

9-2011

# *Nebraska Bird Review* (September 2011) 79(3), WHOLE ISSUE

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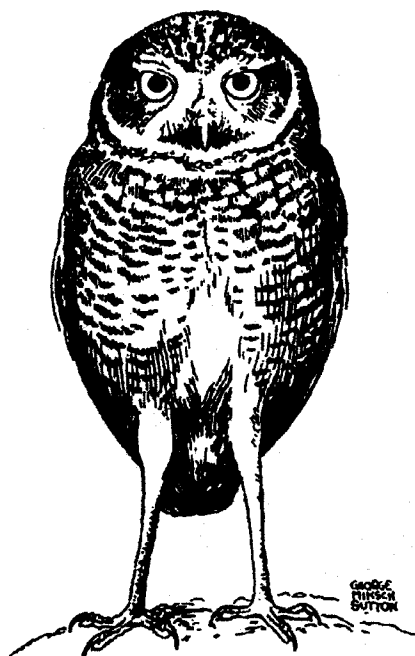
"*Nebraska Bird Review* (September 2011) 79(3), WHOLE ISSUE" (2011). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 1176.  
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# ***The Nebraska Bird Review***

A Magazine of Ornithology of the  
Nebraska Region

Volume 79 September 2011 Number 3



Published by the  
Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc.  
Founded 1899

Janis M. Paseka, Editor  
Joseph Gubanyi, Ph. D., Technical Editor

SSSN 0028-1816

## SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

The effects of major drought in the southwest United States on bird life in Nebraska has yet to be determined, as has the effect of the historic inundation of the Missouri River bottom lands from Gavins Point Dam to Rulo in eastern Nebraska. The water level at McConaughy is coincidentally at a maximum, ensuring that breeding habitat for Piping Plover and Least Tern was much reduced in the state overall. On the other hand, bottom lands wetlands above the flood level were expanded; Black-necked Stilts initiated a late nesting in Dakota Co in flooded fields that also attracted thousands of shorebirds, notably Killdeer and Pectoral Sandpiper.

In the Rainwater Basin, good localized water conditions attracted southern herons, notably Little Blue Heron and Snowy Egret, although Great Egret appeared in about normal numbers.

Ospreys continued their so far ill-fated nesting attempts in the west, while Mississippi Kites added new towns to their list of breeding locations.

A large influx of Cassin's Sparrows occurred in the west, mostly increasing numbers in previously-known breeding locations, but with some expansion eastward, notably to Lincoln Co. This may be related to the extensive drought in the southwest United States. Grassland conditions in the Panhandle were suitable for Dickcissels (as well as Cassin's Sparrows); large numbers of Dickcissels were reported from there, a recent phenomenon that has been continuing. Surprisingly, following a strong move into the Panhandle in the last few years, no Lesser Goldfinches were reported.

Finally, expansion and range consolidation of several "southeastern" species continued; included were Least Bittern, Glossy Ibis, Chuck-will's-widow, Acadian Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Kentucky Warbler.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ad.: adult  
ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City  
BBS: Breeding Bird Survey  
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co  
Cem: Cemetery  
Co(s): County(ies)  
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co  
fem.: female  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co  
HCR: Harlan Co Res SRA, Harlan Co  
ICSP: Indian Cave State Park, Richardson/Nemaha Cos

imm.: immature

juv.: juvenile

L: Lake

LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co

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

LPB: LaPlatte Bottoms, Sarpy Co

m. ob.: many observers

NC: Nature Center

NLB: North Lake Basin WMA, Seward Co

NM: National Monument

NWR: National Wildlife Refuge

Res: Reservoir

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

SCP: Audubon Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co

SHP: State Historical Park

SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)

SP: State Park

WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area

WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area

WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co

#### GAZETTEER

Harvard Marsh: WPA, Clay Co

Jack Sinn: Memorial WMA, Lancaster and Saunders Cos

Pine Ridge: escarpment in Sioux, Dawes, and Sheridan Cos

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

Wildcat Hills: escarpment in Scotts Bluff, Banner, and Morrill Cos

#### OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering

ARy: Allan Reyer, Bellevue

B&DW: Bruce and Donna Walgren, Casper, WY

B&KG: Bob & Kathi Gerten, Burwell

BF: Bill Fink, Longmont, CO

BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City

BN: Burton Nelson, Hastings

BNe: Brian Nelson, Ord

CG: Cory Gregory, Ames, IA

CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue

D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames

DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk

DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn

EA: Edward Allen, Bellevue

EB: Ed Brogie, Laurel

G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma

GJ: Gail Johnson, Warminster, PA  
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell  
JC: John Carlini, Lincoln  
JD: Jeff Drahota, Lincoln  
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward  
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln  
JGr: Jonas Grundman, Omaha  
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield  
JJJ: James J. Jenniges, Kearney  
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha  
JRi: Juanita Rice, Fairmont  
JW: Jake Walker, Lincoln  
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha  
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KG: Keith Geluso, Kearney  
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MW: Matt Walker, Brady  
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SQ: Susan Quinn, Nebraska City  
SW: Steve Winter, Stillwater, OK  
TCG: T.C. Gannon, Lincoln  
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln  
TF: Ted Floyd, Colorado Springs, CO  
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady  
VC: Virginia Clark, North Platte  
WF: William Flack, Kearney  
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were no reports of this rare summer visitor; at least one occurs most summers.

**Snow Goose:** The usual small numbers lingered through the period in the e. RWB; best count was 12 at Harvard Marsh 17 Jun (PD). One was at HCR through Jun (G&WH).

**Ross's Goose:** Only the 4th report for Jun was of one in Clay Co 17 Jun (LE).

**Cackling Goose:** Singles in the e. RWB 25 Jun (JGJ) and in Dundy Co 2 Jul (LE) added to only 4 previous mid-Jun through Jul records.

**Canada Goose:** Reports were routine for this ubiquitous summer resident.

**Mute Swan:** A surprise was the appearance of 3 ads. at Kissinger WPA, Clay Co, 13 Jun (JW); this appears to be the only record of this species away from the Omaha area or Grand Island.

**Trumpeter Swan:** In addition to the usual reports of breeding birds in the Sandhills, a southerly pair near Ravenna had one chick 13 Jun (fide LR, RH); this is the 4th report of breeding south and east of the Sandhills in the last 3 summers.

**Wood Duck:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Gadwall:** Breeding occurs rarely in the e. RWB; a pair and a separate drake were at Kissinger WPA, Clay Co, 17 Jun (PD), and a single was in Phelps Co 19 Jun (JJ).

**American Wigeon:** There is only one breeding record for the RWB, and so singles at different Clay Co locations 17 Jun (PD) and 9 Jul (JGJ), the latter a drake, were of interest. There are at least 9 similar RWB reports.

**Mallard:** Reports were routine for this ubiquitous summer resident.

**Blue-winged Teal:** Two in Harlan Co 29 Jul were unexpected at that date, as breeding is virtually unknown in the county (G&WH).

**Cinnamon Teal:** Easterly was one in Clay Co 13-17 Jun (JW, PD); breeding is unknown in the e. RWB.

**Northern Shoveler:** Breeding in the e. RWB is rare, and so as many as 12 in the e. RWB 17 Jun (LE) were of interest.

**Northern Pintail:** Reports were routine for this uncommon, mostly Sandhills, breeder.

**Green-winged Teal:** Breeding is rare, especially s. of the Platte River; singles in Phelps Co 5 Jun (LR, RH) and Clay Co 26 Jun (RSt) were likely stragglers. Jun has the fewest reports away from Sandhills breeding areas.

**Canvasback:** The small summering population in the Sandhills was represented by 4 at CLNWR 1 Jun (GK); not all such birds are breeders.

**Redhead:** A drake at Broken Bow SL 11 Jun (TH) was tardy.

**Ring-necked Duck:** A male at NLB 9 Jul (JGJ) added to the several similar summer RWB records; breeding has not been recorded in the RWB. Tardy were single males near Fremont 9 Jun (JGJ) and in Omaha 11 Jun (JR).

**Lesser Scaup:** One at NLB 21-26 Jun (JGJ, RSt) was about the 20th in summer for the RWB; breeding has not occurred there.

