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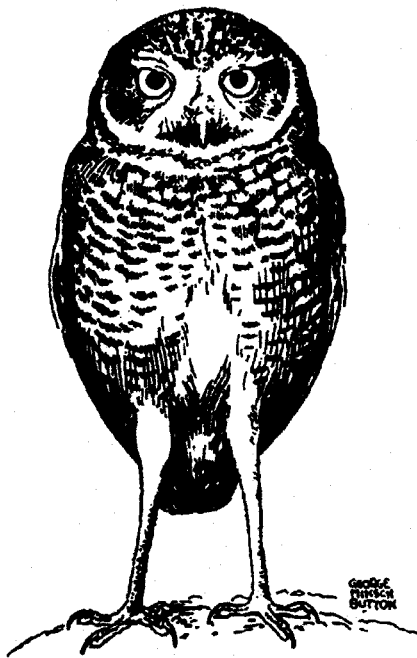
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FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Overall, this fall migration was routine (waterfowl, warblers, sparrows), but there were a few unexpected highlights. The flooded Missouri River Valley provided habitat that led to some amazing fall counts: 3000 pelicans, 5700 coots, 338 American Golden-Plovers, and 1200 Pectoral Sandpipers. The 10,000 cormorants at Harlan County Reservoir may not have been affected by the Missouri River flooding, and were a record count also. While we're talking numbers, the martin roost in Omaha topped out at 50,000-55,000, and seasonal totals of 4 Red-necked Grebes and 15 Philadelphia Vireos for the state, 34 Mississippi Kites over Ogallala (it's often hard to find one), and 45 Lesser Goldfinches banded at Wildcat Hills Nature Center were interesting tallies.

Surprising many was the rare occurrence of 4000-5000 Sandhill Cranes lingering late into fall; the reports of 5 Snowy Owls before the end of the period also was a hint of what might follow. Also surprising was the low number of Black-capped Chickadees reported in south-central Nebraska; the NOU meeting held at Audubon Rowe Sanctuary reported chickadees in only one of the 12 counties covered by participants.

And, of course, there is always the weird. Two species of vagrant psittacids were reported, neither a threat to our native birds: a Rosy-faced Lovebird and a Budgerigar. One reporter found a Burrowing Owl on the grounds of an Omaha Lowes store (strange enough), but a subsequent reporter, looking for the owl, turned up a Smith's Longspur in the same place. Maybe I've been trying too hard for the Smith's! And finally, a Rufous Hummingbird appeared in a Lincoln yard in mid-Sep and stayed there all fall until it was captured on 10 Nov and sent to hummingbird heaven at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

ABBREVIATIONS

ad: adult
ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co
CBL: Capitol Beach L, Lincoln
Cem: Cemetery
Co(s): County(ies)
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co
fem: female
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Knox/Cedar Cos
HCR: Harlan Co Res SRA, Harlan Co
HL: Holmes L, Lincoln
imm: immature

juv: juvenile

L: Lake

LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co

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

m. ob.: many observers

NC: Nature Center

NM: National Monument

NWR: National Wildlife Refuge

PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co

Res: Reservoir

PSP: Ponca SP, Dixon Co

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

SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co

SHP: State Historical Park

SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)

SP: State Park

SRA: State Recreation Area

WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co

WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area

WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln

WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area

WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co

GAZETTEER

Chadron SP: Dawes Co

Jack Sinn: Jack Sinn Memorial WMA, Lancaster and Saunders Cos

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

OBSERVERS

AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering

ARy: Al Reyer, Bellevue

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

BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City

BG: Bob Gerten, Burwell

BW: Bruce Wendorff, Lincoln

CH: Carr Heaney, Omaha

CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue

CW: Colin Woolley, Portland, OR

D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames

DL: Dan Leger, Lincoln

DR: Dean Rosenthal, Fairbury

DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn

EB: Elaine Bachel, Lincoln

G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma

GJ: Gail Johnson, Warminster, PA
GN: Greg Neuman, Seward
GR: Gary Roberts, Fremont
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell
JC: John Carlini, Lincoln
JED: James E. Ducey, Lincoln
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield
JLL: Jeanine L. Lackey, Doniphan
JM: Jeanne Miller, Bennington
JO: Jim Ochsner, Ogallala
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha
JRi: Juanita Rice, Fairmont
JS: John Schukman, Leavenworth, KS
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha
KC: Kenneth Carnes, Lincoln
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell
KS: Kent Skaggs, Minden
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue
LD: Linda Deeds, North Platte
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln
LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City
LJH: Luke Hamilton, Lewellen
LR: Lanny Randolph, Kearney
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton
MC: Mary Clausen, Bellevue
MCv: Matthew Cvetas, Evanston, IL
MH: Michael Hague, Chadron and GA
MUs: Moni Usasz, Lincoln
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings
PS: Phil Swanson, Papillion
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RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln
RH: Robin Harding, Minden
RL: Roger Lawson, Curtis
RM: Robert Manning, Omaha
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SS: Shari Schwartz, Lincoln
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
WF: William Flack, Kearney
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: One that summered in Douglas Co was still present 18 Sep (JM); there are very few such reports from the east. Best count was an excellent 1000 in Lancaster Co 26 Oct (WF).

Snow Goose: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Ross's Goose: Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.

Cackling Goose: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Canada Goose: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Trumpeter Swan: One of the Ravenna breeding pair (see summer report) was still present 18 Sep (LR, RH).

Tundra Swan: None were reported; this is a rare fall migrant, perhaps now overlooked, given the more numerous migratory Trumpeters.

Wood Duck: An impressive count of 48 at Jack Sinn 4 Aug (LE) was probably a group of adults and hatch-year birds; flocks begin to form in Aug. A similar but westerly group was the 22 at Broken Bow SL 3 Sep (TH).

Gadwall: The 200+ in Lincoln Co 14 Sep (JJ) were early for a large number; migrants usually appear in mid-Sep in smaller numbers.

American Wigeon: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

American Black Duck: None were reported of this rare but regular fall migrant.

Mallard: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Blue-winged Teal: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Cinnamon Teal: None were reported; this is a rare fall migrant in the west.

Northern Shoveler: The 1500 at BOL 8 Nov (JGJ) was a good tally; fall highs are in the 1700-2000 range.

Northern Pintail: One in Saunders Co 4 Sep (LE) was a bit early; migrants appear in mid-Sep most years.

Green-winged Teal: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Canvasback: One in Clay Co 24 Sep (CNK) was rather early; migrants usually arrive in Oct.

Redhead: One in Sherman Co 24 Sep (LE) was a bit early; migration usually begins in late Sep.

Ring-necked Duck: Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

Greater Scaup: The only reports were of 2-3 at Oak L, Lincoln, 6-8 Nov (JGJ, LE). This is a rare fall migrant, with far fewer reported in fall than spring.

Lesser Scaup: The 2000 at BOL 8 Nov (JGJ) was 2nd-highest fall count on record; high is 3450.

Surf Scoter: This was a good fall for this species, with at least 9 reported, all fem/imm types: 2 were in Pierce Co 20 Oct (JJ), 2-3 were at BOL 30 Oct (JGJ, GR), another was near Niobrara 2 Nov (MB), singles (same bird?) were at CBL 11-29 Nov (LE, JGJ), and 2 were at GPD 25 Nov (MB).

White-winged Scoter: At least 5 were reported, including an ad male at GPD 26 Nov (BFH); the others were fem/imm types: 1-2 were at CBL 11-28 Nov (JGJ, DL, LE, RSt, EB), one at BOL 16 Nov (JGJ), and one at HL 23-30 Nov (DL, MUs, LE, JGJ, RE).

Black Scoter: None were reported, surprising in that this species has been numerous the last few falls.

Long-tailed Duck: The only reports were of one at BOL 16 Nov (JGJ) and 6 at GPD 25 Nov (MB); the latter ties the 2nd-highest count on record. High is 11.

Bufflehead: Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

Common Goldeneye: Two in Morrill Co 24 Oct (LJH) were rather early; earliest dates are around 20 Oct.

Barrow's Goldeneye: None were reported; this is a rare but regular winter visitor in the west.

Hooded Merganser: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Common Merganser: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Red-breasted Merganser: One at BOL 29 Oct (LE) was rather early, and a good count was the 28 at BOL 20 Nov (JGJ). High fall count is 137.

Ruddy Duck: The 1186 in Lancaster Co 29 Oct (LE) was an excellent count. High is 1500. A fem in Hall Co 12 Aug (JLL) was early at a non-breeding location.

Northern Bobwhite: Reports were routine for this virtually statewide resident.

Gray Partridge: None were reported; this species is currently at a low ebb in numbers.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide resident.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Reports were routine for this fairly common northern and western resident.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Best count was an impressive 104 in Custer and Lincoln Cos 27 Nov (TJW). Seven in Merrick Co 16 Oct (LR, RH) were a little southeasterly for the Sandhills population, and may have been following this species' well-known propensity for moving southeast in late fall.

Wild Turkey: Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.

Pacific Loon: Two were reported after being absent from the state the last few falls. Singles were at PL 22-24 Oct (MB, RSt, GR) and at CBL 8 Nov (LE).

Common Loon: An injured imm was treated and released at HL 1 Aug and seen there through 21 Aug (JGJ, m. ob.). Summering imms are rare eastward, but regular in the west. Elsewhere, numbers were higher than in most falls; 15 were at BOL 8 Nov (JGJ).

Pied-billed Grebe: Good numbers were reported, including 190 in Lancaster Co 29 Oct (LE) and 100-120 at Carter L, Douglas Co, 18 Oct (CNK). High counts, however, are 475+.

Horned Grebe: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Red-necked Grebe: A surprising 4 were reported, all singles; these were at BOL 28-30 Oct (DL, RSt, GR), HL 29 Oct (LE), PL 29 Oct (LE), and LO 3 Nov (KS). This species has been reported more often in recent years.

Eared Grebe: Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

Western Grebe: Reports were routine for this fall migrant, which is abundant in the west and uncommon in the east.

Clark's Grebe: None were reported for this rare fall migrant.

Neotropic Cormorant: There were 2 reports of this casual summer visitor, only the 15th and 16th for the state. One was in Harlan Co 23-24 Sep (CNK, JJ), the other in Sherman Co 23 Sep (LE).

Double-crested Cormorant: A near-record 10,000 were gathered at HCR, a favored staging area, 14 Oct (G&WH); high is 12,000, also at HCR.

American White Pelican: The severe flooding in the Missouri River Valley provided excellent conditions for waterbirds as the waters receded; a record fall count of 3000 were in eastern Washington Co 19 Sep (NR).

American Bittern: Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.

- Least Bittern:** The only report of this rare summer resident was of one rather late in Clay Co 23 Sep (CNK).
- Great Blue Heron:** Groups of migrants are rarely noted or reported; 26 were flying south over Dakota Co 17 Sep (BFH).
- Great Egret:** Fewer are reported in the west; 2 were in Scotts Bluff Co 4 Sep (KD).
- Snowy Egret:** A total of 14, typical for fall, was reported through 24 Sep (m. ob.), including 8 in Clay Co 15 Aug (JGJ).
- Little Blue Heron:** The only reports of this rare summer visitor were of 1-2 ads at Kissinger Basin WPA, Clay Co, 15 Aug (JGJ) and 28 Aug (LR, RH). Most late summer birds are imms.
- Cattle Egret:** The 250 in Scotts Bluff Co 4 Sep (KD) was a good count; 6 at BOL 29 Oct (LE) were tardy.
- Green Heron:** Singles in Scotts Bluff Co 9 Sep (AD) and Morrill Co 7 Aug (LJH) were westerly, where uncommon.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** One in a not-often-seen imm plumage was photographed in the eastern RWB 24 Sep (PD). Reports after Aug are few; late dates are in early Oct.
- Glossy Ibis:** Observers may be jaded by the numbers seen in recent years and may not be searching for this species as much; only one was reported, in Clay Co 15 Aug (JGJ).
- White-faced Ibis:** Uncommon in the east in fall, one was in Saunders Co 4 Sep (LE).
- Turkey Vulture:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Osprey:** One in Sherman Co 3 Aug (WF) was likely a young non-breeder. Migrants appear in mid-Aug. The 8 at HCR 16 Sep (JJ) was a good count; high is 26.
- Mississippi Kite:** The population at Ogallala is doing very well; the 8+ nests this summer, along with non-breeding imms, would account for the amazing 34 seen overhead 2 Sep (JO). Elsewhere, reports were widespread, most apparently fall dispersers and migrants, although a juv was well-described in extreme northern Kearney Co 26 Aug (WF); 12 were at a roost in McCook 10 Sep (RB, photo), and about 14 others were reported statewide (m. ob.), including 3 record late near Genoa 1 Oct (SM).
- Bald Eagle:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Northern Harrier:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** One carefully studied in Saline Co 17 Aug (CNK) was rather early. Another was in Nebraska City 2 Sep (LF, SQ).
- Cooper's Hawk:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Northern Goshawk:** None were reported of this rare Panhandle resident and fall migrant.
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** After some signs of increasing numbers in recent years, this fall the only report was of a dispersing bird as far west as Lincoln Co 27 Aug (TJW).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** Two ads with a juv at Hummel Park, Omaha, 17 Aug (JR, JED) were suggestive of local breeding, a rare occurrence in the Missouri River Valley. One in Scotts Bluff Co 17 Sep (KD) was only the 12th Panhandle fall record.

