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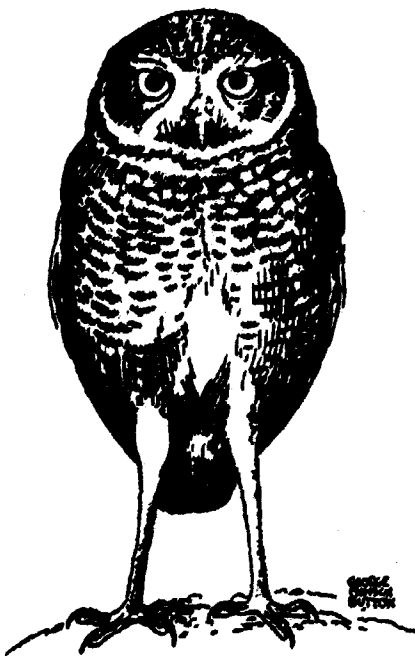
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# *The Nebraska Bird Review*

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**FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2005**

Compiled by W. Ross Silcock  
P.O. Box 57, Tabor, IA 51653  
silcock@rosssilcock.com

**INTRODUCTION**

This fall was notable for its lack of notable events; numbers of migrants reported in all species groups, especially waterfowl, shorebirds, and warblers, were low. Lingered birds were both insectivores and seed-eaters, and, coupled with a rather stable fall weather-wise, it seems that there were no disturbances to concentrate birds or otherwise impede a steady flow of migrants through the state. Without concentrations, migrants are often not noticed or, more accurately here, not reported by observers.

The best Western Grebe count was 2500, very low relative to expected high fall counts of at least 20,000. Mergansers were the only bright spot in waterfowl numbers, although they were present only in average numbers, rather than low numbers as were most of the other waterfowl. Among warblers, the few highlights included more reports than usual of Black-throated Green, as well as a lengthy migration period, both indicators of more birds being present. Other migrant species, however, were represented by 1-2 or even no reports.

One significant report was the first known successful nesting, as well as a separate attempted nesting, both this spring and summer, by Barn Owls in northeast Nebraska. This part of the state has almost no records of this species.

Western birds in the east were White-throated Swift and Say's Phoebe, and late departures were made by insectivores Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, and Blue-headed Vireo, while seed-eaters Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows and Indigo Bunting were also tardy.

**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, Harlan Co;  
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos;  
L: Lake;  
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co;  
LNB: Lakes North and Babcock, Platte Co;  
LO: L Ogallala (includes contiguous Keystone L), Keith Co;

m. ob.: many observers;  
NC: Nature Center;  
NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission;  
NM: National Monument;  
NNF: Nebraska National Forest, Thomas Co;  
NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union;  
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;  
UNSM: University of Nebraska State Museum;  
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area;  
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln;  
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area;  
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

#### GAZETTEER

DeSoto NWR: Washington Co;  
L Minatare: Scotts Bluff Co;  
Oliver Res SRA: Kimball Co;  
Ponca SP: Dixon Co;  
Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central Nebraska;  
Smith L WMA: Sheridan Co.

#### OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering;  
ARy: Allan Reyer, Bellevue;  
AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney;  
B&LP: Babs & Loren Padelford, Bellevue;  
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City;  
BT: Barb Tebbel, Kearney;  
CG: Carlos Grande, Geneva y España;  
CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett;  
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue;  
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala;  
CRu: Christopher Rustay, Albuquerque, NM;  
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames;  
DB: Duane Bright, Bellevue;  
DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk;  
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn;  
EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue;  
EBe: Eric Bents, Omaha;

EBr: Ellen Brogie, Creighton;  
GH: Gerard Harbison, Lincoln;  
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell;  
JED: James E. Ducey, Omaha;  
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward;  
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair;  
JH: Joan Hackett, Elkhorn;  
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield;  
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha;  
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell;  
KN: Kay Niyo, Evergreen, CO;  
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln;  
L&CF: Laurence & Carol Falk, Nebraska City;  
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln;  
LO: Linda Ollinger, Wilsonville;  
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon;  
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton;  
NF: Nancy Fish, Superior;  
NP: Neva Pruess, Lincoln;  
P&DD: Phyllis & Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff;  
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings;  
RD: Robert DeLara, Mitchell;  
RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln;  
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon;  
RSg: Reuben Siegfried, Scottsbluff;  
SA: Sue Amiotte, Chadron;  
SJ: Stephen Jones, Boulder, CO;  
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA;  
ST: Scott Taylor, Lincoln;  
TD: Tom Dougherty, Bellevue;  
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln;  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady;  
TL: Tony Leukering, Brighton, CO;  
TP: Theresa Pester, Lincoln;  
WF: William Flack, Madison;  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Single summer vagrants were in Madison Co through the period (fide MB), at PL 6-26 Aug (LE), in Adams Co 11 Sep (LR,RH), and at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN). First migrants noted were 35-40 flying over the Lincoln-Logan Cos line 17 Oct (TJW).

**Snow Goose:** The usual summer vagrants were reported: 1-2 birds at 3 locations (LE,LR,RH) and "the first skein of the season" had 30 birds over Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 14 Oct (EB).

**Ross's Goose:** Routine reports.

**Canada Goose:** Routine reports.

**Cackling Goose:** One at Schramm Park SRA, Sarpy Co, 17 Sep (CNK,B&LP) may have been the same bird seen there 29 May, although it was not reported during summer. First migrant flock was 50 in Adams Co 14 Nov

(PD), although a single was in Platte Co 25 Oct (D&JP). High count to date for fall is 100 in Douglas Co 17 Nov (JGJ); I suspect this record will soon be eclipsed!

**Trumpeter Swan:** A family group of 4 in Madison Co 25 Nov (LE) adds to the increasing number of migrants noted in recent years as breeding flocks are re-established in north-central states.

**Tundra Swan:** None were reported; this is a rare migrant in Nov.

**Wood Duck:** Routine reports.

**Gadwall:** Best count was a moderate 628 in Lancaster Co 11 Nov (LE).

**American Wigeon:** Best count was a moderate 850 in Scotts Bluff Co 6 Nov (KD).

**American Black Duck:** None were reported; this species, once regular but rare in fall, is not now reported every year.

**Mallard:** Routine reports.

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

**Cinnamon Teal:** None were reported.

**Northern Shoveler:** The "thousands" at North Platte SL 11 Oct (TJW) continued this site's traditional attractiveness to this species. The high fall counts for the state are all from this location.

**Northern Pintail:** Routine reports.

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

**Canvasback:** Routine reports.

**Redhead:** Best count was a mediocre 490 in Lancaster Co 11 Nov (LE); record fall count is 3292.

**Ring-necked Duck:** Two of the 3 birds reported in summer at Deep Well WMA, Hamilton Co, were still present 25 Aug (RE). The 200 in Scotts Bluff Co 22 Nov (KD) was a good count, although the fall record is 2100.

**Greater Scaup:** The only report was of one in Lancaster Co 20 Nov (GH).

**Lesser Scaup:** One in Seward Co 6 Aug (LE) had summered there. Fall tallies were pathetic, best count only 220 (KD).

**Surf Scoter:** The two reports, of 2 at Scottsbluff SL 28 Oct-2 Nov (KD) and one near Schuyler 19 Nov (WF), were as expected for a typical fall.

**White-winged Scoter:** The only report was of one above GPD 11 Nov (MB).

**Black Scoter:** None were reported; this species is rare but regular in fall.

**Long-tailed Duck:** A first-winter-plumaged female was taken in Burt Co 28 Nov (EBE), almost precipitating a re-run of the dreaded "hunting thread" on NEBirds. No others were reported.

**Bufflehead:** Routine reports.

**Common Goldeneye:** Only 16 were reported before the end of the period, the first 2 somewhat early at Scottsbluff SL 28 Oct (KD).

**Hooded Merganser:** Good counts were 81 in Douglas Co 14 Nov (JGJ) and 14 in Scotts Bluff Co 29 Oct (KD).

**Common Merganser:** Other than a surprising 650 at L Minatare 6 Nov (KD), only about 10 were reported.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** About 27 were reported statewide 29 Oct (KD) through 19 Nov (LE, JGJ, JJ), a reasonable showing.

