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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2007

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INTRODUCTION

This summer was a "something for everyone" season. Ecologists, already excited by the apparent ability of Greater Prairie-Chickens to lek in improbable habitats, such as corn fields and dirt edges of Rainwater Basin playas, will welcome the use by Lark Buntings and Vesper Sparrows of wheat stubble fields with a growing corn crop. The Vesper Sparrows of the east, a different subspecies from those in the north and west, have been at the mercy of full-tillage cropping systems, but now have a reprieve and may even be increasing because of no-till and minimum tillage methods currently in vogue due to high fuel prices and conservation benefits.

White-faced Ibis again nested in several places, and Red-shouldered Hawk is showing signs of expanding from its limited range at Fontenelle Forest. Very exciting was the confirmation of breeding for the first time in Nebraska of Ash-throated Flycatcher, only the second record of the species' occurrence in the state. Hopefully confirmation is soon to follow for Broad-tailed Hummingbird, which has now twice been reported during the breeding season.

A phenomenon that may be applicable to those early migrant passerines that appear well before local breeders seem to have finished breeding and have even contemplated migration, is molt-migration. A recent article in *Birding* <http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/birding/archives/vol39no3p34to40.pdf> discusses this strategy for such species as Dusky Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, and Bullock's Oriole, which is probably best known for its early departure from breeding areas for an intermediate staging area where it molts, then continues to its wintering grounds. The possibility was raised by Ted Floyd that Chipping Sparrow might be in this group as well.

Unfortunately, other than the existence of many such rather early fall records for various species in areas where breeding does not occur, Nebraska has little data to support or contradict this idea. Observers should continue to report obvious indications of early fall movement (flocking, appearance out of breeding habitat, disappearance of adults).

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City;

BBS: Breeding Bird Survey;

BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co;

Cem: Cemetery;

CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co;

FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co;

HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co;

ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos;

LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co;

LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co;

m.ob.: many observers;

NLB: North Lake Basin WMA, Seward Co;
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge;
Res: Reservoir;
RWB: Rainwater Basin, south-central and southeast Nebraska;
SCP: (Audubon) Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co;
SHP: State Historical Park;
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s);
SP: State Park;
SRA: State Recreation Area;
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area;
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area;
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Calamus Res: SRA/WMA, Loup/Garfield Cos;
Funk Lagoon: WPA, Phelps Co;
Harvard Marsh: WPA, Clay Co;
Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co;
Oliver Res: SRA, Kimball Co;
Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering;
AR: Arlys Reitan, Lincoln;
B&DW: Bruce and Donna Walgren, Casper, WY;
BB: Bart Bly, Alliance;
BG: Betty Grenon, Bellevue;
CG: Carey Grell, Lincoln;
CH: Carolyn Hall, Bassett;
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue;
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala;
D&CN: Don & Colleen Noecker, Albion;
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames;
D&RK: Dennis and Rhalene Katus, Bayard;
DK: Dan Kim, Wood River;
DL: Dan Leger, Lincoln;
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma;
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell;
J&LP: Janis and LeRoy Poppe, Scribner;
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward;
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln;
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield;
JM: Jeanne Miller, Bennington;
JMc: John McCarty, Omaha;
JMu: Jerry Mulliken, Nickerson;
JR: Justin Rink, 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: Larry & Carol Falk, Nebraska City;
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney;
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln;
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon;
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton;
MT: Martha Tacha, Lincoln;
MU: Mark Urwiller, Kearney;
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings;
PR: Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA;
RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln;
RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue;
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon;
RM: Robert Manning, Omaha;
RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha;
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA;
SM: Steve Morris, Grand Island;
SR: Sarah Rehme, Seward;
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow;
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady;
TP: Theresa Pester, Walton;
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland;
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: Summer stragglers are rare, but one was in Clay Co 17 Jun (JGJ).

Snow Goose: About 25 stragglers or non-migrants were found; largest group was 20 at Harvard Marsh 2 Jun (PD), and westerly, where rare, was one at LM 10 Jun (SJD).