**Common Goldeneye:** One near Fremont 9 Jun (JGJ) was tardy; there are about 20 records for summer.

**Hooded Merganser:** Reports were routine; most summer reports are of imm. birds not yet old enough to breed.

- Common Merganser:** The 3 at LO 13 Jun (TJW) were at a location where summering birds occur; breeding is unknown there.
- Ruddy Duck:** A few occur through summer on suitable wetlands, especially in the RWB where breeding may occur on occasion; best count was 26 at Kissinger WPA, Clay Co, (PD); 5 were still there 9 Jul (JGJ).
- Northern Bobwhite:** Reports were routine for this virtually statewide resident.
- Gray Partridge:** None of this scarce ne. Nebraska specialty were reported.
- Ring-necked Pheasant:** None were found in a weekend tour of se. Nebraska 26 Jun (CNK); usually numbers are good in and around grasslands in this region.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Reports were routine for this widespread inhabitant of northern and western grasslands.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Booming males were still on 2 Chase Co leks 11 Jun (MB), rather late.
- Wild Turkey:** The "hundreds" seen along I-80 in w. NE 23 Jul (RE) exemplify the high population levels throughout the state.
- Common Loon:** Loons do not breed until 3-4 years old; immatures summer occasionally in Nebraska, mostly in the west. Two were at LO 21 Jul (RE) and one was at Burchard L, Pawnee Co, 16 Jun through 2 Jul (SW fide TEL, LR, RH).
- Pied-billed Grebe:** Reports were routine for this statewide inhabitant of rush-lined marshes.
- Eared Grebe:** Reports were routine for this common Sandhills summer resident.
- Western Grebe:** A straggler in Clay Co 17 Jun (PD) was only the 11th report from mid-Jun through early Aug in the eastern half of the state.
- Clark's Grebe:** The only report was from the expected LO, where 2 were seen 21 Jun (RE).
- Neotropic Cormorant:** Two at BOL 25 Jun (LE) provided the 16th record for the state.
- Double-crested Cormorant:** Nesting has occurred at HCR on a sporadic basis, apparently related to water levels; this year none nested and the largest flock was only 55, on 29 Jun (G&WH).
- American White Pelican:** A few nonbreeders summer, mostly in cen. and w. Nebraska; 5 were at HCR through the period (G&WH).
- American Bittern:** Five singles were reported in RWB wetlands 19 Jun-24 Jul (JJ, WM, JC, SS, LE, JGJ), any or all of which might have been breeding, although such records are rare.
- Least Bittern:** This species is extending its range northwestward in Nebraska; it was at "several sites" in Cherry Co in early Jun (MR), in Dakota Co 29 Jul (D&JP), and, less surprisingly, at LPB 5 Jun (B&LP) and near Tamora 3 Jul (JC, SS).
- Great Blue Heron:** Reports were routine for this statewide breeder.
- Great Egret:** Reports were widespread but numbers were only moderate; best count was only 28, in the e. RWB 24 Jul (JGJ).
- Snowy Egret:** A surprising 18 were reported (m. ob.), all as expected in cen. Nebraska; 9 of these were in the e. RWB 24 Jul (JGJ).
- Little Blue Heron:** Probably the best summer tally for many years of this generally rare species was the amazing 11 reported, all ads. but one (m. ob.). As with the Snowy Egrets, all were in cen. Nebraska, including 4 near Massie WPA, Clay Co, 9 Jul (JGJ) and 2 in Phelps Co 18 Jul (WF), one of which was the only imm. reported. Seven of the birds were in the e. RWB 1-9 Jul

(TCG, JC, SS, JGJ); there were no previous e. RWB records in that time period.

**Cattle Egret:** Reports were statewide and numbers were excellent, about 630 in all, although no breeding was reported. Best numbers were found after mid-Jun, suggesting dispersal after failed breeding; 221 in one flock were in n. Cherry Co 22 Jul (WM). The 100+ near the North Platte Airport 3 Jul (TJW) may have been the same birds as the 100 reported n. of North Platte 25 Jun (VC).

**Green Heron:** One in Holt Co 10 Jun (DH) was northwesterly.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Two on a Perkins Co playa 15 Jun were considered a "good record" for the southwest (TJW). The 7 other reports (LE, JGJ) were from the e. RWB as expected.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** Surprisingly, there was only one report, that from an upland grassland area, Bowwood WMA, Pawnee Co, 2 Jul (LR, RH).

**Glossy Ibis:** The 6th report for 2011 was one in Phelps Co 18 Jul (WF, details). This species is now an expected summer visitor in Nebraska.

**White-faced Ibis:** Numbers were moderate for recent years, best counts 55 in the e. RWB both 9 Jul and 24 Jul (JGJ) and 50+ in Clay Co 26 Jun (RSt).

**Turkey Vulture:** Perhaps an ominous sight was the 60-75 circling over a performance of "Shakespeare on the Green" in Omaha 8 Jul (JWH, JR).

**Osprey:** The 3 active nest sites mentioned in the Spring Report provided interesting stories. The pair at the Winters Creek L site apparently rebuilt their wind-damaged nest and one was sitting on the nest in late Jun (KD). The other Scotts Bluff Co site, just west of Scottsbluff, was occupied in spring by a pair that was electrocuted. The local power company then proceeded to install a 65-foot high pole and platform, and a new pair was present late in the reporting period (KD). The third site, near LO, was active again; nest-building took place earlier in spring, and incubation was underway 15 Jun (MP fide JJJ). Two birds were seen in the area 13 Jul (TJW).

**Mississippi Kite:** The last few years have seen isolated nestings away from Ogallala, where kites were first noted in 1991 and nesting was confirmed in 1994. Nesting occurred at Red Cloud 2004-2006 and at Benkelman for "a few years" prior to and including 2010. Two were at Benkelman this year 2 Jul (LE). This year, a nesting pair was at Imperial from early Jul on (MB), and at least one pair was thought to be nesting in Scottsbluff, but this was unconfirmed despite copulation being observed, along with the presence of 7 birds (KD, photo). There were several other scattered reports suggesting an influx of potential breeders; 2 were in extreme s. Jefferson Co 4 Jun (WM), singles were at Curtis 12-14 Jun (RL, TJW, MW) and in Lincoln 2 Jun (SHS), and an imm. was at Hastings 2 Jun (PD).

**Bald Eagle:** Surveys by Nebraska Game and Parks located 69 active nests in the state for 2011; most were located along riparian corridors (JGJ).

**Northern Harrier:** Reports were routine for this low-density breeder in grassland or tall wetland vegetation.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Summer reports of this species tend to be misidentified male Cooper's Hawks, but the most likely Sharp-shinned age-class to appear in summer, though rare, is a one-year-old non-breeder; one such was in Custer Co 9 Jun (TH).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Reports were routine for this increasingly common statewide breeder.



- Red-shouldered Hawk:** Barely hanging on as a summer visitor in Nebraska, the two birds sighted were from a traditional summer area in the Bellevue area 18 Jun and 22 Jul (ARy).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** The only report was of one at Ponca SP 5 Jun (JJ), possibly an imm.; breeding in Nebraska is rare, the only known regular breeding locations are in the lower Missouri River Valley.
- Swainson's Hawk:** Easterly for the date was one in Dodge Co 2 Jun (D&JP).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Reports were routine for this common resident.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Reports were routine for this western grasslands resident.
- Golden Eagle:** A pair in each of Banner and Kimball Cos 1 Jun had chicks 20-30 and 10-20 days old respectively (JGJ).
- American Kestrel:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide breeder.
- Merlin:** No reports were received.
- Peregrine Falcon:** Breeding was successful at both long-established city nest-box locations, with 5 chicks in Omaha and one in Lincoln (JGJ). A "darkish" imm. near North Platte 23 Jun (TJW) was only the 5th record for Jun away from the Lincoln and Omaha areas.
- Prairie Falcon:** Reports were routine for this western breeder.
- Black Rail:** A report of one in Dodge Co 30 Jun (D&JP) was accompanied by good details; usually only fleeting glimpses are accorded, but a small black bird flying low when flushed by the observer while windrowing grass hay at this date is very likely this species.
- King Rail:** No reports were received.
- Virginia Rail:** Reports were routine for this fairly common breeder in northern marshes.
- Sora:** Reports were routine for this fairly common breeder in northern marshes.
- Common Gallinule:** The only report of this rare summer visitor was of one at Funk Lagoon WPA, Phelps Co, 20 Jul (KS).
- American Coot:** Reports were routine for this statewide marsh breeder.
- Sandhill Crane:** Reports were from known western breeding locations: the Kiowa WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, pair appeared to have 2 chicks (when observed in a fleeting glimpse) 21 Jun (KD), but none were visible with the ads. 11 Jul (KD). The Facus Springs, Morrill Co, pair had 2 chicks 3 Jun (LJH); 3 birds were seen there 22 Jul (RE).
- Black-bellied Plover:** None were reported; migrants often occur into early Jun.
- American Golden-Plover:** One in Clay Co 2 Jul (LE) was the earliest on record for fall and only the 20th Jul record for the species. Early migrants are ads., most of which migrate to the Atlantic Coast in fall.
- Snowy Plover:** The only report of this species was of one in ne. Knox Co 14 Jun (JGr); major Missouri River flooding in the area probably precluded any breeding in 2011 (see Piping Plover).
- Semipalmated Plover:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Piping Plover:** According to the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project's Central Loess Hills Newsletter: "Because of severe flooding along the Missouri river this year, much of the Piping Plover habitat that is typically available is under water. The birds that would use these areas are using alternative areas for nesting. In fact, at least five Piping Plovers that were banded along the Missouri River were found using the Loup River area this year." Nebraska Game and Parks surveys found only 330 Piping Plovers in Nebraska in 2011 (JGJ), down from 723 in 2006 (JGJ), when some 130 birds were at LM. The

Nebraska Game and Parks Survey does not include the Gavins Point reach of the Missouri River, but given the Legacy Project's indication that no birds were on this reach because of flooding, the estimate of 330 birds probably covers all birds in Nebraska, including the Missouri River. This indicates a severe decline from 2006, even allowing for LM birds, presumably an effect of major reduction in extent of breeding habitat. Breeding was successful at Linoma Beach, Sarpy Co, where up to 4 young were fledged by 2 Jul (CNK). A group of 16 migrants, including 5 juvs., was in Sarpy and Saunders Cos 22 Jul (JGJ).

**Killdeer:** An amazing 1000 were estimated present in flooded fields in Dakota Co 30 Jul (BFH), eliminating the previous high by 300.

