671.81
Dec. 31, 2008 Balance - CDs	\$5,507.67	\$6,964.90		\$34,673.97	\$47,146.54
Maturity	1/20/09	6/20/09		5/27/09	
CD Annual Rates	2.75%	2.00%		3.10%	
Endowment Principal				\$34,042.00	
Grand Total					\$57,072.48

### 2008-2009 Christmas Bird Counts in Nebraska

Thirteen Christmas Bird Counts were held in Nebraska in the 2008-09 season, one less than last year. (Beaver Valley was not run this year.) This year fewer participants (184, the fewest since 2000) found more individual birds than last year (146,635 vs 133,106) but fewer species (126, the fewest since 2000).

Temperatures were about like last year, with an average high of 29° F. Most counts reported some snow cover, frozen still water and some open running water. On the day of the Branched Oak-Seward count, a balmy 51° F was recorded in Lincoln shortly after midnight. By afternoon, the temperature had dropped to 5° and was accompanied by north winds gusting to 40 mph.

Notable misses this year were all loon and grebe species. The last time we had a loon and grebe shutout was in 1990. We also missed Short-eared Owls this year and in 2006. No Brewer's Blackbirds were found: the last time they were absent was in 1998.

Notable finds included a Red-shouldered Hawk at Branched Oak-Seward during count week. This species is found sporadically on the Omaha count and has only once before been found on a count other than Omaha (DeSoto in 1988). A Peregrine Falcon was seen in the Lincoln count circle; one was last seen on a count in 2001. One Great Black-backed Gull was found at Lake McConaughy, only the third ever; all were from this decade and all were seen at Lake McConaughy. A first for the Lake McConaughy count was Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. This species is unusual on CBCs and was last seen in 1989 in Scottsbluff. Prior to that, one was in Crawford in 1978.

Among the high counts were 3 Pileated Woodpeckers at Omaha. Previous counts (all in the Omaha circle) have been 1 in 1999, 2 in 2005 and 1 in 2007. More Northern Flickers (622) were found this year than ever before (next highest count was 610 in 1988.) We also reached a new high count for Eastern Bluebird (524); DeSoto alone recorded 176. Three Northern Mockingbirds were found this year (1 at DeSoto and 2 at Lake McConaughy). This is the first year since 1965 that more than one has been found. This year's White-throated Sparrow count of 45 is the highest since 1989, when 49 were recorded. More White-crowned Sparrows (169) than ever before were counted this year, and 156 of those were at Scottsbluff. This year's Rusty Blackbird count of 102 is the highest since 127 in 1998.

Remarkable low counts this year included Black-billed Magpie. Totals for this species on Nebraska CBCs continue to decline. This year's count of 38 is the lowest since 1967, when only 16 were found. Black-capped Chickadee numbers are low for the 6th consecutive year. The average per count this year is 72, only about half of what averages in the 1990s were. The 11 Golden-crowned Kinglets this year is lowest since 9 were counted in 1978.

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Ames	Branched Oak - Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison
Greater White-fronted Goose							
Snow Goose		28				2	
Ross's Goose					1		
Cackling Goose		56	1			3	
Canada Goose	461	694	1,300		64	5,043	
Trumpeter Swan			13				
Wood Duck						7	
Gadwall		10	1				
American Wigeon		3	30			4	
Mallard	650	2,825	6,916	3	152	1,095	2
Blue-winged Teal							
Northern Shoveler			1				
Northern Pintail	8	14					
Green-winged Teal		cw					
Casvasback		1					
Redhead			1				
Ring-necked Duck							
Greater Scaup							
Lesser Scaup							
Bufflehead							
Common Goldeneye	1	15	510		49	18	
Hooded Merganser							
Common Merganser		118	40		28		
Red-breasted Merganser							
Ruddy Duck		1					
Duck sp.					7		
Ring-necked Pheasant	10	4		1	38	3	
Sharp-tailed Grouse			cw				
Greater Prairie-Chicken			38			2	
Wild Turkey		1	31	56	204	275	29

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca	Scottsbluff	Total
Greater White-fronted Goose	3		1			1	5
Snow Goose	2	1				1	34
Ross's Goose							1
Cackling Goose	592	4	1			28	685
Canada Goose	8,333	5,903	325	1,875		19,877	43,875
Trumpeter Swan	8						21
Wood Duck	1					7	15
Gadwall	20					2	33
American Wigeon	2					43	82
Mallard	1,656	836	220	220		1,465	16,040
Blue-winged Teal						cw	
Northern Shoveler						1	2
Northern Pintail	3	1				8	34
Green-winged Teal	26	2		12			40
Casvasback							1
Redhead						4	5
Ring-necked Duck	1					40	41
Greater Scaup	2						2
Lesser Scaup	1						1
Bufflehead	11					1	12
Common Goldeneye	384			16	1	161	1,155
Hooded Merganser	2						2
Common Merganser	1,700			16			1,902
Red-breasted Merganser	7						7
Ruddy Duck							1
Duck sp.							7
Ring-necked Pheasant	7	27	103	4	40	9	246
Sharp-tailed Grouse	6						6
Greater Prairie-Chicken	26						66
Wild Turkey	4	8	51	249		14	922

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Ames	Branched Oak - Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison
Northern Bobwhite		12	1			13	
American White Pelican							
Double-crested Cormorant							
Great Blue Heron	3	2			1	1	
Bald Eagle	15	4	27	2	38	7	1
adult	7			1		4	
immature	8			1		3	1
unspecified age		4	27		38		
Northern Harrier	2	7	5	3	5	7	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	6		2	5	1	
Cooper's Hawk		1	1		2		
Accipiter sp.			2				
Red-shouldered Hawk		cw					
Red-tailed Hawk	29	26	5	2	75	16	
Ferruginous Hawk							
Rough-legged Hawk	1	3	2	4	6	7	4
Buteo sp.				5			
Golden Eagle				5			1
American Kestrel	9	4	3	3	9	3	
Merlin		2	2	cw			
Peregrine Falcon							
Prairie Falcon		1		1	1	1	
Hawk sp.					1		
Virginia Rail							
American Coot		14					
Killdeer							
Wilson's Snipe			cw			2	
Ring-billed Gull		44	2				
California Gull							
Herring Gull		2					

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca	Scottsbluff	Total
Northern Bobwhite	24	7	cw				57
American White Pelican	3						3
Double-crested Cormorant				2			2
Great Blue Heron	6	5				cw	18
Bald Eagle	73	3	10	38	2	12	232
adult	44					8	64
immature	29					4	46
unspecified age		3	10	38	2		122
Northern Harrier	11	5	1	5	1	13	67
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	7	1	5	4	1	37
Cooper's Hawk	5	6	1	2	1	cw	19
Accipiter sp.			1				3
Red-shouldered Hawk							
Red-tailed Hawk	20	57	28	96	8	29	391
Ferruginous Hawk	2					4	6
Rough-legged Hawk	5	2	2	4	4	5	49
Buteo sp.		2				2	9
Golden Eagle			1				7
American Kestrel	17	18	19	8		22	115
Merlin	7	1		1	1		14
Peregrine Falcon		1					1
Prairie Falcon	1					1	6
Hawk sp.							1
Virginia Rail	1						1
American Coot		1	1			13	29
Killdeer	5						5
Wilson's Snipe	4						6
Ring-billed Gull	800						846
California Gull	1						1
Herring Gull	430						432



## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Ames	Branched Oak - Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison
Thayer's Gull							
Iceland Gull							
Lesser Black-backed Gull							
Glaucous Gull							
Great Black-backed Gull							
Rock Pigeon	174	40		20	145	354	
Eurasian Collared-Dove		20	5	84	2	64	17
Mourning Dove	2	1		3	10	7	
Eastern Screech-Owl		1	1			3	
Great Horned Owl	6	1	5		1	2	
Barred Owl		1			3		
Long-eared Owl		3					
Northern Saw-whet Owl							
Owl sp.		2					
Belted Kingfisher		1	3		cw		
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	1			8		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	6	32	3		86	1	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1			1		
Downy Woodpecker	12	42	6	3	73	10	2
Hairy Woodpecker	3	6	2	1	7	1	1
Northern Flicker	30	66	14	2	117	20	
Pileated Woodpecker							
Northern Shrike	1	8	cw	1		2	2
Shrike sp.		1					
Blue Jay	19	77	3	10	166	4	1
Black-billed Magpie				2			
American Crow	11	520	4,093	33	127	36	5
Horned Lark	114	80	4	66	66	1,051	198
Black-capped Chickadee	52	31	3	40	208	4	8
Tufted Titmouse					17		