**Ruddy Duck:** "Hundreds" (a moderate tally depending on the actual number of hundreds), were reported at North Platte SL 11-17 Oct (TJW) and at Davis Creek Res, Valley and Greeley Cos, (LR, RH).

**Gray Partridge:** The only report was from the west, where 6-9 birds were at WSR 5 Oct (HKH); a small population has been established in this area of Sioux Co for a few years.

- Ring-necked Pheasant:** A rather late nest containing eggs and chicks was in Dodge Co 22 Aug (D&JP).
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Routine reports.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Routine reports.
- Wild Turkey:** Routine reports.
- Northern Bobwhite:** Usually seen only in fall and winter in the observer's Scotts Bluff Co yard, 6 were there for a drink 23 Oct (KD). This species occurs regularly in the North Platte Valley.
- Common Loon:** The 13 reported were found statewide 16 Oct (JGJ) through 14 Nov (JGJ), a typical migration.
- Pied-billed Grebe:** Best count was a moderate 40, in Dundy Co, 15 Oct (TJW).
- Horned Grebe:** The 18 reported were found statewide 11 Oct (TJW) through 26 Nov (JGJ), a typical migration.
- Eared Grebe:** Routine reports.
- Western Grebe:** Numbers at LM were much lower than usual, with best count there only 2500, on 23 Oct (TL). Almost as many were at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, where 1000 were present 18 Aug (RE).
- Clark's Grebe:** The only report was of 6 at LM 23 Oct (TL).
- American White Pelican:** The 800 at HCR 5 Sep (LR,RH) was a good count; 3 were still at DeSoto NWR 19 Nov (CNK) and one at BOL 26 Nov (LE).
- Double-crested Cormorant:** Best count was a moderate 1000 at HCR 17 Oct (PD); 11 were still at BOL 26 Nov (LE).
- American Bittern:** Last were northerly singles at Smith L 14 Oct (SJ) and at Bazile Creek WMA, Knox Co, the same day (MB).
- Least Bittern:** Indicative of breeding at such a northerly location were 4-5 at Bazile Creek WMA, Knox Co, 4-13 Aug (MB,DSt); there have been a few reports from Knox Co in recent years. Unexpected was one flushed twice in an Omaha park 12 Oct (RE), the second-latest date for the state.
- Great Blue Heron:** Best count was a moderate 40 near Hastings 19 Aug (PD).
- Great Egret:** Reports were, as expected, from the eastern half of the state, and numbers were about average. Total reported was about 220 and best count a moderate 41 at Bluebill WMA, Fillmore Co, 24 Sep (JGJ). Notable in recent years are lingering birds in fall; of 8 Nov records for the state, only one was prior to 2002. This fall singles were in Douglas Co 2 Nov (JGJ) and at DeSoto NWR 19 Nov (CNK), the latter the 4th-latest for the state.
- Snowy Egret:** One at HCR 17 Oct (PD) tied the 4th-latest date for the state.
- Little Blue Heron:** None were reported; last dates are in early Sep.
- Cattle Egret:** Best count was a moderate 80 at HCR 11 Sep (PD).
- Green Heron:** A good count was 5 at Wagon Train L, Lancaster Co, 11 Sep (LE). Westernmost were singles in Furnas Co 14 Aug and 18 Sep (LR,RH).
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Rather late was an immature in Lincoln Co 2 Nov (TJW).
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** There was a good showing, with about 13 reported, all from the RWB. A record count of 9, including 8 juveniles and an adult, was made near Hastings 19 Aug (PD). Latest was an immature in Phelps Co 11 Sep (D&JP,B&LP).
- Glossy Ibis:** A single in alternate plumage was well-studied at Hastings 19 Aug (PD), for the 8th state record and latest documented date. Identification of dark ibises is difficult once alternate plumage is lost.
- White-faced Ibis:** Eight birds (reported as "Plegadis sp.") at Deep Well WMA, Hamilton Co, 14 Oct (RE) were rather late, as were 4 near Hastings 10 Oct (PD).

- Turkey Vulture:** That well-known vulture stronghold, Gering, hosted 80 on 24 Sep (AK), but was challenged by the 70 at Norfolk 14 Sep (MB). A bit tardy was one at Swanson Res, Hitchcock Co, 10 Nov (TJW).
- Osprey:** About 30 were reported, beginning with a rather early single present 13-14 Aug in Sarpy Co (CNK,EB,LE), through 12 Nov in Webster Co (LR,RH).
- Mississippi Kite:** The Ogallala breeding population appears to be doing well; 17 birds were seen in late Aug and "often a dozen" were flying overhead 26-28 Aug (CWH). In recent years fall sightings have become expected as fall dispersers northward migrate back to the south. An immature was at Bellevue 24 Aug (TD) and 2 birds were with a mixed-species kettle of hawks over Omaha 24 Sep (B&LP). Probably of the same provenance were a single near Grant 17 Aug (RE) and another near Orleans 11 Sep (LR,RH, m.ob.).
- Bald Eagle:** Routine reports.
- Northern Harrier:** Routine reports.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** One in Dixon Co 10 Aug (JJ) was early, possibly a failed breeder.
- Cooper's Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Northern Goshawk:** The only 2 reported, singles over FF 7 Oct (B&LP) and SCP 8 Oct (EB), were on time for the start of fall migration.
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** Of interest was a juvenile at WP 24 Aug (LE); the possibility of a second breeding site in Nebraska is always hoped for! At the only known such site, 2 immatures at FF 14 Aug (EB) were indicative of breeding; an immature was seen there 23 Sep (EB) and singles were seen there 7 and 12 Oct (B&LP).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** All but 5 of the 245 reported were seen 24 Sep: 50 office flybys in Omaha (EB), a kettle of 154 (which included 2 dark morphs) near Fremont (JGJ), 33 in a mixed kettle of hawks over Omaha (B&LP), and 3 over Bellevue (B&LP). Elsewhere, one was kettling with other species over FF 14 Aug (EB); possibly a local breeder, one was at Norfolk 14 Sep (MB); 2 were in Dixon Co 27 Sep (JJ); and latest was one in Otoe Co 9 Oct (L&CF).
- Swainson's Hawk:** Only 19 were reported, last an immature in Frontier Co 23 Oct (LR,RH).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Easterly, although in a regular wintering area, was a light morph juvenile in Adams Co 14 Nov (PD). Two in Brown Co 26 Nov (MB,DSt,DH) were a mild surprise.
- Rough-legged Hawk:** Only 7 were reported, earliest 2 in southwest Nebraska 13 Oct (TJW).
- Golden Eagle:** Routine reports.
- American Kestrel:** Ten miles in Hitchcock Co 13 Aug yielded 18 birds (JSt), an interesting concentration for that early date and suggestive of early fall movement.
- Merlin:** Of 8 reported, earliest was in Lincoln Co 19 Aug (TJW), a typical arrival date.
- Prairie Falcon:** Rare eastward, singles at GPD 19 Sep (MB), rather early, and in Washington Co 29 Nov (D&JP) were unexpected. A group of 3 in Thomas Co 10 Sep (MB) appears to have been a family group post-fledging.
- Peregrine Falcon:** Only 4 were reported, all in the short period 18-24 Sep (SJD,WRS, KN,B&LP).

**Virginia Rail:** Adults with 2 young were at Bazile Creek WMA, Knox Co, 20 Aug (MB). As none had summered there, 6 at Chilibaba Ponds, Scotts Bluff Co, 8 Aug were considered migrants (KD). Singles in Douglas Co 10 Oct (RE) and Lincoln Co 20 Oct (TJW) were a bit late, as wintering is not expected at those locations.

**Sora:** Routine reports.

**American Coot:** Routine reports.

**Sandhill Crane:** As is usually the case in fall, highest counts are from the western half of the state. This fall excellent counts were 5000 south of Gering 13 Oct (AK), 5000 in Scotts Bluff Co 14 Oct (RSg), and 5000 at one playa wetland in Hayes Co 26 Oct (TJW). The only report from the east was of 200 over sw. Dixon Co 1 Nov (JJ).

**Whooping Crane:** The only report was of 2 adults in an alfalfa field south of Carns in Rock Co 2 Nov, apparently joined by 2 more 4 Nov (fide CH).