- Swainson's Hawk:** Of interest was a fledgling banded in California that was also carrying a transmitter and was seen in the Sioux City area in mid-Sep (fide MC).
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Reports were routine for this common resident and fall migrant.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** One in Kearney Co 23 Sep (D&JP) was about on schedule for fall migrants eastward.
- Rough-legged Hawk:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant and winter resident.
- Golden Eagle:** Easterly was a sub-ad over Sarpy Co 23 Oct (L&BP); a few are reported in the Missouri River Valley each fall.
- Crested Caracara:** A convincing report of one seen twice feeding on roadkill in Seward Co 20-21 Aug (GN) has been referred to the NOU Records Committee; it would be a first record for Nebraska if accepted. Probably of significance relative to this report was the sighting of one in Washington Co, Kansas, about 120 miles south of Seward Co, Nebraska.
- American Kestrel:** reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Merlin:** One near Niobrara 24 Aug (MB) was rather early; fall arrival is in mid-Aug. The wintering subspecies in Nebraska, *Falco columbarius richardsonii*, was represented by one near Creighton 2 Nov (MB).
- Peregrine Falcon:** The 4 in Knox Co 8 Oct (MB) was a fall high count.
- Prairie Falcon:** Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant eastward.
- Virginia Rail:** Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.
- Sora:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- American Coot:** Fourth-highest fall tally on record was the 5700 at Carter L, Omaha, 28 Oct (JED).
- Sandhill Crane:** Most are gone by mid-Nov, and so a major surprise was the presence of large numbers in the central Platte River Valley at least into late Nov; 4000-5000 were lingering in Hall Co as late as 25 Nov (JLL). Their feeding and roosting behavior was similar to that seen during their March stopover (LR, RH). Whether these birds are merely lingering because of mild conditions without snow cover or have returned from their usual wintering areas in the southwest United States due to drought-induced food source reduction there is unclear.
- Whooping Crane:** About 35 were detected as they passed through the state 20 Oct-13 Nov, as expected (fide JGJ).
- Black-bellied Plover:** Two in Scotts Bluff Co 2 Oct (KD) were considered noteworthy for fall.
- American Golden-Plover:** Fewer pass through Nebraska in fall than in spring, and most are juvs, arriving around 1 Sep. A major surprise was the large numbers that appeared in flooded agricultural fields in southeastern Washington Co in late Oct. On 25 Oct a near-record 338 were tallied (JR, JED, CNK), and 150+ were there 28 Oct (NR, JJ). Also on 28 Oct, 152 were in Douglas Co (JED).
- Semipalmated Plover:** The 32 near Niobrara 29 Aug (MB) was a record fall count.
- Piping Plover:** A juv in Platte Co 29 Sep (PD) was rather late, and one in Knox Co 8 Oct (MB) was 4th-latest on record.
- Killdeer:** Best count was a moderate 332 in Douglas Co 28 Oct (JED).
- Mountain Plover:** None were reported of this rare southern Panhandle resident.

Black-necked Stilt: The nesting birds at a flooded field in Dakota Co (see summer report) were still present 27 Aug, when an ad and 3 24-day-old juvs were seen (BFH, JJ, LE). Of 2 nests started, one had dried out and the other had 4 eggs by 2 Aug (BFH); the first downy young was seen 6 Aug and 2 in juv plumage were present 6 Aug (BFH). There are only about 15 reports after 11 Aug, and so tardy were one in Scotts Bluff Co 4 Sep (KD), and an adult and 2 juvs in Clay Co 26 Aug (PD). As many as 9 were in Clay Co 15-17 Aug (CNK, JGJ).

American Avocet: The 12 near Niobrara 2 Nov (MB) were tardy; there are only 6 sightings after 6 Nov.

Spotted Sandpiper: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Solitary Sandpiper: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Greater Yellowlegs: Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

Willet: Uncommon in the east in fall, the only reports were of 1-2 at BOL 1-11 Nov (LE).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Upland Sandpiper: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Long-billed Curlew: None were reported; this is often an early-departing westerly fall migrant.

Marbled Godwit: None were reported; this is often an early-departing fall migrant.

Ruddy Turnstone: The only report of this rare fall migrant, only the 26th in all for fall, was a juv near Niobrara 30 Aug (MB).

Red Knot: The only report of this rare fall migrant, about the 30th for the state in fall, was a juv in Knox Co 9 Sep, the veteran observer's (MB) first for the county.

Sanderling: Best count was a moderate 85 near Niobrara 8 Oct (MB); high for fall is 179.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: This species is rarely reported after about 10 Oct, and so surprising were up to 6 in southeastern Washington Co 25-27 Oct (CNK, JR, JED) and 8-12 in Cass Co 26-27 Oct (CNK).

Western Sandpiper: This fairly common fall migrant was reported 3 times: one was photographed near Ashland 15 Aug (MCv), one was in Cass Co 29 Aug (CNK), and 2 were in Lancaster Co 9 Oct (LE).

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

Baird's Sandpiper: Although there are a few Nov records, 2 at PL 3 Nov (LE) were rather late.

Pectoral Sandpiper: The 1200 near Niobrara 27 Aug (MB) was a record fall count, and one in Sarpy Co 16 Nov (LE) was 6th-latest on record.

Dunlin: None were reported of this uncommon, often overlooked fall migrant.

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

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Reports were routine for this fairly common east-central fall migrant.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Reports were routine (2 Aug-3 Sep; m. ob.) for this uncommon fall migrant.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.

Wilson's Snipe: Migrants begin to appear in fall in Aug, such as the 30 in Clay Co 28 Aug (LR, RH).

American Woodcock: Last reported were singles in Dodge Co 26 Oct (D&JP) and at FF 1 Nov (L&BP). Late dates are in mid-Nov.

- Wilson's Phalarope:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Red-necked Phalarope:** Reports from the Missouri River Valley counties are unusual; 2 were in Cass Co 29 Aug (CNK).
- Red Phalarope:** Two were reported at BOL 22 Sep (LE; no details).
- Sabine's Gull:** The 7 reports may have been of the same bird: singles were at BOL 14-15 Sep (JC, SS, LE), CBL 17 Sep (JGJ, JC, SS), and at BOL 27-30 Sep (LE, PD, DL).
- Bonaparte's Gull:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Franklin's Gull:** One in Lancaster Co 28 Nov (LE) was late. Dec records are rare.
- Mew Gull:** The only report of this rare winter visitor was of a basic ad at HCR 11 Nov (PD), 2nd-earliest of the 15 fall records.
- Ring-billed Gull:** Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.
- California Gull:** None were reported; a few are usually at LM if looked for.
- Herring Gull:** First of the season was one at BOL 21 Sep (LE); summer records are rare.
- Thayer's Gull:** A first-year bird was well-studied at BOL 1 Oct (JGJ, details); it is the earliest on record for fall. One to two ads were at CBL 14-18 Nov (LE).
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** None were reported; winter visitors often arrive by November.
- Glaucous Gull:** Three arrived in time for the fall report: one was at HCR 24 Nov (KS), and 1-2 first winter birds were at GPD 25-26 Nov (MB, BFH, BG).
- Great Black-backed Gull:** None were reported; winter visitors rarely arrive before December.
- Least Tern:** Reports were routine for this fairly common local summer resident and fall migrant.
- Caspian Tern:** The only report of this uncommon fall migrant was of one in Sherman Co 23 Sep (LR, RH).
- Black Tern:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Common Tern:** The only report of this uncommon fall migrant was of 4 at Niobrara 9 Sep (MB).
- Forster's Tern:** Best count was a moderate 45 at BOL 11 Sep (LE); high counts are in the range 83-95.
- Rock Pigeon:** Reports were routine for this common resident.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Best count reported was the 143 at a grain elevator in Gibbon 18 Sep (LR, RH), indicating when fall flocking begins.
- White-winged Dove:** None were reported since the summer report; the year's total remains at 7.
- Mourning Dove:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident and abundant fall migrant.
- Rosy-faced Lovebird:** The 2nd report for the state of this exotic was of one at a Scottsbluff nursery 16 Sep (KD). See comments under Budgerigar, next.
- Budgerigar:** One was in a Lincoln yard 13 Sep (JGJ), certainly an escape or released bird. This is the 4th report for the state, but there is no likelihood that this species will establish in the wild in the state.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** One at WP 7 Oct (LE) was a bit tardy; latest dates are in late Oct.
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** None were reported; most depart by late Sep.
- Barn Owl:** Reports were, as expected, from southwest Nebraska: 2 were south of Gering 28 Aug (AK), another was in Scotts Bluff Co 17 Sep (AK), and one was in Lincoln Co 2 Oct (LD).

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

Great Horned Owl: Occasionally, pale Great Horned Owls appear in Nebraska in winter; one such in Dakota Co 25 Nov (BFH) was likely of the arctic race *Bubo virginianus subarcticus*. Its appearance may be related to the influx of Snowy Owls noted during this fall period.

Snowy Owl: By the end of the period there had been several reports, presaging a likely influx of this species during the winter. The first reported was in Saline Co 8 Nov (fide JGJ), 2nd-earliest on record, and others were at Calamus Res, Loup Co, 24 Nov (fide JGJ), near Bassett 25-26 Nov (fide JGJ), in Webster Co 27 Nov (KS, photo), and in Burt Co 28 Nov (fide JGJ).

Burrowing Owl: The population at Hultine WPA, Clay Co, is doing well; as many as 12 were there, including several juvs, 2 Aug (JC, SS). A surprise was one near the Lowes Store in Omaha at 10 pm on 12 Oct (DSt, JR).

Barred Owl: One at Hebron 23 Sep (LE) was at the west edge of its range.

Long-eared Owl: Only 2 were reported, fewer than usual for this uncommon winter visitor; singles were in Dixon Co 1 Nov (JJ) and in Omaha 27 Nov (JWH).

Short-eared Owl: Good numbers were at Jack Sinn 11 Nov, when 5 were counted (LE); one was found there 18 Nov (RSt, EB). High counts are 10+.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: None were reported of this uncommon fall migrant and winter visitor.

Common Nighthawk: The 156 flying over Omaha 30 Aug (JR) was a good count; high counts are 260+.

Common Poorwill: None were reported; departure dates are in late Sep, but fall silent birds are hard to detect.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: As with Common Poorwill, fall birds are difficult to detect, but 2 were at PSP 18 Sep (MB), a rather late date.

Chimney Swift: One in Lincoln 12 Oct (LE) was tardy; most depart by mid-Oct.

White-throated Swift: Last reported was in Scotts Bluff Co 8 Sep (AK); most depart by mid-Sep.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Best yard count was an excellent tally of 14 in Lincoln 21 Sep (R&SW). Reports were widespread; farthest west was one in Lewellen 9 Sep (LJH). Early arrivals where breeding was not noted were 1 Aug in Lincoln (MUs), 5 Aug in Bennington (JM), and 6 Aug in Hall Co (JLL). Breeding does occur in the Missouri River Valley and so the 1 and 5 Aug dates may be of local breeders.

Calliope Hummingbird: None were reported of this rare fall migrant in the western Panhandle; there were no Jul reports either.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: The only report was of a fem near Mitchell 7 Aug (KD); this is an uncommon fall migrant in the Panhandle.

Rufous Hummingbird: There were only 3 reports, one of which involved an easterly imm which appeared at the observer's Lincoln feeder 13 Sep and remained until 10 Nov, when it was captured, its identity confirmed as a Rufous, not an Allen's, and transferred to the Henry Doorly Zoo Insect Pavilion (JGJ). Surprisingly, this is the 5th record for Nov, all from the east. The 2 additional reports included one at an expected location, WSR, 15 Aug (HKH), and a possible in Lincoln 19 Aug, described as having "distinct brown coloration" (RE).

Belted Kingfisher: The 6 in Lancaster Co 4 Sep (LE) tied the high count; at least some were likely a family group.

- Lewis's Woodpecker:** None were reported; this is an uncommon fall migrant or wanderer in the west.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** There are only 3 records after 2 Oct in the north-central, so 9 in Knox Co 8 Oct (MB), one in Dixon Co the same day (JJ), and singles in Boyd and Knox Cos as late as 14 Nov (JGJ) were unexpected.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** This species continues to consolidate in the Panhandle; a male and fem together in a Mitchell yard 18 Sep was the first time the observer had seen a pair together there (KD).
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Reports from the west are more numerous in fall; one was at WHNC 3 Oct (AK).
- Red-naped Sapsucker:** None were reported; this is a rare fall migrant in the western Panhandle.
- Downy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this common statewide resident.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** Reports were routine for this fairly common statewide resident.
- Northern Flicker:** Rather early for a "red-shafted" flicker in the east was one in Omaha 21 Sep (JR); there are 6 eastern dates 17-24 Sep.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** Only one was reported away from the usual lower Missouri River Valley locations: one was along the Little Blue River west of Fairbury 13 and 19 Nov (DR fide JGJ). Such out-of-range sightings are likely of young birds dispersing; such movements can lead to establishment of a breeding population.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.
- Western Wood-Pewee:** One banded at WHNC 23 Sep (CW) was rather late; last dates are in late Sep.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Three in Lancaster Co 7 Oct (LE) were rather late; there are only 5 records after 8 Oct. The 13 at FF 16 Sep "mostly in one group" (JR) was an excellent count (high is 25).
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** One was photographed in the observer's yard in Papillion 28 Aug (PS). Only a few are identified each fall.
- Acadian Flycatcher:** None were reported; this is an uncommon summer resident in the southeast, mostly departing by early Sep.
- Willow Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this uncommon summer resident; most depart by early Sep.
- Least Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Hammond's Flycatcher:** None were reported of this rare Panhandle fall migrant.
- Dusky Flycatcher:** None were reported of this rare Panhandle fall migrant.
- Cordilleran Flycatcher:** Few are found during migration; one banded at Chadron SP 13 Sep (MH) was easterly.
- Eastern Phoebe:** One at ADF 24 Oct (LF, SQ) was rather late; there are only 6 dates for Nov and one for Dec.
- Say's Phoebe:** The observer's first for several years in Dixon Co was seen 25 Aug (JJ); there have been occasional sightings in the area since the late 1990s. Also easterly was one in Buffalo Co 23 Sep (CNK). One in Scotts Bluff Co 5 Oct (B&DW) was rather late.
- Great Crested Flycatcher:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Cassin's Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.
- Western Kingbird:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

Eastern Kingbird: Migration must have been underway in Lincoln 27 Aug, when "hundreds" were noted (TEL).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: No reports were received; only one nesting was noted during summer.