Ross's Goose: One at LM 9 Jun (SJD) was only the 3rd Jun record.

Canada Goose: Routine reports.

Trumpeter Swan: Routine reports.

Wood Duck: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: A male at LM 9 Jun (SJD) was likely a late migrant; breeding is not known there.

Mallard: There is little information on timing of molt to eclipse in Nebraska; thus of interest was a male molting near North Platte 9 Jul (TJW).

Blue-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Cinnamon Teal: One at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS) was unexpected, although recent years have seen increased reports from the RWB.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-winged Teal: Sightings in Jun-Jul away from the Sandhills are unexpected, but earliest molt-migrants could appear in Jun. Most Jun-Jul sightings away from the Sandhills are from the RWB; 5 were at NLB 10 Jun (JGJ) and another at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS).

Canvasback: A male at LO 9 Jun (SJD) was probably unmated at that date and location. Few breed in Nebraska.

Redhead: A nest with 12 eggs, apparently of this species based on characteristics of the eggs and nest site and the presence of 12 adults, was at Harvard Marsh 2 Jun (PD); this is only about the 4th nesting record for the RWB. Scattered reports elsewhere included 2-5 at Alma SL 23 Jun-1 Jul (G&WH), one in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ), and one at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS).

Ring-necked Duck: The only report was of a male in Clay Co 22 Jul (JGJ); summer stragglers are rare.

Lesser Scaup: Stragglers can occur anywhere in the state during summer; one in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ) was the latest of about 20 Jun-Jul reports there, while singles were in n. Cherry Co 10 Jun (a male, L&CF) and at LO the same day (SJD). Low numbers breed on w. Sandhills lakes.

Hooded Merganser: The usual scattering of immatures was reported statewide (m. ob.); usually reported as "females/immatures", most if not all are likely one-year-old birds not yet breeding. Breeding in Nebraska is rare, with fewer than 5 documented cases.

Common Merganser: A few non-breeders and molt-migrants regularly occur in summer at LO; a male and 2 females were there 9 Jun (SJD).

Ruddy Duck: The presence of 2 broods in w. Seward Co 14 Jul (JGJ) was one of fewer than 10 breeding records in the e. RWB. Displaying territorial males were seen at Deep Well WMA, Hamilton Co, 8 Jun (JGJ).

Gray Partridge: Somewhat unpredictable in occurrence in its ne. and nc. Nebraska range, the 2 birds in Dixon Co 2 Jun were the first seen there for several years (JJ).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Routine reports.

Wild Turkey: A hen was flushed from a nest with 13 eggs in Nemaha Co 3 Jun (WRS).

Northern Bobwhite: Two were flushed in s. Morrill Co 17 Jun; apparently bobwhites are recent inhabitants of this area, as a local farmer who has also been seeing them stated they were his "first in 40 years" (WRS). Although fairly common in the North and South Platte Valleys in the Panhandle, bobwhites are rare away from those valleys.

Common Loon: None were reported; this species occurs regularly in summer at LO.

Pied-billed Grebe: Good water conditions in parts of the RWB and the se. allowed numerous sightings of broods 9 Jun-28 Jul in Lancaster (LE), Seward (JGJ), York (JGJ), and Phelps (KS) Cos. Nesting was reported also from Sarpy Co 3 Jun (CNK).

Red-necked Grebe: A basic adult at LM 10 Jun (SJD) provided only the 2nd Jun record for the state; it was likely a non-breeder.

Eared Grebe: Easterly stragglers, which are rare in summer, included singles in Seward Co 10 Jun (JGJ), at Alma SL 20 Jun (G&WH), and at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS).

Western Grebe: Best count at LM was 1198 on 10 Jun (SJD). One in York Co 8 Jun (JGJ) was easterly.

Clark's Grebe: Among the 1198 Westerns at LM 10 Jun were 23 Clark's (SJD), an excellent count.

American White Pelican: Routine reports.