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Porta	Scottsbluff	Total
Thayer's Gull	6						6
Iceland Gull	1						1
Lesser Black-backed Gull	3						3
Glaucous Gull	8						8
Great Black-backed Gull	1						1
Rock Pigeon	20	965	232	178	10	525	2,663
Eurasian Collared-Dove	112		11			207	522
Mourning Dove	1	153		24		4	205
Eastern Screech-Owl	3	2	3	2	3		18
Great Horned Owl	3	6	7	1	1	3	36
Barred Owl			1	4	2		11
Long-eared Owl	2						5
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1						1
Owl sp.							2
Belted Kingfisher	4	4		2	1	6	21
Red-headed Woodpecker				15	5		30
Red-bellied Woodpecker	8	65	15	157	17		390
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1		cw			3
Downy Woodpecker	37	96	19	164	24	14	502
Hairy Woodpecker	8	16	4	27	7	cw	83
Northern Flicker	52	66	12	169	32	42	622
Pileated Woodpecker				3			3
Northern Shrike	5	2	7		2	3	33
Shrike sp.		1					2
Blue Jay	3	131	31	152	99	69	765
Black-billed Magpie	12				5	19	38
American Crow	6	141	17	60	111	24	5,184
Horned Lark	219	53	113	6	72	703	2,745
Black-capped Chickadee	26	93	22	354	76	25	942
Tufted Titmouse				34			51

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Ames	Branched Oak - Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison
Red-breasted Nuthatch		1			1	1	
White-breasted Nuthatch	12	49	5	1	98	7	2
Pygmy Nuthatch				5			17
Brown Creeper	cw	5			8	2	
Carolina Wren		1			1	1	
Winter Wren	cw	2					
Marsh Wren							
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	1					
Eastern Bluebird	27	53	6		176	3	
Mountain Bluebird							
Townsend's Solitaire				7			1
Hermit Thrush	1				2		
American Robin	365	342	39	63	4,018	125	5
Northern Mockingbird					1		
Brown Thrasher							
European Starling	1,190	805	372	310	3,807	245	80
Cedar Waxwing	206	150	8		301	95	5
Yellow-rumped Warbler		2			3		
Spotted Towhee					1		
Eastern Towhee		4			2		
American Tree Sparrow	72	373	51	36	626	562	
Field Sparrow		1					
Fox Sparrow		cw				2	
Song Sparrow		3			4	24	
Lincoln's Sparrow							
Swamp Sparrow		cw					
White-throated Sparrow		3			22	1	
Harris's Sparrow	2	24	23	1	17	65	
White-crowned Sparrow		1			3		
Sparrow sp.		2					

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca	Scottsbluff	Total
Red-breasted Nuthatch		13	1			3	20
White-breasted Nuthatch	20	60	26	342	26	2	650
Pygmy Nuthatch						cw	22
Brown Creeper	2	26	2	20			65
Carolina Wren		4		16	1		24
Winter Wren	1			2			5
Marsh Wren	4						4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	6	2				11
Eastern Bluebird	32	64		130	33		524
Mountain Bluebird	1						1
Townsend's Solitaire	37					7	52
Hermit Thrush							3
American Robin	1,681	156	40	696	5,987	243	13,760
Northern Mockingbird	2						3
Brown Thrasher		1					1
European Starling	1,661	7,602	6,111	1,364	700	2,021	26,268
Cedar Waxwing	106	83	2	272	291		1,519
Yellow-rumped Warbler		1		7			13
Spotted Towhee		3		2			6
Eastern Towhee					1		7
American Tree Sparrow	61	391	89	231	520	113	3,125
Field Sparrow							1
Fox Sparrow							2
Song Sparrow	8	5		21		16	81
Lincoln's Sparrow				1			1
Swamp Sparrow				1			1
White-throated Sparrow		7		12			45
Harris's Sparrow	1	64	3	11	15		226
White-crowned Sparrow	1	3		4	1	156	169
Sparrow sp.							2

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Ames	Branched Oak - Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison
Dark-eyed Junco	135	544	65	36	1,031	468	51
Slate-colored	135	285		7	1,028		
Oregon				9	2		1
White-winged							2
Pink-sided					1		
unspecified subspecies		259	65	20		468	48
Lapland Longspur	174	3			4	234	
Snow Bunting							
Northern Cardinal	27	115	8		83	40	
Red-winged Blackbird	10	22			805	714	
Western Meadowlark	1			1		54	
Meadowlark sp.	17	18			39		
Rusty Blackbird	10	cw			92		
Common Grackle		1					
Great-tailed Grackle						50	
Brown-headed Cowbird					1		
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch							
Purple Finch	2	2	2		32		
House Finch		108	58	25	31	68	2
Common Redpoll		1			cw		
Red Crossbill							
Pine Siskin	1	37	14	25	4	3	22
American Goldfinch	16	548	91	113	256	84	64
House Sparrow	191	259	93	112	243	189	63
TOTAL SPECIES	44	76	47	36	62	57	25
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	4,081	8,313	13,909	1,087	13,435	11,106	585

## 2008-2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca	Scottsbluff	Total
Dark-eyed Junco	354	1,092	485	785	310	336	5,692
Slate-colored	175	283				85	1,998
Oregon	39	30			1	124	206
White-winged	1						3
Pink-sided	17					19	37
unspecified subspecies	122	779	485	785	309	108	3,448
Lapland Longspur	10						425
Snow Bunting	2						2
Northern Cardinal	36	202	39	194	28	2	774
Red-winged Blackbird	603	73	11	20	7	198	2,463
Western Meadowlark	2	6			1		65
Meadowlark sp.		22		25			121
Rusty Blackbird							102
Common Grackle	2	5		1		2	11
Great-tailed Grackle							50
Brown-headed Cowbird	3		2				6
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	1						1
Purple Finch	1	3		16	9	1	68
House Finch	278	191	23	126	30	195	1,135
Common Redpoll	1	1					3
Red Crossbill	4						4
Pine Siskin	62	53	11	54	29	245	560
American Goldfinch	217	366	40	360	43	225	2,423
House Sparrow	241	694	579	461	84	414	3,623
TOTAL SPECIES	97	63	46	60	44	55	126
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	20,193	19,889	8,726	9,079	8,645	27,587	146,635

## 2008-09 CBC Site Data

	Date	Species	Individuals	Observers	Low Temp (° F)	High Temp (° F)	Sky	Precipitation
Ames	30 Dec	44	4,081	7	27	42	pt cloudy	none
Branched Oak/Seward	14 Dec	76	8,313	18	5	18	pt cloudy	lt snow am
Calamus-Loup	30 Dec	47	13,909	6	15	32	pt cloudy	none
Crawford	27 Dec	36	1,087	5	10	29	clear	none
DeSoto-Boyer	27 Dec	62	13,435	18	30	38	cloudy	none
Grand Island	20 Dec	57	11,106	14	2	13	cloudy	none
Harrison	28 Dec	25	585	2	30	36	clear	none
Lake McConaughy	3 Jan	97	20,193	24	14	36	pt cloudy	none
Lincoln	27 Dec	63	19,889	36	23	29	pt cloudy	none
Norfolk	20 Dec	46	8,726	5	7	29	pt cloudy	none
Omaha	28 Dec	60	9,079	23	17	38	clear	none
Ponca S.P.	3 Jan	44	8,645	13	10	23	cloudy	rain
Scottsbluff	20 Dec	55	27,587	13	1	18	pt cloudy	none
Total		126	146,635	184	15	29		

## 2008-09 CBC Participants

**Ames** Larry Einemann, Clem Klaphake, Steve Lamphere, Elizabeth Mulliken, Jerry Mulliken, Don Paseka (compiler), Janis Paseka (7)

**Branched Oak-Seward** Elaine Bachel, Kevin DeGarmo, Barbara DiBernard, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Joseph Gubanyi (compiler), Joel Jorgensen, Thomas Labedz, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Kathy Putensen, John Quinn, Sarah Rehme, Mary Steinbeck, Moni Usasz, Bill Wells, Gertrude Wood, Heather York (18)

**Calamus-Loup** Bob Gerten, Kathi Gerten, Robin Harding, David Heidt (compiler), Lanny Randolph, Duane Wolff (6)

**Crawford** Phil Dobesh, John Flavin, Ruben Siegfried, Bruce Walgren (compiler), Donna Walgren (5)

**DeSoto** Elliott Bedows, Fred Davis, Janet Greer, Nora Greer, Jonas Grundman, Mace Hack, Clem Klaphake, Steve Lamphere, Sue Mattix, Jim Meyer, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Sandy Reinken, Justin Rink, Brian Specht, Joyce Specht, Jerry Toll, Steve Van Riper (18)