**Mountain Plover:** An estimated population of 1500 birds in Kimball Co during the period 2005-2007 was provided by Nebraska Game and Parks (JGJ).

**Black-necked Stilt:** A surprise due both to the late date and easterly location was the discovery of two nesting pairs in a flooded field in Dakota Co; 2 birds were seen 21 Jul (BFH, JJ, PR), and the nests were found later the same day (BFH). By 28 Jul there were 9 birds in the area (RD) and incubation was ongoing at the end of the period, 30 Jul (EB). Breeding reports from the RWB continued with 1-2 at NLB from 9 Jun (MUs, CNK) and a fem. incubating there 21 Jun (JGJ); unfortunately heavy rain appeared to have flooded the nest by 25 Jun, when no ads. were present (JGJ). An amazing record fall count was the 43 at Funk Lagoon WPA 28 Jul (JD fide JGJ). An additional 24 were reported in the RWB. Among 14 at Kiowa WMA 11 Jul were 2 half-grown chicks (KD).

**American Avocet:** The two in Saunders Co 22 Jun (JGJ, MBr) were easterly and early; also easterly were two at Jack Sinn 28 Jul (LE).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** One in Cherry Co 28 Jun (JJ) was rather early; early dates are about 4 days earlier.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** One in the e. RWB 9 Jun (JGJ) was earliest on record by a day, although arrival begins in mid-Jun.

**Willet:** Breeding occurs sparingly to the east edge of the Sandhills; a territorial bird was in Holt Co 10 Jun (DH). Rare in the east in fall, singles were in Saunders Co 8 Jul (PH) and Dakota Co 30 Jul (EB, BFH, MB).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

**Upland Sandpiper:** The 29 in one Cherry Co field 28 Jun (JJ) seems a bit early for post-breeding flocking; perhaps there was an abundance of food in the area.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Significant though discouraging data were provided from graduate work in the w. Sandhills (CG fide JGJ); nest survival was around 30%, affected mostly by the presence of tall vegetation around the nest, and fledging success was only 4%, albeit based on a fairly small sample: one fledged from 28 chicks. These data probably factor into the early post-breeding departure of translocated bird "Bailey" the last two years. The overall population estimate for Nebraska was 23,909 (CG fide JGJ). Encouraging was the ad. with 3 young in Cherry Co 28 Jun (JJ), more young than usual for this species.

**Marbled Godwit:** One near Santee 9 Jun (JGr) was easterly, likely a failed breeder on the move.

**Sanderling:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Last spring migrant was in Cass Co 13 Jun (JGJ), while first in fall appeared in Saunders Co 9 Jul (CNK). Unusual was the group of 13 using a dry cornfield near Linoma 1 Jun (CNK).

**Western Sandpiper:** None were reported; this is an uncommon but often overlooked fall migrant.

**Least Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Along with Semipalmated Sandpiper, this is the latest spring migrant shorebird; last reported were 9 in Fillmore Co 17 Jun (LE).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** One in Saunders Co 9 Jul (CNK) was tied with the earliest regular fall arrival dates. Juvs. usually do not arrive until mid-Aug, but one was on the Sarpy-Saunders Cos boundary 22 Jul (JGJ).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Also a late spring migrant, one was rather late in Fillmore Co 17 Jun (LE). First fall arrivals included the rather early 6 in Saunders Co 8 Jul (PH). An amazing concentration in perfect habitat for this species, flooded grassy fields, was the 1000 in Dakota Co 30 Jul (BFH).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** None were reported; arrival is usually at the end of Jul or in early Aug.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Jul migrants are ads.; juvs. do not appear until mid-Aug. Reports were of 2 in Kearney Co 15 Jul (LE), 2 in Saunders Co 21 Jul (LE), and 1-4 in Dakota Co 21-30 Jul (JJ, RD, EB, BFH, MB).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Three at Clark WPA, Kearney Co, 13 Jul (KS) tied early regular arrival dates.

**Wilson's Snipe:** Late Jul reports from Jack Sinn (LE, TEL) may have been early migrants, but there have been fairly regular summer reports there in recent years and breeding probably occurs.

**American Woodcock:** None were reported; birds become inconspicuous when not displaying.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Reports indicative of summering in the RWB were 4 at Funk WPA, Phelps Co, 5 Jun (LR, RH), one at Massie Lagoon WPA, Clay Co, 27 Jun (CNK), and 3 at Clark WPA, Kearney Co, 13-14 Jul (KS, LE).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Reports were routine for this uncommon, mostly western fall migrant.

**Franklin's Gull:** Stragglers in summer are uncommon; singles were in Chase Co 11 Jun (MB) and Clay Co 17 Jun (PD), and 2 were at BOL 25 Jun (LE). First reported fall flock was the 124 at HCR 29 Jul (G&WH).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Summer birds are usually imms., and so 5 ads. at NLB 24 Jul (JGJ) were probably failed breeders on the move southward.

**California Gull:** None were reported; usually a few can be found at larger western reservoirs in mid-summer.

**Herring Gull:** None were reported. This species is rare in mid-summer, any such birds are imms.

**Least Tern:** As with Piping Plover, it appears some Least Terns moved from the flooded Gavins Point reach of the Missouri River to other Nebraska river systems. One banded near Ponca SP in 2007 was captured on the lower Platte River this summer (JGJ). However, the lower Platte River had high water problems also, although there was some late season nesting that likely will meet with some success (JGJ). The presence of a few ad. terns in se. Nebraska in Jun-Jul without breeding evidence suggests they were displaced by flooding

from their preferred areas. Linoma hosted 1-2 ads. through 9 Jul (CNK, JC, SS), 2 were at LPB 9 Jun (L&BP), and 1-2 ads. were at L Wanahoo, Saunders Co, 24 Jun-21 Jul (PH, CNK, RSt, LE).

**Caspian Tern:** The only report of this uncommon species was of one near Santee 14 Jun (JGr).

**Black Tern:** Reports were routine for this common spring and fall migrant and local breeder.

**Common Tern:** None were reported; migrants occur uncommonly into Jun and again starting in late Jul.

**Forster's Tern:** Reports were routine for this fairly common spring and fall migrant and locally common breeder.

**Rock Pigeon:** Reports were routine for this common resident.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports were routine for this common resident.

**White-winged Dove:** The usual handful of reports came to hand, though without breeding evidence; these bring the year's tally to 7 reports. Singles were at Hastings 8 Jun (BN fide PD), LO 13-18 Jun (TJW, MB), in Kearney 30-31 Jul (WF), and in Fairmont 31 Jul (JRi).

**Mourning Dove:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Uncommon in the west, one was at WSR 4-7 Jul (HKH), where over many years there the observer has noted perhaps 4 successful nestings.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** There were 5 reports, about as expected for this uncommon species: singles were in Madison Co 10 Jun (DH), Lincoln Co 28 Jun (TJW), York Co 9 Jul (LE), Polk Co 25 Jul (JJ), and Lancaster Co 31 Jul (GJ).

**Barn Owl:** The 2 reports were from the west, where numbers are highest. Two were in s. Scotts Bluff Co 22 Jun (AK) and one was at Wellfleet 1 Jul (LE).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Reports were routine for this common resident.

**Great Horned Owl:** Reports were routine for this common resident.

**Burrowing Owl:** The easterly breeders at Hultine WMA, Clay Co, had success; 2 were in the prairie dog town there 11 Jun (PD, BF), and 7, including 5 juvs., were seen 26 Jun (JC, SS). Five were still present 9 Jul (JGJ). Also easterly were 2 at Massie Lagoon WPA, Clay Co, 27 Jun (CNK).

**Barred Owl:** The 4 at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 15 Jun (JG, TEL) were at a westerly but regular location.

**Long-eared Owl:** None were reported; this is a rare summer resident.

**Short-eared Owl:** None were reported; this is a rare summer resident.

**Common Nighthawk:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Common Poorwill:** Reports were east to Thomas Co 28 Jun (JJ) and Lincoln Co 26 Jul (TJW), both regular locations.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Reports are increasing and becoming more widespread for this species, which has been considered rather scarce and local in its distribution. This summer reports outlined the nw. extent of the current range: singles were at Wiseman WMA, Cedar Co, 16 Jun (DH), Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 15 Jun (JG, TEL), and Elkhorn 12 Jun (DSt), and an amazing 8 were in the Little Blue River Valley near Fairbury 21 Jul (JG).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** Reports were all from the east as expected; best count was 13 at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 15 Jun (JG, TEL). Surprisingly far west were 2 heard near the fire tower at Nebraska National Forest, Halsey, 28 Jun (JJ). Westerly were 2 near Fairbury in the Little Blue River Valley 21 Jul