Double-crested Cormorant: Some 200-250 were at LO, including 2 nests (JGJ,SJD); one nest was found there in Apr (MB), the first in the LM area since the 1940s. Summer stragglers, usually immatures, are rare in the southeast, but several were reported: one was in w. Seward Co 9 Jun (JGJ), singles were at 3 Lancaster Co locations 28 Jun-28 Jul (LE), and 2 were in Butler Co 12 Jul (CNK).

American Bittern: Good numbers were found in the RWB due to good water conditions, a total of about 9 (JGJ,JG,KS,G&WH).

Least Bittern: As with the previous species, sightings would be expected this year, even though this species is rare in Nebraska; 1-3 were found in w. Seward Co through the period (JG).

Great Blue Heron: An established rookery at the Platte River in s. Sarpy Co had 55 adults and young 1 Jun (CNK), and a new rookery near Glen at the opposite end of the state had 11 occupied nests 6 Jun (B&DW). These bring the total rookeries reported for 2007 to 5.

Great Egret: Very few appeared this summer; none were found 29 Jul in the e. RWB (JGJ), usually peak time for the species there. Another active observer found only one in Lancaster Co during the period (LE). Best count was only 6, at HCR 18 Jul (G&WH).

Snowy Egret: The only report was of a late migrant at LM 10 Jun (SJD).

Little Blue Heron: None were reported; the first of the few that do occur arrive in late Jul.

Cattle Egret: Only the 6th breeding record for the state was noted at CLNWR 19 Jun (WM). The only other reports were of 11 "yard birds" near Ames 14 Jun (D&JP), one at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS), and one in the e. RWB 14 Jul (JGJ). Numbers are lowest in Jun-early Jul.

Green Heron: Routine reports.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Routine reports.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: None were reported; a few appear in the RWB in late Jul most years.

Glossy Ibis: Continuing a string of sightings in the e. RWB was one at Harvard Marsh with 68 White-faced Ibis 2 Jun (PD). This is Nebraska's 16th record.

White-faced Ibis: Although a surprising 3 nesting attempts were reported this summer, there are still fewer than 10 nesting records for the state. A nesting colony was establishing at Harvard Marsh 2 Jun, when 68 birds had 6 nests with 1-2 eggs each and 10 more nests were under construction; unfortunately cattle were added to the area and the nesting attempt failed (PD). Two other colonies were reported, at CLNWR 19 Jun and Avocet WMA, Grant Co, 23 Jun (WM); several birds were at the latter location 5 Jul (LR,RH). Four in w. Seward Co 9 Jun (JG) and 12 in York Co the same day (SM) were likely late migrants, while one in Morrill Co 23 Jun (KD) and 4 at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS) may have been non- or failed breeders.

Turkey Vulture: Two nestlings were at a nest near Scribner 5 Jun (J&LP).

Osprey: Singles at LO 9-10 Jun (SJD), near North Bend 10 Jun (JGJ), and near Valley 11 Jul, the latter possibly the same as the North Bend bird (JGJ) were likely immatures not yet breeding. There are about 33 similar records 10 Jun-7 Aug.

Mississippi Kite: At a regular site was one in Ogallala 9 Jun (SJD), but another near Kearney 15 Jun (MU) was unexpected. Breeding is known from only 2 sites, Ogallala and Red Cloud.

Bald Eagle: Nebraska Game and Parks reported a record 45 nests in the state this year; the total for 2005 was 37 (JGJ).

Northern Harrier: Presence of adult males in Jun is indicative of local nesting; males were over prairie near Sterling 3 Jun (WRS) and near Friend 9 Jun (LR,RH), parts of the state where breeding numbers are probably low.

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Red-shouldered Hawk: One crossing the Missouri River from Iowa to Nebraska at Omaha 22 Jul (JR) was not far from a known breeding site at FF, but another in Adams Co 14 Jul (PD) continues a recent trend of sightings some distance from FF. A similar trend has been noted in Kansas.

Swainson's Hawk: Density of nesting birds in the s. Panhandle is impressive; 100+ nests, 70+ active, were located this breeding season, most of them in Kimball Co (BB). A single was easterly at Wausa 28 Jun (D&JP).

