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## Spring Field Report, March–May 2007

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## SPRING FIELD REPORT, March–May 2007

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### INTRODUCTION

Extremes of weather conditions and resulting variation in water conditions were noteworthy this spring. The west was very dry, but the Rainwater Basin had ample rains resulting in excellent breeding conditions for various waterbirds, notably Eared Grebe and American Coot. Shorebird numbers were unremarkable, although there was plenty of variation between species. Indeed, Dunlin, with record numbers, and Ruddy Turnstones were numerous. Arrival dates were pushing early, but not record early. Species earlier than average were American Golden-Plover, Mountain Plover, Black-necked Stilt, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Stilt Sandpiper.

Increasingly associated with wetlands, albeit unrelated to water levels, Greater Prairie-Chicken continued to use grassy margins of wetlands in the Rainwater Basin for lek sites. Leks were also noted in agricultural fields. Use of these habitats suggests ability to adapt and bodes well for the future of this species in southeast Nebraska, where it is also doing very well in its traditional native grassland habitats.

Red-shouldered Hawks are being reported away from the traditional breeding site at Fontenelle Forest, the only site known in the state. Other species continuing range expansions and increasing in numbers are Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Summer Tanager.

It was a fun spring for rarity-seekers, with a putative first state record Zone-tailed Hawk, one of fewer than 5 records on the Great Plains north of the breeding range, a state 7th record Curve-billed Thrasher, found, appropriately, by the state's Non-game Bird Program Manager, and a 9th state record Golden-crowned Sparrow. Lesser highlights, but still major zooties, were Common Crane, Prairie Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and Cape May Warbler.

### ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City;  
BOL: Branched Oak L SRA, Lancaster Co;  
Cem: Cemetery;  
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co;  
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar/Knox Cos;  
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co;  
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos;  
L: Lake;  
LM: L McConaughy SRA, Keith Co;  
LNB: Lakes North and Babcock, Platte Co;  
LO: L Ogallala SRA, Keith Co;  
m.ob.: many observers;  
NC: Nature Center;  
NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee;

NWR: National Wildlife Refuge;  
PL: Pawnee L SRA, Lancaster Co;  
Res: Reservoir;  
RWB: Rainwater Basin; eastern RWB mostly Fillmore, Clay and surrounding counties, western RWB mostly Phelps Co;  
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co;  
SHP: State Historical Park;  
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s);  
SP: State Park;  
SRA: State Recreation Area;  
WMA: Wildlife Management Area (State);  
WPA: Waterfowl Production Area (Federal);  
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, s. Sioux Co.

#### GAZETTEER:

Boyer Chute: NWR, Washington Co;  
Harvard Marsh: WPA, Clay Co;  
Jack Sinn: Memorial WMA, Lancaster and Saunders Cos;  
Kiowa: WMA, Scotts Bluff Co;  
Rowe Sanctuary: Lillian Annette Rowe Bird Sanctuary, Buffalo Co;  
Sandhills: large area of sand prairie and wetlands in central Nebraska;  
Tamora: WMA, Seward Co;  
Valentine NWR: Cherry Co;  
Waco-Spikerush: Waco WPA and Spikerush WMA, York Co;

#### OBSERVERS

AD: Ann Duey, Scottsbluff;  
AEK: Allen E. Kurth, Bellevue;  
AG: Alan Grenon, Seattle, WA;  
AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering;  
ARy: Allen Reyer, Bellevue;  
B&DW: Bruce and Donna Walgren, Casper, WY;  
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City;  
BG: Betty Grenon, Bellevue;  
BH: Brian Hula, Bellevue;  
BN: Brent Nelson, Scottsbluff;  
CB: Charles Brown, Tulsa, OK;  
CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett;  
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue;  
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala;  
D&CN: Don and Colleen Noecker, Albion;  
D&JP: Don and Jan Paseka, Ames;  
DE: Dave Ely, Salem, MA;  
DK: Dan Kim, Wood River;  
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn;  
EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue;  
G&WH: Glen and Wanda Hoge, Alma;  
GW: Gordon Warrick, Blair;

HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell;  
JED: James E. Ducey, Lincoln;  
JF: John Flavin, Chadron;  
JG: Joseph Gubanyi, Seward;  
JGr: Jonas Grundman, Omaha;  
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln;  
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield;  
JLL: Jeanine L. Lackey, Raymond;  
JM: Jeanne Miller, Bennington;  
JP: Jerry Probst, Sioux City, IA;  
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha;  
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha;  
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha;  
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha;  
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell;  
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln;  
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney;  
L&BP: Loren and Babs Padelford, Bellevue;  
L&CF: Laurence and Carol Falk, Nebraska City;  
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney;  
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln;  
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon;  
LS: Larry Snyder, Kimball;  
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton;  
MUs: Moni Usasz, Lincoln;  
NF: Nelli Falzgraf, Bellevue;  
NP: Neva Pruess, Lincoln;  
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings;  
PH: Pat Heller, Louisville, CO;  
PS: Phil Swanson, Papillion;  
RB: Roland Barth, Bellevue;  
RD: Roger Dietrich, Yankton, SD;  
RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln;  
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon;  
RHe: Renae Held, Lincoln, NE;  
RS: Rick Schmid, Bellevue;  
RW: Rick Wright, Tucson, AZ;  
SB: Steve Brown, Colorado Springs, CO;  
SK: Sarah Knutie, Tulsa, OK;  
SR: Sarah Rehme, Seward;  
ST: Scott Taylor, Lincoln;  
TB: Tom Bloom, Apple Valley, MN;  
TF: Tim Fennell, Round Rock, TX;  
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow;  
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady;  
TM: Tracy Morfeld, Valley;  
TP: Theresa Pester, Walton;  
TS: Tom Stehn, Austwell, TX;  
VOB: Valerie O'Brien, Tulsa, OK;  
WF: William Flack, Madison;  
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland;  
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

## SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Routine reports.

**Snow Goose:** Best counts were 350,000 between Gothenburg and Kearney 4 Mar (SB) and 200,000 at Harvard Marsh 16 Mar (PD). Of interest was the composition of the flock of 100,000 near North Platte 8 Mar: 20-30% "Blue Geese", in contrast to the virtual absence of this color morph nearby in the Panhandle as recently as 1990 (TJW, Richard Rosche).

**Ross's Goose:** Best count was a moderate 100 at PL 11 Mar (LE). One in Dakota Co 14 May (BFH) was tardy.

**Cackling Goose:** Best count was the "hundreds" at GPD 8 Mar (RE).

**Canada Goose:** Best tally was the 100,000 between Gothenburg and Kearney 4 Mar (RE). The medium-sized subspecies *interior* is generally thought to occur primarily in eastern Nebraska (*Birds of North America*), and so of interest was the observation by an experienced observer that "*interior* types were common" in central Nebraska 28 Mar (RW). A pair with 9 "fluffballs" was at Gering SL 27 Apr (KD).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Routine reports.