- (JG) and northerly were singles in Keya Paha Co 11 Jun (WF) and Niobrara SP 12 Jun (RE), and 2 near Wiseman WMA, Cedar Co, 16 Jun (DH).
- Chimney Swift:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident in the east, less common westward.
- White-throated Swift:** A count of 12 was made at Scotts Bluff NM 22 Jul (RE); high count is 35-40, also from that location.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Jun reports (LF, BFH) were from Missouri River Valley locations where breeding occurs, although a male in a Dixon Co farmyard 10 Jun (JJ) seemed out of place. First apparent migrant, albeit rather early, was in Fairmont 31 Jul (JRi).
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** The only report was easterly: one was seen and heard by an observer familiar with the species in Kearney 12 Jun (KG). This is an unusual date, as most migrants arrive in the Panhandle in late Jul, although there is a report from Bassett 20 Jun 2002.
- Rufous Hummingbird:** None were reported; usually migrants arrive in late Jul.
- Belted Kingfisher:** Reports were routine for this statewide resident.
- Lewis's Woodpecker:** The only report was from the same area a pair and juv. were reported in Aug 2010 (MB), between Sowbelly and Hat Creek Canyons, Sioux Co, 20 Jul (WM). This is a low-density summer visitor in the Pine Ridge.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Numbers were good in se. Nebraska; this species "far outnumbered" Northern Flickers there 26 Jun (CNK).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common, virtually statewide resident, absent only from the northwest.
- Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** This species is less common westward than in the east, and so the 6 at Smith Lake WMA, Sheridan Co, 5 Jul (TH, WM) were of interest.
- Northern Flicker:** Reports were routine for this statewide summer resident.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this uncommon inhabitant of mature riparian forest in the lower Missouri River Valley.
- Western Wood-Pewee:** There were 4 reports, each of one bird, from n.-cen. Nebraska 12-29 Jun (CNK, JJ, DH); this species occurs eastward in n. Nebraska to Valentine.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Reports were routine for this common eastern summer resident.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** One was heard at FF 4 Jun (JR, LE); this species moves through Nebraska mostly in late May.
- Acadian Flycatcher:** This species is establishing itself at FF; since 2008 there have been multiple reports each year, with singles this year 15 Jun (L&BP), 27 Jun (L&BP), 27 Jun (NR; different location), and 4 Jul (L&BP). It has been regular in occurrence at ICSP for some time; one was there 25 Jul (L&BP).
- Alder Flycatcher:** This species commonly migrates through e. Nebraska into early Jun; singles were in Saunders Co 1 Jun (CNK) and Dixon Co 3 Jun (JJ).
- Willow Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this uncommon statewide summer resident.
- Least Flycatcher:** First fall migrant reported was in w. Douglas Co 28 Jul (JGJ), about on time.
- Hammond's Flycatcher:** None were reported; this is a regular but rare fall migrant in the w. Panhandle.

- Dusky Flycatcher:** None were reported; this is a regular but rare fall migrant in the w. Panhandle.
- Cordilleran Flycatcher:** This species has been expanding eastward in the Pine Ridge for the last few years; what may be the easternmost nest yet discovered was at Metcalf WMA, Sheridan Co, 20 Jul (WM).
- Eastern Phoebe:** Reports were routine for this statewide summer resident.
- Say's Phoebe:** Easternmost was one at Niobrara SP, Knox Co, 12 Jun (RE); reports this far east in n. Nebraska are few.
- Great Crested Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Cassin's Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle wooded canyon-dweller.
- Western Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this statewide summer resident.
- Eastern Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this statewide summer resident.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Only one report of breeding was received; one was on a nest in Frontier Co 21-29 Jul (TJW, WF). Singles were in Kearney 8-18 Jun (TH, JJ) and in York Co 9 Jul (LE). Belated reports of successful breeding (fledged young) at Wapiti WMA, Lincoln Co, in 2009 and near there in 2008 were received (TJW).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** Reports were routine for this fairly common summer resident.
- Bell's Vireo:** The 8 at Memphis SRA, Saunders Co, 1 Jun (CNK) was a good count.
- Yellow-throated Vireo:** Westerly were one at the edge of the summer range in Antelope Co 12 Jun (DH) and 2 in Jefferson Co 16 Jun (CNK); there are essentially no other reports from the Big and Little Blue River Valleys.
- Plumbeous Vireo:** None were reported; this is a fairly common Pine Ridge summer resident.
- Cassin's Vireo:** The report of 2 birds at Bushnell Cem 1 Jun (JGJ, photos) comprises the first Nebraska spring record; there is a specimen and a few reports in May for the ne. Colorado plains.
- Warbling Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Red-eyed Vireo:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Pinyon Jay:** Somewhat reclusive in summer, the only report was of 2 harassing a Golden Eagle in Long Canyon, Banner Co, 1 Jun (JGJ).
- Blue Jay:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Black-billed Magpie:** Reports were generally gloomy; none were found on a trip through Cherry Co 4 Jun (MR) and, after finding only 3, those in Long Canyon, Banner Co, the observer noted it "seems like a big time rarity these days" (JGJ). Along the same lines, another observer noted that "it seems like more get reported from [the area around the Gibbon I-80 exit] than any other spot in the eastern two-thirds of the state." (RE)
- American Crow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Horned Lark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Purple Martin:** The major roost in Omaha began forming early this summer; 300 birds were there as early as 5 Jun (JR), surely failed breeders. Numbers increased to 600-800 by 14 Jul, 6500 by 21 Jul, and 15,000 by 29 Jul (JR). Formerly uncommon in the far sw., numbers appear to be increasing there; 25

were at Enders Res 1 Jul (LE), one was at Benkelman 2 Jul (LE), and 2 were at Grant 18 Jun (MB). Also uncommon in the cen. and w. Sandhills, 2 were at Burwell 11 Jun (LR, RH) and 4 were in Holt Co 28 Jun (JJ).

**Tree Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Violet-green Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Bank Swallow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

**Cliff Swallow:** First fall aggregation reported was the 300 in Otoe Co 17 Jul (LF, SQ).

**Barn Swallow:** A pair in Omaha fledged 3 young by 14 Jul and were starting a second brood (JR); second broods are fairly common in Nebraska. An early fall group was the 260 in Saunders Co 21 Jul (LE).

**Black-capped Chickadee:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

**Tufted Titmouse:** This common e. Nebraska species appears to have had a decline in numbers in the last few years that has been largely undetected until this year, when feeder-watchers noticed absences. In Bellevue, one feeder had regular visitors in 2010 through 17 Aug, after which date none were seen; the only visit this summer was a brief one 20 Jul (L&BP).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Reports from the s. and se. in Jun-Jul are unusual, and so the presence year-round of at least one bird in a Lincoln yard for the last 4 years (RE) is of interest; breeding in the area has not been detected, however. Three others were reported without long-term observation: singles in Hastings 2 Jun (PD), Omaha 27 Jun, seen for a few days (NR), and Wauneta 2 Jul (LE).

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** This species is a low density summer resident along the Platte River Valley west of Hall Co, and so a pair in Lincoln Co 28 Jun was considered a "breeding season highlight" (TJW).

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** There appears to be a small breeding population in the Nebraska National Forest - McKelvie division; 2 were behaving territorially at Steer Creek Campground 4 Jun (MR). A pair was in the same area in 2008 (DH).

**Brown Creeper:** No reports were received of this localized summer resident; breeding occurs in nw. Nebraska and in se. Washington Co and at FF, although the flooding this summer may have affected the eastern two very small populations.

**Rock Wren:** A pair with 3 young were in Lincoln Co 28 Jun (TJW), where the species is fairly common in cedar canyons; the eastern edge of this habitat in extreme w. Dawson Co also marks the edge of the Rock Wren breeding range in the Platte River Valley.

**Carolina Wren:** One at Curtis 14 Jun (TJW) was westerly. A Bellevue yard had had nesting Carolina Wrens for several years, but the hard winter of 2009-2010 apparently caused their demise; another pair was back and nest-building there 10 Jul, and 4 eggs were in the nest 23 Jul (ARy).

**House Wren:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**Sedge Wren:** Early to mid-Jun reports, especially in the north, are likely breeding birds; such reports were from Keya Paha, Garfield, and Brown Cos 15-24 Jun (DH). Fall returnees appear in mid-Jul, and may attempt to breed; first noted was one at SCP 14 Jul (KP), and they were "becoming common" at Jack Sinn by 30 Jul (TEL).

- Marsh Wren:** This species has recently been shown to follow a similar strategy to Sedge Wren. Late Jul returnees, where none were present in summer, may attempt to breed; 3 such birds were at the west end of Jack Sinn 30 Jul (TEL).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Sightings continue in areas that have been occupied only in the last few years: 2 were in Long Canyon, Banner Co, 1 Jun (JGJ), and singles were in Garden Co 11 Jun (AK) and Cedar Co 18 Jun (DH).
- Eastern Bluebird:** Nest boxes at ADF fledged 50 young birds, but broods in 3 boxes were killed by the heat and humidity in Jul (LF, SQ).
- Mountain Bluebird:** A group of 100 in s. Scotts Bluff Co 30 Jul was considered unusual, and likely due to large numbers of grasshoppers (AK).
- Townsend's Solitaire:** Unexpected was one at Metcalf WMA, Sheridan Co, 12 Jun (CNK). Migrants depart by late May; there is a handful of breeding records, none east of Dawes Co.
- Wood Thrush:** This species is essentially unrecorded in summer in the Republican River Valley; one at Red Cloud 27 Jun (CNK) appears to be the first such record. It has expanded westward in Kansas since 2001, but still only occurs in summer west to the longitude of Jefferson Co, Nebraska.
- American Robin:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Gray Catbird:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident, somewhat less common westward.
- Northern Mockingbird:** Fewer are seen in the n. half of the state, and breeding records are rare there; one was in Garden Co 11 Jun (AK), 2 were east of Antioch 4 Jul (TH, WM), and one was carrying food in Wayne Co 14 Jun (DH).
- Brown Thrasher:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- European Starling:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Cedar Waxwing:** Late spring flocks, most in late May, are thought to be long-distance migrants from s. of the United States; the 50 in Cedar Co 8 Jun (JJ) were rather late.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** The northeasterly population in Keya Paha Co continues, with a single found 0.5 miles e. of Springview 15 Jun (DH).
- McCown's Longspur:** Reports were routine for this fairly common w. Panhandle summer resident.
- Ovenbird:** Breeding is unproven in the Loup River drainage, but there are a few suggestive reports. This year, one was in Garfield Co 11 Jun (LR, RH).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** Reports were routine for this southeastern inhabitant of woodland streambeds.
- Blue-winged Warbler:** One in Lancaster Co 1 Jun (RSt) was rather late; this is a rare spring visitor.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** One in Lancaster Co 1 Jun (RSt) was rather late; breeding is unknown in recent years away from the Niobrara River Valley and Pine Ridge.
- Prothonotary Warbler:** None were reported, probably due to extensive flooding of its low-lying lower Missouri River Valley riparian habitat this summer.
- Orange-crowned Warbler:** Migrants linger later in the Panhandle in spring; singles were at Kimball City Park 1 Jun (JGJ) and Long Canyon, Banner Co 1 Jun (JGJ). There are only two later spring dates, 2 and 3 Jun.
- Kentucky Warbler:** This species continues to establish itself at FF, with 1-3 birds reported through 27 Jun (NR, m. ob.). One was at PRSP 14 Jun (JC, SS), another location where this species is becoming established.