Red-tailed Hawk: A dark morph bird in Bellevue 24 Jul was the observer's first in summer in 50 years (RG); this bird may have been a failed breeder on the move early; earliest fall dates for dark birds are in late Sep.

Ferruginous Hawk: A good total of 30+ nests were located in the Panhandle this summer (BB); this compares with the estimate by the Federal Government in 2001 of 35 breeding pairs in the state.

Golden Eagle: Some 20+ nests were found in the Panhandle this summer (BB). An adult was at a nest in Keith Co that had 3 large young 9 Jun (SJD).

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: This species breeds in very small numbers on the Pine Ridge, with few summer reports in recent years. Thus of interest was one near Chadron 3 Jun (RM).

Prairie Falcon: Routine reports.

Peregrine Falcon: Routine reports.

Virginia Rail: Nesting may occur anywhere in the state given suitable water conditions; an adult with 2 chicks was seen at an expected location near Lakeside 5 Jul (LR,RH) but unusual was an adult with 3 chicks in w. Seward Co 12 Jul (CNK). Although there have been a few summer sightings in the RWB in recent years, this is only the 2nd confirmed breeding record there.

Sora: One of few breeding records for the southeast was the discovery of an abandoned egg at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 9 Jun (LE). Late for the location was one in Nuckolls Co 2 Jun (LR,RH).

American Coot: This was another species taking advantage of good water conditions to breed; nests and broods were widely-reported in the e. RWB, with eggs 2-10 Jun (PD,JGJ), a nestling 10 Jun (JGJ), and broods 3-29 Jul (KS,JGJ). Less usual breeding locations were Sarpy Co, where nesting was noted 2 Jun (CNK), and w. Custer Co, where 3 incubating birds were found 20 Jun (TJW).

Sandhill Crane: The nesting pair in Morrill Co had 2 chicks 22 Jun, but one died of unknown causes around 25 Jul (D&RK,KD,AK). The adults arrived in the 3rd week of Mar and the chicks were first seen in early May (D&RK). This is the 3rd year this pair has nested there; one chick was raised in 2005 (a second was apparently killed by a coyote) and two were raised in 2006 (D&RK). Other sightings without nesting evidence were of 4 in Buffalo Co 3 Jun (D&JP) and 3 at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 19 Jul (PR).

Black-bellied Plover: None were reported; migrants usually occur into early Jun.

American Golden-Plover: Only the 5th Jun record for this early migrant was one in the e. RWB 3 Jun (JGJ).

Snowy Plover: The glory days of nesting of this species at LM seem to be over with higher water levels encroaching into vegetation and eliminating open nesting habitat. Only one bird was found there 10 Jun (SJD). However, an exciting discovery at the newly-cleared Dinan Memorial Tract along the Platte River in Buffalo Co was the two nests, each with 3 eggs, 21 Jun; at least one nest fledged young (MT).

Semipalmated Plover: Second-earliest on record for fall were 2 in w. Seward Co 7 Jul (JG).

Piping Plover: Numbers were down from recent years at LM, but still a healthy 41 were counted there 9 Jun (SJD) and a chick was found 3 Jun (JGJ). Significant were 6 adults and 2 nests at Goose L, CLNWR, 9 Jun (SJD); nesting in the Sandhills is unusual, with only 3-4 records of breeding in the last 5 years and none before that since 1917. A displaying male at Oliver Res 10 Jun (SJD) would add a breeding site if able to impress a mate. The 1-2 in Sarpy Co 1-9 Jun (CNK,L&BP,JR) and again 4 Jul (CNK) may have come across the Missouri River from their breeding site in Iowa.

Killdeer: At Ogallala 25 Jul chicks 1-2 days old were noted (CWH); this indicates eggs 22-23 Jul, a rather late date.

Mountain Plover: The numbers of nests located by the Prairie Partners program in the s. Panhandle continue to amaze: 107 were found this year (BB). More usual were the pair noted courting near Kimball Airport 8 Jun (SJD), and the adult with nearly grown chick south of the airport 16 Jun (WRS).

Black-necked Stilt: The only reports were of 2-3 at Funk Lagoon 3-13 Jul, with 2 young present on the latter date (KS). Nesting occurred there in 2003 and was recorded in the e. RWB in 2005-2006.