**Tundra Swan:** Three were found at Rowe Sanctuary 4 Mar (SB,KS); this is a rare spring migrant.

**Wood Duck:** The 15 at GPD 9 Mar (MB) were on the early side.

**Gadwall:** Routine reports.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** The only report of this rare, but essentially annual, migrant was rather early in York Co 6 Mar (RE); it is the 26th spring record.

**American Wigeon:** Routine reports.

**Mallard:** Routine reports.

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

**Cinnamon Teal:** Usually 10-12 can be found at Kiowa, and so the amazing 50 there 22 Apr was a surprise, as well as a record count (KD). Easterly were a single at BOL 22 Mar (JGJ), and a hybrid with Blue-winged Teal there 24 Mar (JGJ) and 13 Apr (AG,BG).

**Northern Shoveler:** A rather early brood of 4 ducklings with a hen was in Seward Co 20 May (JG). This is only the 5th report of a brood in the e. RWB since 1990.

**Northern Pintail:** Routine reports.

**Green-winged Teal:** Three at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD) were rather late.

**Canvasback:** Two in Sarpy Co 17 May (CNK) were rather late that far east. Also rather late was one identified as a female at LO 29 May (JM). Best count was a mediocre 200 at BOL 9 Mar (JGJ).

**Redhead:** Best count was a moderate 1000 at BOL 9 Mar ((JGJ). Two in the e. RWB 26 May (JGJ) were suggestive of breeding, which occurs occasionally there.

**Ring-necked Duck:** Routine reports.

**Greater Scaup:** About 13 were reported statewide through 24 Apr, the last a male in Dakota Co (BFH).

**Lesser Scaup:** Last away from breeding areas were a single at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD) and a pair at LO 29 May (JM). Breeding is limited to the western Sandhills.

**Surf Scoter:** Only the 5th spring record with details was a first spring bird at Funk WPA, Phelps Co, 6 May (KS). The 5 records are 29 Apr-15 May.

**White-winged Scoter:** Also rare in spring, only the 23rd and 24th records were a female at GPD 4-9 Mar (RD,MB) and a single at LNB 19 Mar (RE). Both dates are rather early, the GPD bird 3rd earliest.

**Long-tailed Duck:** A surprise location hosted the only one reported: the small pond across the road from Gilbert-Baker WMA, Sioux Co, had a basic male 28 Mar (WF).

**Bufflehead:** Routine reports.

**Common Goldeneye:** A female in Sarpy Co 12 May (CNK) was rather late.

**Hooded Merganser:** Routine reports.

**Common Merganser:** Routine reports.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Routine reports.

**Ruddy Duck:** Nesting is rare in the e. RWB, but 2 pairs at Tamora 20 May (JG) and 2 males displaying to females in York Co 26 May (JGJ) were suggestive.

**Gray Partridge:** The only reports from the main range in the northeast were of a road-killed bird near Brunswick 27 Mar (D&JP) and 2 birds 6 miles ne. of O'Neill 26 May (DSt). The small population in s. Sioux Co is hanging on; 6 were huddled behind a barn at WSR 28 Mar (HKH).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Routine reports.

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

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** This species is doing well in se. Nebraska and is expanding its range by establishing new leks at wetlands surrounded by agricultural lands, as well as in crop fields themselves. It is yet to be seen, however, whether prairie-chickens will adapt to nesting (as opposed to displaying) in nontraditional habitats. But, as noted by Joel Jorgensen, "The Greater Prairie-Chicken story in the Rainwater Basin continues". A lek at Rauscher WPA, Fillmore Co, with 10 birds present 9 Apr continues for its 3rd year (JGJ), and a new lek established in the middle of intensely-farmed countryside at Kirkpatrick Basin South WMA, the first for many years in York Co, had 2 males 18 May (JGJ). Booming was heard at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD), one was at BOL 24 Mar (D&JP), and 6 were at Hultine WPA, Clay Co, 30 Mar (BFH,JP). Farther afield, but still in the southeast, 6 were on a lek 20 Apr in sw. Nuckolls Co in a field of old corn stubble with interplanted wheat (DE); birds have been seen displaying in cornfields in the RWB also (fide JGJ). More traditionally, 6 were just west of SCP 2 Apr, in native prairie (KP), and one was easterly in sandy prairie in extreme sw. Platte Co 20 May (WRS).

**Wild Turkey:** Routine reports.

**Northern Bobwhite:** One at Gering 17 Apr (AK) continues reports of this species' presence throughout the North Platte Valley.

**Common Loon:** Record early was one at HCR 11 Mar (G&WH), and also rather early was a single at BOL 22 Mar (JGJ). A good count was the 7 in alternate plumage at LM 21 Apr (BFH,JP).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Although not record early for the state, 2 in Harlan Co 11 Mar were the observers' earliest ever there (G&WH).

**Horned Grebe:** This species was widely reported 13 Mar-28 Apr, with at least 58 found, including 13 in Knox Co 17 Apr (MB). In addition, a straggler was still in Keith Co 20 May (JM).

**Eared Grebe:** What may be the first records of attempted breeding south and east of the central Sandhills were provided by a pair (2 of 14 birds present) building a nest at Waco-Spikerush, 26 May (JGJ), and one (of 28 present) "exhibiting nesting behavior" similar to that described by Jorgensen at Waco-Spikerush at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD).

**Western Grebe:** The usual spring "thousands" were at LM 20 Apr (BFH,JP), while uncommon eastern sightings were of singles in Douglas Co 28 Apr (JSt), Sarpy Co 12 May (CNK), and at Decatur 24 May (TJW). One in Knox Co 17 Apr (MB) was rather early for the east.

**Clark's Grebe:** Routine reports.

**American White Pelican:** Two at LO 1 Mar (JGJ) were rather early; earliest dates for migrants are in late Feb. Best count was a moderate 500 in Lancaster Co 13 Apr (RE).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** One at Alma SL 18 Mar (G&WH) was rather early, and the 5000 at Wagon Train L, Lancaster Co, 13 Apr (RE) tied the high count for spring. Breeding may be returning to the LM area after an absence of about 60 years; one was on a nest below Kingsley Dam there 28 Apr (MB). Some 40+ were nest-building at a traditional site at Valentine NWR 26 May (TH).

**American Bittern:** Reports were widespread, beginning with one at FF 14 Apr (L&BP). A nest with 6 eggs was photographed at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD); on the same day, an excellent tally of 7 individuals was made (PD). There are very few nesting records for the RWB; this appears to be the first documented.

**Least Bittern:** The only report was of one at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD), where water conditions were good.

**Great Blue Heron:** Several rookeries were reported in the Panhandle (AK,KD,B&DW), but colonies in the east are more unusual; surprising were the 60+ nests along the Platte River in Sarpy Co 6 May where 38 nests were counted 23 Apr (CNK). By 28 Jun the rookery had 120+ birds, including adults and nearly-fledged young (CNK). A rookery with 12 nests near Waverly was unexpected (NP).