**Black-bellied Plover:** The only reports were of 2 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) and 4 juveniles in Clay Co 10 Oct (PD).

**American Golden-Plover:** Uncommon in fall, 7 were reported 10-17 Sep (DH,LE,SJD), and another in Knox Co 8 Oct, the latter carefully scrutinized in hopes of it being a Pacific Golden-Plover (MB).

**Snowy Plover:** The only report was of an adult and 2 juveniles at LM on the rather late date of 17 Sep, apparently a late-hatched brood (SJD,WRS,KN).

**Semipalmated Plover:** Routine reports.

**Piping Plover:** One at Willow Creek Res, Pierce Co, 1 Oct (WF) was 4th-latest for the state.

**Killdeer:** An excellent count was the 340 packed onto a 10 x 30-foot sandbar at Memphis L SRA, Saunders Co, 2 Oct (CNK).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Following the summer's RWB excitement, last reported were 4 at Sinniger WPA, York Co, 5 Aug (JGJ) and 10 juveniles 6 Aug: 6 at North L Basin WMA, Seward Co, (JGJ) and 4 at Spikerush WMA, York Co, (JGJ). There are only 7 later records of this species for Nebraska.

**American Avocet:** The 167 near Lakeside 20 Sep was a good count (CRu).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Rather late were 2 in Adams Co 14 Nov (PD).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Routine reports.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Best count was a moderate 19 in Lincoln 23 Aug (LE).

**Willet:** Routine reports.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Routine reports.

**Marbled Godwit:** Usually restricted to the west in fall, the only report was of 2 fitting the expected pattern in Scotts Bluff Co 13 Aug (KD).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Only the 15th fall record for Nebraska was one at BOL 26 Aug (LE).

**Red Knot:** The 2 juveniles at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) provided the 17th documented fall record.

**Sanderling:** Only 17 were reported, 13 Aug (JSt) through 8 Oct (KD).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Western Sandpiper:** The only report was of juveniles at LM, 2 on 17 Sep and 7 the next day (SJD,WRS,KN).

**Least Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

- Pectoral Sandpiper:** One of few shorebird species to appear in any numbers this fall, 285 were at Bowling L, Lincoln, 23 Aug (LE), still only a moderate count. Uncommon in fall as far west as the Panhandle, one was at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).
- Dunlin:** The only report was of one at Hastings 10 Oct (PD).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Generally more widespread in fall than in spring, reports were from LM eastward, through 17 Sep, when 2 juveniles were seen at LM (SJD,WRS,KN). Only 71 were reported in all.
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** The only report was of 2 in Douglas Co 29 Aug (CNK).
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** As with most shorebird species this fall, best count for this species was rather pathetic: only 57 in Scotts Bluff Co 29 Oct (KD). A bit tardy was one at Cunningham L, Omaha, 7 Nov (JGJ).
- Wilson's Snipe:** A rather early concentration of 12 in the e. RWB 18 Aug (CG) was indicative of migrants. Fall movement begins in late Jul.
- American Woodcock:** The only report was of 2 at Niobrara SP, Knox Co, 6 Sep (TJW); this location is presumably near the western edge of the summer range.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** Routine reports.
- Red-necked Phalarope:** Routine reports.
- Red Phalarope:** Providing only the 10th fall record were an adult and a juvenile at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN). Of the 11 fall birds reported to date, only 3 were adults.
- Pomarine Jaeger:** A rented ski-boat allowed close observation and yielded good photos of a dark juvenile at LM 17-18 Sep (SJD,KN,WRS). This is only the 12th fall (and overall) record.
- Franklin's Gull:** Providing biomass lacking in the waterfowl and shorebird categories were 5000 at HCR 17 Oct (PD) and "thousands" at 4 locations 18 Aug (RE) through 13 Oct (TJW).
- Little Gull:** The 11th fall record (16th overall) was of a basic adult at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).
- Bonaparte's Gull:** Somewhat early was a juvenile at BOL 26 Aug (LE), and a good count was 170 at BOL 21 Oct (LE).
- Ring-billed Gull:** Routine reports.
- California Gull:** As usual, most were at LM; a good count of 82 was made there 17 Sep (SJD), while one was there 18 Aug (RE) and 15 on 23 Oct (TL). The only report elsewhere was of 2 at L Minatare, another regular location, 8 Oct (KD).
- Herring Gull:** Rather early were as many as 13 at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN); most arrive in Oct.
- Thayer's Gull:** None were reported; arrival is usually in Nov.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Now a regular migrant through the state, though still rare, a first alternate bird at LM 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) was probably the same bird seen there during summer.
- Glaucous Gull:** None were reported; arrival is usually in late Nov.
- Great Black-backed Gull:** Completing a nice selection of gull species at LM 17 Sep was a worn adult (SJD,WRS,KN). This is the 5th fall record, 15th overall.
- Sabine's Gull:** A total of 5 juveniles was found each day 17 and 18 Sep at LM (SJD,WRS,KN), and 3 were at L Minatare 18 Sep (SJD), where at least one lingered through 24 Sep (AK,P&DD,KD).

**Caspian Tern:** A total of 6 was reported statewide 20 Aug (MB) through 17 Sep (LE, SJD, WRS, KN), a typical fall migration for the state.

**Common Tern:** The only report was of 7 at LM 17 Sep (SJD, WRS, KN).

**Forster's Tern:** An excellent count was 65 in Lancaster Co 26 Aug (LE).

**Least Tern:** An excellent count from a regular location was 12-15 at the junction of the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers, Knox Co, 7 Sep (TJW).

**Black Tern:** Routine reports.

**Black Skimmer:** A report of one in Lancaster Co 10 Sep has been referred to the NOURC. There are no Nebraska records, but the species has occurred in Kansas and Colorado.

**Rock Pigeon:** Routine reports.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Best counts were an excellent 60 in Holbrook 20 Nov (LR, RH), 30-45 at a Brady feeder through the period (TJW), 42 at Tekamah 20 Nov (JGJ), and 40 at Bassett 11 Sep (CH). High count to date is 65 at Kearney 31 Oct 2004. Young were fledged in Superior 21 Aug (NF). Sightings in Grant and Thomas Cos 10 Sep (MB), Cherry Co 20 Sep (TJW, ST), Boyd Co 4 Nov (WF), and, belatedly, Hooker and Blaine Cos both on 21 May 2005 (WF), reduced the list of counties without sightings to only 5, mostly in areas with extensive prairie: Jefferson, Keya Paha, Loup, Pawnee, and Sherman (there will be a report for Jefferson in the Winter Seasonal Report).

**White-winged Dove:** On the verge of becoming a regular summer visitor, with 40 records since 1988, there were 3 reports involving 4 birds. Most interesting were the 2 seen together in Morrill Co 10 Aug (SA); there was no indication of breeding activity reported. Singles were at Creighton 8-9 Aug (MB) and in Scottsbluff 30 Sep (RSg).

**Mourning Dove:** Routine reports.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Last was one at ADF 21 Aug (L&CF).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Routine reports.

**Barn Owl:** Evidence of the first known successful breeding in the northeastern part of Nebraska (a pair laid eggs this spring near Laurel, but the attempt failed-see Spring Report) was provided by the presence all summer of a pair near Creighton, mentioned in the Spring Report; 5 birds, at least 4 of which were young, were seen 8 Oct (MB). Any easterly breeding records are unusual; an adult and juvenile were at Ulysses 3 Sep; the nesting probably occurred in an old school building there (JG).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Routine reports.

**Great Horned Owl:** Routine reports.

**Burrowing Owl:** A good count was 10-12 at the Scottsbluff Landfill 8 Aug (KD).

**Barred Owl:** Westerly reports were of one heard at Niobrara SP, Knox Co, 6 Sep (fide TJW) and 2 at Black Island WMA, Cuming Co, 17 Sep (WF). Intriguing was the possibility of one at McCook 4 Oct; a person who had heard an owl calling later identified a taped call of a Barred Owl as the same as that of the calling bird (fide TJW). Such westerly reports are not unprecedented.

**Long-eared Owl:** Routine reports.

**Short-eared Owl:** Routine reports.

**Common Nighthawk:** Best counts were 160 (CNK) and 146 (B&LP), both over Bellevue 26 Aug. Last was one at South Sioux City 3 Oct (BFH).