American Avocet: An excellent nest count for this common Sandhills breeder was the 45 nests (with 76 adults) at CLNWR 9 Jun (SJD). One was as far east as Lincoln 19 Jun (LE).

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: Earliest returnee was near LO 28 Jun (TJW); this species returns early, with earliest dates in mid-Jun.

Willet: Uncommon in the east, the 5 in Seward Co 3 Jun (JG) were late as well. A "territorial" bird near St Paul 9 Jul (LB) was south and east of the usual summer range, but within the normal migration period, while another in Lancaster Co 21 Jul (LE) was a rare fall occurrence in the east.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Last for spring was one in the e. RWB 3 Jun (JGJ) and first for fall was one in Morrill Co 23 Jun (KD).

Upland Sandpiper: The 40 in a flooded hay meadow in Keith Co 20 Jun (TJW) was an excellent count; either they were fairly late migrants or were local

- breeders attracted to a good food supply. Two chicks 2 weeks old were found in Clay Co 30 Jun (JGJ), perhaps a little late.
- Long-billed Curlew:** "A few" were in sw. Lincoln Co 11 Jun (TJW) at the s. edge of the summer range, and a pair with a juvenile in Box Butte Co 24 Jul (PR) was rather late. Last one seen at WSR was 22 Jul (HKH); most leave breeding grounds by Aug.
- Hudsonian Godwit:** The only report was of one rather late in Sarpy Co 1 Jun (CNK).
- Marbled Godwit:** None were reported; most fall movement is in Jul.
- Sanderling:** At the tail end of spring migration were 6 at LM 3 Jun (JGJ) and one in Sarpy Co. the same day (L&BP).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A late migrant in spring, 9 were in Lancaster Co 7 Jun (LE) and as many as 150 still in the e. RWB 3 Jun (JGJ).
- Western Sandpiper:** None were reported; adults arrive in mid- to late Jul.
- Least Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** Last for spring was one at Oliver Res 16 Jun (WRS).
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** One in w. Seward Co 7 Jul (JG) was a rather early fall returnee.
- Stilt Sandpiper:** One in w. Seward Co 8 Jun (JG) was a bit late, while first for fall were "a few" at Funk Lagoon 13 Jul (KS).
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Arrival was rather early, with one at LBN 19 Jul (MB), the 2nd-earliest on record, and 10 at North Bend by 27 Jul (JGJ).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** The first dowitchers in fall are adult Short-billeds; right on time were 2 in the e. RWB 14 Jul (JGJ).
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Routine reports.
- Wilson's Snipe:** Sightings of singles at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, 9 Jun and 28 Jul (LE) were likely summering there; both dates are out of the usual migration periods for spring and fall. Snipe have been recorded several times during the breeding season at this location.
- American Woodcock:** None were reported; this is a summer resident in the east.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** Following reports of breeding at Harvard Marsh and in Fillmore Co this spring, this summer in Seward Co a male was with a young chick 3 Jun (JGJ), distraction displays were seen 9 Jun (JG), "fresh juveniles" were found 30 Jun (JGJ), and 2 additional juveniles were seen 14 Jul (JGJ). There are still very few breeding records from the RWB, most of them since 2000. Closer to the usual breeding range were 2 broods at LM 10 Jun (SJD) and a brood in Morrill Co 10 Jun (SJD). Rather late for the east were 1-2 through 9 Jun (CNK,L&BP).
- Red-necked Phalarope:** Routine reports.
- Franklin's Gull:** Usually a few can be found lingering in summer, but this year last reported for spring were 31 at LM 9 Jun (SJD) and first in fall 10 at BOL 13 Jul (LE). Best count was only 58, in Nuckolls Co 2 Jun (LR,RH).
- Ring-billed Gull:** LM still had 133 on 9 Jun (SJD), a good count for the date.
- California Gull:** Best count was 17 at LM on 9 Jun, consisting of 15 adults and one each first and second summer birds (SJD). A first summer bird was at Oliver Res 16 Jun (WRS). Numbers are lowest in Jun.
- Herring Gull:** Routine reports.
- Least Tern:** LM hosted 8 adults with 4 nests 9 Jun (SJD); one adult was there 3 Jun (JGJ). Nesting was successful at a popular swimming area in sw. Sarpy

Co, where 10-12 adults had at least 2 young ready to fledge 18 Jul (CNK). One near Friend 9 Jun (LR,RH) was unexpected at that location, and is only the 5th RWB record in some 90 years. Several other reports were from or near traditional summering locations on the Platte River west to Dodge Co (L&BP,D&JP,CNK).