- Common Yellowthroat:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- American Redstart:** Breeding occurs in the Missouri River Valley generally close to the river, with few reports westward; one was in Platte Co 27 Jun (JGJ). This species also breeds in the Niobrara River Valley and on the Pine Ridge.
- Cerulean Warbler:** This rare edge-of-range species made a showing in FF, with probably 2 different territorial males continuing from spring and reported through 29 Jun (JR, L&BP, LE, ARy, EA).
- Northern Parula:** Westerly was one in Imperial 10-11 Jun (MB); there are 16 reports for the Panhandle.
- Blackburnian Warbler:** One in Kimball City Park 1 Jun (JGJ) was 5th-latest on record and the 19th from the Panhandle.
- Yellow Warbler:** A nest with 4 eggs was at Jack Sinn 4 Jun (LE), right on time for eggs.
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** None were reported; this is a fairly common summer resident on the Pine Ridge.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** Reports were routine for this uncommon summer resident in the lower Missouri River Valley.
- Wilson's Warbler:** Last reported was in Bushnell Cem 1 Jun (JGJ), one of several early Jun records for the species.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** An easterly surprise was one at Bowwood WMA, Pawnee Co, 8 Jul (LF, SQ), one of very few reports from the east in recent years. Elsewhere, birds at the e. edge of the Republican River summer range were a healthy 5 in Harlan Co 25 Jun (G&WH) and one near Alma 1 Jun (G&WH).
- Spotted Towhee:** One near Red Cloud was easterly for the 27 Jun date (CNK); most in the eastern Republican River Valley are hybrids.
- Eastern Towhee:** One was reported as far west as Frontier Co 13 Jun (RL); occasional "pure-looking" birds pop up this far west in the Republican River Valley.
- Cassin's Sparrow:** This species usually occurs in low numbers in sw. Nebraska and northward at isolated locations in the Panhandle, but this year there was a major influx, mostly reflected in increased numbers rather than expansion beyond areas where the species has occurred in recent years. This influx was likely an effect of the major drought in the Southwest, which has been centered on the usual summer range of this species. Notable in Nebraska this summer were the 33 counted in 6-7 miles of road in Chase Co 11 Jun (MB), first time sightings on a BBS route in Keith Co 13 Jun (TJW), 6 on a BBS route in Banner Co (KD), and Lincoln Co sightings including as many as 8 birds in a sand-sage area s. of North Platte 23 Jun-1 Jul (TJW). The North Platte sighting was east of any recent known Nebraska locations. Reports from previously-known locations reflected increased numbers, including 3-4 in Garden Co, some 18 miles n. of Oshkosh 9 Jun (KS); a BBS route high of 6 at CLNWR 6 Jul (B&DW); and 2-3 in the LM area 13 Jun (TJW), 15 Jun (CNK), and 18 Jun (MB). Strangely, none were found 2 Jul near Benkelman (LE) in an area where the species is usually reliably found. The remaining reports were from generally unexpected locations: Sioux Co 4 Jul (TH, WM), 5 Jul (B&DW), and 13 Jul (2, HKH); Scotts Bluff Co 22 Jul (RE); and Morrill Co 3 Jun (LJH) and 22 Jun (AK).

- Chipping Sparrow:** Breeding numbers are lowest in the sw.; 2 were at Bartley 18 Jun (LR, RH). Fall movement begins in mid-Jul; interestingly, these early birds are likely post-breeders moving eastward from the Rocky Mountains to molt on the Great Plains (TF), whereas Nebraska breeders may not leave until later in Aug.
- Brewer's Sparrow:** The only reports of this w. Panhandle sage specialist were one nw. of Bushnell 18 Jun (AK) and 2 in n. Banner Co 22 Jun (KD).
- Field Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident, less common westward.
- Vesper Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Lark Sparrow:** This species is common westward in drier grasslands; grasshoppers were thought to have attracted large numbers to s. Scotts Bluff Co (AK), and 50+ were in Cherry Co 30 Jun (JJ).
- Lark Bunting:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident in the west, less common in the n.-central.
- Savannah Sparrow:** A breeding population was found in a creek drainage just sw. of Hay Springs 12 Jul (WM); Richard Rosche had found them there 19 years ago. On 12 Jul, there were 6 present, including one carrying food, and in the same general area 20 Jul there were 14 counted, including at least 4 fledged young birds (WM). This species is a rare and local summer resident in nw. Nebraska.
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** A BBS route in n. Banner Co had birds at 23 stops instead of the usual 1-2 stops; this was thought to be due to wetter conditions this summer in that area (KD). Good numbers were encountered in Cherry Co, with 40+ there 1 Jul (JJ).
- Henslow's Sparrow:** The 3 reports were from SCP, a regular location: a singing male was photographed 11 Jun (PD, BF), one was seen 14 Jul (KP), and 5 were found on 30 Jul (JR).
- Song Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this resident, slowly expanding its summer range southward in Nebraska.
- Swamp Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common central and northern Nebraska inhabitant of cattail marshes.
- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** Reports were routine for this fairly common summer resident of the Pine Ridge.
- Summer Tanager:** A pair at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, 2 Jun (MUs) may establish a new breeding location. Reports otherwise were from established breeding locations at FF (1-2; L&BP, JR, LE), PRSP (JC, SS), and ICSP (JC, SS, L&BP).
- Scarlet Tanager:** The 8 at Schramm SP 26 Jun (TJW) was a good count.
- Western Tanager:** Two at Metcalf WMA, Sheridan Co, 12 Jun (CNK) were at the east edge of the summer range in Nebraska.
- Northern Cardinal:** One at Bridgeport 3 Jun (LJH) continues the series of sightings along the North Platte River Valley at this westerly location; only the small population in Scotts Bluff Co is farther west.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Two in a Burwell yard 11 Jun along with a Black-headed Grosbeak (LR, RH, B&KG) were at the west edge of the summer range for phenotypically pure Rose-breasteds; the great majority of *Pheucticus* grosbeaks in this part of the state show features of both species.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** See Rose-breasted Grosbeak.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this fairly common summer resident.

- Lazuli Bunting:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Indigo Bunting:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Dickcissel:** The 82 in Seward Co 9 Jul (LE) and 69 in Merrick Co 24 Jul (LE) were excellent counts. Numbers were again high in the west, as has been the case the last few summers. One BBS route in se. Cherry Co had 35 on 12 Jun (CNK), a BBS route high of 12 was found near Crawford 5 Jul (B&DW), and there were a "good number" on a CLNWR BBS route 6 Jul (B&DW). Other unexpected Panhandle reports were of singles in Garden Co 11 Jun (AK), Kimball Co 18 Jun (AK), and Morrill Co 22 Jun (AK). There was a singing male in s. Scotts Bluff Co 3-30 Jul (AK), one at Smith L WMA, Sheridan Co, 25 Jun (AK), and a yard first at WSR 25 Jun (HKH).
- Bobolink:** A fem. was carrying food in Seward Co 2 Jul (JG), and a recently-fledged young bird was photographed in Valley Co 30 Jul (BNe fide MB). Numbers continue to be good in se. Nebraska, with 11 in Fillmore Co 17 Jun (LE), 7 in Otoe Co 22 Jun (LE), and 5 in Saunders Co 1 Jun (CNK).
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident over most of the state.
- Western Meadowlark:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Brewer's Blackbird:** A pair with a nest were in Smiley Canyon, Sioux Co, 12 Jun (CNK); other reports were from the s. edge of the breeding range: singles in Kimball Co 18 Jun (AK) and Scotts Bluff Co 22 Jun (AK).
- Common Grackle:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Four fledged young near a nest in Omaha 11 Jun (JR) appears to be only the 2nd record of breeding in Omaha; 2 nests were at Boystown L in 1977. This species has been present at Smith L WMA, Sheridan Co, since 2004; one was there 25 Jun 2011 (AK).
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Orchard Oriole:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Bullock's Oriole:** Reports east of the Panhandle are few; surprising were 3 such reports from the southwest: singles were in Frontier Co 13 Jun (RL), at Wellfleet 1 Jul (LE), and in Chase Co 2 Jul (LE).
- Baltimore Oriole:** One was northwesterly at Smith L WMA, Sheridan Co, 5 Jul (B&DW).
- House Finch:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.
- Red Crossbill:** The usual group was at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders; 12 were there 22 Jul (RE). One was easterly for the date in n.-cen. Cherry Co 12 Jun (CNK), while scattered groups were reported away from the breeding range: 8 were at the Gordon Cem 12 Jun (CNK), 4 in ne. Sioux Co 14 Jun (CNK), and 4 at Imperial 18 Jun (MB).