**Common Poorwill:** Routine reports.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** None were reported; departure is in Sep.

**Whip-poor-will:** None were reported; departure is in Sep.

- Chimney Swift:** Westernmost found on a Sandhills study trip were 35 at Ainsworth 19 Sep (JED); the current westward limit of breeding in the Niobrara Valley is unclear. Rather late were 4 in Gretna 18 Oct (DSt).
- White-throated Swift:** One was picked up alive at a North Platte grain elevator 11 Oct; it died 13 Oct and is in the process of being added to the UNSM collection (BT; fide LR,RH,WM). This is the second report for Lincoln Co; the first (albeit undocumented) was on an almost identical date, 13 Oct 1984. The two reports are the easternmost for the state.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** A good count was 8, including 3 adult males, at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 21 Aug (EB). Last were rather late singles 9 Oct in Elkhorn (JH) and Bellevue (ARy).
- Calliope Hummingbird:** This is the rarest of the 4 regularly-occurring hummingbird species in Nebraska. One that first appeared in the observer's Mitchell yard 21 Jul remained until 21 Aug (KD); it was the 13th documented record. Another was reported without details in Scottsbluff 19 Aug (RSg).
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Two were reported: singles near Mitchell 7 Aug (AK,KD) and in Scottsbluff 19 Aug (RSg).
- Rufous Hummingbird:** Expected in the Panhandle, 4 were reported 4 Aug-4 Sep (RSg,KD). Most unexpected was an adult male at a Lancaster Co feeder 24-26 Aug (TP), the 8th record from the east.
- Belted Kingfisher:** Routine reports.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Apart from a Jan 1952 report, a lingering bird set a new late Panhandle date 28 Oct (RD,KD).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The only 3 reported were in the southeast 7 Oct-17 Nov (B&LP,LE,DB).
- Red-naped Sapsucker:** Two were reported, bringing the total of fall reports to 13: an adult male was at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), and another was at WSR 16 Oct (HKH).
- Downy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Northern Flicker:** Routine reports.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** One was seen 4 Sep along the Steamboat Trace bike trail 3 miles south of the power plant in Otoe Co (L&CF); this is the same location at which one was seen in Mar 2003.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** An excellent count was the 7 in Lancaster Co 3 Sep (LE).
- Western Wood-Pewee:** The 25 at Smith L 14 Aug (SJ) was an excellent count. There are very few reports east of the Panhandle, none documented, and so one reported 10 Sep in Furnas Co (by an observer experienced with the species) is best left as an additional such report, although quite likely to be correct.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee:** The 11 in Nance and Boone Cos 27 Aug (LR,RH) was a good count, and one in Dixon Co 29 Sep (JJ) was rather late.
- Willow Flycatcher:** An empid with a minimal eye-ring and vocalizations attributed to this species was in Otoe Co 22 Sep (L&CF). This is a rather late date; specimen and banding data from Kansas include late dates in mid-Sep. Departure dates for empid flycatchers are difficult to establish.
- Least Flycatcher:** Routine reports.
- Hammond's Flycatcher:** None were reported; most pass through in Sep.
- Dusky Flycatcher:** The only report of this regular fall Panhandle migrant was of one at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).

- Cordilleran Flycatcher:** The only report of this species, rarely noted in migration, was from Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co, 3 Sep (AK). There are now 12 fall reports away from the breeding range, most late Aug-early Sep.
- Eastern Phoebe:** Rather late were singles at WSR 29 Oct (HKH), the latest Panhandle record, and in Lancaster Co 3 Nov (TP). The latter is the 5th Nov record, and there is even a single Dec record.
- Say's Phoebe:** Easterly were singles in Harlan and Furnas Cos 10 Sep (G&WH,KD) and in Furnas Co 18 Sep (LR,RH). These are only the 8th-10th reports east of Lincoln Co for fall. One in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Sep (AK) was tardy.
- Great Crested Flycatcher:** One at ADF 8 Oct (L&CF) was 3rd latest.
- Cassin's Kingbird:** Routine reports.
- Western Kingbird:** One at SCP 8 Oct (EB) is the latest ever for the east. Another in Scotts Bluff Co 29 Sep (AK) was rather late also.
- Eastern Kingbird:** A record count was the 197 in Otoe Co 14 Aug, including 126 in a 37-mile stretch (LE). Another good tally was the 94 in Lancaster Co 26 Aug (LE).
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Following 3 summer reports including a nesting, two were reported this fall, both at northerly locations. An adult was photographed near Creighton 13 Sep (EBr, MB) and another was near Merriman 20 Sep (CRu).
- Northern Shrike:** First reported were 2 in Perkins Co and one in Lincoln Co 17 Oct (TJW), a timely arrival date.
- Loggerhead Shrike:** Routine reports.
- Bell's Vireo:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-throated Vireo:** Last was one at FF 23 Sep (EB), a timely departure date.
- Plumbeous Vireo:** None were reported; departure is in early Sep.
- Cassin's Vireo:** The only reports were of singles at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN) and at LO 17 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN), the latter (just barely!) the first non-Panhandle record, although the species has been seen at Ash Hollow SHP some 25 miles to the west. A bird reported as a Blue-headed at CLNWR 20 Aug (CG) was westerly and early for that species; the observer had not considered Cassin's, agreeing that it was more likely than Blue-headed.
- Blue-headed Vireo:** Occasionally a lingerer in fall, one in Bellevue 20 Oct (B&LP) was the 8th latest.
- Warbling Vireo:** A good count was 12 in Boone Co 27 Aug (LR,RH).
- Philadelphia Vireo:** This was a good fall for this often-overlooked species, with 5 reported. Totals reported in fall seem to be higher in recent years. One was at ADF 21 Aug (L&CF), two at Seward 22 Aug (JG), and singles in Gage Co 13 Sep (RE) and at FF 23 Sep (EB).
- Red-eyed Vireo:** Routine reports.
- Blue Jay:** A good count for the location was the 40 in the observer's Dixon Co yard 24 Sep (JJ).
- Pinyon Jay:** The only report was of one in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 8 Sep (AK).
- Clark's Nutcracker:** Despite the presence of good numbers in summer, none were reported.
- Black-billed Magpie:** One observer (MB) suggested that numbers are currently low in the northeast.
- American Crow:** An indication of peak migration timing was the 2000 at one playa wetland in Hayes Co 27 Oct (TJW). High fall counts to date are in the period 7-28 Oct.

- Common Raven:** Continuing the enigmatic nature of reports of this species in the Panhandle was a belated sighting of 15+ circling over Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 29 Oct 2004. Although ravens soar more than crows, the sighting is at peak migration time for the latter; documentation of raven sightings is sorely needed for Nebraska.
- Horned Lark:** The presence in Sarpy Co of a small flock of 25 as early as 13 Aug (CNK) is of interest as an indicator of timing of post-breeding fall flocking for this early breeder.
- Purple Martin:** A record fall count was 1000+ at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 20 Aug (EB), and also an excellent count was 300+ in Sarpy Co the next day (ARy).
- Tree Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Violet-green Swallow:** None were reported; departure is in early Aug.
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** The 175 in Otoe Co 20 Sep (L&CF) was a good count.
- Bank Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Cliff Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Barn Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Black-capped Chickadee:** A few observers noted continuing very low numbers or total absence, mostly from sc. to ne. Nebraska (LO,LE,D&JP,BFH). At South Sioux City, none were at the observer's feeder for the 3rd year in a row (BFH). Elsewhere, such as in the Missouri Valley and in Lincoln Co (TJW), numbers appeared normal.
- Mountain Chickadee:** Two in Ponderosa Pines at Smith L 14 Oct were well-seen and well-described by an observer experienced with this and Black-capped Chickadees and aware of the rarity of this species (SJ, details); this is about the same time birds have arrived in prior incursion years.
- Tufted Titmouse:** Routine reports.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** This species arrives early in fall, usually by mid-Aug. Rather early was one near Elkhorn 8 Aug (JHa).
- White-breasted Nuthatch:** Routine reports.
- Pygmy Nuthatch:** Routine reports.
- Brown Creeper:** Routine reports.
- Rock Wren:** A surprise was one at SCP 6 Sep (KP, details), only the 11th record for the east. One in Hayes Co 26 Oct (TJW) was 4th-latest, and 4 at WSR 18 Oct (HKH) were also rather late.
- Carolina Wren:** Reports at the margin of the current range were from Webster Co 15 Oct (PD), Nuckolls Co 7 Oct (NF), and Colfax Co 21 Oct (MB). The reports from Webster and Nuckolls Cos, along with establishment of a small population at HCR in recent years, indicate range expansion westward in the Republican Valley, but surprisingly far west were 3 at 2 locations in McCook 26 Nov (LR,RH).
- House Wren:** Routine reports.
- Winter Wren:** Westerly was one at North Platte 12 Oct (TJW); in recent years a few have been reported in fall west to Lincoln and Keith Cos and in Sioux Co, some possibly belonging to the western interior subspecies *salebrosus*.
- Sedge Wren:** There was the usual spate of Aug reports, many of singing birds, westernmost near Gibbon 14 Aug (LR,RH,m.ob.). Last migrants were singles in Hastings 10 Oct (PD) and Lincoln 14 Oct (LE).
- Marsh Wren:** Routine reports.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Routine reports.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Two at WSR 29 Oct (HKH) were a bit late and an uncommon occurrence that far west.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** There are very few reports from the northeast; one was in sw. Dixon Co 20 Aug (JJ), and another was a first for the observers' "yard" list in Dodge Co 2 Sep (D&JP). Perhaps this species is expanding northward in the east as it has done in the west.