Caspian Tern: The only report was of 2 at LM 3 Jun (JGJ), a location where there have been several early Jun reports in recent years.

Black Tern: An "immature", presumably a year-old bird not completing migration, was at Wehrspann L, Sarpy Co, 19 Jun (JWH), and another straggler was in Lancaster Co 28 Jun (LE). First juveniles noted were with adults at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS), rather early.

Common Tern: The only report was of an alternate-plumaged adult at LM 10 Jun (SJD); migrants pass through into mid-Jun.

Forster's Tern: Two molting adults at Oliver Res 16 Jun were likely failed breeders or non-breeders (WRS), while 6 at BOL 13 Jul (LE) were fall migrants.

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Routine reports (finally).

White-winged Dove: The 2nd breeding record for this increasingly-reported species in Nebraska was of a pair with a juvenile in Lincoln 11 Jul (DL). There were 3 additional reports: singles in Albion 4 Jun (D&CN), where the first breeding record occurred in 2005, in Fairmont 15 Jul (JR), and in David City 17 Jul (RE).

Mourning Dove: Flocks of young birds begin to form in mid-Jul; 118 were at one site in Lancaster Co 21 Jul (LE).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: This species is being reported more often, including a record count of 7 in Otoe Co 16 Jun (L&CF), suggesting that migration in this species continues well into Jun. It summered at ADF (L&CF), and singles were at SCP 6 Jun (KP), Adams Co 7 Jul (MB), and se. Jefferson Co 14 Jul (WRS).

Barn Owl: An adult at a nest with 2 young as well as an additional nest were found at LM 9 Jun (SJD), a regular nesting location. The only other report was of one in Adams Co 15 Jun (PD).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: Surveys in Scotts Bluff Co showed a decline from 97 birds in 2006 to 58 this year, although the ratio of juveniles to adults was similar at 56% and 49% respectively (KD).

Barred Owl: Continuing westerly reports in the Platte Valley was a dead bird found at North Platte and turned in for West Nile Virus testing 7 Jun (fide TJW).

Long-eared Owl: None were reported; this species is a regular but rare breeder in Nebraska.

Short-eared Owl: The only report was of 2 at a traditional summer location in Scotts Bluff Co 14 Jul (KD).

Common Nighthawk: Routine reports.

Common Poorwill: A local rancher reported "dozens" on the dirt canyon roads in Lincoln Co 15 Jun ((fide TJW); although this is one of fewer than 5 reports from that area, this interesting habitat apparently hosts good numbers of this species.

Chuck-will's-widow: Singles were detected again this year at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 16 and 18 Jul (JG,CNK). There are few known regular locations in the state.

Whip-poor-will: A good count of 10+ was made at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 16 Jul (JG); this species is localized in the east due to its dislike of disturbed woodland such as that affected by grazing, but is abundant in suitable woodlands.

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: The only reports were from traditional locations in Scotts Bluff Co (AK).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: There were scattered summer reports from the Missouri Valley (L&CF,TP,CNK,RM), as expected.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: An exciting report was from the observer's feeders in s. Scotts Bluff Co, where a male was seen 24 Jun and a female remained there 27 Jun-23 Jul (AK). The only other summer record suggestive of breeding, not yet documented in Nebraska, was one identified by the loud buzz in flight 29 Jun 2003 in Monroe Canyon. First for fall was record early by a few days near Mitchell 12 Jul, and 1-2 were there through 21 Jul (KD).