**Grand Island** Gordon Backer, Tom Blanchard, Anton Curtis, Karine Gil, Michele Kock, Ron Kruse, Ann Kruse, Connie McCartney (compiler), Mary McCartney, Jim Meyer, Steve Morris, Patricia Smith, Vern Throop, Enrique Weir (14)

**Harrison** Bruce Walgren (compiler), Donna Walgren (2)

**Lake McConaughy** Elliott Bedows, Mary Bomberger Brown, Mary Cay Burger, Stephen Dinsmore (compiler), Paul Dunbar, Joey Hajda, Tim Hajda, Luke Hamilton, Robin Harding, Alice Heckman, Bill Huntley, Joel Jorgensen, Bette Klaphake, Clem Klaphake, Rodger Knaggs, John Murphy, Kay Niyo, Lanny Randolph, Al Reyer, Justin Rink, Ross Silcock, Kent Skaggs, Randy Skaggs, Mark Urwiller (24)

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**Norfolk** Anne Brogie, Ben Brogie, Mark Brogie, David Heidt, Duane Wolff (compiler) (5)

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Ruddy Turnstone, Hultine WPA, Clay Co.,  
19 May 2008. Photo by Joel Jorgensen.



Red-headed Woodpecker, Audubon Spring  
Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co., 3 June 2009.  
Photo by Gordon Warrick.



Least Tern chick, Lower Platte  
River, Sarpy Co., 19 July 2008.  
Photo by Joel Jorgensen.



Sedge Wren, Harland Warrick Farm  
near Blair, Washington Co., 27 May  
2007. Photo by Gordon Warrick.



Sprague's Pipit, Audubon  
Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster  
Co., 20 Oct 2007. Photo by  
Phil Swanson.

Baltimore Orioles, near Auburn, Nemaha Co.,  
3 May 2006. Photo by Kenneth Carnes.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak,  
2 miles south of Nickerson,  
Dodge Co., 10 May 2008.  
Photo by Jerry Mulliken.

Le Conte's Sparrow,  
Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy  
Co., 16 Oct 2008.  
Photo by Phil Swanson.



## WINTER FIELD REPORT, December 2008 to February 2009

Compiled by W. Ross Silcock  
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## INTRODUCTION

This was one of the more “normal” winters for some time; I base this conclusion on the lack of unusually early or late dates or exceptional counts, as well as the lack of rarities. Although there were 11 species of gulls reported, perhaps we have become jaded by the gull extravaganza that is Lake McConaughy. It was a great winter for Common Redpolls and Snow Buntings as well, which was welcome as these birds do not appear in any numbers most winters. Perhaps the only group of birds that exhibited consistent aberration from the “norm” (I prefer “average”) was the native sparrows, with several unexpected midwinter dates for various species.

## ABBREVIATIONS

BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co  
CBC: Christmas Bird Count  
Cem: Cemetery  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co  
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar-Knox Cos  
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co  
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos  
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co  
m.ob.: many observers  
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge  
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co  
Res: Reservoir  
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)  
SP: State Park  
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co

## GAZETTEER

DeSoto NWR: Washington Co

## OBSERVERS

AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff  
AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering  
ARy: Al Reyer, Bellevue  
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City



BG: Betty Grenon, Bellevue  
BM: Brad McKinney, Scottsbluff  
BW: Ben Wheeler, Ord  
B&DW: Bruce & Donna Walgren, Casper, WY  
CM: Connie McCartney, Grand Island  
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue  
CS: Carolyn Sonderman, Omaha  
CW: Chris West, North Platte  
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala  
DD: Debbie DeButts, Fremont  
DM: Deborah Murphy, Omaha  
DS: Dave Swanson, Vermillion, SD  
D&CN: Don and Colleen Noecker, Albion  
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames  
FM: Fran Maunder, Hastings  
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma  
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell  
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward  
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln  
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield  
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha  
JRi: Juanita Rice, Fairmont  
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha  
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha  
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha  
KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue  
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell  
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln  
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney  
KSt: Keith Storm, Broken Bow  
LRB: Linda R. Brown, Lincoln  
LBr: Lisa Bringewatt, North Platte  
LD: Linda Deeds, North Platte  
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln  
L&CF: Laurence & Carol Falk, Nebraska City  
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue  
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton  
MH: Mace Hack, Omaha  
NB: Norma Brockmoller, Winside  
NF: Nancy Fish, Superior  
NN: Nate Nye, Columbus, OH  
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha  
PB: Paul Bedell, Richmond, VA  
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings  
PS: Phil Swanson, Omaha  
RD: Roger Dietrich, Yankton, SD  
RK: Rodger Knaggs, Ogallala  
RM: Ralph Morocco, Omaha  
RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha

Continued on page 22



Dunlin, North Lake Basin WMA, Seward Co.,  
12 May 2008. Photo by Joel Jorgensen.

Brown Thrasher, Pawnee Lake  
SRA, Lancaster Co., 4 June 2009.  
Photo by Kenneth Carnes.

Barred Owl, Walnut Grove Park,  
Douglas Co., 5 June 2009.  
Photo by Rachel Hall.



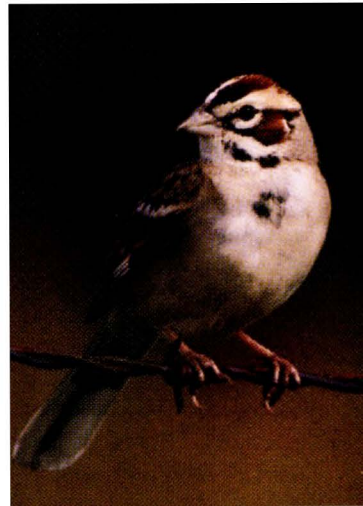


Cerulean Warbler,  
Hummel Park, Douglas  
Co., 21 May 2005. Photo  
by Phil Swanson.

Common Yellowthroat, near Mallard  
Haven WPA, Fillmore Co., 21 May 2008.  
Photo by Carlos Grande.



Varied Thrush, Ogallala,  
Keith Co., 26 Nov 2008.  
Photo by Tina Simeon.



Lark Sparrow, near Ainsworth,  
Brown Co., 12 June 2007.  
Photo by Gordon Warrick.



RSi: Ruben Siegfried, Gering  
RV: Richard Vitters, Fremont  
SA: Scott Allison, North Platte  
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA  
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln  
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady  
TS: Tom Stehn, Rockport, TX  
TSi: Tina Simeon, Ogallala  
WF: William Flack, Kearney  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** A surprise at the late date, which raises questions of provenance, was an unmarked bird with other waterfowl at Pier Park, Grand Island, early Dec (NN, photo).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Small numbers winter with Canada Geese most years; the 148 at Lexington 4 Jan (SJD) were late fall migrants. Spring arrival was in mid-Feb; 250 were at BOL 14 Feb (JGJ), and 466 were found in Lancaster Co by 23 Feb (LE). Rare in the Panhandle, one was in Scotts Bluff Co 20 Dec (AK).

**Snow Goose:** The usual few winter birds were reported; the 30 in Buffalo Co 9 Jan (KS) were tardy. First arrivals noted were the 1100 at Fairmont 7 Feb (JRi) and 1500 in Lancaster Co 10 Feb (LE).

**Ross's Goose:** Best count was 100 with 900 Snow Geese near Geneva 12 Feb (JRi).

**Cackling Goose:** First significant number reported for spring was the 77 in Lancaster Co 5 Feb (LE); "hundreds" were at Fairmont 11 Feb (JRi).

**Canada Goose:** Numbers were huge in Scotts Bluff Co; Scottsbluff CBC reported 19,877 on 20 Dec (fide AK), and 12,500 were at Kiowa WMA 13 Feb (KD).

**Mute Swan:** After several sightings in fall, 2-4 were noted at Boys Town L, Douglas Co, through 30 Jan (JSt, ARy, RM); one of the two present 1 Jan had a silver band on its right leg (JSt).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Routine reports.

**Tundra Swan:** Identification of swans in winter is very difficult. Ten swans in Stanton Co 22-25 Feb whose identity was in question (NB) would overwhelmingly be expected to be Trumpeters, but such flocks have been known to include Tundras.