**Eastern Bluebird:** Nest-boxes fledged 96 this year at ADF (L&CF); thus it is probably no surprise to see aggregations such as the 71 in a single mile in Otoe Co 22 Oct (L&CF).

**Mountain Bluebird:** Two birds at Smith L 14 Oct (SJ) were migrants; departure from breeding areas is completed by late Oct.

**Townsend's Solitaire:** One in Webster Co 15 Oct (PD) was a little early and rather uncommon that far to the se.

**Veery:** None were reported; this species is a rare but regular fall migrant both east and west in Sep.

**Swainson's Thrush:** One at WSR 20 Oct (HKH) was rather late.

**Hermit Thrush:** Western migrants, a different subspecies, arrive about 3 weeks earlier than those in the east; 2 were at WSR 5 Sep. This and another at WSR 29 Oct (HKH) define the Hermit Thrush migration period in the Panhandle.

**Wood Thrush:** None were reported; most depart by early Oct.

**American Robin:** Earliest flock noted was 22 in Lancaster Co 9 Aug (NP); such flocks can form as early as late Jul. More massive were the "thousands" that hung out around Walton "for days" prior to 11 Oct (TP).

**Varied Thrush:** Only the 7th record since 1991 was a male photographed at WSR 2 Oct (KD) and present through 2 Nov (HKH). The arrival date is the 3rd-earliest.

**Gray Catbird:** Providing the latest Panhandle date except for a single Jan record was one at WSR 2 Nov (HKH).

**Northern Mockingbird:** The 6 in Lancaster Co 6 Aug (LE) was a good count, but likely a single family group.

**Sage Thrasher:** The only reports were from expected locations and dates in the west: 2 in Scotts Bluff Co 11 Aug (KD) and one at WSR 5 Sep (HKH).

**Brown Thrasher:** Routine reports.

**Curve-billed Thrasher:** The bird in se. Sioux Co continues (fide AK); it has been there since Oct 2002 and will apparently live out its life there.

**European Starling:** Routine reports.

**American Pipit:** Two in sw. Dixon Co 4 Sep (JJ) were rather early. A good count was 75-100 in one group in Perkins Co 25 Oct (TJW). Unusual was the sight of 17 on a powerline in Merrick Co 25 Oct (D&JP).

**Sprague's Pipit:** The only reports were from a regular location, SCP, where 13 were found 8-10 Oct (EB,KP). The Fall 2004 report had a 3 Oct sighting incorrectly located in Lancaster Co; it was in Seward Co (LE).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** None were reported; arrival is in Nov when it occurs.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Routine reports.

**Tennessee Warbler:** Only 5 were reported 26 Aug-15 Oct.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Fewer than usual were reported 3 Sep-22 Oct.

**Nashville Warbler:** A good count was 12 at Ponca SP 26 Aug (B&LP). Only about 20 were reported 26 Aug-15 Oct.

**Northern Parula:** Routine reports.

**Yellow Warbler:** Routine reports.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** None were reported; passage is mostly in Sep.

- Magnolia Warbler:** The only report was of one rather far to the west in Grant Co 10 Sep (MB); this is only about the 11th fall record for the western half of the state.
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** None were reported; passage for this rare but regular statewide migrant is in Sep and early Oct.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Of 10 birds at Oliver Res 18 Sep, 9 were Audubon's and the other a Myrtle (SJD,WRS,KN). Best count was 56, all Myrtles, in Frontier Co 23 Oct (LR,RH).
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** Compared to other less common *Dendroica* species, this one appeared in good numbers, with 4 reported; singles were at Bellevue 23 Aug (B&LP), Lincoln 13 Sep (LE), Bellevue 18 Sep (B&LP), and Otoe Co 22 Oct (L&CF). These dates are at the extremes of the migration period, 23 Aug the earliest ever and 22 Oct the 5th latest ever.
- Townsend's Warbler:** The two reports were as expected from the west: one at WSR 5 Sep (HKH) and 2 at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Only 4 were reported: singles at ADF 7 and 26 Aug (L&CF, details), one at Bellevue 23 Aug (B&LP), and one in Lincoln 24 Sep (LE). Although there are a few mid-Aug reports, the 7 Aug date is the earliest ever, possibly a failed breeder drifting southward early.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** The only report was of one in Bellevue 23 Aug (B&LP); this species leaves early in late summer, with only 9 records after Aug.
- Pine Warbler:** One was carefully studied at Victoria Springs SRA, Custer Co, 6 Sep (TJW). This is the 13th accepted fall report; it occurs statewide in fall.
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** The two reports were from Lincoln, 24 Aug (LE) and 24 Sep (LE).
- Blackpoll Warbler:** Only a casual fall migrant, in contrast to its status in spring, there was only one report, in Custer Co 6 Sep (TJW).
- Black-and-white Warbler:** Routine reports.
- American Redstart:** A good count was the 9 at Ponca SP 20 Aug (BFH).
- Ovenbird:** The 3rd-latest ever hit a window and stunned itself at Elkhorn 23 Oct (DSt).
- Northern Waterthrush:** The only report was of one at Ponca SP 24 Aug (B&LP); usually more are reported.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** None were reported; most depart in Aug.
- Kentucky Warbler:** None were reported; most depart in Aug.
- Mourning Warbler:** The 3 reports were of rather early singles at Ponca SP 24 and 25 Aug (B&LP) and 2 males at FF 23 Sep (EB).
- MacGillivray's Warbler:** A good total of 8 was reported 5 Sep-2 Oct, including 3 at WSR 5 Sep (HKH). Easterly was one at Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co, 22 Sep (TJW); there are only 3 accepted records farther east.
- Common Yellowthroat:** Singles at opposite ends of the state were rather late, both on 14 Oct, at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co (EB) and WSR (HKH).
- Hooded Warbler:** This species has a habit of appearing far to the west in spring and fall; a female or immature at WSR 5 Sep (HKH) was the 3rd Panhandle report out of a total of 12 fall reports.
- Wilson's Warbler:** As usual in fall, this species was reported statewide with best counts from the west: "dozens" were at WSR 5 Sep (HKH) and 19 at Oliver Res 18 Sep (SJD,WRS,KN).
- Canada Warbler:** Three were reported, all at the beginning of the migration period 14-25 Aug; a male at FF 14 Aug (EB) was 2nd-earliest ever, and singles were in Lincoln 24 Aug (LE) and at Ponca SP 25 Aug (B&LP).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Becoming difficult to find in Knox Co in recent years, as in any part of the east, one was near Niobrara 20 Aug (MB).

**Summer Tanager:** Routine reports.

**Scarlet Tanager:** Routine reports.

**Western Tanager:** Routine reports.

**Spotted Towhee:** About on schedule, last in the west were several at WSR 20 Oct (HKH), and first in the southeast was one in Webster Co 7 Oct (PD).