Calliope Hummingbird: The 3 singles reported were a male at WSR 7 Jul (HKH), a bird in Scotts Bluff Co 13 Jul (AK), and one near Mitchell 22 Jul (KD). With knowledgeable feeder-watchers monitoring hummers in the Panhandle, this species is proving to be a regular migrant, along with Rufous and Broad-tailed.

Rufous Hummingbird: Earliest of 3 or so reported in Scotts Bluff Co was near Mitchell 12 Jul (KD), tying the 3rd-earliest date.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Downy Woodpecker: Adults were feeding nestlings near Broken Bow 9 Jun (TH).

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: A nest with a nearly-fledged young bird was near Broken Bow 9 Jun (TH).

Pileated Woodpecker: Nesting was confirmed at both locations where breeding is known to occur. At ICSP, a nest hole found 9 Jun (SM) had 3 juveniles near fledging 16 Jun (RM). At FF, a nest near Hidden Lake checked on 1 and 13 Jul still had at least one of the 3 young seen there earlier (CNK). This is the second of the 2 active nests at FF this year. Intriguing were unconfirmed sightings from Lincoln and McPherson Cos in late summer 2005 (fide TJW). There are no confirmed reports away from se. Nebraska.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The only sighting was the last spring migrant reported, in Lancaster Co 1 Jun (LE).

Western Wood-Pewee: Routine reports.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Adults were feeding young in Burt Co 10 Jul (CNK) and Sarpy Co 26 Jul (CNK).

Acadian Flycatcher: None were reported; this is a summer resident in the southeast.

Alder Flycatcher: There were 3 reports of this late-migrating species: 2 were captured and measured at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 1 Jun (RS,BG), one was heard in Keith Co 3 Jun (JM), and another singing there 10 Jun (SJD) was latest on record.

Willow Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Least Flycatcher: This early fall migrant was reported 26 Jul in Dodge Co (D&JP); the few documented records suggest migration begins in late Jul in Nebraska.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: The only reports were from traditional summer locations in Sioux Co 30 Jun (AK).

Eastern Phoebe: Routine reports.

Say's Phoebe: An adult was feeding 3 fledglings at Lorenzo, Cheyenne Co, 4 Jul (KD).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: Very exciting was the discovery of a single in Kimball Co 28 Jun (WM), photographed 9-10 Jul (JG,MB), and subsequent confirmation of the presence of a breeding pair there 15 Jul (WM). This is the first Nebraska breeding record, and only the 2nd record overall.

Great Crested Flycatcher: An adult was feeding young rather late at ADF 28 Jul (L&CF), and one was westerly, but within the summer range, in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 7 Jul (LH,RH).

Cassin's Kingbird: This species has increased its range in s. Panhandle escarpments in Kimball, Banner, Scotts Bluff, and Morrill Cos in the last 20 years (AK). It also occurs in good numbers in favored locations away from escarpments, such as just south of Exit 1 on I-80 in Kimball Co, where 4 were found 3 Jun (JGJ).

Western Kingbird: Young were being fed in Banner Co 2 Jun (AK), rather early; earliest egg date for this species, however, is 4 May. An excellent easterly count was the 20 in Lancaster Co 13 Jul (LE), when fall groups begin to appear.

Eastern Kingbird: The 145 in Lancaster Co 28 Jul (LE) was an excellent count; as with Western Kingbird, groups form in late Jul.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Breeding occurred at the Lincoln Airport where a pair had a nest with eggs 16 Jun and 4 fledged young 6 Jul (AR, fide JGJ). Apparently 3 young were fledged there in 2006 also (fide AR). Although a juvenile was reported at Eppley Airfield, Omaha, as early as 2 Jun, only singles were reported there, leaving breeding unconfirmed (m. ob.). The male of the breeding pair in sw. Kearney Co was seen 12 Jun (TH). Yet another single was in Nemaha Co 22-23 Jun (CG, fide JGJ).

Loggerhead Shrike: The w. Sandhills and Panhandle continue to be a national stronghold for this species; good numbers were found in Cherry and Sheridan Cos in early Jun, with 14 counted on 2 BBS routes (CNK), and in Cheyenne Co 4 Jul, where 4 family groups were found on a BBS route (KD). One on a nest near Agate 9 Jun (AK) was behind schedule.