**Great Egret:** One in Lancaster Co 2 Apr (KP) was rather early.

**Snowy Egret:** Surprisingly, only one was reported, that at Father Hupp WPA, Thayer Co, 11 May 2007 (JGJ).

**Little Blue Heron:** Although rarely found in spring, usually more than one is reported; this spring the only sighting was of one at FF 15 May (CNK).

**Cattle Egret:** One in Otoe Co 26 Mar (L&CF) was record early by 3 days. Reports were widespread, but numbers low, with only about 50 found.

**Green Heron:** Northwesternmost was one in Lincoln Co 28 Apr (TJW).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Routine reports.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** None were reported; this is a rare spring migrant in the southeast, but with few recent reports

**Glossy Ibis:** Nebraska's 16th record, and only the 3rd report away from the RWB, was one in Sarpy Co 25 May 2007 (EB).

**White-faced Ibis:** A flock of 21 at Harvard Marsh 13 Apr (PD) was rather early. In all, some 75 were reported statewide, although the only report east of the RWB was of 6 near Mead 13 May (D&CN).

**Turkey Vulture:** Routine reports.

**Osprey:** Routine reports.

**Mississippi Kite:** As expected, 3-5 were at Ogallala 20-23 May (CNK,JM), but one in Lancaster Co rather early on 7 May (LE) was a surprise; it is only the 9th spring record away from Keith Co.

**Bald Eagle:** The 40 at HCR 5 Mar (G&WH) was a good count. A nest that was successful in 2006 in Cass Co had an adult present 25 Mar but was abandoned by 1 Jun (CNK).

**Northern Harrier:** The resident pair (since 1999, JT) was seen at Boyer Chute 27 May (WRS). Potentially a local breeder was one at Jack Sinn 12 May (LE).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Routine reports.

**Cooper's Hawk:** This species is becoming rather common as a breeder, even in cities; a nest with 5 eggs was located in Wilderness Park, Lincoln, 24 May (LE,WM), and nest-building was underway in Bellevue 24 Mar (L&BP). Another was carrying prey over Seward 21 May (JG).

**Northern Goshawk:** About par for the spring, the single report was of a female in Knox Co 17 Apr (MB).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Something is happening with this species; extra-limital reports (those away from FF) are increasing. A single bird was seen 3 times 12 Apr-4 May at PL (LE), and another was at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 22 Mar (LE).

**Zone-tailed Hawk:** An amazing first state record (pending NOURC approval) involved sharp-eyed observers noticing one roosting with 6 Turkey Vultures at LO 25 Apr and photographed (CB,VOB,SK; details). It could not be found there 28 Apr among the 28 vultures on the roost (MB).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Only 10 were reported, all from the east, 19 Apr-9 May (m. ob.).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Best count was only 16, those in Buffalo Co 23 Apr (LR,RH). Single dark morphs were reported at opposite ends of the state: FF on 21 Apr (AEK) and Morrill Co the same day (KD).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** The pale "Kridler's Hawk" color morph was reported in Sarpy Co 2 Apr (CNK) and Douglas Co 10 Apr (TP); easterly reports are uncommon. Most Kridler's Hawks are gone from the east by mid-Apr.

**Ferruginous Hawk:** Routine reports.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Routine reports.

**Golden Eagle:** Routine reports.

**American Kestrel:** Routine reports.

**Merlin:** A report of the long-distance migrant *columbarius* from the e. RWB 22 May (JGJ) was rather late for this subspecies.

**Prairie Falcon:** Easterly was one in Lancaster Co 3 Mar (LE).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Nebraska's 2 resident pairs continued. The Lincoln pair at the State Capitol in their 3rd year had 4 eggs 11 Apr, after fledging 4 young the past two years, and the Omaha pair on the Woodmen Tower had four 3-week-old chicks banded 24 May; some 49 young have been fledged in Omaha in the past 16 years. The subspecies *tundrius* is the more common of the two migratory subspecies occurring in Nebraska, and so an *anatum* in the RWB 27 Apr (JGJ) was unexpected and was indeed the observer's first for the RWB.

**Virginia Rail:** One at WSR was "singing incessantly" in cattails 11 Apr and was still there 16 May; no nesting evidence was noted, however (HKH).

**Sora:** The 7 at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD) and 2 in Sarpy Co 31 May (CNK) were suggestive of local breeding, but no evidence was noted. Breeding records in both the east and the RWB are rare.

**Common Moorhen:** One photographed at Tamora 17 May (JG) is the first in Nebraska for several years and is indicative of the excellent water conditions in the e. RWB this spring.

**American Coot:** As mentioned above, water conditions allowed for "what could be a banner coot production year" (JGJ) in the e. RWB. Some 48 nest mounds were found at 4 e. RWB sites 26 May, including 27 at Tamora (JGJ). Six platforms with 6-10 eggs each were at Harvard Marsh 26 May (PD).



- Sandhill Crane:** Highest estimate was 200,000 "in the Platte Valley" 12 Apr (CH). Good numbers move through the Panhandle; "hundreds" were at Winters Creek L, Scotts Bluff Co, 17 Mar (AK). Easterly, where rare in spring, were one over Bellevue 19 Apr (BH) and 3 over Washington Co 29 Apr (CNK). The 2-3 west of Burwell 20 May, seen by a driver in a hurry to get to a wedding and unable to stop (MUs) were possibly breeding there (must have been an important wedding).
- Common Crane:** One with about 1000 Sandhill Cranes was reported by a group of birders from Boulder, CO, on private property east of Lewellen 10 Mar (PH).
- Whooping Crane:** A single bird 16 Mar "on the Platte River" was thought to be the individual now in its third winter that has never been to Aransas (TS). However, there were 2 near Rowe Sanctuary the next day (CNK) and 1-2 were reported in the general area through 1 Apr (m. ob.). An airplane survey 14 Mar located a surprising 25 birds in the Platte Valley (fide CH). Finally, 2 adults and 2 juveniles were on a private wetland in Phelps Co 16-17 Apr (LB).
- Black-bellied Plover:** Routine reports.
- American Golden-Plover:** Five at Harvard Marsh 19 Mar (PD) provided the 2nd-earliest arrival date ever by a day. An excellent 500 in the e. RWB 6 May (including 326 in one group) and 346 in one field in York Co 25 Apr (JGJ) were excellent, but not record, counts.
- Snowy Plover:** With water levels a bit higher at LM, none were reported from there. The only report was of single migrants in Seward Co 6 May (JGJ) and near York the same day (JGJ).
- Semipalmated Plover:** Routine reports.
- Piping Plover:** Of interest was one at L Minatare, Scotts Bluff Co, 28 Apr (KD); nesting attempts have been made there in recent years, but only a single bird was found this year and water levels were high (KD). Seven at LM 20 Apr (BFH,JP) and 3 at HCR 28 Apr (G&WH) were at locations where breeding has occurred, the latter site of particular interest. The remaining reports, of some 14 birds, were from traditional eastern locations. Very early were singles at Ashland 2 Apr (RHe) and, a belated report, at Valley 4 Apr 2006 (RHe).
- Killdeer:** Small fledglings were reported 4 May in Lancaster Co (LE), early, but not startlingly so.
- Mountain Plover:** Displaying and copulation was noted among 3 pairs and a group of 3 in Kimball Co 26 Mar (LS) and 2 were courting sw. of the Kimball Airport 21 Apr (BFH,JP). The first date, 26 Mar, is rather early for this species.
- Black-necked Stilt:** Rather early were the 6 at Lakeside 12 Apr (WM); two at Chilibaba Pond near Scottsbluff 18 Apr (AK) and another near Kiowa 26 May (AK) were the only others reported.
- American Avocet:** Routine reports.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** The 25 in Lincoln Co 8 May (TJW) was a good tally.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Greater Yellowlegs:** Routine reports.
- Willet:** More than usual were easterly; about 65 were reported east of the RWB, including 36 in Lancaster Co 22 Apr (LE).
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** The 500 in the e. RWB 27 Apr (JGJ) was an excellent spring count. The 3 high spring counts are in the short period 24-29 Apr.
- Upland Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Whimbrel:** None were reported; this is a rare but regular migrant in spring.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Ten birds near North Platte 26 Mar (fide TJW) were rather early; earliest spring dates are 20-22 Mar.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Best count was a moderate 92, in the e. RWB 28 Apr (JGJ). Tying the 3rd-earliest arrival date were 30 at LBN and 11 in Platte Co on 11 Apr (D&JP). Also early were 58 at Harvard Marsh 13 Apr (PD) and 30 in the e. RWB 14 Apr (JGJ).