Loggerhead Shrike: Departure dates can be unclear due to the overlapping arrival of Northern Shrikes; however a Loggerhead in Scotts Bluff Co 4 Sep was confirmed by photo (KD). Late dates in the west are in late Sep, but few are documented.

Northern Shrike: Eleven had arrived by the end of the period; earliest was in Otoe Co 1 Nov (CNK), later than usual.

Bell's Vireo: One in Thayer Co 23 Sep (LE) was tardy; late dates are in early Oct.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern summer resident.

Plumbeous Vireo: The only report was of one banded at WHNC 8 Sep (CW), about on time for a migrant; late dates are in mid-Sep.

Cassin's Vireo: None were reported of this uncommon fall Panhandle migrant.

Blue-headed Vireo: One in Omaha 25 Aug (L&BP) was rather early. Only the 6th Panhandle record was of a hatch-year bird banded at WHNC 16 Sep (CW).

Warbling Vireo: Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

Philadelphia Vireo: This species showed well in the east, with 12 reports involving 15 birds (m. ob.); earliest was in Bellevue 20 Aug (ARy) and last were 2 in WP 5 Oct (RSt), rather late.

Red-eyed Vireo: Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

Pinyon Jay: This species can be elusive in late summer and early fall; none were reported.

Blue Jay: This species often moves southward in fall, usually peaking in numbers around 25 Sep. Likely such a movement was the 100+ in Harlan Co 24 Sep (JJ).

Black-billed Magpie: This species continues to make a slow recovery from depressed numbers in the last few years in various parts of its range. Considered noteworthy was the observer's first in Knox Co for 5+ years on 9 Sep (MB), a flock of 12 in Scotts Bluff Co 11 Sep (AD), and 5 near Broken Bow 5 Sep (TH).

American Crow: Reports were routine for this common resident and fall migrant.

Horned Lark: Reports were routine for this common resident.

Purple Martin: The Omaha roost peaked at an amazing 50,000-55,000 birds 27 Aug (JR, JED); a "dramatic drop" in early Sep resulted in only 4000-5000 present 5 Sep (JR) and only 5 were seen 12 Sep (JR). A good non-roost tally was the 4000-5000 on wires in Douglas Co 21 Aug (RM).

Tree Swallow: A record fall count was the 1000 at BOL 15 Sep (LE). Many molting birds were among the 500-600 in Saline Co 17 Aug (CNK).

Violet-green Swallow: None were reported for this fairly common Panhandle summer resident.

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

Bank Swallow: The 500 mostly young birds at CLNWR 11 Aug (WM) was an excellent fall count for the west.

Cliff Swallow: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Barn Swallow: The 3000 in Platte Co 29 Sep (PD) was an excellent count; high is 10,000.

Black-capped Chickadee: As with Black-billed Magpie, recovery from depressed numbers in recent years is still slow in a few parts of the state. The observer's first since the "West Nile summer" was in her Scotts Bluff Co yard 28 Sep (AD), and, amazingly, this species was reported in only one county (Buffalo) out of 12 covered during the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union meeting in south-central Nebraska 23 Sep (m. ob.).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Birds appear in mid-Aug away from breeding areas, but most movement is in Sep; 29 were in a small area of Brown Co 6 Sep (D&JP).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Reports were routine for this common resident.

Pygmy Nuthatch: The 15 at Wright's Gap, Banner Co, 19 Aug (JGJ) were at the eastern edge of the range in the Wildcat Hills.

Brown Creeper: Evidence is scanty for breeding at Chadron SP; one banded there 19 Sep (MH) may have been a resident or an early fall migrant.

Rock Wren: Singles in Clay Co 23 Sep (MB) and Kearney 21 Sep (TH) were easterly; these are the 12th and 13th fall sightings from this part of the state.

Carolina Wren: Rather late were a nest with 4 eggs at Fontenelle Forest 4 Aug (RS) and the 4 young that fledged from a Bellevue nest 14 Aug (ARy).

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

Winter Wren: One in Lincoln 5 Sep (DL, details) was 3rd-earliest on record; arrival is usually in late Sep.

Sedge Wren: This species breeds in Nebraska in late summer on occasion; 6 birds, including 2 probable juvs, were in Richardson Co 28 Aug (JSC). One was in Lincoln 15 Nov (KC, details). This is the 3rd record for Nov; there is a specimen dated 20 Nov.

Marsh Wren: Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: There are several records over the last 20 years in the HCR area; 2 were below the HCR dam 21 Aug (LR, RH).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: One in Brown Co 6 Nov (WF) was rather late for the north; last dates there are 7-8 Nov.

Eastern Bluebird: What appears to be only the 2nd record of breeding in the southern Panhandle (south of Wildcat Hills) was an ad and a juv at Oliver Res, Kimball Co, 19 Aug (JGJ). An impressive concentration was the "hundreds" at Nine Mile Prairie, Lancaster Co, 17 Sep (JM); high counts are 200-300.

Mountain Bluebird: Reports were routine for this fairly common summer visitor, fall migrant, and winter visitor in the west.

Townsend's Solitaire: Easternmost were 2 near North Platte 9 Oct (LD).

Veery: None were reported of this rare fall migrant.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: None were reported; this rare fall migrant is seldom seen outside the Missouri Valley.

Swainson's Thrush: Numbers were lower than usual; a veteran observer in Lancaster Co reported only 2 for the fall season (LE).

Hermit Thrush: The only report was of 2 in Lincoln 25 Oct (JGJ); most migrants are found late Sep through Oct.

Wood Thrush: A rather late breeding was an ad with a newly-fledged young bird at FF 11 Aug (CNK). Two imms there 14 Sep (JR) may have been migrants or locally-fledged birds.

American Robin: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

Gray Catbird: One in Sherman Co 10 Oct (WF) was rather late for that location, as was one in Lincoln 25-27 Nov (RE). Reports after mid-Nov in the east are rare.

Northern Mockingbird: A rather late breeding was the ad with 3 juvs at Oliver Res, Kimball Co, 19 Aug 2011 (JGJ).

Sage Thrasher: None were reported of this rare Panhandle fall migrant.

Brown Thrasher: Reports were routine for this common summer resident.

European Starling: Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.

American Pipit: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Sprague's Pipit: Reports are increasing, possibly as observers work out where and how to find this species. There were 5 reports, including 2 counts of 12, one in Phelps Co 24 Sep (JJ) and the other at SCP 12 Oct (LF, SQ). Elsewhere, one was in Kearney Co 23 Sep (CNK), one was at a Lowe's store in west Omaha 13 Oct, where the observer was searching for a reported Burrowing Owl (JR), and one was at SCP 26 Oct (LE).

Cedar Waxwing: Best count was an excellent 150 in Hall Co 11 Nov (TJW); high fall counts are 200+.

Lapland Longspur: Reports were routine for this abundant winter resident.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: None were reported of this common western fall migrant.

Smith's Longspur: This species is difficult to find; it prefers short patchy grass but can be frustratingly inconsistent in its occurrences. A good find was the 11 in mowed 4-5 inch prairie near Talmage 1 Nov (CNK), only about the 21st fall record.

McCown's Longspur: Apparently on the move were the 13 in southern Sioux Co 24 Sep (HKH); small flocks appear around mid-Sep.

Snow Bunting: There were only 2 reports of this late-arriving winter resident: 2 were rather early in Douglas Co 28 Oct (JED, photo) and 3 were in Platte Co 11 Nov (SM). Most do not arrive until Nov.

Ovenbird: One at WP 7 Oct (LE) was rather late; there are only 5 later dates on record, through 11 Nov.

Louisiana Waterthrush: None were reported; this species is rarely noticed in fall, most leaving before Sep.

Northern Waterthrush: Only 6 were reported, those in the expected period 5-15 Sep (JR).

Blue-winged Warbler: Only the 13th fall report for this species was one in Lancaster Co 15 Sep (LE).

Black-and-white Warbler: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Tennessee Warbler: Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Good numbers were noted statewide, including 14 at WP 7 Oct (LE) and 11 in Omaha 12 Oct (JR). One at WSR 18 Aug (HKH) was early; such early migrants in the west are likely the Rocky Mountain subspecies *Oreothlypis celata orestera*.

Nashville Warbler: This species appeared in much higher numbers than usual, including best counts of 21 at WP 21 Sep (LE) and 15 there 15 Sep (LE). Primarily an eastern migrant, westernmost were 2 in Howard Co 18 Sep (LR, RH) and one in Merrick Co 2 Oct (LR, RH).

- MacGillivray's Warbler:** The only reports were of singles in Sioux Co 24 Sep (HKH) and Scotts Bluff Co 2 Oct (KD), the expected timing for fall migration.
- Mourning Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern fall migrant.
- Kentucky Warbler:** None were reported; this species is rarely noted in fall, but departure dates are in early Sep.
- Common Yellowthroat:** One in Otoe Co 25 Oct (LF, SQ) was rather late; there are only 5 later dates.
- American Redstart:** One at ADF 28 Sep (LF, SQ) was rather late; last dates are around 1 Oct.
- Cape May Warbler:** Only the 7th fall record was a first-year male at BOL 11 Sep 2011 (LE, details).
- Cerulean Warbler:** An imm male was record late in southwest Dixon Co 24 Oct (JJ, details); this is another wood-warbler species rarely reported in fall, especially from the northeast at such a late date. The previous latest date was 19 Sep.
- Northern Parula:** Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.
- Magnolia Warbler:** One in Lincoln 28 Aug (JC, SS) was rather early.
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** Reports were routine for this uncommon fall migrant.
- Blackburnian Warbler:** There were 7 singles reported 21 Aug-21 Sep (L&BP, LE, JR, AK), a good showing for this uncommon fall migrant. Surprising was the one in Scotts Bluff Co 17 Sep (AK), only the 8th Panhandle report for fall.
- Yellow Warbler:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** None were reported of this rare fall migrant.
- Palm Warbler:** One was reported on eBird by Andrew Furman in Omaha 29 Sep.
- Pine Warbler:** One photographed in Lancaster Co 2 Oct 2010 (R&SW) was omitted from the appropriate report.
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** Reports were routine, in the period 7-26 Sep in the Panhandle (CW). Two were in Omaha 21 Aug (JR, details). The latter report ties the early date for this species in fall, and is the first record for the east.
- Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** This species is prone to lingering late in fall, and so one on 11 Nov in Hall Co (TJW) was not unexpected, although only the 7th record later than mid-Sep, as well as being westerly.
- Townsend's Warbler:** None were reported of this fairly common fall Panhandle migrant.
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** This species was present in good numbers, with 15 reports involving 17 birds, all from the east. One at FF 4 Aug (RS) was earliest on record by 19 days.
- Canada Warbler:** The 6 reports were in the narrow period 22 Aug-5 Sep (L&BP, JR), typical of this species in fall.
- Wilson's Warbler:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western fall migrant.

- Spotted Towhee:** One in Nance Co 7 Aug (LR, RH) was easterly for the date; most towhees in that part of Nebraska are of mixed Eastern-Spotted heritage.
- Eastern Towhee:** One in Sherman Co 10 Oct (WF) was westerly; as noted under Spotted Towhee, most towhees in that part of Nebraska are of mixed Eastern-Spotted heritage. A nest at BOL with one nearly-fledged young 4 Sep (LE) was a rather late nesting attempt.
- Cassin's Sparrow:** None were reported, despite the summer influx; this species leaves the breeding areas very early and there are few dates even for Aug.
- American Tree Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common winter resident.
- Chipping Sparrow:** Good numbers were banded at WHNC, where this species is a common summer resident and at times an abundant fall migrant; 245 were banded 31 Aug-10 Oct (CW). An excellent eastern count was the 150+ at Forest Lawn Cem, Omaha, 21 Sep (JR). Few linger into late Nov, but this fall singles were in Lincoln 21 Nov (RSt), Bellevue 26 Nov (ARy), and Omaha 27 Nov (CH).
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Brewer's Sparrow:** None were reported; apparently few observers venture into the remote habitat of this western Panhandle species.
- Field Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common eastern and central summer resident.
- Vesper Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Lark Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Lark Bunting:** There fewer than 10 reports from eastern Nebraska in fall; one was in Clay Co 23 Sep (PD).
- Savannah Sparrow:** Evidence that migration, or at least dispersal, can start in early Aug was provided by the presence of one at a McPherson Co site 9 Aug where none were found earlier (WM), and the apparent departure by 10 Aug of 12 of 14 birds seen earlier at a summering site near Hay Springs (WM).
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** Rather late were singles in York Co 13 Oct (WF) and Jack Sinn 16 Oct (JC, SS). There are only 6 dates after 18 Oct.
- Henslow's Sparrow:** There were more reports than usual. Reports from locations where breeding is likely were of 1-2 at SCP 1-20 Aug (GJ, RSt) and 3 in Conservation Reserve Program grassland in Richardson Co 28 Aug (JS). One at Alexandria Lakes WMA/SRA, Jefferson Co, 22 Sep (LE) was a likely migrant, as was one rather late at Little Salt Fork Marsh, Lincoln, 16 Oct (JC, SS, LE). Latest dates are 20-30 Oct.
- LeConte's Sparrow:** One near Talmage 1 Nov was rather late; there are only 3 later dates, through 9 Nov. Another, in Lancaster Co 26 Oct (LE), was also tardy.
- Nelson's Sparrow:** The 3 reports (3 birds) were as expected in the period 2-16 Oct, all in Lancaster Co (JC, SS, LE).
- Fox Sparrow:** One in Cass Co 30 Sep (WF) was early; early dates are 17-20 Sep.
- Song Sparrow:** The 40 in Hamilton Co 14 Aug (LR, RH) suggests a healthy local population; migration generally begins later in Aug.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Best count was a moderate 30, in Dixon Co 28 Sep (JJ); high count is 100.
- Swamp Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this fairly common fall migrant.
- White-throated Sparrow:** Early arrival dates on record are 14-15 Sep, and so this fall's arrival was pushing early, with singles at FF 16 Sep (JR), North Platte 18 Sep (TJW), and Chadron SP (MH, banded).