**Pine Siskin:** Last reported from the east were 2 at a Bellevue feeder 12 Jun (L&BP) and one at a Lancaster Co feeder 9 Jun (R&SW, photo). Such late out-of-range birds breed on occasion, but neither of these sightings suggested breeding.

**Lesser Goldfinch:** None were reported, surprising in view of the numerous Panhandle summer reports the last few summers.

**American Goldfinch:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

**House Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common statewide summer resident.

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## 2010 (22nd) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE

Compiled by Mark A. Brogie - NOU Records Committee Chairperson  
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The functions and methods of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (NOURC) are described in its bylaws (NOURC 2010). The committee's purpose is to provide a procedure for documenting unusual bird sightings and to establish a list of all documented birds for Nebraska. Accidental and casual species for which the NOURC seeks documentation (NOURC Review List) can be found at the NOU website [www.NOUBirds.org](http://www.NOUBirds.org).

All records mentioned here are available to interested persons at the NOU archives at the University of Nebraska State Museum (UNSM), Lincoln, NE. Interested parties should contact the current NOU Librarian, whose address can be found in the latest issue of The Nebraska Bird Review (NBR).

### State List:

The "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska" was first published in 1988 (NOU 1988) and has been updated three times (NOURC 1997, 2004, 2009a). The "Official List" has been appended twenty times: (Mollhoff 1989; Grenon 1990, 1991; Gubanyi 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Brogie 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Jorgensen 2001, 2002, 2003).

The American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds, Seventh Edition (1998) and its following supplements: (AOU: 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010), contain many taxonomic changes affecting North American birds.

The following summarizes all 2010 revisions by the AOU in regards to changes in scientific names and changes in assignments to family and order of species to the most recent published "The Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2009" (NOURC 2009a, [www.NOUBirds.org](http://www.NOUBirds.org)).

This report includes all accounts submitted during the 2010 calendar year covering 73 records with accession numbers 1319-1391.

#### **Criteria for Accepted Records:**

In order for a record to be accepted, a minimum of six votes in favor are required with no more than one dissenting vote (NOURC 2010). Records in the following categories are classified as accepted:

- I-S - a diagnostic, labeled specimen exists
- I-P - diagnostic, labeled photographic evidence exists
- I-R - a diagnostic, labeled recording exists
- II - three or more independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist
- III - one or two independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist

Each account of an accepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and initial(s) of observers.

This report summarizes all records accessioned in 2010, discusses any new additions to the state list, and reports any changes in firmness of data of Nebraska birds. Additionally, the list reflects changes in frequency of occurrence, as determined by the NOU Records Committee, which reviewed records of bird occurrences in Nebraska for 2001-2010. Frequency of occurrence is indicated by the following terms (NOURC 2009a):

- Regular - acceptably reported in 9-10 of the past 10 years.
- Casual - acceptably reported in 4-7 of the past 10 years.
- Accidental - acceptably reported in 0-2 of the past 10 years.
- Extirpated - not acceptably reported in the past 50 years.
- Extinct - no longer found alive anywhere in the world.

The frequency of occurrence for any species that is acceptably reported in 3 or 8 of the last 10 years is discussed by the committee and placed in a category felt most appropriate by the committee.

With this report, the following changes are made to "The Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2009" (NOURC 2009a).

#### **2010 Additions to State List:**

There was one new species added in 2010.

1. Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*), Accidental, Class I-P.  
Insert after Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*).

With this addition, the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska” now stands at 455 species.

**Changes Involving Nebraska Species Due to Taxonomic Revisions and/or Changes in English or Scientific Names Based on AOU 2010**

The following changes are made in the taxonomic order in the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska”.

1. The two forms of Black Scoter are now regarded as full species: Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) in the Old World and Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*) in the New World, the latter being the species found in Nebraska.

2. The family Ardeidae (Bitterns, Herons, and Egrets) and the family Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills) are removed from the order Ciconiiformes and are placed in the order Pelecaniformes, taxonomically after the family Pelecanidae (Pelicans).

3. The families Fregatidae (Frigatebirds), Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants), and Anhingidae (Darters) are removed from the order Pelecaniformes and placed in the new order Suliformes, which follows the order Ciconiiformes in the taxonomic sequence.

4. A new family Pandionidae (Osprey) is created and is placed after the family Cathartidae (New World Vultures) in the new order Accipitriformes.

5. Whip-poor-will has been split into the Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*), which breeds in eastern North America, and the Mexican Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus arizonae*) of the montane pine forests of the southwestern United States, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Eastern Whip-poor-will is a common regular breeder and spring and fall migrant east, rare central (Sharpe et al. 2001). Unconfirmed reports from Colorado and Montana may be the Mexican Whip-poor-will. To date Nebraska has no accepted records for Mexican Whip-poor-will.

6. Although involving no change to the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2009” (NOURC 2009a), Winter Wren in North America has been split into two species; the eastern form retains the name Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), while the western form is now called Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*). The two species are best separated by vocalization, but they do differ visually as well (Toews and Irwin 2008). To date Nebraska has no accepted records for Pacific Wren, while Winter Wren status is described as “Uncommon regular spring and fall migrant east, rare casual central and west. Rare regular winter visitor east, rare casual central and west.” (Sharpe et al. 2001)

7. A new family Polioptilidae (Gnatcatchers) is created and placed after the family Troglodytidae (Wrens).

8. Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) becomes *Vermivora cyanoptera*.

9. Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) becomes *Oreothlypis peregrina*.
10. Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) becomes *Oreothlypis celata*.
11. Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) becomes *Oreothlypis ruficapilla*.
12. Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*) becomes *Oreothlypis virginiae*.
13. Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) becomes *Parkesia noveboracensis*.
14. Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) becomes *Parkesia motacilla*.
15. Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*) becomes *Peucaea cassinii*.
16. McCown's Longspur (*Calcarius mccownii*) becomes *Rhynchophanes mccownii*.
17. Longspurs and Snow Buntings are moved from the family Emberizidae (Emberizids) to the family Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings), and will precede the family Parulidae (Wood-Warblers) with the following sequence:
  - Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*)
  - Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)
  - Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)
  - McCown's Longspur (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*)
  - Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*).

#### 2010 Changes in Frequency of Occurrence:

1. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) changed from Accidental to Casual.
2. Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) changed from Casual to Accidental.
3. Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) changed from Casual to Accidental.
4. Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) changed from Casual to Accidental.
5. Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) changed from Casual to Accidental.
6. Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) changed from Casual to Accidental.
7. Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax oberholseri*) changed from Casual to Accidental.

**2010 Changes in Firmness of Data:**

1. Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) changed from Class I-P to Class I-S. A male bird salvaged (WJM) in Ashland, Saunders Co., 06 May 2010, is now a specimen at the University of Nebraska State Museum (# ZM-18422).
2. Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*) changed from Class III to Class I-P.

**Pre-2010 Accepted Records:**Common Crane (*Grus grus*)

1. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P, JF) northwest of North Platte, Lincoln Co., 12 March 2009. Accession # 1322.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

1. A written report (Class III, SJD) was received of a light morph adult bird observed at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., 19 September 2001. Accession # 1332.
2. A photograph (Class I-P, SJD) was received of an adult Long-tailed Jaeger in alternate plumage observed at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., 09 June 2008. Accession # 1333.

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

1. A series of photographs (Class I-P, BM) were received of a single bird in Scotts Bluff Co., 27 January 2009. Accession # 1371.

**2010 Accepted Records:**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

1. A pair of birds was photographed (Class I-P, CC) at Pioneers Park Nature Center, Lancaster Co., 14 May 2010. Accession # 1345.
2. A single adult bird was photographed (Class I-P, BD) on a small pond in Omaha (144th & F), Douglas County, 04 September, 2010. The bird was not banded and had intact hind toes. Accession # 1369.

Neotropical Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

1. A single bird was observed and described (Class III, JR) at Branched Oak Lake, Lancaster Co., 15 May 2010. Accession # 1342.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

1. A single adult bird was photographed (Class I-P; CG) north of Mitchell, Scotts Bluff Co., 02 May 2010. Accession # 1327.
2. An adult bird was photographed (Class I-P, JJ) on a private wetland in Clay Co., 30 April, 2010. Accession # 1328.
3. An adult bird was photographed (Class I-P, JJ) at Straight Water WMA, Seward Co., 03 May 2010. Accession # 1329.
4. A single bird was photographed (Class I-P, JJ) at North Lake Basin WMA, Seward Co., 03 May 2010. Accession # 1330.