**Eastern Towhee:** Birds looking like this species, referred to as "phenotypic Eastern Towhees" (MB) were reported from GPD in the northeast (MB) to HCR in the south-central (B&LP). This approximates the western edge of the summer range.

**American Tree Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Chipping Sparrow:** Single birds at feeders are typical of late fall lingerers, as was a basic adult at a Nebraska City feeder 18-20 Nov (L&CF, details). There are only 3 documented Nov records and one of wintering.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report was of one at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 19 Aug (RE, details); this is east of the breeding range and was probably a migrant. There are very few records east of the breeding range in fall.

**Field Sparrow:** One at ADF 6 Nov (L&CF, details) was tardy.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Routine reports.

**Lark Sparrow:** One at Smith L 14 Oct (SJ) was rather late for the location, as was another in Dixon Co 16 Oct (JJ).

**Lark Bunting:** Routine reports.

**Savannah Sparrow:** This species was reported in good numbers in the east; it was described as "abundant" (RE) and present in "gobs" (PD) in the e. RWB 10-14 Oct. Moderate counts of 45 were reported in Furnas Co 18 Sep (LR,RH) and in Otoe Co 21 Oct (RE).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Third-latest was one in Thayer Co 30 Oct (MB).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** The only reports were of singles at SCP 2 Oct (EB) and at Holmes L, Lincoln, 21 Oct (LE). There are few fall records; the 21 Oct date cited here is the 2nd-latest.

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** The only report was of one at SCP 8 Oct (EB).

**Fox Sparrow:** Good numbers were reported, all from Antelope Co eastward, as expected. Intriguing was a bird picked up in the observers' Dodge Co yard 7 Nov that was rather dark with plumage suggestive of the subspecies *zaboria* or *altivagans* or possibly *schistacea* (D&JP). The specimen is in the care of UNSM; hopefully a definitive identification will be forthcoming. Since the Type Specimen was collected in Nebraska, there have been no subsequent records of *schistacea*.

**Song Sparrow:** A late nest was being built at FF 20 Aug (ARy); this may not be surprising in that this species may fledge as many as 4 broods each summer (*Birds of North America*). A good count was the 41 in Lancaster Co 21 Oct (LE).

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

**Swamp Sparrow:** Rather early fall migrants were singles in Lincoln 23 Sep (LE) and at FF the same day (EB). Breeding is not known at either location.

**White-throated Sparrow:** Earliest were 2 in Saline Co 25 Sep (LE), about on time.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** One in Furnas Co 10 Sep (KD) was somewhat early.

**Harris's Sparrow:** An excellent count was 250 in Otoe Co 21 Oct (RE). An indication that this species does not remain for winter in Sioux Co was that 3 at WSR 29 Oct were described as "still here" (HKH).

- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** The only report was of 4 at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 20 Oct (KD); this is a typical migration time.
- Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** Earliest were 2 in Sioux Co 21 Sep (RG) and another at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 22 Sep (TJW). Best count was a moderate 105 in Otoe Co 30 Nov (L&CF).
- Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** Eight at a Sidney feeder 30 Sep (AS) were rather early; this form arrives later than Slate-colored. Uncommon in the east, a female was in a Lancaster Co yard 20 Nov (TP). Regular only in the west, a few "pink-sided" Oregons were reported from North Platte (TJW) and Scotts Bluff Co (KD).
- McCown's Longspur:** The only report was of several in a mixed flock of 60-70 with Lapland Longspurs at WSR 1 Oct (HKH).
- Lapland Longspur:** Second-earliest were several in a mixed flock with McCown's Longspurs at WSR 1 Oct (HKH); there is an earlier report 25 Sep. On a more expected date were 20 as far south as Thayer Co 30 Oct (MB). A single flock in Seward Co 18 Nov contained about 1000 birds (RE).
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** The only report was of 23 at WSR 5 Sep (HKH); these were probably local breeders preparing for departure.
- Snow Bunting:** Only two appeared in time for the Fall Report: singles at PL 28 Oct (LE), rather early, and in York Co 25 Nov (TEL).
- Northern Cardinal:** One at Smith L 14 Aug (SJ) was only the 3rd record for Sheridan Co, and one of very few in the northern Panhandle.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Routine reports
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Routine reports.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Two carrying food at Winters Creek L, Scotts Bluff Co, 13 Aug (KD) were a bit late for this species to be feeding young.
- Lazuli Bunting:** Routine reports.
- Indigo Bunting:** This fall saw 3 of the 5 latest records away from the Missouri Valley: an adult basic female in Furnas Co 9 Oct (LR,RH), a single individual in Gage Co 7 Oct (LE), and 2 in sw. Dixon Co 10 Oct (JJ); an immature was in the yard of the Dixon Co observer Dec-Jan 1998-99. The only other record in this category is 28 Oct 1976 in Howard Co.
- Dickcissel:** Adults feeding young near Cambridge 14 Aug (LR,RH) and near Gibbon 19 Aug (LR,RH) were a bit late for that stage of the breeding cycle. One in Adams Co 15 Oct (PD) was tardy.
- Bobolink:** Routine reports.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Flocks of females and young birds form in fall, to be joined later by males; however, 3 Nov seemed a bit late for a flock of 50 females near Lincoln (NP) to be unaccompanied by males (will refrain from the obvious cheap jokes here).
- Eastern Meadowlark:** One singing in Colfax Co 21 Oct (MB) was a bit late; late dates away from the southeast are in late Oct.
- Western Meadowlark:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Routine reports.
- Rusty Blackbird:** One in Deuel Co 18 Nov (RE) was rather late relative to the 15 or so other Panhandle records. This species is rare in the west. The only other reports of this apparently-declining species were of one in Lancaster Co 19 Nov (LE) and 2 in Seward Co 26 Nov (LE).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** Rare eastward, 30 were in a mixed-species flock with red-wings and starlings in Gage Co 23 Oct (LE).
- Common Grackle:** Best count was the "tens of thousands" at SCP 7 Sep (KP), rather early for such a tally.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Routine reports.

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** The 3000 in Lancaster Co 21 Oct (LE) was an excellent count, and one in Seward Co 26 Nov (LE) was rather late. Most depart by the end of Oct.

**Orchard Oriole:** Routine reports.

**Baltimore Oriole:** Routine reports.

**Bullock's Oriole:** Routine reports.

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

**Purple Finch:** Only 6 were reported, 5 from the east beginning 21 Oct (B&LP,JJ) and the other from Scotts Bluff Co 15 Nov (AK), where the species is uncommon.

**House Finch:** Routine reports.

**Red Crossbill:** Routine reports.

**Common Redpoll:** None were reported; arrival, if it occurs, is in Nov.

**Pine Siskin:** Routine reports.

**American Goldfinch:** An adult was feeding a juvenile rather late on 9 Oct at FF (ARy).

**House Sparrow:** Routine reports.

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## FALL FIELD DAYS AT HARLAN COUNTY RESERVOIR

The annual Fall Field Days were held on September 9-11, 2005, at the 4-H Camp near Alma. Field trip destinations included Harlan County Reservoir and various other points of interest in Furnas, Harlan, Franklin, Phelps, Kearney and Adams Counties. The total tally was 119 species, including Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Mississippi Kite, Prairie Falcon and Olive-sided Flycatcher

Fifty-four members and guests attended. On Friday the group heard from Dr. Josef Kren on the topic of obligate brood parasites, species that have lost the ability to construct nests and incubate eggs and instead lay eggs in the nests of other species, and non-obligate brood parasites, species that lay eggs both in their own nests in the nests of other members of their own species.

On Saturday, Joel Jorgensen talked about his research on the importance of the Rainwater Basin as a stopover site during the migration of Buff-breasted Sandpipers. The world population of Buff-breasted Sandpipers is declining and is currently estimated at only 15,000, many of which use agricultural fields of the Rainwater Basin as they pass through Nebraska.