**Marbled Godwit:** Generally rare in the east, several showed up there: 8 were at LBN 11 Apr (D&JP), 2 in Lancaster Co 12 Apr (LE), one in Seward Co 2 May (TJW), and 3 near Waverly 5 May (WRS).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Good numbers were reported, including a remarkable near-record 44 near Utica 19 May (JGJ). In all, about 20 others were reported 4-24 May (m. ob.). Of interest was one using a dry field in the e. RWB 4 May (JGJ); the observer's studies have shown that several species other than Buff-breasted Sandpipers use such habitat.

**Sanderling:** Routine reports.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Routine reports.

**Western Sandpiper:** None were reported; this is a regular but rare spring migrant.

**Least Sandpiper:** One at BOL 24 Mar (JGJ) was somewhat early.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** The 4000 in the e. RWB 17 May (JGJ) was an excellent count; the 3 high counts are in the very short period 16-20 May. Another in the e. RWB 27 Apr was photographed (JGJ); this is only 9 days later than the earliest documented date.

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

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** The 350 at Father Hupp WMA, Thayer Co, 11 May (JGJ), was an excellent count.

**Dunlin:** This may have been a record spring for this species; an all-time e. RWB high count of 235 (3 times the previous high) on 17 May included a single-site tally of 133 at Renquist WMA, York Co (JGJ), and some 250 more were reported 2-24 May (m. ob.).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** The 2nd- and 4th-earliest on record were 5 in Seward Co 4 Apr (LE) and one in the e. RWB 9 Apr (JGJ). Numbers were considered low early on (JGJ), but good numbers were reported starting mid-May. Best count was a moderate 500 in the e. RWB 19 May (JGJ).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Interestingly, the first to appear were in the northeast, 5 in Dakota Co 29-30 Apr (BFH). Best counts, as expected, were 250 in the e. RWB 17 May (JGJ) and 226 in Thayer Co 11 May (JGJ). Last were 35 in the e. RWB in 4-inch-tall corn 26 May (JGJ).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** The reports were of about 60 birds in the expected period 10-20 May (m. ob.).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Rather early were 2 at Tamora 18 Mar (L&BP) and 2 at Harvard Marsh 21 Mar (PD). An excellent count was the 1900 in the e. RWB 4 May, including 976 at Sora WMA, Fillmore Co (JGJ). The 3 highest counts are in the short period 1-4 May.

**Wilson's Snipe:** Winnowing birds were heard in Lancaster Co 12-13 Apr (LE,AG,BG); breeding has been reported in Lancaster Co in the past, although winnowing may continue for days or weeks before breeding takes place. Somewhat early, if indeed migrants, were the 5 at Harvard Marsh 16 Mar (PD), where wintering generally does not occur.

- American Woodcock:** Sightings in the Sandhills suggest that the breeding range may extend farther west than generally realized; 3 were near Dannebrog 13 Mar (WF) and 2 at Goose L., near Chambers, 23 Mar (WF). Well to the west of expected Platte Valley reports was one well-seen near Hershey 27 Mar (TJW); this is about the 4th report from Lincoln Co, all Mar-Jun.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** One in Scottsbluff Co 17 Mar (AK) was record early by a day. Large numbers were seen in the e. RWB, where 2600 were estimated 28 Apr (JGJ). Breeding has occurred in the e. RWB, but records are few, and so copulation at Sora WMA, Fillmore Co, 9 May (JGJ), and two nests each with 4 eggs at Harvard Marsh 14 and 29 May (PD) were significant finds.
- Red-necked Phalarope:** Unexpected in the east, where rare in spring, was one in Sarpy Co 22-26 May (CNK,EB,JR). There are only about 30 spring records from the eastern half of the state.
- Franklin's Gull:** Routine reports.
- Bonaparte's Gull:** Routine reports.
- Mew Gull:** An adult at Salt L, Lincoln, 13 Mar (JGJ) was a surprise; this is only the 11th spring record.
- Ring-billed Gull:** Routine reports.
- California Gull:** The only reports were of one in Scotts Bluff Co 17 Mar (AK), a rather early date away from LM, and, unexpectedly, one easterly at BOL 24 Mar (D&JP), only the 6th spring record for the east.
- Herring Gull:** Routine reports.
- Thayer's Gull:** The only report was of an adult at LO 1 Mar (JGJ).
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Now regular in occurrence, 3 were reported: adults (possibly the same bird?) at BOL 10 Mar (JGJ) and Salt L, Lincoln, 13 Mar (JGJ), and a single at LO 28 Apr (MB).
- Glaucous Gull:** Two were reported: a first-year at BOL 9-11 Mar (JGJ,LE,CNK) and a single at HCR 4 Mar (G&WH).
- Least Tern:** Most reports were from traditional eastern locations and from the LM area. However 2 nests and a total of 8 birds at a public beach in Saunders Co 28 May (CNK) were unexpected; by 29 Jun 11 adults, 5 on nests, and 2 mobile young were present (CNK). A county first for the observer was one in Antelope Co 29 May (MB).
- Caspian Tern:** The usual small numbers for spring were reported: 5 at BOL 7 May (LE) and singles in Sarpy Co 29 May (CNK) and at LO 29 May (JM).
- Black Tern:** Routine reports.
- Common Tern:** Only 3 were reported: singles at Harvard Marsh 10 May (PD), a rather early date, LO 29 May (JM), and in Antelope Co 30 May (MB), a county first for the observer.
- Forster's Tern:** Nesting was underway at Valentine NWR by 26 May (TH).
- Rock Pigeon:** Routine reports.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Best count was 20 in Bassett 3 Mar (CH).
- White-winged Dove:** The increase in reports continues, with 3 this spring. One was in Omaha 25-30 Mar (RS, m.ob.), another was photographed in a Papillion yard 20 May (PS), and one was in Scotts Bluff Co 26 May (AK). Most reports are Apr-Oct, and the Omaha sighting is only the 4th outside this period.
- Mourning Dove:** Singles in Dixon Co 11 Mar (JJ) and Scotts Bluff Co 16 Mar (KD) were rather early at those locations.