**Wood Duck:** Three in Lincoln through 18 Jan (LE) were apparently attempting to winter; there are only about 20 reports mid-Jan through mid-Feb.

**Gadwall:** Rare in midwinter, 2 were in Polk Co 24 Jan (WF).

**American Wigeon:** Early were singles in Madison Co 7 Feb (WF) and Lancaster Co 8 Feb (WF). Over-wintering is rare.

**Mallard:** Routine reports.

**Blue-winged Teal:** One in Scotts Bluff Co during the 20 Dec CBC Count Week (AK) is, except for two overwintering records, the latest date on record for this warm-weather species.

**Northern Shoveler:** Routine reports.

**Northern Pintail:** Routine reports.

**Green-winged Teal:** Routine reports.

**Canvasback:** Routine reports.

**Redhead:** Routine reports.

**Ring-necked Duck:** One at GPD 22 Jan (MB) and 2-8 at Boys Town L, Douglas Co, through 1 Feb were likely wintering (RM). There are fewer than 20 such reports.

**Greater Scaup:** One at GPD 22 Jan provided one of fewer than 10 winter reports away from LM. Spring arrivals were one at North Platte 15 Feb (CW) and 3 at Alma SL 20 Feb (G&WH).

**Lesser Scaup:** Routine reports.

**White-winged Scoter:** Only the 3rd midwinter report was one at GPD 11 Jan 2009 (RD).

**Bufflehead:** One in Lancaster Co 8 Feb (LE) was rather early, as were 20 at North Platte SL 11 Feb (TJW).

**Common Goldeneye:** Routine reports.

**Hooded Merganser:** This species arrived record early in good numbers at several locations. Two were at North Platte 11 Feb (TJW), 15 at Scottsbluff SL 13 Feb (KD), and 42 at BOL 14 Feb (JGJ). Although there are several midwinter reports from Scottsbluff, it seems unlikely that the 15 individuals wintered.

**Common Merganser:** Routine reports.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** LM hosts a few each winter among the large Common Merganser flocks there; 7 were reported on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD).

**Ruddy Duck:** Routine reports.

**Gray Partridge:** No reports were received from the sparse but persisting population in the northeast and north-central, but 5-6 were seen at WSR 10 Jan (HKH), where a small population has established in the last few years.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Best count reported was a moderate 75 in a Phelps Co cornfield 10 Dec (TH).

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Routine reports.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Good numbers were found in the northeast Sandhills: 36 were at a traditional "roosting prairie" site in n. Antelope Co 6 Feb (MB), booming had begun at a new site near Bazile Mills 7 Feb some 10 days earlier than the previous early date (MB), and 2 leks near Winnetoon had 11 and 14 birds 8 Feb, but no Sharp-tailed Grouse as in past years (MB).

**Wild Turkey:** Best CBC count was 275 at Grand Island 20 Dec (fide CM). Record counts are well over 300.

**Northern Bobwhite:** Numbers thin out to the north, and so 6-8 in Boyd Co 2 Jan (JJ) were of interest.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** One in Lancaster Co 27 Feb (LE) was rather early; wintering is rare.

**American White Pelican:** Three at LM 3 Jan (fide SJD) were apparently attempting to winter there; another at HCR 7 Dec (G&WH) was a little tardy.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Probably the only regular winter site for this species is the normally ice-free cooling pond at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co; 3 were there 17 Feb (TJW). Singles in Sarpy Co 7 Dec (CNK) and Cass Co 10 Dec (L&BP) were tardy.

**Great Blue Heron:** Routine reports.





Least Sandpiper in basic plumage,  
Ayr Lake, Adams Co., 20 Oct  
2008. Photo by Paul Dunbar.



White-breasted Nuthatch  
with unusual bill, west of  
Boyer Chute, Washington  
Co., 27 Dec 2008. Submit-  
ted by Jerry Toll; photo by  
Marty Fitzgerald.



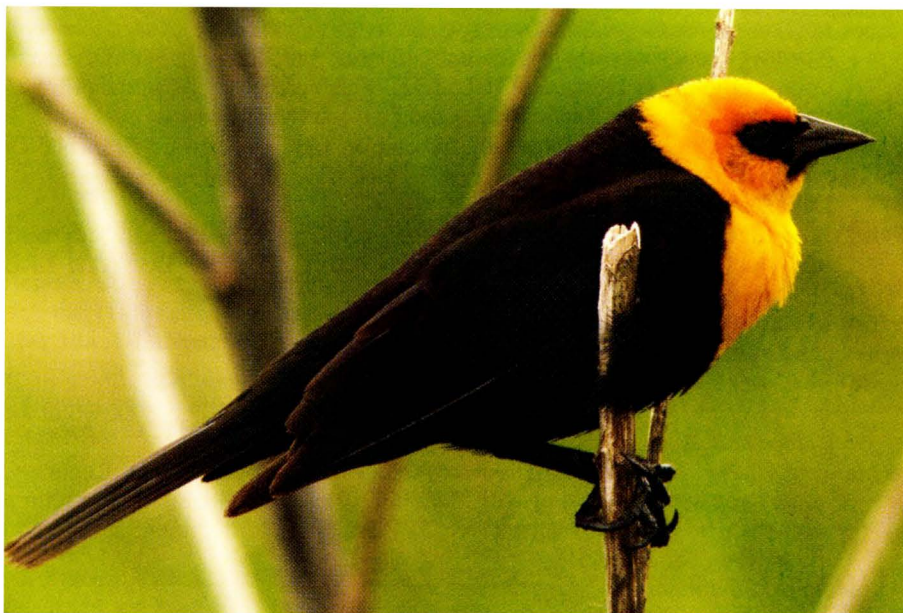
Field Sparrow, Audubon  
Spring Creek Prairie,  
Lancaster Co., May 2008.  
Photo by Heather York,  
Doane College.



Adult Glaucous Gull, Lake Ogallala, Keith Co.,  
2 Jan 2009. Photo by Paul Dunbar.



Cedar Waxwing, Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy  
Co., 5 May 2009. Photo by Phil Swanson.



Yellow-headed Blackbird, Harvard WPA, Clay Co., 28 May 2007. Photo by Paul Dunbar.

- Turkey Vulture:** There have been increased reports of this species in recent years north of the usual winter range; still unexpected, however, was one over Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 2 Jan (PS).
- Bald Eagle:** This species has been establishing new nest sites in recent years along the Lower Platte River (from Columbus downstream), with at least 9 sites currently known (JGJ); an apparent new site was found near Fremont with an attendant adult 13 Feb (DD, JGJ). Elsewhere, incubating birds were noted at a long-time site at Calamus Res, Loup Co, 21 Feb (D&CN) and at Elba and Ord 24 Feb (BW). A good count was the 105 at GPD 7 Dec (D&CN).
- Northern Harrier:** Routine reports.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Northern Goshawk:** The only report of this rare winter visitor was of an adult in Antelope Co 7 Dec (MB).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** There were several sightings of a single adult at both PL and BOL through the period (LE); it is likely that these were of the same bird, as two birds were never seen together (LE).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Easternmost were singles about as far east as expected at Ord 22 Feb (BW), in Buffalo Co 1 Feb (WF), and in Harlan Co 14 Feb (G&WH). The 4 on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec was a count high (fide AK).
- Rough-legged Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Golden Eagle:** Singles in Dakota Co 2 Feb (JJ) and Webster Co 7 Feb (WF) were easterly, but not unexpected.
- American Kestrel:** Routine reports.
- Merlin:** A very dark bird ("black and white") photographed near Gothenburg 1 Jan (JRi) was puzzling; it was thought unlikely to be *suckleyi* from the Pacific Northwest and possibly a dark *columbarius*, but that subspecies is usually only a migrant in Nebraska (TEL, JGJ). There are previous Jan sightings of very dark Merlins in Banner (SJD) and Dawson (MB) Cos.
- Prairie Falcon:** Singles were unusually far east on CBCs at Seward-Branched Oak 14 Dec (fide JG) and DeSoto NWR 27 Dec (fide JT) and in Lancaster Co 17 Dec (LE).
- Peregrine Falcon:** The only sightings were presumably of the resident "city birds" in Lincoln 17 Dec (TEL) and on the Lincoln CBC 27 Dec (fide LRB). Nonresident Peregrines generally do not winter in Nebraska.
- Virginia Rail:** Routine reports.
- American Coot:** Routine reports.
- Sandhill Crane:** Spring arrival is in late Jan, and so rather early was a flock of 200 between Hershey and North Platte 15 Jan (TJW). By 23 Feb 8000-9000 were in the same area (TJW).
- Whooping Crane:** The lone juvenile near Alma 15 Oct-4 Dec (see Fall Report; CS photo) apparently wintered with Sandhill Cranes in Oklahoma and returned with them to the cen. Platte River 20 Feb; it was still present at the end of the period (TS, JGJ, PB).
- Killdeer:** Routine reports.
- Wilson's Snipe:** Routine reports.
- Franklin's Gull:** One at BOL 1 Dec (LE) was rather late; there are only 17 reports 2-21 Feb.