## Harlan County Fall Field Days

	Harlan	Phelps	Franklin	Furnas	Kearney	Adams
Greater White-fronted Goose						x
Snow Goose						x
Canada Goose	x					
Wood Duck	x					
Gadwall	x	x				
Mallard	x	x				x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x				x
Northern Pintail	x					
Green-winged Teal	x					
Ring-necked Pheasant		x	x			
Greater Prairie-Chicken		x				
Wild Turkey	x		x	x		
Northern Bobwhite		x	x	x		
Pied-billed Grebe				x		
American White Pelican	x			x		x
Double-crested Cormorant	x					
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x			x
Great Egret	x					x
Snowy Egret	x					
Cattle Egret	x					x
Green Heron	x					x
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		x				
<i>Plegadis sp.</i>	x	x				
White-faced Ibis	x					
Turkey Vulture	x		x	x		
Osprey	x		x	x		
Mississippi Kite	x					
Bald Eagle	x					
Northern Harrier	x	x			x	x
Sharp-shinned Hawk	x					
Cooper's Hawk	x	x			x	
Swainson's Hawk	x				x	
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x	x	x
American Kestrel	x		x	x	x	x
Merlin	x					x
Prairie Falcon			x			
American Coot	x					x
American Golden-Plover					x	
Killdeer	x	x	x	x	x	x
Greater Yellowlegs		x				x
Lesser Yellowlegs		x				
Solitary Sandpiper		x				

## Harlan County Fall Field Days

	Harlan	Phelps	Franklin	Furnas	Kearney	Adams
Spotted Sandpiper	x	x				x
Semipalmated Sandpiper					x	
Least Sandpiper	x				x	
Baird's Sandpiper	x	x				
Stilt Sandpiper		x				
Long-billed Dowitcher		x				
Wilson's Snipe		x				
Franklin's Gull	x					
Ring-billed Gull	x					
Forster's Tern	x					
Black Tern	x					
Rock Pigeon	x	x	x	x		x
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	x		x		
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x	x
Great Horned Owl	x					
Short-eared Owl	x					
Common Nighthawk	x			x		
Chimney Swift	x	x		x		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	x					
Belted Kingfisher	x			x		
Red-headed Woodpecker	x	x	x	x		x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x					
Downy Woodpecker	x					
Hairy Woodpecker	x	x				
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x		
Olive-sided Flycatcher	x			x		
Western Wood-pewee				x		
Eastern Wood-pewee	x					
Eastern Phoebe	x	x		x		
Say's Phoebe	x			x		
Great Crested Flycatcher	x					
Western Kingbird	x			x		
Eastern Kingbird	x			x	x	
<i>Empidonax sp.</i>	x					
Loggerhead Shrike	x	x	x	x		x
Warbling Vireo	x					
Red-eyed Vireo	x					
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x	x	
American Crow	x		x			
Horned Lark	x					x
Purple Martin	x			x		
Tree Swallow	x			x		

## Harlan County Fall Field Days

	Harlan	Phelps	Franklin	Furnas	Kearney	Adams
N. Rough-winged Swallow	x					
Bank Swallow	x	x	x			
Cliff Swallow	x	x				
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee	x			x		
White-breasted Nuthatch	x	x	x	x		
House Wren	x			x		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	x					
Eastern Bluebird	x			x		
American Robin	x	x	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird	x			x		
Brown Thrasher	x	x	x	x		
European Starling	x	x	x	x		x
American Redstart	x					
Wilson's Warbler	x			x		
Eastern Towhee	x					
Chipping Sparrow	x	x		x		
Clay-colored Sparrow		x	x	x		
Field Sparrow	x		x			
Vesper Sparrow	x		x			
Lark Sparrow	x				x	
Grasshopper Sparrow				x		
Song Sparrow	x					
White-crowned Sparrow				x		
Northern Cardinal	x		x	x		
Blue Grosbeak		x				
Indigo Bunting			x			
Red-winged Blackbird	x	x	x		x	x
Western Meadowlark	x		x	x		x
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x					x
Common Grackle	x	x	x	x		
Brown-headed Cowbird	x		x	x	x	x
Baltimore Oriole	x	x		x		
House Finch	x	x				
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x		x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x	x
County totals	97	47	34	48	18	31
Total species	119					

## SNOWY PLOVER NESTING AT LAKE MCCONAUGHY IN 2004 AND 2005

Mark M. Peyton  
Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District  
4th and D Street  
Gothenburg, NE 69138

Gabriel Wilson  
Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District  
199 Kingsley Drive  
Ogallala, NE 69153

### INTRODUCTION

The Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) is a small shore bird that upon casual observation resembles the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). The most obvious differences are in the dark beak and legs of the Snowy Plover in contrast to the orange bill with the black tip and orange legs of the Piping Plover. The two also have strikingly different calls (pers. obs.). In Nebraska the Piping Plover can be found along the Missouri, Platte, Niobrara, Loup and Elkhorn Rivers and the sandpits associated with those rivers (Haig and Plissner 1993). Piping Plovers are also common along the shore of Lake McConaughy (Peyton 2004). The Snowy Plover, in contrast, has been recorded from only a few locations in Nebraska, and the only reported areas for successful breeding within the state are Harlan County Reservoir (Silcock 2004) and Lake McConaughy, where breeding has been documented since 2000 (Silcock 2000, 2001b, and 2003).

In Nebraska the Snowy Plover was listed as Casual until the designation was changed to Regular in 2003 (NOU Records Committee 2004). This change is reflective of the increase in sightings reported in *The Nebraska Bird Review* and the documentation of nesting within the state.

The first report of nesting Snowy Plovers in Nebraska was in 1998 from the Missouri River near Santee, Nebraska (Silcock 2001a). This nest was apparently lost. The second and third reports for the state, and the first reports of successful nesting, were of adults with young at Lake McConaughy in 2000 and 2001 (Silcock 2001b).

Adult birds were sighted at Lake McConaughy in 2002, but it wasn't until June 2003 that a Snowy Plover nest with eggs was located at Lake McConaughy (Silcock 2003a). Later that summer three additional broods were located, two of which eventually fledged chicks (Silcock 2003b). Thus, between 2000 and 2003, there was one nest with eggs and four broods of Snowy Plovers documented at Lake McConaughy.

Starting in 2004, the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (Central) added the monitoring of nesting Snowy Plovers at Lake McConaughy to its annual

Piping Plover monitoring plan. Presented here are the nesting data for Snowy Plovers at Lake McConaughy in 2004 and 2005.

#### METHODS

To locate Snowy Plover nests, Central personnel conducted 15 weekly surveys of the entire shoreline of Lake McConaughy from late April through mid-August in both 2004 and 2005. Surveys were conducted between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM local time.

Once a nest was found, its location was recorded using a handheld GPS unit. To minimize human-related nest loss, a protective fence was constructed around each nest area. The fences consisted of four posts arranged approximately 5-7 meters apart in a diamond shape with two strands of bright orange string surrounding an area of approximately 25-35 m<sup>2</sup>. Because of the close resemblance of Snowy Plovers to Piping Plovers and because Piping Plovers were also nesting in the area, one of the same signs used to warn people to keep out of the nesting areas for Piping Plovers was placed on one post of each Snowy Plover fence and reflectors were placed on the other posts.

The nests were then monitored a minimum of twice weekly until nest activity ceased, either by hatching or nest failure. Broods, which tended to stay within the same general area, were located twice weekly and the fate of the chicks was documented (e.g., chicks lost or fledged). We defined fledging as either the observation of a flying chick or one 25 – 30 days old. Nest success was defined as the percentage of nests that successfully hatched at least one chick. Fledge success was defined as the percentage of chicks that reached fledging, and the ratio of fledged chicks to the maximum number of paired adults was also calculated.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The earliest sightings of a Snowy Plover at Lake McConaughy by Central personnel were 28 May and 24 May for 2004 and 2005, respectively. The first nest located in 2004 was on 6 June and in 2005 on 24 May. The first fledged chick was observed on 15 July in 2004 and on 20 July in 2005.

Two nests with three eggs each were located by Central personnel in 2004. Stephen J. Dinsmore also reported finding two nests, one on 12 May and the other on 19 June in the same general area (pers. comm.). Both nests located by Central were successful (i.e., hatched at least one chick). The fate of the nests located by Dinsmore are unknown.

Seven additional broods were located in 2004 and 21 chicks were identified, of which 19 were known to have fledged for a 90% success rate and a 2.1 fledged chicks/adult pair ratio.