5. Photographs (Class I-P, CG) were received of an adult bird in northern Garden Co., 29 April 2010. Accession # 1334.
6. A single adult bird was photographed (Class I-P; CG) at the Rd. 181 intersection with Hwy. 2, Sheridan Co., 06 May 2010. Accession # 1335.
7. A written description (Class III, WF) was received of an adult bird in western Fillmore Co., 30 June 2010. Accession # 1350.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)

1. A single bird was observed (Class III, CK) southeast of the NRD offices at Wehrspann Lake, Sarpy Co., 04 October, 2010. Accession # 1363.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

1. An adult bird was photographed (Class I-P, KS) at LaPlatte wetlands, Sarpy Co., 24 July 2010. Accession # 1352.

Common Crane (*Grus grus*)

1. A single adult bird was photographed (Class I-P, VC) near Muskrat Run WMA, Lincoln Co., 18 March 2010. Accession # 1323.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

1. A single juvenile bird was observed (Class III, JJ) at Cottonwood WPA, Phelps Co., 06 October 2010. Accession # 1391.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

1. A first winter bird was photographed (Class I-P, JJ) at Branched Oak Lake near Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 30 November 2010. Accession # 1383.
2. A first winter bird was photographed (Class I-P, MN) below Gavins Pt. Dam, Cedar Co., 08 December 2010. Accession # 1388.

Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*)

1. A "very pink" adult in non-breeding plumage was videotaped (Class I-P, MAB) on Lake Yankton, Cedar Co., 26 November 2010. Accession # 1379.
2. Additional photographs (Class I-P, GS) of the above bird were submitted. Accession # 1380.
3. Additional photographs (Class I-P, KJ) of the above bird taken on 27 November were submitted. Accession # 1381.
4. Another series of photographs (Class I-P, DB) of the above bird taken on 28 November 2010 was submitted. Accession # 1382.
5. An additional series of photographs (Class I-P, TS) of the above bird taken 01 December 2010 was submitted. Accession # 1384.
6. A single photograph (Class I-P, RD) of the above bird taken 06 December 2010 was submitted. Accession # 1385.
7. Additional frames of a videotape (Class I-P, MS) of the above bird taken on 05-06 November 2010 were submitted. Accession # 1386.
8. An adult in non-breeding plumage was video-taped (Class I-P, JJ) at Branched Oak Lake near Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 03 December 2010. Accession # 1387.

The above represent the 2nd and 3rd NOURC accepted occurrences for this species in Nebraska.

*Long-tailed Jaeger (Stercorarius longicaudus)*

1. A single intermediate-morph juvenile was observed and photographed (Class I-P, PS) at Winter's Creek Lake, Scotts Bluff Co., 18-19 September 2010. Accession # 1358.
2. A written description (Class III, WRS) was received by the second observer of the above bird. Accession # 1359.

*White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus)*

1. A written description (Class III, CK) was received of a singing adult male in northwestern Johnson Co., 02 May 2010. Accession # 1346.
2. A westward adult bird was observed (Class III, MAB) at Imperial, Chase Co., 03 October 2010. Accession # 1362.

*Brown-headed Nuthatch (Sitta pusilla)*

1. A written description (Class III, LE) was received by the initial observer of a single bird observed at Holmes Lake in Lincoln, 08 November 2010. Accession # 1378.
2. Photographs (Class I-P, JJ) of the above bird observed on 11 November 2010 were received. Accession # 1373.
3. Additional photographs (Class I-P, PR) of the above bird observed on 12 November 2010 were received. Accession # 1374.
4. A videotape (Class I-P, MAB) with vocalizations of the above bird observed on 13 November 2010 was received. Accession # 1375.
5. Additional photographs (Class I-P, PS) of the above bird observed on 13 November 2010 were received. Accession # 1376.
6. An additional photograph (Class I-P, JMu) of the above bird observed on 15 November 2010 was received. Accession # 1377.
7. Additional photographs (Class I-P, AB) of the above bird observed on 24 December 2010 were received. Accession # 1389.

The above represent the first NOURC accepted occurrence for this species in Nebraska.

*Varied Thrush (Ixoreus naevius)*

1. A photograph (Class I-P, PR) was received of an adult male near Blair, Washington Co., 01 January 2010. Accession # 1319.
2. An additional photograph (Class I-P, PS) of the above bird observed on 05 January 2010 was received. Accession # 1320.

*Smith's Longspur (Calcarius pictus)*

1. A lone bird was photographed (Class I-P, GW) at Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co., 01 April 2010. Accession # 1324.

*Hermit Warbler (Dendroica occidentalis)*

1. An adult female was photographed (Class I-P, CG) at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 21 May 2010. Accession # 1340.

This represents the 2nd NOURC accepted record and the 1st photographic record for this species in Nebraska.

*Pine Warbler (Dendroica pinus)*

1. A detailed description (Class III, JM) was received of an adult male observed in Pioneers Park in Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 13 April 2010. Accession # 1336.
2. A photograph (Class I-P, DL) of the above bird (taken later on the same day) was received. Accession # 1326.

*Baird's Sparrow (Ammodramus bairdii)*

1. A written description (Class III, TH) was received of three singing males observed along Sugar Loaf Road in the Oglala National Grasslands, Sioux Co., 14-16 May 2010. Accession # 1355.
2. A singing male from the above location was photographed (Class I-P, PS) on 16 May 2010. Accession # 1338.

*Cassin's Finch (Carpodacus cassinii)*

1. A hatch-year bird was netted, banded, and photographed (Class I-P, CW) at Wildcat Hills SRA, Scotts Bluff Co., 13 September 2010. Accession # 1356.

*Lesser Goldfinch (Spinus psaltria)*

1. A "black-backed" male was photographed (Class I-P, CG) at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 27 May 2010. Accession # 1343.
2. One was netted, banded, and photographed (Class I-P, CW) at Wildcat Hills SRA, Scotts Bluff Co., 13 September 2010. Accession # 1364

*Evening Grosbeak (Coccothraustes vespertinus)*

1. Two birds (of a group of 28) were photographed (Class I-P, TH) at Camp Norwesca, Dawes Co., 15 May 2010. Accession # 1353.
2. Photographs (Class I-P, JMu) were received of at least one male and one female (from above group) on the same date. Accession # 1354.
3. An adult male was photographed (Class I-P, VC) north of North Platte, Lincoln Co., 04 November 2010. Accession # 1370.

**Unaccepted Records:**

Records in the following categories are considered unaccepted (NOURC 2010):

- IV - probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.
- V - a record with insufficient evidence to support the identification claimed.
- VI - a probable released or escaped bird or mistaken identification.

Each account of an unaccepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and reasons for the committee's non-acceptance of the record.

**Unaccepted Records (Received in 2010):***Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Dendrocygna autumnalis)*

1. An adult bird was videotaped flying over Harvard WPA, Clay Co., 06 June 2010. Accession # 1347.

2. Additional photographs of the Harvard WPA bird, from the same date, were also received. Accession # 1348.

Independent identification by two qualified observers leave little doubt as to the authenticity of the above records; however, several committee members felt the photographic evidence presented (in both cases) was lacking in quality for stand-alone identification, and both records were classified as a Class IV. Neither record was accompanied with a written description.

**Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)**

1. A written report was received of a group of three males and two females in a large backwater of the Calamus River in Loup Co.; 30 March 2010. Accession # 1325. The brevity of the sighting, lack of certain details, especially in describing the females, number of birds, and provenance were all factors listed for non-approval by some committee members.

**Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)**

1. A photograph of a single bird among several Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) at Branched Oak Lake, Lancaster Co., 15 May 2010 was considered lacking in diagnostic detail for approval. Accession # 1337.

**Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)**

1. A description of an adult in winter plumage observed at Branched Oak Lake near Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 11 November 2010 was considered lacking in diagnostic detail for approval by several committee members. Accession # 1372.

**Non-Review List Records Submitted in 2010: Filed Without Votes**

The following records are of species not on the NOURC Review List. They have been accessioned due to other circumstances (out-of range, non-normal date of occurrence, unusual nesting record, etc.) and filed without NOURC votes.

**Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)**

1. A photograph (TJW) of an adult male, south of North Platte, Lincoln Co., 21 January 2010 was filed. Accession # 1321.

**Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)**

1. A photograph (DL) of a juvenile bird with "a large open wound on the wing - suspected gunshot" near Valley, Douglas Co., 17 October 2010 was filed. Accession # 1365.

**Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)**

1. A written description (JD) of an observation of an adult pair of cranes with one juvenile, indicating "potential breeding success" at County Line WPA, Fillmore Co., 31 August 2010 was received. Accession # 1357.

**Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*)**

1. A written description was received (GC) of two adult birds on the Niobrara River, southwest of Niobrara, Knox Co., 23 October, 2010. Accession # 1366.

2. Possibly the same birds as above, two adults were photographed (MAB) at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers, Knox Co., 29 October, 2010. Accession # 1367.
3. Photographs (SS) were received of three birds at Hedgefield WMA, southwest of Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 27 October, 2010. Accession # 1368.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

1. A written description (LH) of an adult bird observed near the Gering sewage lagoons during the Scottsbluff Christmas Bird Count, Scotts Bluff Co., 18 December 2010 was filed. Accession # 1390.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

1. A photograph (KD) of an adult bird at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co., 24 September 2010 was filed. Accession # 1360.
- The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*)

1. A photograph (JS) of a juvenile bird found just west of Chadron State Park, Dawes Co., 05 July 2010 was filed. Accession # 1351.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

1. Representing one of the few Panhandle records, a photograph (CG) of an adult male at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 18 May 2010 was filed. Accession # 1339.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

1. A written description (MAB) of a westward adult female observed below Enders Reservoir, Chase Co., 02-03 October 2010 was filed. Accession # 1361.