- Harris's Sparrow:** Rare in the Panhandle, one was banded at Chadron SP 4 Oct (MH).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** Fall arrival can be early; early dates are 25 Aug-2 Sep, and so one in Lincoln Co 20 Aug (RL) was not too unexpected, but it is the earliest on record for fall. This species winters in some numbers in the west but is primarily a migrant in the east, where last reported was at BOL 14 Nov (LE).
- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** The only report was of one banded at Chadron SP 27 Sep (MH); this species breeds in low numbers at that location. Migrants are usually not noted until early Oct away from breeding areas.
- Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** Reports were routine for this common winter resident.
- Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** One banded at WHNC 30 Sep (CW) was rather early; early arrival dates in the west are 26-27 Sep. The only "Pink-sided" Junco reported was in Lincoln Co 12 Oct (WF), an expected date.
- Summer Tanager:** Reports continued from Sarpy and Douglas Cos (JR, CNK, L&BP) and Lancaster Co, where a male was in Lincoln 1 Aug (JRI) and a single was at WP 3 Sep (LE).
- Scarlet Tanager:** Reports were routine for this uncommon eastern fall migrant.
- Western Tanager:** Reports were routine for this uncommon western fall migrant.
- Northern Cardinal:** At least one bird continues near the western edge of the North Platte Valley range at Bridgeport, with sightings of singles there 9 Aug and 24 Oct (LJH). A late nesting in Lincoln had a "very young" fledgling with ads 5 Sep; the fledgling was still in the same yard 20 Sep (JGJ).
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this common eastern summer resident.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Reports were routine for this common western summer resident.
- Blue Grosbeak:** A fem in Scotts Bluff Co 28 Sep (AD) was rather late. Last dates are 3-5 Oct.
- Lazuli Bunting:** One banded at WHNC 26 Sep (CW) was rather late; most depart by mid-Sep. There are only 5 records for Oct. Easterly was one at Jeffrey Res, Lincoln Co, 20 Aug (RL), only the 8th fall record away from the Panhandle.
- Indigo Bunting:** A rather late nesting was indicated by ads feeding 2 fledged young at FF 11-21 Aug (CNK, L&BP).
- Dickcissel:** An ad fem at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo Co, 21 Oct (KS) was rather late; last dates are 27-30 Oct.
- Bobolink:** As many as 35 were apparently molting at Hultine WPA, Clay Co, 2-7 Aug (JC, SS, LF, SQ, LE); this species molts in cattail wetlands prior to migration. A group of 39 was in York Co 7 Aug (JJ), likely also molting.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Last singing was heard in Lancaster Co 23 Oct (LE); movements of this species are poorly known going into winter, but most apparently leave the state.
- Western Meadowlark:** Last singing was heard in Lancaster Co 3 Nov (LE); this species does indeed winter in varying numbers in southeastern Nebraska, but movements are dictated by weather conditions more so than a strict migration schedule.

- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Reports were routine for this common fall migrant.
- Rusty Blackbird:** Reports were all in Nov for this late-migrating species. There were 5 reports 3-26 Nov with a total of 18 birds from central and eastern Nebraska as expected (LE, JR, TJW, LR, RH, JC, SS).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** This species migrates uncommonly through the east, but the 60 at Jack Sinn 26 Oct (WF) was a larger flock than usual.
- Common Grackle:** Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Two in Ogallala 18 Nov (JO) were tardy for that westerly location, and 10 were still as far north as Burwell 13 Nov (LR, RH).
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports were routine for this abundant fall migrant.
- Orchard Oriole:** A fem in Seward Co 26 Sep (JG) was rather late; departure is usually completed by 26-27 Sep, and there are 5 records for Oct.
- Bullock's Oriole:** Reports were routine for this fairly common western summer resident.
- Baltimore Oriole:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident.
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** None were reported of this western Panhandle winter visitor; early arrival dates are around 1 Nov.
- Purple Finch:** Westerly was one at Bridgeport 20-21 Oct (LJH). An imm at PSP as early as 17 Sep (BFH, MB) was a surprise; it is one of only 4 records earlier than 20 Sep.
- Cassin's Finch:** Occurrences of this species in Nebraska are enigmatic, although essentially restricted to the Panhandle. It may occur at any time of year and probably breeds in the state on occasion. This fall, a "young" bird was banded at WHNC on the early date 8 Sep (CW), and another on 16 Sep (CW). These records are suggestive of nesting in or very close to Nebraska.
- House Finch:** Reports were routine for this common resident.
- Red Crossbill:** Easterly was one in Lincoln 18-19 Oct (BW fide JC, SS); Oct is the month with most records away from the Panhandle. Breeding probably occurs in the Wildcat Hills, but evidence is scanty. Supportive, though, was the recapture of 3 AHY (after hatch year) and 2 HY (hatch year) birds there during Sep-Oct (CW). In all, a total of 153 crossbills were banded Sep-10 Oct (CW). At Chadron SP, 33 were banded 19-26 Sep (MH). Breeding may occur at the latter location, but evidence is lacking.
- Common Redpoll:** The only one that arrived early enough for the Fall report was at a Bellevue feeder 27 Nov (L&BP).
- Pine Siskin:** Numbers banded at WHNC were surprisingly low; only 44 were tallied Sep-10 Oct (CW). Elsewhere, few were reported, with only singles at 3 locations: 24-25 Oct in Dixon Co (JJ), 24 Oct in Pierce Co (JJ), and 19 Nov in Omaha (JR). An exception was the "piles" near Doniphan 6 Nov (JLL).
- Lesser Goldfinch:** This species is fast becoming a regular summering species in the Panhandle. An amazing 45 were banded at WHNC Sep-10 Oct (CW), and the 7-8 in southwest Kimball Co and Banner Co 19 Aug led the observer to describe the species as "this decade's Blue-gray Gnatcatcher" (JGJ), following the latter species' rapid influx into the Panhandle starting in the late 1990s. At WHNC, only 6 Lesser Goldfinches were caught in 2010, and none in 2009 or 2008 (CW).
- American Goldfinch:** Reports were routine for this common summer resident and fall migrant.
- House Sparrow:** Reports were routine for this common resident.

First Documented Nebraska Sighting of
Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*)

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Monday, November 8, 2010, was an unusually warm (upper 70s) autumn day for Lincoln, Nebraska, with no clouds and a wind from the southwest. I went to Holmes Lake Park in southeast Lincoln to scan for late migrating waterfowl and then to check the stand of conifers for the arrival of winter migrants. I had no great expectations for the day, anticipating only the usual species for this time of the year.

Around 11 A.M. I was attracted to a feeding group of six Black-capped Chickadees and three Red-breasted Nuthatches in the 30- to 40-year-old pines and Douglas firs north of Hyde Observatory. I noticed a differently-patterned nuthatch in the group. I had seen a Pygmy Nuthatch several times in Lincoln, including two times at Holmes Lake Park and two times at Pioneers Park. This nuthatch, however, was not a Pygmy Nuthatch. I consulted *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America* and was able to identify the bird as a Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*). The nuthatch was about the same size as the Red-breasted Nuthatches it was feeding with in the pines. However, it appeared plumper and not as sleek as the Red-breasted Nuthatches. Noticeable upon seeing it was the rich brown crown and a



Brown-headed Nuthatch at Holmes Lake Park, Lancaster Co, 15 Nov 2010.
Photo by Jerry Mulliken.

dark eye line (not noticeable unless at close range). It was pale buff below. The short tail was obvious along with the white nape spot. The back and wings were gray with the primaries lighter gray. The throat and cheek were white. It was not very vocal; only snippets of sound were heard that could have been nuthatch utterances. After I was sure that it was a Brown-headed Nuthatch, I kept birding the area, making four attempts of varying lengths over two hours to observe the rare nuthatch.



Brown-headed Nuthatch at Holmes Lake Park, Lancaster Co, 13 Nov 2010. Photo by Phil Swanson.

When I arrived home, I made further searches in other field guides. I was convinced that I had found a Brown-headed Nuthatch. I then posted an account of my sightings on NEBirds. Later that day Mark Brogie, chairman of the NOU Records Committee, responded and requested documentation on the nuthatch, which was submitted a few days later. Later on November 9, I searched for information on the Brown-headed Nuthatch on the internet. On the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology website I watched and listened to about 10 videos shot by Timothy Barksdale in January 1998. One of the videos almost seemed as if I had recorded it myself.

I visited Holmes Lake Park on November 9 and 10 and again found the Brown-headed Nuthatch in the same area. By this time the word was out and other birders were coming to see the nuthatch. On November 10, Clem Klaphake and Ruth Stearns reported finding two Brown-headed Nuthatches. Subsequently quite a few birders (100+) from around Nebraska and surrounding states made the nuthatch pilgrimage to Holmes. Birders kept this up for at least a couple of months. Many

observers were able to see the Brown-headed Nuthatch and some were able to document it by photographing or videotaping it. I saw the Brown-headed Nuthatch on the following dates: November 8, 9, 10, 13, 17 and 21 and December 5 and 28, 2010, and on January 5 and 14, 2011. Four extended searches of the area in February produced no further sightings. The last sighting was reported late in January by another birder who did not think the bird looked healthy. The Lincoln Christmas Bird Count on December 18 included the observation of two Brown-headed Nuthatches at Holmes Lake Park. In all of my searches, I only saw one Brown-headed Nuthatch, but I saw it at several different locations in the area north of the clubhouse parking lot and in the area around Hyde Observatory. I walked these areas in search of a second nuthatch, but I never encountered more than one at a time in my searches.

We can only speculate why this bird (or birds) chose the conifer plantings at Holmes Lake Park for their stay in Nebraska and why they were so far from their southeastern haunts (coastal states from east Texas to Virginia). Brown-headed Nuthatches are considered non-migratory (Withgott and Smith 1998). They are not known for irruptive movements (Renfrow 2003). Nevertheless, vagrant Brown-headed Nuthatches have been found both in the eastern United States (Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and in the Midwest (Kansas, Kentucky and Missouri) (Renfrow 2003). There is even a report with "suspect details" from Nebraska in 1896 (Renfrow 2003). Until now, there were no documented sightings of Brown-headed Nuthatch in Nebraska. How long the birds were present before they were found is not known. Lincoln temperatures in November and December were close to average, but January was colder than usual, with 15 nights below 10° F. (LWC 2011) The birds may have succumbed to the recurring frigid weather or starved.

Lincoln is one of the few places in North America where all four North American species of nuthatches (White-breasted, Red-breasted, Pygmy and Brown-headed) have been seen. Holmes Lake Park is where I can say that I have seen and heard all four species of nuthatches in the last two years.

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First Discovery of a Four-egg Clutch for Mountain Plover
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Mountain Plovers (*Charadrius montanus*) are currently classified as highly imperiled by the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (Brown et al. 2001; USSCP 2004). Mountain Plovers routinely nest in sparsely vegetated areas with a high percentage of bare soil in the dry tablelands and shortgrass prairie of the western Great Plains (Knopf and Wunder 2006), a trait that often leads them to nest in dryland crop fields in Nebraska (Bly et al 2008). Because Mountain Plover is a Tier 1 state-threatened species (Schneider et al. 2005) that breeds in only three counties of southwestern Nebraska, in 2001 the Nebraska Prairie Partners (a cooperative



Figure 1. Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) nest with four eggs located on 27 May 2010 in Kimball County, Nebraska (Photo by Megan DeMory).

partnership between the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission) began studying and conserving Mountain Plover nests (Bly et al. 2008) in the southwest Panhandle. Since 2001, Nebraska Prairie Partners have located a total of 606 Mountain Plover nests in Kimball, southern Banner, and western Cheyenne Counties.