- Inca Dove:** A Texan experienced with this species reported 3 in Lincoln 31 May (TF); unfortunately no photographs were taken. This species, like White-winged Dove, is moving northward on the Great Plains.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** A good count was the 16 at FF 10 May (JR), and rather early for the location were singles in Lincoln Co 20 May (D&JP) and in Keith Co the same day (JM).
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** Five were reported, 3 of these from Otoe Co on 9, 12 and 31 May (L&CF). The others were at FF 10 May (JR) and in Garden Co 20 May (JM).
- Barn Owl:** Rather early arrivals were one roosting on a rock face at ICSP 18 Mar (WF) and another returning to the Creighton nest site at the northeast edge of the summer range 22 Mar for the 3rd year (MB).
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** Rare in Nebraska, a red morph road-killed bird was found in Cass Co 18 Mar (WM). Two young fledglings were in a Lincoln yard 26 May (MUs).
- Great Horned Owl:** Nestlings were found in Sheridan Co 12 Apr (WM) and Scotts Bluff Co 19 Apr (KD), and two fledglings with an adult were in Washington Co 29 Apr (CNK).
- Burrowing Owl:** Reports from the e. RWB are increasing; 1-2 were seen at a "ghost" prairie-dog town in Clay Co from 9 Apr (JGJ), one was at Hultine WPA, Clay Co, 2 Apr (PD), and one was at Harvard Marsh 9 Apr (PD).
- Barred Owl:** This species appears to be undergoing a westward expansion in both the Platte and Republican Valleys. One was flushed from an apparent nest site in Nuckolls Co 20 Apr (DE), and 1-2 were along the Republican River in sw. Nuckolls Co 1 Apr (LR,RH). Eggs hatched in a Douglas Co nest box around 14 Apr (DSt).
- Long-eared Owl:** None were reported.
- Short-eared Owl:** Six reports were received of 8 birds through 17 Apr (m.ob.); the reports were statewide.
- Northern Saw-whet Owl:** "Simple, evenly-spaced tooting whistles" were heard 26 May at Valentine NWR (TH); the reporter assumed it was this species. The summer distribution of this species in Nebraska is poorly-known.
- Common Nighthawk:** Arrivals showed the typical east-west difference in arrival dates: 2 May in Otoe Co (L&CF) and 24 May at WSR (HKH); both dates were fairly early at those locations.
- Common Poorwill:** There are occasional reports of this species in the east, usually in grasslands in the southeast. One was heard singing at SCP 21 May (fide KP).
- Chuck-will's-widow:** Somewhat westerly, but within the expected range were singles at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 12 May (LE) and in w. Douglas Co 23 May (DSt).
- Whip-poor-will:** One in Lincoln 22 Apr (JED) was rather early.
- Chimney Swift:** Routine reports.
- White-throated Swift:** Routine reports.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Nest-building was under way in Lincoln 12 May (MUs).
- Belted Kingfisher:** Routine reports.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Singles at FF 23 Mar (CNK) and 28 Mar (RW) were early for non-wintering birds; a few winter there, or at least not far to the south most years.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Routine reports.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** A female in Thomas Co 25 Mar (WF) was westerly.

**Red-naped Sapsucker:** One identified as this species in Hall Co 5 Mar was well-described, with no apparent hybrid characters (WF); it would be only the 2nd spring record for Nebraska if accepted by NOURC, albeit easterly and early for this species.

**Downy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.

**Northern Flicker:** Routine reports.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports were from the FF area, where a pair nested at the sw. corner of the area (CNK). Young were being fed 13 May but had fledged by 28 May (CNK). It is unsure how many breeding pairs are in the area, but it seems unlikely there are more than two.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** One in Lincoln Co 19 May (L&BP) was westerly; it is rare as far west as the Panhandle.

**Western Wood-Pewee:** One in Lincoln Co 19 May (CNK, details) was easterly; the species breeds east to the LM area, and apparently occurs farther east during migration, but most reports east of there are undocumented. The other reports were, as expected, from the Panhandle.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** The 20 at FF 10 May (JR) was a record spring tally.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** About the norm for a spring, one report was received: a single was at SCP 21 May (KP).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** None were reported; arrival is around mid-May.

**Alder Flycatcher:** Banding data indicate that this species is a common migrant in the LM area; thus singles there 20 and 24 May (JM) may not be too surprising. Another was in Seward Co 30 May (JG) and 4 were counted at FF 16 May (JR).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Routine reports.

**Least Flycatcher:** Routine reports.

**Cordilleran Flycatcher:** Rarely reported in migration, one at WSR 30-31 May (HKH) was only the 11th spring report away from the breeding range.

**Eastern Phoebe:** First reported was in Otoe Co 13 Mar (L&CF), about on time, but one in Lincoln Co 16 Mar (TJW) was early for the location.

**Say's Phoebe:** First was in Frontier Co 23 Mar (TJW), about on time.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** One at ICSP 28 Apr (EB) was about on time, too.

**Cassin's Kingbird:** None were reported; arrival is in early May.

**Western Kingbird:** Routine reports.

**Eastern Kingbird:** Routine reports.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Now reported yearly, even as a breeder, this species continues to engender increased reports. A pair returned to a breeding site sw. of Kearney 23 May for the 3rd year (KS), and at least one was seen on 4 occasions at Eppley Airfield, Omaha, during May (JT). The Eppley birds have been present for some 5 years and nested during at least 2 of those years (fide JT). Singles were reported as well in Hall Co 12 May (TB) and Colfax Co 17 May (LE).

**Northern Shrike:** Last to leave was one in Dixon Co 9 Mar (JJ), an early departure date.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Arrival was on time. First to appear were singles at BOL 11 Mar (JGJ) and in Harlan Co the same day (G&WH). Singles reached Dakota Co 20 Mar (WF) and Scotts Bluff Co a little late on 28 Apr (AK).

**Bell's Vireo:** Routine reports.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Nest-building had started in Lincoln 14 May and 4 eggs were present 24 May (LE,WM).