In 2005 seven nests were located with a total of 19 eggs. Three of the nests were destroyed resulting in a 57% nest success. In addition, three broods not associated with the four successful nests were documented. Fourteen chicks were seen with a minimum of 13 fledging for a fledging success of 93% and a 1.3 fledged chicks/adult pair ratio.

Nine Snowy Plover nests and a total of 19 broods were monitored at Lake McConaughy during 2004 and 2005. Six of the nine nests successfully hatched at least one chick for a combined nest success of 67%. Thirty-five chicks were monitored, of which 32 fledged for a fledging success of 91% and a fledge ratio of 1.7 fledged chicks/adult pair.

Incubation for Snowy Plovers is approximately 26 days and fledging occurs 25-30 days later (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2003). Thus fledging can be expected 50-55 days following the start of incubation. The first fledged chick in 2004 was observed on 15 July and in 2005 on 20 July, which suggests that Snowy Plovers begin nesting in mid-May at Lake McConaughy.

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## SUGGESTED AREAS FOR STUDY

William F. Rapp, Jr.  
87 South Main Street  
Pittsford, NY 14534

[Editor's Note: William F. Rapp, Jr., served as editor of *The Nebraska Bird Review* from 1948 to 1955. A New Jersey native with a strong interest in birding and an educational background (Rutgers University and the University of Illinois) in entomology, geology and ecology, Bill came to Nebraska in 1947 to accept a teaching position at Doane College in Crete. He joined the NOU in 1948 and not only took on the editor's job almost immediately, but contributed many articles to the publication. In 1952, he left Doane for the Nebraska Department of Health, working there as a medical entomologist in the area of mosquito and tick control. Bill retired in 1985 and now lives in the Finger Lakes region of New York. His interest in birds continues, as does his research, most recently on spiders and terrestrial isopods.]

After 100 years of organized ornithology we have a good picture of the bird fauna of Nebraska. Yes, we will still be able to add new species to the state list, but this will become more and more difficult. What problems are left for the amateur ornithologist to solve? Nebraska is a big state with many different ecological areas, few of which have been studied in detail. Only a few areas of the state have been well studied. Not only do we need data on what species occur, but how many. This type of study can be done by amateur ornithologists. In fact many of the outstanding field studies done in this country and Canada have been done by amateur ornithologists.

What does such a study require? A good field study requires a desire to do a good job, good study design, good field notes, and time. By time, I mean that it can't be done in a hurry. A good field study requires several years so that you can get data under various conditions. It is not necessary to spend every day in the field, but spending 12 to 20 days a year in the area will yield good data.

I have selected four areas in which over the years I have done fieldwork on insects and ticks. However, these areas would be excellent for ornithological study. The data from such a study would be a major contribution to the ornithology of Nebraska.

### SOUTHEAST RICHARDSON COUNTY

This area is in the extreme southeastern part of the state. The area is south of the Big Nemaha River, west of the Missouri River, and north of the Kansas-Nebraska state line. This is a very hilly area with a well-developed oak-hickory-walnut woodland. For many years this area was heavily timbered, especially during the steamboat era. Today it is good second growth woodland with a good

understory of shrubs and herbaceous plants. Very little timbering has been done in the last 60 to 70 years. Also in this area are some old field woodlands. There is a limited amount of farming, as most of the area is too hilly for modern-day agriculture. From the historical point of view this area was settled early in the Nebraska Territorial period. This area has a low population density, although more and more people are building summer homes here now. The area is easy to reach from Omaha and Lincoln. From Rulo there is a good road leading to the area and a number of dirt roads and trails leading into the woodland. A topographic map of the area is available.

What is there for the ornithologist? In the spring it is a stopover for warblers. The late William Youngworth told me that he believed that it might be a resting area during the spring hawk migration. We could also expand our knowledge of the birds which may breed in this area, such as Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler and Scarlet Tanager. I believe that a good study of this area would yield some interesting ornithological data.

#### BIG BLUE VALLEY BARNESTON TO SEWARD

Over the years major ecological changes have taken place in the Big Blue River Valley. This narrow river valley with its well-developed flood plain woodland is an ecological island in the tall grass prairie. It has been said that at one time the Big Blue River had more hydroelectric plants than any other river system in the United States. Starting in 1910 a series of 10 hydroelectric plants was constructed between Barneston and Seward. By the 1960s all were gone. (See Rapp & Beranek, 1984, pp. 77-83 for locations.) At many of the plants, the dams resulted in large ponds which attracted large numbers of waterfowl.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s when I was teaching ornithology at Doane College, field trips to Casteel's Dam north of Crete offered a wide variety of ducks, and one morning a large flock of American White Pelicans. Another morning we saw a large flock of Yellow-headed Blackbirds in the cattail marsh. Today all of the dams are gone or have been bypassed except the one at Barneston where there still is a hydroelectric plant. Today the Big Blue River is a slow-moving, silt-laden stream, and there are many floodplain woodlands with a good understory of shrubs and herbaceous plants between Barneston and Seward. In some areas there are old-field woodlands. This narrow river valley has over the years developed an interesting bird fauna and supports a number of species not found in the tall grass prairies. A detailed study of this area would yield good data on the importance to bird populations of river valleys in grassland areas.

#### NORTHERN SIOUX COUNTY OGLALA NATIONAL GRASSLAND

Approximately 16 miles north of Harrison is a large short grass prairie region of the Oglala National Grassland. This is ranching country with a very low population. There are many small streams, most of which dry up in the summer.

The area has seldom been visited by bird students. Being in the short grass prairie biome, it does not support many species, and bird populations are thought to be low. However, in this area one might find western species; the flora is similar to what one finds in eastern Wyoming. Unfortunately this area is very isolated and roads are not the best. A good study of this area could yield important data on the bird populations in the short grass prairie.

#### DUNDY COUNTY

Dundy County, located in the southwestern part of the state, is an ecotone between the high plains and the short grass prairie. Benkelman is the county seat, with an estimated 2003 population of 962. The county is a semi-dry area of large wheat farms and ranches.

The Republican River flows west to east across the southern part of the county. Prior to 1950 this was an uncontrolled river with large sandy flood plains. Today it is controlled and its sandbars are becoming overgrown with sandbar willow and more permanent trees. In a normal year the river discharge varies greatly, with the major discharge in the spring. During the summer the flow is very low because most of the water is diverted for irrigation.

For the ornithologist, the Republican River valley is the most interesting area in Dundy County. Several questions need to be answered: What type of bird population does the Republican support, both in winter and summer? Is this an area where some species stop over during spring or fall migration? If so, can we add to our understanding of its use by 'Western' migrants? Does the area support a breeding population, and if so, of what species and how large?

If one looks at a topographic map of the Republican River valley, one will see that there are many small creeks which flow into the river. There are many wooden bridges which should be examined for nesting phoebes. The area north of the Republican valley is mostly agricultural and does not support a high bird population. However, this area should be investigated to create a record of species and populations.

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President and Newsletter Editor: Dave Heidt, 1703 Hilltop Drive, Norfolk, NE 68701-2031; daveh@northeastcollege.com

Vice-President: Urban Lehner, 15526 Pierce Circle, Omaha, NE 68144; urbanity@hotmail.com

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Directors:

Steve Lamphere, 3101 Washington St., Apt. 98, Bellevue, NE 68005; kingfisher65@aol.com (2006)

Jan Uttecht, Box 823, Stanton, NE 68779; jautek@stanton.net (2007)

Loren Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005; lpdlfrd@juno.com (2008)

Records Committee Chairman: Mark Brogie, Box 316, Creighton, NE 68729; mbrogie@esul.org

Editor of The Nebraska Bird Review: Janis Paseka, 1585 Co. Rd. 14 Blvd., Ames, NE 68621; paseka@tvsonline.net

Occurrence Report Compiler: Ross Silcock, P.O. Box 57, Tabor, IA 51653; silcock@rosssilcock.com

Breeding Bird Atlas Project and Nest Records Coordinator: Wayne Mollhoff, 2354 Euclid St., Ashland NE 68003; wmollhoff@netscape.net

NOU Website: <http://rip.physics.unk.edu/NOU/>

Nebraska Birdline: c/o Josef Kren 402-721-5487, ext. 6490, or 800-642-8382, ext. 6490, or birdsne@yahoo.com

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc.  
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