On 27 May 2010, the first documented Mountain Plover nest to contain a clutch of four eggs was documented in a fallow strip of a dryland crop field in southern Kimball County (Figure 1). The nest was checked every 2 - 4 days through 7 June, when the eggs were within a few days of hatching, and on that date we found the eggs missing. No pipping chips were located in the nest scrape, no adult bird was observed near the area, and coyote (*Canis latrans*) tracks were scattered all around, suggesting the nest had failed due to predation. In 2010 72% of nests hatched at least one egg, and most failures were the result of predation or weather.

Mountain Plover typically have a clutch size of 3 eggs, though clutches with 1 and 2 eggs are observed in ~15% of nesting attempts (Knopf and Wunder 2006). Clutches with 4 eggs are rare and have been reported to occur in less than 1% of the population (Knopf and Wunder 2006). Five 4-egg clutches have been reported in Colorado and one in Montana (see Knopf and Wunder 2006 for details), but this was the first 4-egg clutch reported in Nebraska, and it was located after 11 years of intensive study in which a total of 598 Mountain Plover nests were located.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Smith's Longspur in Knox County, Nebraska

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Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) is considered to be an uncommon casual spring migrant and is limited in spring to the southeast corner of Nebraska (Sharpe et al. 2001). The following provides the only known record for Smith's Longspur for spring in northeast Nebraska.

At sunrise on 02 April 2011, I was standing outside my vehicle watching a group of Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) east of Creighton, Nebraska (.5 miles west of 871st Rd & 536 Ave). I brought along my iPod player (with iMainGo speakers) and was broadcasting the Stokes recording of Smith's Longspur. I had heard longspur rattles the evening before as I was watching the cranes and was hoping for a Smith's Longspur. The iPod was playing for about 10 minutes when I heard the rattle of a longspur approaching from the south. I turned and saw a bird coming towards my vehicle in response to the call. It flew within 10 yards of my truck and made about 5 circles around the vehicle, rattling several times.

It was difficult finding the bird in my binoculars as it circled the truck, but even with the naked eye I could see the buffy-orange underparts of a Smith's Longspur. The tail was black with white outer feathers, and the head looked dark with a bit of white. The wings from underneath appeared translucent. After about five times around the truck, the bird dropped quickly into a weedy fence row and I was unable to relocate it. The above-mentioned field marks and vocalizations led me to identify the bird as a male Smith's Longspur.

I believe this may be a great method for detecting migrating Smith's Longspurs in spring.

LITERATURE CITED:

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Fall 2011 Bird Banding at Wildcat Hills Nature Center

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Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory has been operating a fall migration bird banding station at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center (WCH) in Scotts Bluff Co. since 2007. In 2011, during our fifth year of banding, we captured a few new species, had new high totals for other species, and had a record number new high total of recaptures. The Wildcat Hills Nature Center is surrounded by Ponderosa Pine woodland with a mixed shrub understory dominated by Mountain Mahogany. As such, it hosts bird species that are rarely found throughout the rest of the state, including Pygmy Nuthatch and Red Crossbill. In addition, common breeders in the area include Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Black-capped Chickadee, and Spotted Towhee. In the fall, high numbers of various finches move through the area, including American and Lesser Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, House Finch, and the occasional Cassin's Finch.

Weather permitting, we banded on weekdays from August 31 through October 10 for five hours per day beginning soon after sunrise. We caught and banded 735 individual birds of 32 species, our second highest season total since 855 birds in 2010. We banded two new species for the station in 2011: one Red-eyed Vireo and one Black-headed Grosbeak. Chipping Sparrow set a new high as the most frequently captured species, with 245 individuals, up from 162 in 2010. Red Crossbill was the second highest species at 153, which was a decline from a high of 323 in 2010, though still an impressive number for this nomadic species. Also of note, we captured a new high of 45 Lesser Goldfinches. This species has expanded greatly in the Wildcat Hills in the last five years. We caught only six Lesser Goldfinches in 2010 and none from 2007-2009. Among our Lesser Goldfinch captures this year was an adult female with a brood patch, confirming that the species is now breeding in the area. Eighteen birds captured in 2011 were recaptures, including 12 birds from 2010. This new high number of recaptures included five Black-capped Chickadees, five Red Crossbills, four Spotted Towhees, and four Chipping Sparrows.

The complete list of species and individuals banded during 2011 is as follows:

Downy Woodpecker- 2
Hairy Woodpecker- 3
Northern "Red-Shafted" Flicker- 1
Western Wood-Pewee- 2
Plumbeous Vireo- 1
Blue-headed Vireo- 1
Red-eyed Vireo- 1
Black-capped Chickadee- 47
Red-breasted Nuthatch- 5
Pygmy Nuthatch- 12
House Wren- 4

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher- 6
Eastern Bluebird- 8
Mountain Bluebird- 1
Orange-crowned Warbler- 7
Yellow Warbler-1
"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler- 6
"Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler- 1
Intermediate Yellow-rumped Warbler-1
Wilson's Warbler- 1
Spotted Towhee- 43
Chipping Sparrow- 245
Clay-colored Sparrow- 1
Vesper Sparrow- 1
"Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow- 12
"Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco- 3
Black-headed Grosbeak- 1
Lazuli Bunting- 6
Cassin's Finch- 2
House Finch- 16
Red Crossbill- 153
Pine Siskin- 44
Lesser Goldfinch- 45
American Goldfinch- 52

Kearney Fall Field Days

The 2011 NOU Fall Field Days were held at the Iain Nicolson Center at the Audubon Rowe Sanctuary southeast of Kearney on September 23-25, and 55 members and friends were in attendance. The meeting was organized by Kent Skaggs.

Field trip destinations included Harlan County Reservoir, led by Kent Skaggs, the Rainwater Basin, led by Paul Dunbar, Bittern's Call WPA and Johnson Lake, led by John Murphy, and Sherman Reservoir, led by Robin Harding and Lanny Randolph. A final tally of 143 species was recorded. Highlights included the Neotropic Cormorants at Harlan County Reservoir and Sherman Reservoir and the numerous Sprague's Pipits at Prairie Dog WPA.

On Friday evening, Paul Dunbar led an informal clinic on digiscoping, with a discussion of cameras, settings, and spotting scopes. On Saturday evening, Dr. Walter Wehjte of the Crane Trust at Wood River presented a program on using GPS transmitters to study Whooping Crane migratory behavior, survival and winter habitat use. He explained how transmitters are used to track the migration of Whooping Cranes from their nesting sites at Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta and the Northwest Territories of Canada to their wintering grounds in Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast of Texas.

NOU Fall Field Days - Rowe Sanctuary

	Adams	Buffalo	Clay	Dawson	Franklin	Gosper	Hamilton	Harlan	Howard	Kearney	Phelps	Sherman
Snow Goose	x							x				
Cackling Goose											x	
Canada Goose	x	x		x					x	x	x	
Wood Duck	x	x	x	x	x			x		x		x
Gadwall			x	x				x				
Mallard	x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x
Blue-winged Teal	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Northern Shoveler	x		x	x						x		
Northern Pintail				x					x	x		x
Green-winged Teal	x		x	x								
Canvasback			x									
Redhead												x
Ruddy Duck		x										
Northern Bobwhite		x							x			x
Ring-necked Pheasant		x		x				x		x	x	
Greater Prairie-Chicken			x		x					x		
Wild Turkey	x	x	x						x	x		x
Pied-billed Grebe			x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
American White Pelican								x			x	
Neotropic Cormorant								x				x
Double-crested Cormorant		x		x				x				x
American Bittern	x		x									
Least Bittern			x									
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x	x			x		x		x
Great Egret								x				
Snowy Egret								x				
Cattle Egret				x				x				
Green Heron								x				
Black-crowned Night-Heron	x		x	x				x				
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron			x									
White-faced Ibis			x							x		x
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x		x		x	x			x
Osprey								x				
Bald Eagle		x		x				x				x
Northern Harrier	x		x		x		x			x	x	
Sharp-shinned Hawk			x	x	x			x	x	x	x	
Cooper's Hawk	x		x	x				x		x		

	Adams	Buffalo	Clay	Dawson	Franklin	Gosper	Hamilton	Harlan	Howard	Kearney	Phelps	Sherman
Swainson's Hawk	x		x						x		x	
Red-tailed Hawk	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Ferruginous Hawk										x		
Golden Eagle		x										
American Kestrel	x		x	x	x				x	x		x
Merlin					x			x		x		
Prairie Falcon												x
Sora			x					x	x			
American Coot		x	x	x		x		x		x		x
Black-bellied Plover			x	x								
American Golden-Plover	x											
Semipalmated Plover				x								
Killdeer		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Solitary Sandpiper	x	x	x									
Greater Yellowlegs		x	x	x						x		
Lesser Yellowlegs	x	x	x	x							x	
Sanderling	x		x									
Semipalmated Sandpiper			x									
Least Sandpiper	x		x	x							x	
Baird's Sandpiper	x											
Pectoral Sandpiper	x		x	x							x	
Stilt Sandpiper	x		x	x								
Long-billed Dowitcher	x		x	x								
Wilson's Snipe	x		x	x						x	x	
Wilson's Phalarope				x				x				
Franklin's Gull	x	x				x		x				x
Ring-billed Gull				x		x		x				x
Caspian Tern												x
Forster's Tern								x				
Rock Pigeon	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Eastern Screech-Owl	x	x							x			
Great Horned Owl		x	x						x	x		x
Burrowing Owl			x							x		
Chimney Swift	x								x	x		

NOU Fall Field Days - Rowe Sanctuary

	Adams	Buffalo	Clay	Dawson	Franklin	Gosper	Hamilton	Harlan	Howard	Kearney	Phelps	Sherman
Ruby-throated Hummingbird										x		
Belted Kingfisher	x	x	x					x	x	x		x
Red-headed Woodpecker		x		x				x	x	x		x
Red-bellied Woodpecker		x						x	x			
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		
Hairy Woodpecker	x	x						x	x			x
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x
Olive-sided Flycatcher								x				
Eastern Wood-Pewee		x						x				
Eastern Phoebe		x										
Say's Phoebe		x										
Warbling Vireo	x											
Red-eyed Vireo	x								x			
Blue Jay	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Black-billed Magpie		x										
American Crow		x						x	x	x		x
Horned Lark				x	x					x		
Tree Swallow			x		x							
N. Rough-winged Swallow		x			x							
Bank Swallow					x							
Cliff Swallow					x							
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
Black-capped Chickadee		x										
White-breasted Nuthatch		x						x	x	x		
Rock Wren			x									
House Wren		x	x						x			
Marsh Wren			x									
Ruby-crowned Kinglet									x			
Eastern Bluebird		x						x	x	x		
American Robin	x	x	x		x			x	x	x		x
Gray Catbird		x	x						x	x		
Brown Thrasher		x							x			
European Starling	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
American Pipit			x	x								
Sprague's Pipit										x		
Cedar Waxwing	x	x						x	x	x		

Orange-crowned Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 Wilson's Warbler
 Spotted Towhee
 Chipping Sparrow
 Clay-colored Sparrow
 Field Sparrow
 Vesper Sparrow
 Lark Sparrow
 Lark Bunting
 Savannah Sparrow
 Grasshopper Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Swamp Sparrow
 White-throated Sparrow
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Northern Cardinal
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting
 Dickcissel
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Western Meadowlark
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Brewer's Blackbird
 Common Grackle
 Great-tailed Grackle
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 House Finch
 American Goldfinch
 House Sparrow

Total species 143

Adams	Buffalo	Clay	Dawson	Franklin	Gosper	Hamilton	Harlan	Howard	Kearney	Phelps	Sherman
x	x	x					x	x	x		x
								x			
x	x		x				x	x			
x	x	x						x			
								x	x		
	x						x				
	x			x		x	x				x
x	x	x							x		
	x										
x	x	x		x					x	x	
									x		
		x									
x	x	x	x	x					x	x	
x		x							x		
x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x
x	x	x	x								
x	x						x	x	x		
	x										
										x	
								x			
x	x	x							x		x
x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x
x			x				x			x	
			x								
x	x						x	x	x		x
x	x						x				
x	x	x							x	x	
	x						x	x			
x	x	x					x	x		x	x
x	x	x			x		x				
65	70	71	51	29	12	6	57	50	59	28	41