**Plumbeous Vireo:** The only report was of a migrant at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 16 May (BN); the migration period is 9-28 May.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The 8-10 in Douglas Co 4 May (TP) was a good count (estimate?). Westerly was one near Orleans 11 May (G&WH), one of still very few reports away from the east.

**Warbling Vireo:** Earliest were rather early at FF 21 Apr (L&BP) and PL 22 Apr (LE; 2 birds). Nest-building had started by 8 May at FF (ARy).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** Singles in Seward Co 4 May (JG) and at ADF 25 May (L&CF) were as expected, but a good find was one in Scotts Bluff Co 26 May (KD, details), only the 4th Panhandle record.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Routine reports.

**Blue Jay:** One on a nest in Cass Co 1 May (LE) was on the early side for this species; published egg dates are 30 Apr-20 Jun.

**Pinyon Jay:** None were reported; this species becomes secretive in the nesting season, but even so, there is very little definite evidence that it nests in the state in any numbers.

**Black-billed Magpie:** Reports from the northeast were encouraging: 2 near Creighton 8 Mar were the observer's first there for 2 years (MB), and 4 more were found in Knox Co 11 Mar (RD). Two were in Colfax Co 23 Mar (LE), and 2 were in Seward Co 7-8 Mar (SR), both easterly locations.

**American Crow:** Routine reports.

**Horned Lark:** An unusual sight was the 16 at the observer's feeder in sw. Dixon Co 2 Mar; they were chased by juncos but finally accepted (JJ). Juveniles were fledged by 21 Apr in Nuckolls Co (DE); it is not unusual to see fledged birds in Mar.

**Purple Martin:** One at Ogallala 19 Mar (CWH) was rather early; earliest dates are in mid-Mar. The 8 that arrived in Alma 2 Apr departed during a cold snap (G&WH). Other early birds were 7-8 in Nuckolls Co 1 Apr (LR,RH). One at Stapleton 6 May was one of few records from the western Loup drainage (LR, RH).

**Tree Swallow:** Three at Alma 18 Mar (G&WH) were early; record early date is 15 Mar.

**Violet-green Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Bank Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Cliff Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Barn Swallow:** Routine reports.

**Black-capped Chickadee:** The first for 3 years in the observer's yard at Brady appeared 11 Mar (TJW). This species, along with Blue Jay and American Crow, were notable by their absence in Nuckolls Co 20 Apr (DE). It appears the recovery still has a way to go, especially in south-central parts of the state. On the other hand, 20 were in a canyon in se. Lincoln Co 23 Apr (TJW).

**Tufted Titmouse:** One in n. Thurston Co 17 May (BFH) was a rare sighting that far north; it was only the 3rd sighting for Thurston, Dakota or Dixon Cos, the first in 2003. Nest-building was noted at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 19 Apr (JGr), rather early.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Usually an early arrival in fall and late to leave in spring, one at Omaha 21 May (RS) was tardy. Latest dates away from breeding areas are at the end of May.

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** All birds seen west to Hall Co 28 Mar were of the eastern subspecies (RW) as expected; breeding in the Platte Valley is rare west of Dawson Co, and most birds seen there in winter are likely not residents. The extent of winter movement of the western subspecies (which breeds in the Pine Ridge) is not well known, but appears to be limited.

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** A pair was again nesting in a large snag at Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co, 24 May (AK). Nesting has become the norm in this area since the mid-1990s.

**Brown Creeper:** Routine reports.

**Rock Wren:** Routine reports.

**Carolina Wren:** Reports in the last 2-3 years show the range covering about half the state; the western limits were defined well this spring by reports of one singing in Knox Co 17 Apr (MB), 2 in Nance Co 8 Apr (LR,RH), one in Hall Co 5 Mar (WF), one singing in Kearney Co 1 Apr (BFH), and singles at McCook 26-27 May (LR,RH). Nest-building started in Bellevue 2 Apr, with the first egg laid 6 Apr, 4 eggs present 9 Apr, and 5 young hatched from 6 eggs 28 Apr, despite 20 degree temperatures (ARy).

**House Wren:** Routine reports.

**Winter Wren:** The 4 reports of 5 birds were all from FF 17 Mar-10 Apr (m. ob.), a typical spring.

**Sedge Wren:** Most migrants pass through by mid-May, and so pairs seen after this may stay to breed, generally an uncommon occurrence in Jun in Nebraska (although the numbers that reappear in mid-Jul may breed also). Thus of interest were 8 in tall grass at Boyer Chute 27 May, and 3 in rough grassland near Arlington the same day (WRS). Apparently this species has been present at Boyer Chute Jun-Aug each year since 1999 (JT,BG).

**Marsh Wren:** One at BOL 24 Mar (D&JP) was early if a migrant, although birds were on territory in Holt Co as early as 23 Mar (see below). Three singing at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD) were near the s. edge of the breeding range. Singing males on territory as early as 23 Mar at Goose L, Holt Co, were of the western song type (WF), possibly a separate species. In Nebraska western birds occur eastward to the edge of the Sandhills and are separated from eastern types by a strip lacking suitable marsh habitat running southeastward from O'Neill.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** One in Lincoln 14 Mar (LE) was rather early; wintering can occur on occasion in the southeast.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Routine reports.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Numbers continue to increase as the range expands and consolidates; 30 were along Old Stage Rd, Scotts Bluff Co, 24 May (KD), where the species has been found since 1998. One was in Keith Co 20 May (JM), where numbers are still low.

**Eastern Bluebird:** Routine reports.

**Mountain Bluebird:** At least one was back at the breeding site at Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co, by 6 Mar (AK) and by 9 Mar at nest boxes near Chadron (JF). This species is usually common in cedar canyons in se. Lincoln Co, but none were found 8 Mar (TJW); perhaps they had departed for the breeding grounds.

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

**Veery:** The only report was of 2 at FF 8 May (NF).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** A total of 7 were reported, 6 in the east 7-17 May (L&BP,LE,JR), and one unexpectedly at Ash Hollow SHP, Garden Co (JM). There are about 30 Panhandle records for spring.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Record early by 2 days was one at ADF 16 Apr (L&CF); a good count was the 45 at FF 10 May (JR).

**Hermit Thrush:** Singles in Dixon Co 30 Mar (JJ) and at FF 12 May (CNK) marked the extremes of the normal migration period.

**Wood Thrush:** Routine reports.

**American Robin:** A group of 350 at Plattsmouth Cem 6 Apr (CNK) were late for such a large number.

**Gray Catbird:** Routine reports.

**Northern Mockingbird:** One was as far north as Wayne Co by 23 Apr (D&JP); even in summer this species is scarce north of the Platte River.

**Brown Thrasher:** Routine reports.

**Curve-billed Thrasher:** The long-staying bird (since Oct 2002!) at the Frimann Ranch in se. Sioux Co was singing and trying to make a nest 14 Apr (fide AK); perhaps it will meet the one found and photographed near Madrid in Perkins Co 22 Apr (JGJ). The latter is only the 7th documented for Nebraska.