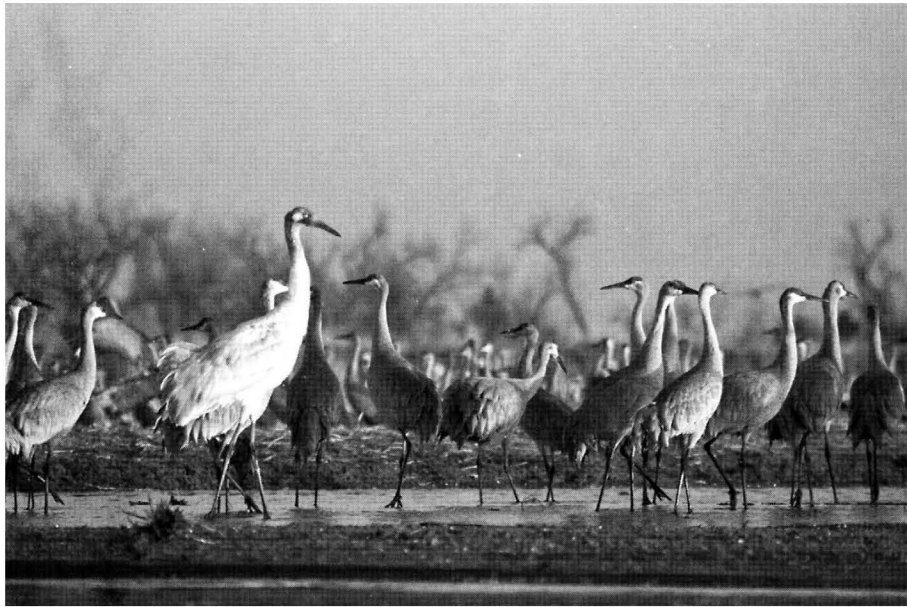
**Bonaparte's Gull:** None were reported; a few linger into Dec most years.

**Mew Gull:** One was reported at GPD 15 Dec (DS fide MB); this is the 12th fall record, 23rd overall.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Routine reports.

**California Gull:** None were reported; a few are usually present at LM.

**Herring Gull:** Routine reports.



Juvenile Whooping Crane with Sandhill Cranes on the Platte River in Hall Co. in March 2009. Photo by Justin Reed.

**Thayer's Gull:** A regular fall migrant, reports were of a basic-plumaged adult in Phelps Co 1-8 Dec (PD) and one at LM 3 Jan (fide SJD). Generally less common as a spring migrant, a first-year bird was at BOL rather early on 14 Feb (JGJ); another or the same was there 25 Feb (JGJ).

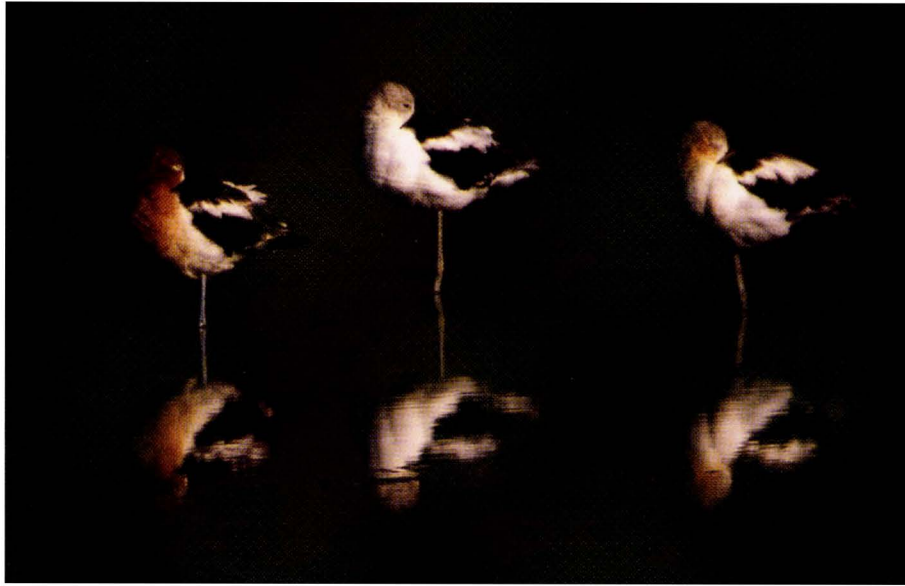
**Iceland Gull:** A first-winter bird was at LM 3-31 Jan (fide SJD, TH, KS); this is the 11th winter record, 22nd overall.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** The only report was of one on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD), about the 40th fall record.

**Glaucous Gull:** About 7 individuals were reported: an adult was in Phelps Co 8-10 Dec (PD, TH), up to 3 were at LM through the period (fide SJD, TJW, KS), one wintered at HCR (G&WH, KS), and 2 first-winter birds were at GPD 11 and 22 Jan (RD, MB).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** A first-winter bird at LM 3-31 Jan (fide SJD, TJW, KS) was the 6th midwinter record, 21st overall.

**Rock Pigeon:** The 525 on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec was a count high (fide AK); numbers have increased in the city and have become a nuisance (fide AK), possibly as mild winters allow almost year-round breeding.



American Avocets, near Lakeside, Sheridan Co.,  
20 Aug 2006. Photo by Carlos Grande.

White-faced Ibis, Harvard WPA, Clay Co.,  
22 April 2006. Photo by Paul Dunbar.



Greater Prairie-Chicken, west of Wood  
Lake, Cherry Co., 15 June 2007. Photo  
by Gordon Warrick.



Sharp-tailed Grouse, near Mullen, Hooker Co., 14 April 2006. Photo by Phil Swanson.



American Woodcock chick, Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co., 11 May 2009. Photo by Joe Gubanyi.

Dickcissel, Audubon Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co., 16 June 2009. Photo by Josef Kren.





- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Best counts were the 112 on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD) and 84 on the Crawford CBC 27 Dec (fide B&DW). Gering had the best non-CBC tally, 76 on 13 Feb (RSi).
- Mourning Dove:** Three on the Crawford CBC 27 Dec (fide B&DW) were late for that n. Panhandle location. Lingerers are not unexpected in the Platte Valley; one was near North Platte 26 Jan (LBr) and 4 were on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec (fide AK).
- Inca Dove:** The wanderer that attended a Brule feeder (see Fall Report) arrived 22 Oct and was last seen 13 Dec (fide CWH). This is the 7th report for Nebraska.
- Barn Owl:** One at a cliff nest site in Scotts Bluff Co 28 Feb (AK) was early and may have wintered; early arrival dates are in late Mar, but there are about 20 reports Dec-Feb.
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** Routine reports.
- Great Horned Owl:** Earliest reports of incubating birds were about on time: Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 7 Feb (JWH) and Lincoln Co 16 Feb (TJW).
- Snowy Owl:** Only 2 were reported: one near Hastings 25 Feb (fide KP) and the other in Nuckolls Co 26 Feb (photo seen, fide NF).
- Barred Owl:** One in Stanton Co 26 Jan (WF) was at the w. edge of the range in Nebraska.
- Long-eared Owl:** Routine reports.
- Short-eared Owl:** About 5 were reported, including 3 near Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, 27 Jan (KS). Singles were there 7 Jan (KS) as well as in Colfax Co 11 Feb (WF) and Thurston Co 27 Dec (BFH).
- Northern Saw-whet Owl:** The only report was of one on the LM CBC 3 Jan (WRS).
- Belted Kingfisher:** Routine reports.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Away from the se. and Missouri Valley, winter reports are rare; an adult in Boyd Co 2 Jan (JJ) is the only winter report from the north-central.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Numbers are increasing around Ogallala (CWH), near the w. edge of the North Platte Valley range; this species is rare w. of LM.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** More than usual for winter were reported, a total of 14, including these away from the east: one at a Brady feeder 21 Dec (TJW) and another in Custer Co 3 Jan (KSt).
- Downy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Northern Flicker:** Routine reports.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** An Omaha CBC count high was the 3 found 28 Dec (fide BG).
- Northern Shrike:** The 8 on the Seward-Branched Oak CBC 14 Dec (fide JG) was a good tally.
- Loggerhead Shrike:** None were reported; most years a few winter in the extreme southeast.
- Blue Jay:** Routine reports.
- Pinyon Jay:** None were reported; most winters a few occur on the Pine Ridge.
- Black-billed Magpie:** One near Norfolk 7 Feb (WF) was at the e. edge of the range.
- American Crow:** Routine reports.
- Horned Lark:** Routine reports.
- Black-capped Chickadee:** Routine reports.