Northern Parula (*Dendroica americana*)

1. A photograph (CG) of a westward bird at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 27 May 2010 was filed. Accession # 1344.

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)

1. A photograph (CG) of a single bird found summering north of Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 19 June 2010 was filed. Accession # 1349.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

1. Photographs (LK) of an extralimital adult male observed near Loup City, Sherman Co., 03 May 2010 were filed. Accession # 1331.
2. Representing one of the few Panhandle records, a photograph (CG) of an adult female at Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 18 May 2010 was filed. Accession # 1341.

**Corrections to the "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2009."**  
(NOURC 2009a)

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) should be listed as Casual.  
Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) should be listed as Regular.

**Correction to the "2009 (21st) Report of the NOU Records Committee." (Brogie 2009b)**

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

The additional photographs (Class I-P, PD) of the Lincoln County bird were taken on 29 June, 2009, instead of the stated July date. Accession # 1292.

**Acknowledgments:**

The NOU Records Committee would like to thank the following observers who contributed records included in this report: Doug Backland (DB), Aaron Brees (AB), Mark A. Brogie (MAB), Charles Chamberlin (CC), Virginia Clark (VC), George Cunningham (GC), Bruce Dean (BD), Roger Dietrich (RD), Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Jeff Drahota (JD), Paul Dunbar (PD), Keith Dyche (KD), Larry Einemann (LE), Jay Favinger (JF), William Flack (WF), Cory Gregory (CG), Tim Hadja (TH), Luke Hamilton (LH), Kent Jensen (KJ), Joel Jorgensen (JJ), Lanny Kizer (LK), Clem Klaphake (CK), Jerry Lazarczyk (JL), Daniel Leger (DL), Denise Lewis (DeL), Brad McKinney (BM), Wayne J. Mollhoff (WJM), Jim Mountjoy (JM), Jerry Mulliken (JMu), Mary Nemecek (MN), Justin Rink (JR), Paul Roisen (PR), Kathy Schwery (KS), John Sidle (JS), W. Ross Silcock (WRS), Gary Small (GS), Steve Smith (SS), Terry Sohl (TS), Malcomb Swan (MS), Phil Swanson (PS), Edward Tickle (ET), T.J. Walker (TJW), Gordon Warrick (GW), and Colin Woolley (CW).

**2010 NOU Records Committee Members:**

Mark A. Brogie (chair), Paul Dunbar, Joe Gubanyi, Bill Huser, Joel Jorgensen, Loren Padelford, W. Ross Silcock, and T.J. Walker.

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## 2011 BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) STATEWIDE NESTING SURVEY

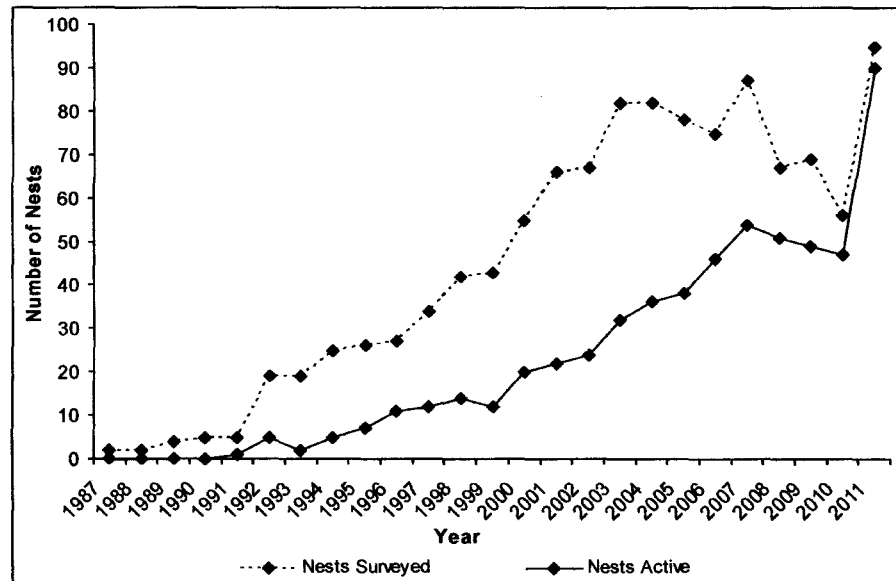
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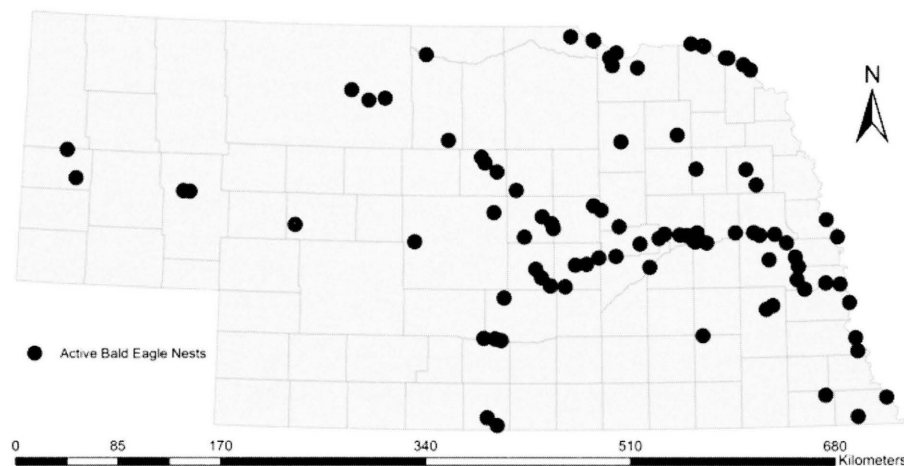
The Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was extirpated as a breeding species in Nebraska for most of the 20th Century. Nebraska's first active, successful, modern Bald Eagle nest was near Valley, Douglas County, in 1991 (Farrar 1991). Jorgensen et al. (2010) summarized modern Bald Eagle nesting records in Nebraska from 1950 to 2009. Jorgensen et al. (2010) noted the highest annual count of active nests was 54 in 2007. In this note we summarize the 2011 Bald Eagle nesting records in Nebraska.



**Figure 1.** Number of Bald Eagle nests surveyed (dashed line) and number of active nests (solid line) in Nebraska from 1987-2011.

## METHODS

Bald Eagle nesting data was compiled from formal surveys conducted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and trained volunteers. These data were supplemented with information from the public. Jorgensen et al. (2010) described additional survey methods, and the 2011 survey followed those methods, with the following exceptions. We increased survey effort in 2011 in much of the state compared to previous years. Effort was increased in the Loup River system in 2011 by systematically driving roads that followed this river in March and April. We used this approach on the entire Loup River, the Middle Loup River upstream to Loup City, Sherman County, and the North Loup River upstream to Taylor, Loup County. Comprehensive survey efforts were limited on the Missouri River due to flooding; however, monitoring will resume in the future. Productivity was not determined due to the increasing number of Bald Eagles and limited personnel resources.



**Figure 2.** Spatial distribution of active Bald Eagle nests in Nebraska in 2011.

## RESULTS

In 2011, we surveyed ninety-five Bald Eagle nests, which are distinctive because of their large size. A record ninety nests were determined to be active (Figure 1). Of the ninety active nests, thirty-eight nests were documented for the first time during the 2011 breeding season. Active nests were distributed across the state with highest concentrations in eastern Nebraska along the Lower Platte and Loup Rivers (Figure 2). In 2011, active Bald Eagle nests were recorded in 44% of all Nebraska counties

(n=93). Almost 50% of the active nests (n=44) were east of Lincoln and Cherry Counties along the Platte and Loup River systems.

#### DISCUSSION

The number of nesting Bald Eagles in Nebraska continues to increase, and a record (90) number of active nests was observed in 2011. The previous record was 54 active nests in 2007. The size of the increase in 2011 was believed to be due in part to increased survey effort. Indeed, systematic nest surveys along the Loup River system yielded eight nests that were previously unknown. The number of nests found per year over the 20-year period increased by an average of 4.5 nests per year. Our results from 2011 suggest that the number of eagle nests in Nebraska may not have peaked. The question is at what point will the increase begin to slow or level off as nesting habitat is increasingly occupied. Additional survey work will yield the answer as long as resources are available to conduct such efforts.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Major funding for this project was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Program, Wildlife Surveys and Inventories, Project W-15-R, State Wildlife Grant Program, the Nebraska Wildlife Conservation Fund, and the National Park Service - Missouri National Recreational River. We thank the various entities that provided support to individuals on staff to conduct individual surveys. We also thank the following individuals who conducted surveys or provided information during the 2011 breeding season: Ben Rutten, Ben Wheeler, Brad Goracke, Christine Roberts, Curtis Maschman, Dan Roberts, Dave Baasch, Dave Hansen, Dina Barta, Gail Ferris, James Brown, Jeanine Lackey, Jim Ducey, Joel Jorgensen, John P. McCarty, Josh Wilhelm, Kathy DeLara, Kent Skaggs, Kevin Holliday, Lucas Negus, Mark Brogie, Mark Lindvall, Mary Brown, Melvin Nenneman, Nic Fryda, Pat Molini, Russ Hamer, Russ Mort, Scott Luedtke, Shona Bohbrin, Stan Ferris, Steve Van Riper, T.J. Walker, Tom Tolen.

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