**European Starling:** Routine reports.

**American Pipit:** Sightings from 19 Mar at LNB (RE) through 19 May in Logan Co (D&JP) define the normal migration period.

**Sprague's Pipit:** The three reports were of 3 on the grassy north side of Harvard Marsh 16 Apr (PD), 15-20 on the edge of a field of small grain in Clay Co 23 Apr (WM), and singles in Dakota Co 29-30 Apr (BFH).

**Cedar Waxwing:** Nest-building was noted in Scotts Bluff Co 26 May (AK), somewhat early for this species.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Two were found together in Scotts Bluff Co 8 May (AD), and one was seen at the site later (KD, details), for only the 4th spring Panhandle record.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** A typical spring for this species had 3 reported: singles in Washington Co 5 May (JT), at ADF 6 May (L&CF), and at FF 8 May (L&BP).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Routine reports.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Routine reports.

**Nashville Warbler:** Only about 10 were reported, all in the east (m. ob.).

**Northern Parula:** Routine reports.

**Yellow Warbler:** Routine reports.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** The only two reported were in Sarpy Co: 9 May (L&BP) and 12 May (CNK).

**Magnolia Warbler:** The 5 reported were all in the southeast 9-14 May (m. ob.).

**Cape May Warbler:** There was a good showing for this normally casual spring migrant; the 3 reported were in Lancaster Co 7 May (LE), in Lincoln 11 May (ST,JGJ), and at Seward Cem 17 May (LE). These are only the 18th-20th spring reports since 1982, all in the period 7-20 May.

**Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** Routine reports.

**Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** None were reported.



- Black-throated Green Warbler:** The only report was of one in Douglas Co 12 May (TP).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** The only two reported were singles at FF 9 May (CNK) and a bit westerly at Stromsburg 14 May (LR,RH).
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** Usually the first wood-warbler to arrive in spring, arrival was record-early this spring by 4 days, with 2 at FF 1 Apr (RS). All reports were from FF, where best count was 4 on 19 Apr (KS), and the last song heard was 10 May (L&BP).
- Prairie Warbler:** This species occasionally appears far northwest of its usual range; one along the Niobrara River in extreme e. Cherry Co 28 May (GW) was only the 7th documented spring record for the state.
- Palm Warbler:** Only two were reported: singles at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 26 Apr (JWH), and in Sarpy Co 6 May (CNK).
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** Rare in spring, the only report was of one in Douglas Co 12 May (TP).
- Blackpoll Warbler:** Good numbers were reported, about 40, in the short period 1-17 May (m. ob.). Westernmost was one in Broken Bow 11 May (TH).
- Cerulean Warbler:** At least one was at FF: one was at the upper boardwalk 7 May (L&BP) and another was heard singing briefly in Mormon Hollow 9 May (JR). Surprisingly far west was one singing and seen well at Hastings 10 May (PD). There are only about 20 reports away from the Missouri Valley.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** Routine reports.
- American Redstart:** Uncommon in the west, singles were at North Platte 19 May (TJW) and in Garden Co 24 May (JM). A good count was the 30 in Thurston Co 17 May (BFH).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** The only report was of one gathering nest material at FF 8 May (L&BP,ARy).
- Ovenbird:** The 4 at ICSP 28 Apr (L&BP,EB) were a bit early.
- Northern Waterthrush:** There were several reports, totaling about 12 birds, 27 Apr (L&BP) through 19 May (LE,D&JP).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** Reports were mostly from FF, where earliest was there 2 Apr (ARy,RB), only a day after a Yellow-throated Warbler, and 2 were found 19 Apr (KS). The only other report was of 3 at Platte River SP, Cass Co (RE).
- Kentucky Warbler:** The 3 reports were from FF, probably of the same bird, a male on territory 10-12 May (L&BP,JR, fide CNK). This species has not been reported very often from FF.
- Connecticut Warbler:** There were 2 reports of this rare migrant: one was singing in Douglas Co 12-13 May (TP), and another was at Schramm SP, Sarpy Co, 12 May (L&BP).
- Mourning Warbler:** Routine reports.
- MacGillivray's Warbler:** Routine reports.
- Common Yellowthroat:** Routine reports.
- Hooded Warbler:** The only report was of a singing male well seen at Hastings 7 May (PD). This species can pop up almost anywhere in spring.
- Wilson's Warbler:** Only 7 were reported, all in the east 2-13 May (L&BP,L&CF,TP).
- Canada Warbler:** None were reported, a surprise.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Routine reports.

**Summer Tanager:** This species was widely-reported westward on the Great Plains of Kansas and Colorado this spring. Nebraska reports included one photographed in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Apr (KD), only the 18th record away from the east and a record early date. It would be interesting to know whether these westerly birds are of the southwestern subspecies *cooperi*; available photos are equivocal. The pair at ICSP 11 May (L&CF) were at a traditional location, but reports continue to increase at FF, where at least 3 were reported beginning 2 May (JR, m.ob.), also very early. A female was gathering nest material at FF 9 May (L&BP) and territorial activity was seen there 10 May (JR). One was in a Bellevue yard 10 May (L&BP).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Routine reports.

**Western Tanager:** Routine reports.

**Spotted Towhee:** Most depart from the east by early May, but one lingered in Lincoln until 24 May (LE). A well-described hybrid was in Bellevue 23 Apr (ARy).

**Eastern Towhee:** Good numbers had arrived in FF by 31 Mar, when 8-10 were reported, all males (JR). Phenotypically pure birds occur westward in the Republican Valley to about Orleans; one was singing in Nuckolls Co 20 Apr (DE); another was near Gibbon 22 Apr, where Spotteds predominate in summer (LR,RH). Most surprising was a phenotypically pure silent male at LM 21 Apr (BFH); banding studies there (Brown et al.) found no phenotypically pure Eastern Towhees.

**Cassin's Sparrow:** None were reported; arrival is in mid- to late May.

**American Tree Sparrow:** One at Hummel Park, Omaha, 4 May (JR) was rather late.

**Chipping Sparrow:** Rather early were singles at ADF 22 Mar (L&CF) and in Buffalo Co 25 Mar (RW).

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

**Brewer's Sparrow:** The only report was of 2 in Scotts Bluff Co 28 Apr (KD).

**Field Sparrow:** Arrival was early, with at least 8 birds found in late Mar (m. ob.). Earliest was in Frontier Co 23 Mar (TJW); there are very few earlier records for the state. Nest-building in Dixon Co 28 Apr (BFH) was early.

**Vesper Sparrow:** A nest in Dodge Co with 5 eggs 16 May had 5 young 23 May; it was located in small patch of alfalfa and grass near larger alfalfa and row-crop fields (D&JP). This species (eastern subspecies?) has adapted to nesting in row-crop fields in the east.