**Mountain Chickadee:** The only report was of one at a Scottsbluff feeder From Dec through the period (BM photo; fide AK).

**Tufted Titmouse:** Routine reports.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** This was about an average winter, with reports statewide in low numbers (m. ob.).

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** Routine reports.

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** The 17 on the Harrison CBC 28 Dec (fide B&DW) was about average for that location.



Mountain Chickadee in Scotts Bluff Co., 21 Feb 2009.

Photo by Connie McKinney.

**Brown Creeper:** Routine reports.

**Carolina Wren:** Apparently the 4th winter record from North Platte (there is a single Panhandle record) was one at a feeder 14 Dec-3 Jan (SA); this is the 3rd straight winter this species has wintered at North Platte feeders.

**Winter Wren:** Rare in midwinter, even in the east, singles were at Bellevue 22 Jan (KCR) and FF 22-23 Jan (JR). Less expected were singles at Hormel Park, Dodge Co, 29 Dec (D&JP) and on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD).

**Marsh Wren:** Routine reports.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Although regular-but-rare in the se. in midwinter, 6 were reported in Jan (LE, JR). Farther afield, one was in Dodge Co 30 Dec (D&JP), and stretching the winter range were 2 near Halsey 17 Jan (TH).

**Eastern Bluebird:** The 176 on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec (fide JT) was a good tally. Although a few are present most winters in the se., one at Alma 1 Jan after 4 days of below zero weather (G&WH) was pushing its luck.

**Mountain Bluebird:** The 23 in se. Lincoln Co 15 Feb (LD) were in a known wintering area. First reported back on the summer range were 4 in Scotts Bluff Co 28 Feb (AK), about on time.



**Townsend's Solitaire:** Routine reports.

**Hermit Thrush:** A total of 5 was reported for the period, the latest at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 11 Jan (BFH). There are about 5 reports of over-wintering in the east; apart from those, this is only the 6th for Jan.

**American Robin:** Best CBC counts were excellent: 5987 at Ponca SP 3 Jan (fide BFH) and 4018 at DeSoto NWR 27 Dec (fide JT); highest CBC counts are over 9000.

**Varied Thrush:** One of the 3 reported in fall remained into winter: the single at Ogallala was last seen 7 Dec (TSi). A 4th for the winter was in Douglas Co 3 Jan (DM, photo). The last few winters have seen increased reports.

**Gray Catbird:** One at North Platte 18 Dec (TJW) was one of fewer than 20 Dec-Feb reports for the state.

**Northern Mockingbird:** Numbers decline rapidly through Dec; one on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec was new to the count (fide JT), and two on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD) were a surprise there. There are only 14 records mid-Jan through Feb, and so singles in Pawnee Co 20 Jan (WF) and one at an Ogallala feeder from about 20 Dec through at least 20 Jan (RK fide CWH) were of interest.

**European Starling:** Routine reports.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Best count was a count record 301 on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec (fide JT).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** One at PL 11 Dec (LE) provided the 6th record for Dec and 5th latest on record.

**Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** Feb sightings are few; a female was in Omaha 5 Feb (JR). There were a surprising 4 reports for Jan, including a flock of 12 in Cass Co 17 Jan (CNK) and 4 there 21 Jan (LE). Other Jan reports were of 3 in Lancaster Co 2 Jan (LE) and one in Pawnee Co 20 Jan (WF).

**Common Yellowthroat:** One seen along a creek near Scottsbluff 7 Dec (AD fide AK) was both the westernmost and 2nd-latest on record.

**Spotted Towhee:** Most of the rare midwinter reports are from the se.; one wintering at a Lincoln Co feeder (SA) was only the 13th such report from the North Platte Valley. The 4 additional reports were indeed from the se. (PS, LE, MH).

**Eastern Towhee:** Lingering into Dec is not unusual, although the 4 on the Seward-BOL CBC 14 Dec (fide JG) was a high count. Midwinter reports are rare, even in the se., such as the female at PL 10 Feb (LE). A hardy male at Ponca SP, Dixon Co, 11 Jan (BFH) was only the 2nd midwinter report north of Omaha in the east.

**American Tree Sparrow:** Best count was 381 in Lancaster Co 14 Feb (LE) and for CBCs the 626 at DeSoto NWR 27 Dec (fide JT). Both tallies are only moderate historically; best CBC tally is 2281 on the HCR CBC in 2000, and best non-CBC tally is 4290 in Phelps and Kearney Cos 31 Jan 1999.

**Chipping Sparrow:** Last reported was an adult in Phelps Co 10 Dec (TH); a probable in Omaha 25 Feb, closely observed, albeit without binoculars, and heard calling, may have wintered in the area (JR). Earliest spring dates are in late Mar and there are fewer than 10 documented winter records.

**Field Sparrow:** A surprising 2 midwinter reports of this rare winter visitor or resident were received, including one as far north as Jackson 11 Jan (BFH, details); the other was in Cass Co 23 Jan (WF, details). There are only 9

other Jan-Feb reports other than the 4 documented records of over-wintering. Rare even on CBCs, one was on the Seward-Branched Oak CBC 14 Dec (fide JG).

**Fox Sparrow:** Latest reported was one at PL 17 Dec (LE); Dec reports are not uncommon.

**Song Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Only the 2nd Feb record for Nebraska was one at ICSP 16 Feb (L&CF); early spring arrival is in late Mar.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Rare in midwinter and usually only in the se., singles at PL 7 and 17 Jan (LE) and ICSP 16 Feb (L&CF) were only the 12th and 13th Jan-Feb reports.

**White-throated Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** This species winters in numbers only in the Panhandle and sometimes in the south; as many as 156 were counted 20 Dec for the Scottsbluff CBC (fide AK), and elsewhere probable early returnees were 15 in Adams Co 14 Feb (FM) and one in Gosper Co 28 Feb (WF).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** One at a feeder near North Platte 26 Jan (LBr, details) was at the e. edge of the expected winter range.

**Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** CBC numbers are greatest in the east; 1028 were found on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec (fide JT). The record Nebraska CBC count is 7189.

**Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** The form *montanus* is most common in Nebraska, but scarce in the east; only 3 were found on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec amongst the 1025 Slate-colored (fide JT). Less numerous, and generally restricted to the west, is Pink-sided (*mearnsi*); one reported on the DeSoto NWR CBC without details may have been a brightly-colored *montanus* or an intergrade.

**Lapland Longspur:** An amazing estimate, done carefully, was of 50,000 in a Dodge Co field 16 Dec (D&JP), tying the previous high count, also from Dodge Co. Just think, 50,001 would have been a new record!

**Snow Bunting:** This was the best winter for several years for this species. At least 600 were reported, almost all in Dec-Jan, including best counts of 225 in Wayne Co 13 Jan (JJ), 200 in Pierce Co 12 Jan (JJ), and 87 in Dodge Co 27 Jan (D&JP). Strangely, the only report for Feb was of one in Sarpy Co 28 Feb (CNK).

**Northern Cardinal:** Helping maintain the species' tenuous hold in Scotts Bluff Co were two on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec (fide AK). First song reported was in Sarpy Co 7 Feb (JWH).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Usually midwinter sightings northerly are of single males, and so a female in Dakota Co 11 Jan (BFH) was a surprise.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Whether this species over-winters in the state on a regular basis is as yet unproven; earliest dates of singing birds are in mid-Feb. One was singing in Otoe Co 13 Feb (L&CF).

**Western Meadowlark:** Earliest singing was 10 Feb in Lancaster Co (LE).

**Rusty Blackbird:** This apparently declining species was present in better numbers than in recent years, with a total of about 220 reported. The surprising 92 on the DeSoto NWR CBC 27 Dec was a count record (fide JT), the 25 in Washington Co 24 Dec (CNK, JT) were likely included in the DeSoto NWR

CBC tally a few days later, 25 were at BOL 7 Jan (LE), and 20 were in Seward Co 15 Feb (JG). Most reports were in Dec, but 5 reports were in Jan-Feb, involving about 60 individuals (LE, RS, NR, JG); all reports were from the east.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A rare winter visitor southward, there were 2 reports: 6 were found in Lincoln Co 3 Jan (TJW) and a female was in Seward Co 15 Feb (JG).