Index to Volume 79

- Ahlschwede, Carla 71
 Allen, Edward 83
 Allison, Scott 32
 Alsop, FJ 36
 American Ornithologists' Union 109-110
 Anderson, BW 36
 Arkansas Audubon Society 36
 Avocet, American 55, 68, 73, 89, 125
- Baasch, Dave 114
 Babcock, Colleen 32
 Bachel, Elaine 32, 47, 119
 Backer, Gordy 32
 Backland, Doug 109
 Barksdale, Tim 48
 Barta, Dina 114
 Barth, Roland 9, 71
 Bedows, Elliott 8, 32, 33
 Behring, Phyllis 33
 Bent, AC 36
 Bentzinger, Ruth 32, 33
Birds of Nebraska 60
 Bittern,
 American 51, 68, 86, 122, 144
 Least 51, 82, 86, 123, 144
 Blackbird,
 Brewer's 19, 30-31, 67, 98, 135, 147
 Red-winged 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 98, 134, 147
 Rusty 19, 30, 66, 135
 Yellow-headed 19, 20, 30, 67, 70, 78, 98, 135, 147
 Blankenau, Laurine 32, 48
 Bluebird,
 Eastern 16, 28-29, 61, 76, 95, 130, 143, 146
 Mountain 16, 28-29, 61, 95, 130, 143
 Bly, Bartholomew 139-140
 Bobolink 67, 70, 78, 98, 134
 Bobwhite, Northern 11, 20, 22-23, 50, 69, 86, 122, 144
 Bogardus, Rob 120
 Bohbrin, Shona 114
 Boren, Matt 32
 Boyce, Bob 32
 Boyd, Molly 32
 Brant 46, 49
Branta bernicla
 bernicla 49
 nigricans 49
 Bray, Tanya E. 69
 Breckbill, Anita 71
 Brees, Aaron 109
- Brockmoller, Norma 48
 Brogie,
 Ben 32
 Ed 32, 47, 83
 Ellen 69
 Mark 9, 32, 48, 69, 71, 84, 99, 109, 110, 114, 120, 137, 141
 Brown,
 James 114
 Linda 9, 32
 Mary Bomberger 32, 48, 84, 114
 S 140
Bubo virginianus subarcticus 127
 Budgerigar 118, 126
 Bufflehead 11, 22-23, 50, 122
 Bunting,
 Indigo 66, 70, 78, 98, 134, 147
 Lark 65, 97, 133, 147
 Lazuli 66, 98, 134, 142-143
 Snow 5, 7, 17, 20, 28-29, 102, 131
- Canvasback 10, 20, 22-23, 49, 85, 121, 144
 Caracara, Crested 124
 Cardinal, Northern 19, 30-31, 39, 66, 70, 78, 97, 134, 147
 Carlini, John 8, 32, 47, 84, 120
 Carnes, Ken 3, 120
 Catbird, Gray 61, 70, 76, 95, 131, 146
 Chamberlin, Charles 109
 Chapman, Doug 8
 Chat, Yellow-breasted 65, 68, 77, 96, 132
 Chickadee, Black-capped 15-16, 20, 28-29, 60, 70, 76, 94, 118, 130, 136, 142, 146
 Christiansen, Donna 32
 Chuck-will's-widow 58, 82, 91
 Clark, Virginia 9, 48, 84, 109
 Clausen, Mary 120
 Cohen, Kathy 47
 Conrey, Reesa Yale 140
 Cooper, Chuck 47
 Coot, American 13, 20, 24-25, 53, 69, 73, 88, 124, 145
 Corman, TE 36
 Cormorant,
 Double-crested 12, 25, 51, 69, 72, 86, 107, 122, 144
 Neotropic 86, 103, 107, 122, 143, 144
 Counties
 Adams 14, 39, 52, 63, 144-147
 Antelope 11, 49, 50, 51, 56, 58, 59, 63, 65, 66, 67, 72-78, 93

Index to Volume 79

Counties, continued

Banner 88, 93, 95, 96, 97, 130, 135, 140
Boone 17, 57, 63, 72-78
Boyd 128
Brown 64, 94, 130
Buffalo 15, 41, 49, 53, 54, 55, 128, 130, 134, 144-147
Burt 127
Butler 11, 13
Cass 10, 12, 19, 50, 51, 68, 90, 125, 126, 133
Cedar 6, 42, 49, 50, 51, 54, 91, 92, 95, 104
Chase 86, 96, 98, 105, 108
Cherry 59, 86, 87, 89, 93, 97, 98
Cheyenne 50, 140
Clay 5, 17, 39, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 103, 106, 121, 123, 125, 127, 133, 134, 144-147
Colfax 15, 53, 62, 72-78
Cuming 18, 48, 49, 57, 60, 67, 72-78
Custer 15, 39, 55, 58, 59, 65, 87, 122
Dakota 52, 57, 58, 62, 82, 86, 89, 90, 123, 125, 127
Dawes 67, 95, 106, 108
Dawson 13, 56, 93, 144-147
Dixon 11, 12, 17, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 72-78, 92, 127, 128, 132, 133, 135
Dodge 3, 13, 40, 50, 88, 125
Douglas 11, 42, 49, 52, 53, 57, 64, 65, 68, 92, 107, 112, 121, 122, 124, 129, 131, 134
Dundy 59, 64, 85
Fillmore 19, 50, 52, 67, 90, 98, 104, 107
Franklin 15, 50, 144-147
Frontier 12, 15, 93, 96, 98
Gage 17, 54, 60
Garden 5, 95, 96, 98, 104, 105, 106, 108
Garfield 94, 95
Gosper 56, 144-147
Grant 64
Hall 9, 13, 42, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53, 60, 63, 94, 122, 124, 127, 131, 132
Hamilton 52, 133, 144-147
Harlan 55, 85, 96, 122, 129, 144-147
Holt 12, 87, 89, 94
Howard 63, 131, 144-147
Jefferson 87, 93, 95, 133
Johnson 10, 57, 61, 105

Counties, continued

Kearney 17, 18, 19, 57, 90, 123, 124, 131, 144-147
Keith 6, 10, 96, 103, 108
Keya Paha 92, 94, 95
Kimball 54, 61, 62, 65, 66, 67, 88, 89, 98, 130, 131, 135, 139-140
Knox 5, 55, 57, 61, 62, 71, 72-78, 88, 93, 107, 108, 124, 125, 128, 129, 141
Lancaster 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 19, 39, 40, 46, 49, 50, 51, 55, 60, 64, 65, 66, 91, 95, 99, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 121, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137
Lincoln 11, 14, 16, 17, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 66, 82, 91, 93, 94, 96, 103, 104, 106, 107, 109, 121, 122, 123, 126, 134
Loup 107, 113, 127
Madison 5, 63, 64, 65, 67, 72-78, 91
McPherson 50, 133
Merrick 59, 98, 122, 131
Morrill 15, 53, 56, 61, 65, 88, 96, 98, 122, 123
Nance 133
Nemaha 33
Otoe 17, 51, 57, 58, 66, 94, 98, 132
Pawnee 52, 62, 86, 87, 96
Perkins 87
Phelps 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 104, 131, 144-147
Pierce 17, 72-78, 121, 135
Platte 51, 61, 72-78, 96, 124, 129, 131
Polk 62, 91
Richardson 130, 133
Rock 61
Saline 17, 65, 123, 127, 129
Sarpy 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 19, 40, 41, 49, 50, 51, 52, 57, 60, 63, 64, 68, 69, 89, 90, 104, 124, 125, 134
Saunders 49, 51, 52, 65, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 98, 103, 121, 123
Scotts Bluff 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 40, 49, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 66, 67, 87, 88, 91, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 105, 106, 108, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 132, 134, 142
Seward 55, 91, 98, 103, 124, 135
Sheridan 19, 67, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 104
Sherman 108, 113, 121, 122, 123, 126, 131, 133, 144-147

Index to Volume 79

- Counties, continued
 Sioux 64, 65, 92, 96, 98, 106, 131, 132
 Stanton 59, 65, 72-78
 Thayer 129
 Thomas 67, 91
 Thurston 58
 Valley 98
 Washington 11, 56, 58, 59, 63, 67, 94, 105, 122, 124, 125
 Wayne 17, 72-78, 95
 Webster 52, 127
 Wheeler 15, 17, 55, 66
 York 13, 14, 55, 56, 64, 67, 91, 93, 133, 134
- Cowbird, Brown-headed 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 98, 135, 147
- Crane,
 Common 46, 53, 54, 103, 104
 Hooded 46, 53-54
 Sandhill 13, 53, 54, 73, 88, 107, 118, 124
 Whooping 54, 107-108, 124, 141
- Crawford-Rose, Kathleen 8, 33, 47
- Creepers, Brown 16, 28-29, 60, 94, 130
- Crossbill, Red 19, 30-31, 67, 98, 135, 142-143
- Crow, American 15, 28-29, 59, 70, 75, 93, 129, 146
- Cuckoo,
 Black-billed 57, 74, 91, 126
 Yellow-billed 57, 69, 74, 91, 126
- Cummings, Verne 33
- Cunningham, George 109
- Curlew, Long-billed 55, 89, 125
- Curtis, Tony 32
- Cvetas, Matthew 120
- Davidson, Deb 32
- Davies, Alan 37
- Dean, Bruce 109
- Deeds, Linda 8, 48, 120
- DeGarmo, Alex 8
- DeLara, Kathy 4, 8, 33, 48, 84, 114, 120
- DeMory, Megan 139-140
- DiBernard, Barbara 32
- Dickcissel 66, 70, 78, 82, 98, 134, 147
- Dietrich, Roger 6, 9, 48, 84, 109
- Dinan,
 JJ 114
 Kenny 8
 Lauren 112
- Dinsmore, Stephen 9, 32, 109
- Dooley, Sean 37
- Dove,
 Eurasian Collared- 14, 20, 26-27, 57, 69, 74, 91, 103, 126, 145
 Mourning 7, 14, 26-27, 57, 69, 74, 91, 126, 145
 Rock (see Pigeon, Rock)
 White-winged 57, 74, 91, 126
- Dowitcher,
 Long-billed 56, 90, 125, 145
 Short-billed 56, 69, 90, 125
- Drahota, Jeff 84, 109
- Drawbaugh,
 Dean 33
 Phyllis 33
- Ducey, Jim 36, 69, 114, 120
- Duck,
 American Black 10, 121
 Long-tailed 11, 20, 22-23, 121
 Ring-necked 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121
 Ruddy 7, 11, 22-23, 50, 69, 72, 86, 122, 144
 Wood 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121, 144
- Ducks Unlimited 36
- Duey, Ann 8, 33, 40, 47, 119
- Dunbar, Paul 6, 9, 39, 48, 84, 109, 120, 143
- Dunlin 55, 125
- Duresky, John 33
- Dyche, Keith 8, 32, 109
- Dykstra, Curtis 8
- Eades,
 Jamie 32
 Rick 4, 9, 32, 48, 84, 120
- Eagle,
 Bald 12, 24-25, 52, 69, 73, 87, 112-114, 123, 144
 Golden 12, 24-25, 52, 88, 124, 145
- Egret,
 Cattle 51, 73, 87, 123, 144
 Great 51, 69, 72, 82, 86, 123, 144
 Snowy 51, 69, 73, 82, 86, 123, 144
- Einemann, Larry 8, 32, 40, 48, 84, 109, 120, 136-138
- Esau, Belle 32
- Fahrenkrog, Krystal 33
- Falco columbarius richardsonii* 124
- Falcon,
 Peregrine 3, 13, 52, 71, 73, 88, 124
 Prairie 13, 24-25, 52, 88, 124, 145

Index to Volume 79

- Falk, Laurence 48, 84, 120
 Falzgraf, Nelli 33
 Farrar, J 114
 Favinger, Jay 109
 Ferris,
 Gail 114
 Stan 114
 Fields, Jeff 33
 Finch, Betsy 8
 Finch,
 Cassin's 67, 106, 135, 142-143
 House 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 98, 135,
 142-143, 147
 Purple 19, 30-31, 67, 135
 Fink, Bill 8, 47, 83
 Fitch,
 HS 36
 VR 36
 Flack, William 9, 41, 48, 71, 84, 109,
 120
 Flicker,
 Northern 15, 26-27, 58, 70, 74, 92,
 128, 142, 146
 "Red-shafted" 27, 128, 142
 Floyd, Ted 84
 Flycatcher,
 Acadian 58, 70, 82, 92, 128
 Alder 58, 75, 92
 Cordilleran 58, 93, 128
 Dusky 93, 102, 128
 Great Crested 59, 70, 75, 93, 128
 Hammond's 92, 102, 128
 Least 58, 70, 75, 92, 128
 Olive-sided 58, 70, 128, 146
 Scissor-tailed 41, 59, 82, 93, 129
 Willow 58, 70, 75, 92, 128
 Yellow-bellied 58, 75, 92, 128
 Fryda, Nic 114
 Furman, Andrew 132
- Gadwall 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121,
 144
 Gallinule, Common 53, 88
 Gannon, Tom 48, 84
 Garganey 107
 Geluso, Keith 84
 Gerten,
 Bob 8, 39, 47, 83, 119
 Kathi 8, 32, 47, 83
 Gill, R 140
 Gilles, Diane 47
 Glomski, Dan 32
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray 3, 61, 70, 76, 95,
 130, 135, 142-143
- Godwit,
 Hudsonian 55
 Marbled 55, 89, 125
 Goldeneye,
 Barrow's 11, 107, 122
 Common 11, 22-23, 50, 85, 122
 Goldfinch,
 American 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 99,
 135, 142-143, 147
 Lesser 67, 82, 99, 106, 118, 135, 142-
 143
 Goose,
 Cackling 9, 20, 22-23, 49, 85, 121,
 144
 Canada 9, 20, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85,
 121, 144
 Greater White-fronted 9, 22-23, 48, 85,
 121
 Ross's 9, 22-23, 49, 85, 121
 Snow 9, 13, 22-23, 49, 72, 85, 121,
 144
 Goracke, Brad 114
 Goshawk, Northern 12, 20, 24-25, 52,
 107, 123
 Grackle,
 Common 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 98,
 135, 147
 Great-tailed 19, 30-31, 67, 78, 98, 135,
 147
 Grebe,
 Clark's 12, 24-25, 51, 86, 122
 Eared 12, 25, 51, 69, 72, 86, 122
 Horned 7, 12, 24-25, 50, 122
 Pied-billed 11-12, 20, 24-25, 50, 69,
 72, 86, 122, 144
 Red-necked 7, 12, 24-25, 51, 118, 122
 Western 7, 12, 20, 24-25, 51, 69, 72,
 86, 122
 Green, Ruth 69
 Gregory, Cory 83, 109
 Grenon,
 Alan 110-111
 Betty 8, 33, 68, 71
 Grosbeak,
 Black-headed 66, 68, 78, 97, 134, 142-
 143
 Black-headed x Rose-breasted 41
 Blue 66, 70, 78, 97, 134, 147
 Evening 67, 106
 Rose-breasted 66, 70, 78, 97, 134,
 147
 Grouse, Sharp-tailed 11, 20, 50, 72, 86,
 122
 Grundman, Jonas 47, 84
 Grzybowski, Joseph 54