**Lark Sparrow:** A nest with 6 eggs ne. of O'Neill 26 May (DSt) was a little early.

**Lark Bunting:** A major surprise both by location and date was a male well seen in York Co 4 Apr (LE). Spring stragglers occur in the northeast on occasion, but are much rarer southeastward.

**Savannah Sparrow:** One in Otoe Co 13 Mar (L&CF) was rather early. A major influx was noted in Nuckolls Co 20 Apr, when "hundreds per mile of fence-line" were found; surprisingly, none were there the next day (DE).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** One in Hall Co 26 Mar (DK) was rather early; earliest dates in the literature are earlier than this, but are undocumented.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Earliest reported were 2 at SCP 11 May (KP) and 7 in a lightly-grazed native grass pasture near Palmyra 12 May (WRS). Generally this species avoids pastures that are grazed to the extent that the preferred structure is damaged (standing dead stalks and significant litter layer). A single was a surprise in native grassland at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 23 May (LE).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** The only report was of one in Otoe Co 17 Apr (L&CF).

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** The only report was of one at SCP 21 May (KP); this is at peak migration timing for this species.

**Fox Sparrow:** Good numbers were reported 8 Mar-16 Apr (m. ob.), including counts of 8-10 at FF 21-29 Mar (JR,RW,RS,L&BP).

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

**Swamp Sparrow:** One at FF 17 Mar (EB) was early if a migrant; over-wintering may occur on occasion in the southeast. Early dates for migrants are in late Mar.

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

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Most of this species in Nebraska are the pale-lored subspecies *gambelii*; black-lored birds are rarely reported, and may originate either from the Rocky Mountains (subspecies *oriantha*) or Canada (subspecies *leucophrys*). Thus of interest were 2 reports of black-lored birds from opposite ends of the state: one at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 22 Apr (KD) and another in South Sioux City 23 Apr (BFH). There is evidence that *leucophrys* occurs statewide in Nebraska and in eastern Colorado in winter, when most *oriantha* are presumed to have departed. Thus it is difficult to determine subspecies of dark-lored birds in the west in spring and fall, although there are Nebraska specimens from there that resemble *oriantha*.

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

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** Nebraska's 9th record, 4th documented, was of one with White-crowned Sparrows photographed near Glen, Sioux Co, 4 May (B&DW).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Reports of "Pink-sided Junco" in the east persist; while its occurrence there is not impossible, of course, this form is poorly-documented in the east. The few available photos show at best intergrades of "Oregon" and "Pink-sided" Juncos; phenotypically pure "Pink-sideds" are striking, brightly-marked birds.

**McCown's Longspur:** The two reports were from Kimball Co: several groups were there 26 Mar (LS), and "hundreds" were migrating 21 Apr (L&BP).

**Lapland Longspur:** "Hundreds" migrating over LM 21 Apr (BFH,JP) were very late; peak migration is in Mar.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Two had arrived at WSR by 15 Apr (HKH) and, near the eastern edge of the Nebraska summer range, 2 males were 6 miles ne. of O'Neill 26 May (DSt).

**Northern Cardinal:** A pair in the observer's yard near Morrill, Scotts Bluff Co, 16 May were the first there since Jun 2006 (KD); small populations have established in the western North Platte Valley in the last few years. Another was in Morrill Co 30 Mar (WF). The western limits of the summer range in the Sandhills are not well known, but birds in Blaine Co 24 Mar and Thomas Co 25 Mar (WF) were at the putative western limits.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Westerly was one in Lincoln Co 19 May (CNK); migrants occur some distance west of the summer range. Unusual was one at Hastings 7 May with the red color on its bib replaced by lemon-yellow (PD). Nest-building in Lincoln 12 May (MUs) was rather early.

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** Only the observer's 2nd for Knox Co was one at Creighton 14-15 May; the other was 3 May 1992 (MB). A male in Sarpy Co 12 May (EB; details) was only the 5th in the east since 1981.

**Blue Grosbeak:** Routine reports.

**Lazuli Bunting:** Spring migrants regularly (but rarely, i.e. in small numbers) appear in the east; this year one was at a Douglas Co feeder 9 May (DSt), one was near Valley 16 May (TM), and 2 were in Raymond 20 May (JLL). A bit farther west was one in Hastings 10 May (PD).

**Indigo Bunting:** Routine reports.

**Dickcissel:** Unexpected westerly this early were singles in Lincoln and Hayes Cos 19 May (CNK,LR,RH).

**Bobolink:** Good numbers were present in Lincoln Co this spring (TJW).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** A flock of 4000 in Dawson Co was early on 4 Mar (LR,RH); large numbers usually appear later in Mar.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Early dates are in early Mar, usually singing birds; one such was at PL 11 Mar (LE). Scattered populations occur in Sandhills wetlands; a single bird was "singing persistently" at Box L, Arthur Co, 26 Mar (WF).

**Western Meadowlark:** A nest with 2 eggs near Osceola 20 May (WRS) was a bit early.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Six nests with 1-4 eggs were found at Harvard Marsh 28 May (PD), a typical situation for that date.

**Rusty Blackbird:** The only reports of this apparently-declining species were of 1-2 in Dixon Co 11-22 Mar (JJ) and 2 females with grackles at BOL 22 Mar (LE).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A rare migrant in the east, 22 were in Lancaster Co 12 Apr (LE) and one was there 13 Apr (AG,BG).

**Common Grackle:** Typical of first arrivals was a single at a feeder as far north as Dixon Co 2 Mar (JJ).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Males were on territories near North Platte by 18 Apr (TJW).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** As with Common Grackle, first arrivals are singles at feeders; one such was in Lincoln 3 Mar (LE). Most arrive in Apr; "thousands" were in Nuckolls Co 20 Apr (DE) and a flock of 450 was in Cass Co 2 Apr (CNK).

**Orchard Oriole:** Routine reports.

**Baltimore Oriole:** Routine reports.

**Bullock's Oriole:** There are few records east of the Panhandle, and so of interest was a singing male seen well in Arthur Co 20 May (CNK).

**Purple Finch:** Last reported was a female at a Bellevue feeder 9 Apr (ARy).

**House Finch:** Routine reports.

**Red Crossbill:** The only reports were of singles in the Wildcat Hills, Scotts Bluff Co, 12 and 26 May (AK).

**Common Redpoll:** The only report was of a male which reappeared after an absence at a feeder in se. Wayne Co 15-16 Mar (JJ).

**Pine Siskin:** Only moderate numbers were reported, best counts 25-30 near Gering 29 Mar-5 Apr (AK). One at a feeder in Dixon Co 29-30 May (JJ) was a surprise; nesting can occur almost anywhere, but usually after winters with large numbers present.

**Lesser Goldfinch:** One was reported at Wildcat Hills NC by a visitor 25 May (fide AK); no details were provided. The sighting does fit the pattern of previous late May arrivals in the west.

**American Goldfinch:** Routine reports.

**House Sparrow:** Routine reports.