**Common Grackle:** The 15-20 at North Platte 5 Jan (TJW) were late for a flock; midwinter records are usually of single males. More surprising was a "huge flock" in Lincoln Co 8 Feb (SA). More typical of winter records were singles in Omaha 11 Feb (JR) and Colfax Co the same day (WF).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** This species is rare in midwinter; stragglers were 15 near North Platte 5 Jan (TJW), and singles at Alma 7 Jan (G&WH) and in Dodge Co 11 Jan (RV). A probable early migrant was in North Platte 16 Feb (TJW), and the first migrant group was a mixed-gender flock of 60 at Axtell 27 Feb (WF).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Arrival was earlier than usual; singles were in Custer Co 13 Feb (TH) and Nebraska City the same day (L&CF), 6 were at BOL 14 Feb (GJJ), and one was at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 15 Feb (CNK).

**Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** A major surprise was one at an Ogallala feeder 3-4 Jan (CWH, video), only the 2nd record east of the Panhandle. Regular at WSR in s. Sioux Co, 21 wintered there, including 2 of the "Hepburn's" form (HKH).

**Purple Finch:** Westerly were one on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec (fide AK) and 2 in Custer Co 10 Jan (KSt). Numbers overall were about average.

**Cassin's Finch:** None were reported; most years it is reported from the Panhandle.

**House Finch:** Routine reports.

**Red Crossbill:** Few were reported; easterly were 15 at BOL 1 Dec (LE), with 6 there 13 Jan (LE), and 2 in Omaha 8 Jan (JR). The only other reports were of 4 on the LM CBC 3 Jan (fide SJD) and 4 in Lincoln Co 3 Jan (SA).

**Common Redpoll:** Reports were widespread, but numbers were low, the total 30-35. Best count was 9 at an Omaha feeder for 2 weeks in mid-Feb (MH).

**Pine Siskin:** Excellent numbers were reported statewide, but especially in the west; best count was a "record" 300 in a yard near Mitchell 8 Feb (KD). Other good counts were 245 on the Scottsbluff CBC 20 Dec (fide AK) and 100 in Lincoln Co 3 Jan (TJW).

**American Goldfinch:** The 548 on the Seward-Branched Oak CBC 14 Dec was 2nd-highest ever (fide JG).

**House Sparrow:** Routine reports.

Differential Use of Agricultural Fields and Rangeland Nesting Habitat  
by McCown's Longspur (*Calcarius mccownii*) and Chestnut-Collared  
Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) in Western Nebraska

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan (NNLP) lists both McCown's Longspur and Chestnut-collared Longspur as Tier I and Tier II species of conservation concern, respectively (Schneider et al. 2005). McCown's Longspur is listed as a Tier I species (highest conservation priority) in Nebraska because of regional population declines (Schneider et al. 2005), and because it is also listed on the Partners in



McCown's Longspur near nest, June 2005, Kimball Co, Nebraska. Photo by Larry Snyder, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

Flight WatchList (Fitzgerald and Pashley 2000). The breeding distribution of McCown's Longspur in Nebraska is suggested to be the westernmost counties of the Panhandle (With 1994), although limited information on the breeding ecology of this species exists for Nebraska. In fact, Mollhoff (2001) only recorded McCown's nesting in the westernmost Panhandle, specifically Kimball and Sioux Counties, although both geographic areas are believed to harbor sizeable breeding populations (Sharpe et al. 2001). McCown's Longspur habitat is shortgrass prairie with short stature vegetation with areas of intermixed bare ground (With 1994, Mollhoff 2001, Sharpe et al. 2001). Threats to the regional population include habitat conversion and fragmentation, and management practices that maintain taller vegetation (Schneider et al. 2005).

Breeding populations of the Chestnut-collared Longspur have been much reduced in Nebraska, and the area in which it is presumed to breed within the state is largely disjunct from other regional breeding populations (Hill and Gould 1997). Even within the state, breeding records are scattered with most probable nesting attempts occurring in the most western and more northern counties of the Panhandle (Mollhoff 2001). As with McCown's Longspur, sizeable Chestnut-collared Longspur breeding populations are believed to occur in Sioux and other northern Panhandle counties, as well as across Kimball County, although breeding numbers and locations likely shift from year to year in response to moisture levels (Sharpe et al. 2001). The Chestnut-collared Longspur prefers to nest in grazed/burned areas with taller vegetation (Rosche 1982, Hill and Gould 1997) than does McCown's Longspur. It is thought to breed in pastures of the northern Panhandle where grass height was predominantly 20-30 cm, slightly taller than those areas (10-20 cm) where they are thought occur in the southern Panhandle (Mollhoff 2001). These two species of longspur only breed in proximity to one another when a mosaic of grassland microhabitats is available (With 1994), thus accommodating each species' breeding habitat requirements.

In 2002 the Nebraska Prairie Partners (NPP), a cooperative partnership between the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), initiated surveys to identify the relative abundance and extent of the breeding distribution of Mountain Plover in Nebraska. One of these surveys was aimed at gaining access to private lands across the Kimball Grasslands Biologically Unique Landscape (BUL) and locating/marketing Mountain Plover nests on agricultural fields. During these surveys, we routinely encountered McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs displaying breeding and nesting behaviors (e.g. falling leaf display). We opportunistically recorded data on McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspur nests during Mountain Plover nest marking surveys to gain knowledge of their distribution and nesting habits within Nebraska. We couple these data with data from section-based surveys conducted across western Nebraska by RMBO during the 2006 and 2007 field seasons, where both longspur species were also recorded along with general habitat data. The purpose of this paper is to provide information on nesting locations and general habitat information for both McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs breeding in Nebraska.

## METHODS

### *Study Area and Field Surveys*

We conducted surveys across the Kimball Grasslands BUL (Schneider et al. 2005) in the southwestern Panhandle, including sections located in northwestern and south-central Kimball County. This study area lies adjacent to the northern boundary of the Pawnee National Grassland in Colorado, a large, relatively contiguous shortgrass prairie. The predominant composition of Kimball County is dryland agriculture (64%) intermixed with native rangeland (33%) on the xeric tablelands surrounding the Lodgepole Creek drainage (USDA 2002 Census of Agriculture: NASS Fact Finder).

Nesting observations for both Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs were recorded during NPP Mountain Plover nest marking activities, which were initiated between mid-April and the end of June in 2007. Technicians drove parallel transects with ATV's (5-10 mph) down strip rows (millet stubble, wheat stubble, and fallow bare) and through native rangeland when fields were too muddy following rain events. During the 2007 field season, a total of 23,575 acres (22,455 acres of dryland agriculture and 1,120 acres of rangeland) was surveyed with nest marking methods from which longspur species were recorded. When longspurs were flushed off nests, technicians backed away from the area until the adult returned, at which point the actual nest location was determined before approaching the area again. Because longspurs were not the target species of this activity, little time was allowed for adults to return before a general nesting GPS location and associated landuse data were recorded (personal observation of nesting adult flushing behavior when adults with nests were located). When adults returned quickly we recorded a GPS point at the nest, associated land use surrounding the nest, and species of longspur.

In both 2006 and 2007, RMBO conducted 3 point count surveys on randomly selected sections across the shortgrass prairie ecoregion (Bird Conservation Region 18) in western Nebraska. These surveys were developed to address the entire community of birds, not longspur species in particular, observed within these sections, and are used to suggest approximate distributions and relative abundances of breeding grassland birds across the study area. Section based surveys were conducted between mid-May and the end of June, a time period that corresponds largely with the presence of resident birds (e.g., migrants for most species have moved through already), so detections during these surveys were taken to infer nesting by resident birds within the Nebraska portion of BCR 18. During the 2006 and 2007 field seasons, respectively, 645 sections (583 on native rangeland, 62 on dryland agriculture) and 619 sections (558 on native rangeland, 61 on dryland agriculture) were surveyed. While some habitat association data were collected on sections during these surveys, we focus on general landscape features (e.g., landuse within section) where birds were detected. Our section survey results were not corrected for any detectability issues (e.g., sections where longspurs may have been present but were not detected) and should therefore be considered with caution.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The earliest observations of McCown's Longspur flocks migrating into the study area during the 2007 field season was 1 April, but whether any of the birds observed in these flocks were local breeders is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the earliest date for the onset of nesting during the 2007 field season could not be determined. Longspurs were documented on a total of 11 different properties across the Kimball Grasslands BUL, with the majority of nests being located in south-central Kimball County. Between 30 May and 15 June 2007, a total of 37 McCown's Longspur breeding locations was recorded, including 7 nests (2 of which were located in fallow bare agricultural strips). Sixteen of these breeding locations were located in heavily grazed rangeland, while the other 21 were in agricultural fields (2 in millet stubble and 19 in fallow bare). All breeding locations were in areas that were either heavily grazed or were agricultural land with extensive areas of bare ground in the general nesting area.