Index to Volume 79

- Gubanyi, Joe 32, 47, 84, 109, 111, 120
 Gucciardo, Suzanne 32
 Guild, Sue 32
 Gull,
 Bonaparte's 13, 26, 56, 126
 California 13, 26-27, 56, 90, 108, 126
 Franklin's 13, 56, 69, 74, 90, 126, 145
 Glaucous 14, 27, 57, 126
 Great Black-backed 14, 27, 46, 57, 108, 126
 Herring 14, 26-27, 56, 90, 126
 Kelp 37
 Laughing 46, 56, 107
 Lesser Black-backed 6, 14, 26-27, 56-57, 126
 Little 102
 Mew 13, 126
 Ring-billed 6, 13, 26-27, 56, 69, 74, 90, 126, 145
 Ross's 6, 7, 13, 104
 Sabine's 126
 Thayer's 14, 26-27, 56, 126
 Gyrfalcon 102
 Gyrzbowski, Joseph 47
- Hague, Michael 120
 Hain, Jerry 47
 Hajda, Tim 9, 32, 38, 48, 84, 109, 120
 Hall, John 8, 47, 84, 120
 Hamer, Russ 114
 Hamilton,
 Luke 9, 32, 33, 48, 84, 109, 120
 Roger 32, 33
 Hansen,
 Dave 114
 Mathew 32
 Harding, Robin 9, 32, 48, 84, 120, 143
 Harrier, Northern 4, 12, 20, 24-25, 52, 73, 87, 123, 144
 Harrington, B 140
 Hatfield, Blake 32
 Hausman, Bob 32
 Hawekotte, Nancy 33
 Hawk,
 Broad-winged 52, 69, 71, 73, 88, 123
 Cooper's 12, 24-25, 42, 52, 69, 71, 73, 87, 123, 144
 Ferruginous 12, 24-25, 52, 88, 124, 145
 Red-shouldered 12, 20, 25, 52, 88, 123
 Red-tailed 12, 24-25, 52, 69, 71, 73, 88, 124, 145
 Harlan's 52
 Hawk, continued
 Rough-legged 12, 20, 24-25, 52, 124
 Sharp-shinned 12, 24-25, 52, 69, 71, 87, 123, 144
 Swainson's 52, 69, 73, 88, 124, 145
 Heaney, Carr 119
 Heckman, Alice 32
 Heidt, Dave 8, 32, 71, 83
 Herhahn, Nancy 48
 Heron,
 Great Blue 12, 24-25, 51, 69, 72, 86, 123, 144
 Green 5, 51, 69, 73, 87, 123, 144
 Little Blue 51, 82, 86-87, 123
 Herrell, Charlotte 33
 Hickey, C 140
 Hitchcock Nature Center Hawkwatch 71
 Hoge,
 Glen 47, 83, 119
 Wanda 47, 83, 119
 Holliday, Kevin 114
 Holmquist, Jill 8
 Hoppe, Paula 48, 84
 Hopps, Eric 33-36
 Hubbard, Anne 33
 Huddle, Julie 32
 Hughson, Helen K. 47, 84, 120
 Hummingbird,
 Broad-tailed 92, 127
 Calliope 127
 Ruby-throated 40, 58, 69, 74, 92, 127, 146
 Rufous 92, 118, 127
 Humpert, M 140
 Hunter, WC 36
 Huntley, C. W. (Bill) 32, 47
 Huser, Bill 8, 33, 47, 83, 109, 119
- Ibis,
 Glossy 51, 82, 87, 103-104, 123
 Glossy x White-faced 51
 White-faced 51, 87, 123, 144
 Iriyama, Rie 33
 Irwin, DE 111
- Jaeger, Long-tailed 103, 105
 Janzen, Pete 9
 Jay,
 Blue 15, 28-29, 59, 70, 75, 93, 129, 146
 Pinyon 15, 59, 93, 129
 Jenniges, Jim 47, 84

Index to Volume 79

- Jensen,
 Kent 109
 Rita 9
 Johnsgard, Paul 32
 Johnson,
 Allison 32
 Ann 47
 Ingrid 33
 Jan 5, 32, 47, 71, 84, 120
 Gail 84, 120
 Michelle 32
 Richard 32
 Steve 48
 Jorgensen, Joel G 3, 5, 6, 8, 32, 36, 47,
 84, 109, 111, 112, 114, 120, 140, 141
 Junco, Dark-eyed 18, 30-31, 66, 134,
 143
 "Cassiar" 66
 Gray-headed 7, 19, 31, 66
 Oregon 18, 30-31, 66, 134, 143
 Oregon x Slate-colored 66
 Pink-sided 18, 30-31, 66, 134
 Slate-colored 18, 30-31, 66, 134
 White-winged 18, 66, 97, 134
Junco hyemalis cismontanus 66
- Kasperek, Kristin 32
 Kenitz, Alice 8, 33, 47, 83, 119
 Kestrel, American 12, 24-25, 52, 69, 73,
 88, 124, 145
 Killdeer 13, 24-25, 53, 69, 73, 82, 89,
 124, 145
 Kingbird,
 Cassin's 59, 93, 128
 Eastern 59, 70, 75, 93, 129
 Western 59, 70, 75, 93, 128
 Kingfisher, Belted 14, 26-27, 58, 70, 74,
 92, 127, 146
 Kinglet,
 Golden-crowned 16, 28-29, 61, 130
 Ruby-crowned 7, 16, 29, 40, 61, 70,
 130, 146
 Kite,
 Mississippi 4, 52, 73, 82, 87, 118,
 123
 White-tailed 109
 Kittiwake, Black-legged 6, 13, 56, 104
 Kizer, Lanny 109
 Klaphake,
 Bette 32
 Clem 8, 32, 33, 47, 68, 83, 109, 119,
 137
 Kliewer, Sharon 48
 Knaggs, Rodger 32
- Knopf, FL 140
 Knot, Red 102, 125
 Knott, Tim 32
 Kock, Michele 32
 Komar, Nick 37
 Kovanda,
 Jim 32, 33, 47
 Sandy 32, 33, 47
 Kruse,
 Anne 32
 Ron 32
 Kuper, Catherine 32
 Kusak, Ray 32
- Labedz, Thomas 32, 48, 84, 120
 Lackey, Jeanine 8, 47, 114, 120
 Lacy, Keith 4, 39
 Lamphere, Steve 33
 Lark, Horned 15, 28-29, 59, 70, 75, 93,
 129, 146
 Lassek, Terry 33
 Lawson, Roger 9, 32, 84, 120
 Lazarczyk, Jerry 109
 Leger, Dan 5, 8, 32, 47, 109, 119
 Lehner, Urban 33, 71
 Leising, Amy 33
 Lewis, Denise 109
 Liske-Clark, Jill 47
 Leonhardt, Dwain 32
 Leonard, Nancy 71
 Lindvall, Mark 114
 Lionberger,
 James 32
 Ruth 32
 Liske-Clark, Jill 8
 Longspur,
 Chestnut-collared 62, 95, 102, 131
 Lapland 17, 28-29, 59, 61, 102, 131
 McCown's 62, 95, 102, 131
 Smith's 62, 102, 118, 131, 141
 Loon,
 Common 7, 11, 24-25, 50, 86, 122
 Pacific 122
 Red-throated 46, 50
 Lovebird, Rosy-faced 118, 126
 Luedtke, Scott 114
 Lutter, Tucker 33, 48
- Magpie, Black-billed 15, 20, 28-29, 59,
 75, 93, 129, 130, 146
 Mallard 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121,
 144
 Manning, Robert 120

Index to Volume 79

- Martin, David 47
 Martin, Purple 59, 70, 75, 93-94, 129
 Maschman, Curtis 114
 Mattix, Sue 32, 33
 McCartney, Connie 8, 32
 McCarty, John 114
 McKinney, Brad 109
 Meadowlark,
 Eastern 19, 67, 70, 78, 98, 134
 Western 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 98,
 134, 147
 Mecko, Veronica 32
 Mellberg, Bruce 32
 Mengel, RM 36
 Merganser,
 Common 11, 22-23, 50, 86, 122
 Hooded 11, 22-23, 50, 72, 85, 122
 Red-breasted 11, 22-23, 50, 122
 Merlin 13, 24-25, 52, 71, 88, 124, 145
 Meyer, Jim 32
 Miller,
 Jeanne 120
 Ruth 37
 Mockingbird, Northern 17, 28-29, 61,
 76, 95, 131
 Molini, Pat 114
 Mollhoff, Wayne 32, 36, 48, 71, 84, 109,
 111, 120
 Morris, Steve 9, 32, 42, 48, 120
 Mort, Russ 114
 Mountjoy, Jim 109
 Mulliken, Jerry 109, 136
 Murphy, John 143

 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 36, 112, 140
 Negus, Lucas 114
 Nelson,
 Brian 83
 Burton 83
 Greg 32, 33
 Nemecek, Mary 109
 Nenneman, Melvin 114
 Neuman, Greg 120
 Nighthawk, Common 57, 74, 91, 127
 Night-Heron,
 Black-crowned 7, 12, 20, 24-25, 42,
 51, 87, 123, 144
 Yellow-crowned 51, 87, 123, 144
 Niyo, Kay 32, 48
 Noecker
 Colleen 8, 32, 47
 Don 8, 32, 47
 NOU Records Committee 99-111, 137

 Nuthatch,
 Brown-headed 7, 16, 20, 29, 40, 100,
 105, 136-138
 Pygmy 16, 28-29, 60, 94, 130, 136,
 138, 142
 Red-breasted 16, 28-29, 60, 76, 94,
 130, 136, 138, 142
 White-breasted 16, 28-29, 60, 70, 76,
 94, 130, 138, 146

 Obmascik, Mark 37
 Ochsner, Jim 8, 47, 120
 Ohmart, RD 36
Oreothlypis celata orestera 131
 Oriole,
 Baltimore 67, 70, 78, 98, 135
 Bullock's 67, 98, 135
 Orchard 67, 70, 78, 98, 135
 Orr, Vicky 32
 Osprey 52, 68, 73, 82, 87, 123, 144
 Ovenbird 62, 70, 76, 95, 131
 Owl,
 Barn 57, 91, 126
 Barred 14, 26-27, 57, 69, 74, 91, 127
 Burrowing 57, 91, 118, 127, 131, 145
 Eastern Screech- 14, 26-27, 57, 74, 91,
 127, 145
 Great Horned 14, 26-27, 57, 69, 91,
 127, 145
 Long-eared 4, 14, 26-27, 57, 91, 127
 Northern Saw-whet 14, 20, 26, 71, 108,
 127
 Short-eared 14, 26-27, 57, 91, 127
 Snowy 14, 118, 127

 Padelford,
 Babs 8, 33, 41, 48, 69, 84, 120
 Loren 8, 33, 48, 84, 109, 120
 Panella MJ 114
 Parakeet, Monk 14
 Partridge, Gray 11, 50, 86, 122
 Parula, Northern 63, 70, 96, 108, 132
 Paseka,
 Don 8, 20, 32, 33, 47, 71, 83, 119
 Janis 8, 32, 33, 47, 71, 83, 119
 Pelican, American White 12, 24-25, 51,
 72, 86, 122, 144
 Pester, Theresa 48
 Petersen,
 Jim 32
 Marcia 32
 Peyton, Mark 84

Index to Volume 79

- Phalarope,
 Red 46, 56, 126
 Red-necked 56, 68, 74, 90, 126
 Wilson's 56, 69, 74, 90, 126, 145
Pheasant, Ring-necked 11, 22-23, 39,
 50, 69, 72, 86, 122, 144
Phoebe,
 Eastern 59, 70, 75, 93, 128, 146
 Say's 59, 75, 93, 128, 146
Pierson, Andrew 8, 47
Pigeon, Rock 14, 20, 26-27, 57, 69, 74,
 91, 126, 145
Pintail, Northern 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 85,
 121, 144
Pipit,
 American 61, 70, 131, 146
 Sprague's 61, 131, 143, 146
Plegadis ibises 7, 12, 42
Plock, Linda 32
Plover,
 American Golden- 54, 68, 88, 118,
 124, 145
 Black-bellied 54, 88, 124, 145
 Mountain 54, 89, 124, 139-140
 Piping 5, 54, 69, 82, 88-89, 90, 124
 Semipalmated 54, 69, 88, 124, 145
 Snowy 54, 88
Poague, Kevin 32, 48, 71, 84
Poorwill, Common 57, 91, 127
Potter, EF 36
Prairie-Chicken, Greater 11, 22-23, 50,
 72, 86, 122, 144
Preuss, Neva 48
Probst, Jerry 33
Putensen, Kathy 32