A total of 16 Chestnut-collared Longspur breeding locations was recorded during nest marking surveys, with 2 confirmed nests. All 16 breeding locations for Chestnut-collared Longspurs were situated in rangeland that was moderately grazed, and only overlapped with McCown's when patches of buffalograss and blue grama were present amongst prairie three awn and needle and thread grasses in surveyed pastures. This combination of grasses likely created the mosaic of short and mixed grass prairie that was suitable for both species. While a single Chestnut-collared adult was observed foraging in a millet stubble field during nest marking, no Chestnut-collared nests were ever located in agricultural fields. Four other longspur breeding locations were recorded in rangeland, but the species was not determined.

Both McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found nesting across the Kimball Grasslands BUL, although McCown's were encountered much more often. Increased McCown's Longspur observations is likely explained because McCown's were also found nesting within agricultural fields, and the majority of native rangeland within the Kimball Grasslands is often intensively grazed by cattle, creating a grassland habitat more conducive to McCown's nesting. Remaining

Table 1. Results of nest location surveys and section surveys for McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the BCR 18 portion of Nebraska in 2006 and 2007.

	McCown's Longspur		Chestnut-collared Longspur	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
Nests / Nesting Areas in Rangeland	---	16	---	16
Nests / Nesting Areas in Crop Fields	---	21	---	0
Total Rangeland Sections Surveyed	583	558	583	558
Total Crop Field Sections Surveyed	62	61	62	61
Total Observations in Rangeland Sections	14	12	25	17
Total Observations in Crop Field Sections	0	0	0	3

grassland in Kimball County occurs on ridges and breaks, which typically support shorter vegetation and bare ground which is also more suitable breeding habitat for nesting McCown's Longspurs. The NNLP lists habitat conversion and fragmentation as a major threat to the persistence of McCown's Longspur populations in Nebraska, but anecdotally it appears that McCown's will nest in agricultural fields. Whether or not these nesting attempts are successful and result in a contribution to the local population was beyond the scope of this study but is an important question that needs to be addressed in evaluating the conservation status of this Tier I listed species in Nebraska.



McCown's Longspur nest, June 2005, Kimball Co, Nebraska. Photo by Larry Snyder, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

Section survey results for McCown's Longspur in 2006 revealed detections in 14 different sections in Sioux (9), Box Butte (3), and Kimball (2), with almost 95% of the birds occurring in Sioux County (122 birds) and only 2 birds observed in Kimball County. Results for the 2007 surveys were similar in that detections of McCown's only occurred on 12 sections, with Sioux County accounting for nearly 85% of the detections (only 4 in Kimball County), but they were detected across a wider area that included Sioux, Dawes, Banner, Kimball, and Dundy Counties. Whether the single observation in Dundy County was a possible migrant or significant find is unknown, but the other detections correspond with the accepted range of McCown's Longspur in Nebraska. However, in contrast to the nest marking surveys that occurred across Kimball County, no McCown's were detected on dryland agricultural sections (n=123) during section surveys.



In 2006 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were detected on a total of 25 sections spread across Sioux, Box Butte, and Sheridan Counties, with Sioux County accounting for nearly half the sections (11) and more than 85% of the total count (270 birds). Results for Chestnut-collared in 2007 were very similar with only the addition of detections in Dawes County contributing to the total of 20 occupied sections, where again Sioux County accounted for nearly half of the sections (8) and nearly 85% of the total count (117 birds). However, in 2007 there were 3 detections (2 in Dawes and 1 in Box Butte) of Chestnut-collared Longspurs in agricultural fields, but whether these birds were actually breeding in these fields is open to speculation.

Several points of interest arise when looking at the results of these various surveys, specifically the lack of detections of McCown's Longspur on agricultural sections and the relatively low number of detections of McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs in Kimball County section surveys. While associated with short stature vegetation and areas of bare ground on native rangeland (With 1994), to the best of our knowledge McCown's Longspur has not been reported to nest in agricultural fields as was observed in the NPP study. Knowing that McCown's Longspur is breeding in agricultural fields and not being detected by traditional survey techniques raises the question of what effect sampling allocation (effort) may be having on the results of studies where similar section-based surveys are being utilized. In the RMBO section surveys, a significant amount of effort was allocated to sampling agricultural habitat; however, McCown's were not located on dryland crop sections. The RMBO results also would suggest that McCown's is a somewhat uncommon breeder and the Chestnut-collared is absent or only a rare breeder in Kimball County, when during nest marking surveys we encountered both species quite commonly during the breeding season. Breeding bird atlas surveys were a little more accurate in representing longspurs in Kimball County (Mollhoff 2001), but results of this study suggest that more species-specific work might be required to better understand the populations of McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs breeding in Nebraska.

No studies have been conducted on McCown's or Chestnut-collared Longspur nest survival in rangeland and agricultural fields in Nebraska, and understanding nest survival rates on both rangeland and agricultural fields will be required to better understand the conservation needs of McCown's (and possibly Chestnut-collared) Longspur in Nebraska. Considerable variation was observed in clutch sizes for both species, but whether this variation was because nests were located before all eggs were laid or whether eggs/chicks had been depredated from the nest is uncertain, and at this point is based on a small sample size. Mollhoff (2001) suggested and we are in agreement that additional information on the nesting ecology of these two species in Nebraska is required before conservation actions can be addressed for either species. However, what is known about these species is that nesting habitat is available and is being utilized by both McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs across the western portion of the Panhandle, including both native rangeland and agricultural fields.

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### 75 Years Ago in *The Nebraska Bird Review*

The following is from the *Nebraska Bird Review* of January 1934 (Volume II, No. 1), which was sent then, as it is now, to all members of the NOU not in arrears for dues, which in 1934 were \$1.00 per year.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**A Midsummer Red Crossbill Record for South-central Nebraska.** - On or about July 12, 1933, a flock of fifty or more Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra* subsp.) was noted feeding in the two Douglas Fir trees in the yard at my home here. The birds spent most of their time feeding on the cones in these two trees, and remained for about the following ten days before departing.- Miss Ruth M. Mauck, *Nelson, Nebr.*

**An Early Fall Record for the American Bohemian Waxwing.** - On September 19, 1933, I noted two American Bohemian Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrula pallidiceps*) in the pear trees at this place. I had never seen this species before, but very distinctly saw the black throat patch and the characteristic white markings on the wings. I am told that this is an unusually early fall date for the species in Nebraska.- Miss Ruth M. Mauck, *Nelson, Nebr.*

**The Clark Nutcracker at Kearney, Buffalo County.** - On October 1, 1933, I was in a duck blind on the Platte River two miles east of the Kearney bridge. Happening to look toward the north bank, to my surprise I saw a flock of ten Clark Nutcrackers (*Nucifraga columbiana*) flying across the river from the north to the south bank. They flew within a few yards of me, and there can be no possible mistake in their identification.- Cyrus A Black, *Kearney, Nebr.*

**A Sixth Nebraska Record of the European Starling.** - I note in the columns of the *Nebraska Bird Review* that the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*) has been reported in Nebraska from near Western, Saline County; from seven miles northwest and from three miles north of Lincoln, Lancaster County; from five miles north of Crete, Saline County; and from Saint Edward, Boone County. A sixth Nebraska record is that of a bird that I noted in the yard at my home at 3103 South 35th Street, Lincoln, on or about September 10, 1933. It was in company with five or six Bronzed Grackles, and my attention was first drawn to it by its peculiar note. I then noticed its spotted plumage, stubby tail and other Starling characteristics.- Miss Louisa E. Wilson, *Lincoln, Nebr.*

**The Seventh Nebraska European Starling Record.** - On November 26, 1933, a farmer living here in Dodge County near Hooper brought me a live European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*). He stated that there were a number of these birds roosting in his barn, and that they had been there all fall. I asked him to watch these birds and report to me if they left or if they stayed there all winter. So far I have heard nothing from him and infer that the birds are still present on his farm.- Joseph E. Stipsky, *Hooper, Nebr.*

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