Quinn,
 John 32
 Susan 84, 120

Rail,
 Black 88
 King 88, 104
 Virginia 13, 24-25, 52-53, 88, 124
 Yellow 104
Randolph, Lanny 9, 32, 48, 84, 120, 143
Ratzlaff, Neal 5, 33, 48, 84, 120
Reagan,
 Kevin 33
 Rebecca 33
Redhead 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121,
 144
Redpoll, Common 19, 67, 135
Redstart, American 63, 70, 77, 96, 132
Rehme, Sarah 114
Reinken, Sandy 32, 33, 71
Reitan, Ken 32
Renfrow, F 138
Reyer, Al 8, 33, 47, 83, 119
Rice, Juanita 47, 84, 120
Richter, Jean 33
Rink, Justin 8, 32, 47, 69, 84, 109, 120
Ripke, Jessica 32
Robbins, Mark 84
Roberts,
 Christine 114
 Dan 114
 Gary 8, 32, 33, 40, 47, 120
Robin, American 17, 28-29, 61, 70, 76,
 95, 131, 146
Robinson, WD 36
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory 140,
 142
Roisen, Paul 9, 33, 109
Rome, Mary Jo 33
Ropp, Susan 40
Rosche, Richard 97
Rosenberg, KV 36
Rosenthal, Dean 119
Rosy-Finch, Gray-crowned 7, 19, 20, 31,
 135
Ruff 102
Russ, Jules 32
Rutten, Ben 114

Salyards, Phyllis 9
Sanderling 55, 89, 125, 145
Sandpiper,
 Baird's 55, 69, 90, 125, 145
 Buff-breasted 56, 68, 90, 125
 Least 55, 69, 73, 90, 125, 145
 Pectoral 55, 69, 74, 82, 90, 118, 125,
 145
 Semipalmated 55, 69, 90, 125, 145
 Sharp-tailed 104
 Solitary 55, 69, 89, 125, 145
 Spotted 55, 69, 73, 89, 125
 Stilt 56, 90, 125, 145
 Upland 55, 73, 89, 125
 Western 55, 68, 90, 125
 White-rumped 55, 69, 73, 90
Sapsucker,
 Red-naped 128
 Yellow-bellied 7, 15, 26-27, 58, 70,
 128

Index to Volume 79

- Scaup,
 Greater 10, 22-23, 50, 121
 Lesser 10, 22-23, 50, 69, 72, 85, 121
 Schmid, Rick 33, 48, 120
 Schmitt, Steve 33
 Schneider, R 140
 Scholar, Eric 33, 42
 Schukman, John 120
 Schwartz, Shari 9, 32, 48, 84, 120
 Schwery, Kathy 8, 109
 Scoter,
 Black 11, 22-23, 101, 121
 Common 101
 Surf 10, 22-23, 121
 White-winged 10, 22-23, 121
 Seipke, Sergio 84
 Sens, Johns 32
 Sharpe, RS 36, 111, 114, 141
 Shoemaker, Mary Sue 32
 Shoveler, Northern 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 84, 121, 144
 Shrike,
 Loggerhead 5, 15, 26, 59, 70, 75, 93, 129
 Northern 15, 26-27, 59, 129
 Shuster, Ken 3, 40
 Sidle, John 109
 Siegfried, Ruben 33
 Silcock, W. Ross 7, 9, 36, 37, 46, 69, 82, 84, 109, 111, 114, 118, 120, 141
 Siskin, Pine 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 99, 135, 142-143
 Skaggs, Kent 8, 48, 84, 114, 120, 143
 Small, Gary 109
 Smith,
 KG 138
 Patricia 32
 Steve 109
 Snipe, Wilson's 13, 20, 26-27, 56, 74, 90, 125, 145
 Snyder, Larry 140
 Sohl, Terry 109
 Solitaire, Townsend's 16, 28-29, 61, 95, 130
 Sora 53, 69, 73, 88, 124, 145
 Sparrow,
 American Tree 18, 28-29, 65, 133
 Baird's 65, 106
 Brewer's 65, 97, 133
 Cassin's 82, 96, 102, 133
 Chipping 7, 18, 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 142-143, 147
 Clay-colored 7, 18, 29, 65, 70, 77, 133, 143, 147
 Sparrow, continued
 Field 7, 18, 29, 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 147
 Fox 18, 30-31, 65, 133
 "Red" 18
 Grasshopper 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 147
 Harris's 18, 30-31, 66, 70, 78, 134
 Henslow's 65, 97, 133
 House 19, 30-31, 67, 70, 78, 99, 135, 147
 Lark 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 147
 Le Conte's 65, 133
 Lincoln's 31, 66, 70, 77, 133, 147
 Nelson's 65, 133
 Savannah 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 147
 Song 18, 30-31, 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 147
 Swamp 18, 31, 66, 78, 97, 133, 147
 Vesper 65, 70, 77, 97, 133, 143, 147
 White-crowned 18, 30-31, 66, 70, 108, 134, 143, 147
 "Gambel's" 143
 White-throated 18, 30-31, 66, 70, 78, 133, 147
 Spencer, Andrew 37
 Stage, Dave 47, 83, 119
 Starling, European 17, 28-29, 61, 70, 76, 95, 131, 146
 Stearns, Ruth 9, 32, 48, 84, 120, 137
 Steckler, SE 114
 Steinauer, G 140
 Stevenson, April 32
 Stilt, Black-necked 55, 73, 82, 89, 125
 Stoiber,
 Eric 47
 Greg 8
 Stokes,
 Donald 38
 Lillian 38
 Stolen, Justin 33
 Stoner, K 14
 Stringham, Ned 32
 Swallow,
 Bank 60, 70, 75, 94, 129, 146
 Barn 60, 70, 75, 94, 129, 146
 Cliff 60, 70, 75, 94, 129, 146
 Northern Rough-winged 60, 70, 75, 94, 129, 146
 Tree 60, 70, 75, 94, 129, 146
 Violet-green 60, 94, 129
 Swan, Malcolm 9, 109
 Swan,
 Mute 10, 49, 85
 Trumpeter 10, 20, 22-23, 49, 85, 121
 Tundra 49, 121

Index to Volume 79

- Swanson, Phil 33, 40, 48, 109, 120, 137
 Swift,
 Chimney 58, 69, 74, 92, 127, 145
 White-throated 58, 92, 127
- Tanager,
 Scarlet 66, 70, 78, 97, 134
 Summer 33-36, 46, 66, 70, 82, 97,
 108, 134
 Western 37, 66, 97, 134
- Teal,
 Blue-winged 7, 10, 23, 49, 69, 72, 85,
 121, 144
 Cinnamon 49, 85, 121
 Green-winged 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72,
 85, 121, 144
- Tern,
 Black 57, 69, 74, 91, 126
 Caspian 57, 69, 91, 126, 145
 Common 57, 91, 126
 Forster's 57, 69, 91, 126, 145
 Least 57, 69, 74, 82, 90-91, 126
- Terres, JK 36
- Thody, Chris 32
- Thrasher,
 Brown 17, 20, 28, 61, 70, 76, 95, 131,
 146
 Sage 131
- Thrush,
 Gray-cheeked 61, 70, 130
 Hermit 7, 16-17, 20, 28-29, 61, 130
 Swainson's 61, 70, 76, 130
 Varied 105
 Wood 61, 70, 76, 95, 130
- Tickle, Edward 47, 109
- Titmouse, Tufted 16, 28-29, 46, 60, 70,
 94
- Toews, DP 111
- Tolen, Tom 114
- Toll, Jerry 8, 32, 33, 47, 71
- Towhee,
 Eastern 18, 28-29, 65, 70, 77, 96, 133
 Eastern x Spotted 133
 Green-tailed 65
 Spotted 3, 18, 28-29, 65, 77, 96, 133,
 142-143, 147
- Turkey, Wild 11, 22-23, 50, 69, 72, 86,
 122, 144
- Turnstone, Ruddy 55, 125
- Urwiller, Mark 32, 53
- Usasz, Moni 32, 84, 120
- Van Riper, Steve 32, 114
- Veery 61, 70, 76, 130
- VerCauteren, T 140
- Vermivora celata*
 orestera 62
 celata 62
- Vireo,
 Bell's 59, 70, 75, 93, 129
 Blue-headed 59, 70, 129, 142
 Cassin's 93, 129
 Philadelphia 59, 118, 129
 Plumbeous 59, 93, 129, 142
 Red-eyed 59, 70, 75, 93, 129, 142, 146
 Warbling 59, 70, 75, 93, 129, 146
 White-eyed 59, 105
 Yellow-throated 59, 70, 75, 93, 108,
 129
- VonEhewegen, Jerry 33
- Vulture, Turkey 52, 69, 73, 87, 123, 144
- Wagener, Carol 32
- Walgren,
 Bruce 8, 32, 83, 119
 Donna 8, 32, 83, 119
- Walker,
 Jake 47, 84
 Matthew 32, 48, 84
 T. J. 9, 32, 48, 84, 109, 114, 120
- Warbler,
 Bay-breasted 46, 63-64, 70, 77, 132
 Black-and-white 62, 70, 76, 95, 131
 Blackburnian 46, 64, 70, 77, 96, 132
 Blackpoll 64, 70, 77
 Black-throated Blue 64, 132
 Black-throated Gray
 Black-throated Green 64, 70, 132
 Blue-winged 46, 62, 63, 70, 95, 101,
 108, 131
 Canada 64, 77, 132
 Cape May 46, 63, 77, 132
 Cerulean 46, 63, 70, 96, 132
 Chestnut-sided 46, 63, 64, 70, 77, 132
 Connecticut 63, 68
 Golden-winged 46, 62, 70, 108
 Hermit 103, 105
 Hooded 63, 70
 Kentucky 46, 63, 70, 82, 95, 132
 MacGillivray's 63, 132
 Magnolia 46, 63, 64, 70, 77, 132
 Mourning 63, 70, 77, 132
 Nashville 63, 70, 76, 102, 131, 147
 Orange-crowned 62, 70, 76, 95, 102,
 131, 143, 147

Index to Volume 79

- Warbler, continued
Palm 40, 46, 64, 70, 132
Pine 64, 106, 132
Prothonotary 62, 70, 76, 95
Tennessee 62, 70, 76, 102, 131
Townsend's 132
Virginia's 102
Wilson's 7, 17, 65, 70, 77, 96, 132, 143, 147
Yellow 64, 70, 77, 96, 132, 143
Yellow-rumped 17, 20, 28-29, 64, 70, 77, 132, 143, 147
Audubon's 64, 96, 132, 143
Audubon's x Myrtle 143
Myrtle 17, 64, 132, 143
Yellow-throated 64, 70, 96, 132
Warrick, Gordon 3, 109
Waterthrush,
Louisiana 62, 70, 95, 102, 131
Northern 46, 62, 70, 76, 102, 131
Waxwing,
Bohemian 17, 28
Cedar 17, 28-29, 61, 70, 76, 95, 131, 146
Wehtje, Walter 48, 143
Weidner, Charlotte 33
Wendorff, Bruce 119
Wessel, Scott 9, 48
West Nile Virus 60
Wheeler, Ben 47, 114
Whimbrel 39, 55
Whip-poor-will,
Eastern 58, 68, 91-92, 101, 127
Mexican 101
Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied 9, 102, 103, 106-107
Whitney,
Ron 9, 48, 84, 120
Susan 9, 48, 84, 120
Wigeon,
American 10, 22-23, 49, 69, 72, 85, 121
Eurasian 49, 68, 69
Wild, Cole 37
Wildcat Hills Nature Center 142-143
Wilhelm, Josh 114
Willet 55, 89, 125
Wilson, SK 114
Winter, Steve 84
Wise-Gervais, C 36
Withgott, JH 138
Wolff,
Jennifer 33
Duane 32, 71
Woodcock, American 56, 90, 125
Woodpecker,
Downy 15, 20, 26-27, 58, 70, 74, 92, 128, 142, 146
Hairy 15, 20, 26-27, 58, 70, 74, 92, 128, 142, 146
Lewis's 92, 128
Pileated 7, 15, 20, 26-27, 58, 70, 92, 128
Red-bellied 15, 26-27, 58, 70, 74, 92, 128, 146
Red-headed 15, 26-27, 39, 58, 70, 74, 92, 128, 146
Wood-Pewee,
Eastern 58, 70, 75, 92, 128, 146
Western 58, 92, 128, 142
Woolley, Colin 109, 119, 142-143
Wooten, Travis 139
Wren,
Bewick's 60, 103
Carolina 16, 29, 60, 70, 94, 130
House 60, 70, 76, 94, 130, 142, 146
Marsh 16, 28-29, 61, 76, 95, 130, 146
Pacific 101
Rock 60, 94, 130, 146
Sedge 3, 61, 70, 76, 94, 95, 130
Winter 16, 20, 28-29, 60, 61, 76, 101, 130
Wright, Rick 9, 48
Wulf, Tyler 33
Wunder, MB 140
Yager, Lisa 112
Yellowlegs,
Greater 13, 20, 24-25, 55, 69, 73, 89, 125, 145
Lesser 55, 69, 89, 125, 145
Yellowthroat, Common 63, 70, 77, 96, 132, 147
Zeillimaker,
Fred 33
Melly 33
Zeutenhorst, Karla 8, 42

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Table of Contents

Fall Field Report, Aug.- Nov. 2011	
by W. Ross Silcock	118
First Documented Nebraska Sighting of Brown-headed Nuthatch	
(<i>Sitta pusilla</i>) by Larry Einemann	136
First Discovery of a Four-egg Clutch for Mountain Plover	
(<i>Charadrius montanus</i>) in Nebraska by Bartholomew L. Bly	
and Travis Wooten	139
Smith's Longspur in Knox County, Nebraska	
by Mark A. Brogie	141
Fall 2011 Bird Banding at Wildcat Hills Nature Center	
by Colin Woolley	142
Kearney Fall Field Days	143
Index to Volume 79	148
Subscription and Organization Information	159