Bell's Vireo: Routine reports.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: Towards the e. end of the Nebraska breeding range were 2 at West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 7 Jul (LR,RH) and 2 at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 8 Jul (LR,RH).

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: A nest with young was at Bassett 14 Jul (CH).

Blue Jay: An incubating bird was at SCP 6 Jun (KP), on schedule.

Pinyon Jay: None were reported; this is a rare breeder in the northwest.

Black-billed Magpie: One of the more easterly nestings for some time was in e. Seward Co this summer (SR). Also easterly were 2-3 in Adams Co 7-14

Jul (MB,PD). Numbers may be recovering in the west; 6 in the observer's yard in Scotts Bluff Co were the first there in 6 years (AK).

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Fledglings were found in Banner Co 2 Jun (AK).

Purple Martin: Two were near the w. edge of the summer range in Ogallala 9 Jun (SJD). A pair with 3 fledglings was in Bellevue 26 Jul (CNK), rather close to fall departure dates, as exemplified by the flock of 200 at a North Platte ball park 28-29 Jul (TJW) and an amazing tally of 1200-1500 migrating in loose flocks over Omaha 30 Jul (JR).

Tree Swallow: Adults were feeding fledglings at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS).

Violet-green Swallow: Routine reports.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Newly-fledged young were seen in Otoe Co 21 Jul (CNK), close to fall departure.

Cliff Swallow: Adults were feeding young near Agate 9 Jun (AK), rather early.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: Routine reports.

Tufted Titmouse: Adults were feeding 2 young at ADF 2 Jul (L&CF).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: One in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 7 Jul (LR,RH) may have been an early fall wanderer; breeding records in the Pine Ridge are surprisingly scarce.

White-breasted Nuthatch: One in Monroe Canyon feeding young 30 Jun (AK) was presumably of the western subspecies *nelsoni*.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: None were reported; this species is a rare breeder in the Missouri Valley and uncommon in the Pine Ridge.

Rock Wren: Easterly was one on a rock'd railroad embankment in Adams Co 16 Jun (PD); summer reports east of the breeding range are rare. Fewer than usual were found in the loess canyons of se. Lincoln Co, possibly because heavy rains washed away dirt bank breeding sites (TJW). Adults were carrying food in Banner and Scotts Bluff Cos 2 Jun (AK).

Carolina Wren: An experienced observer noted that this species "has never been so widely distributed" (LE).

House Wren: A good count was the 38 at Wilderness Park, Lincoln, 5 Jun (LE). Nest-building was noted near Broken Bow 4 Jul (TH), apparently a 2nd brood, and fledglings were seen at ADF 12 Jul (L&CF).

Sedge Wren: Most pass through Nebraska in spring, with few remaining in Jun. However one was singing in a grassy Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field near Pickrell 3 Jun, possibly a late migrant (WRS), one was in Lancaster Co 25 Jun (LE), and one was in Knox Co 28 Jun (D&JP). Typically, Sedge Wrens return to Nebraska in good numbers in mid-Jul; one was at ADF 6 Jul, and another was carrying nest material there 22 Jul (L&CF).

Marsh Wren: While the propensity of Sedge Wren to arrive in mid-Jul and at least attempt nesting is well-known, the same phenomenon likely occurs with Marsh Wren also, at least in the RWB; these birds are absent there in early summer but singing birds start showing up in mid- or late summer (JGJ). There are few actual breeding records south of the Platte Valley, but summer records there are almost all from mid-Jul on. This summer, with good water conditions, territorial birds appeared in w. Seward Co marshes

- 19 Jul where none were found May-Jun (JG). One carrying food near North Platte 9 Jul (TJW) and another that appeared at the marsh in FF 9 Jul (L&BP) were likely new arrivals also.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** One was carrying nest material in Banner Co 2 Jun (AK).
- Eastern Bluebird:** A series of boxes in Otoe Co fledged 45 young this year (L&CF). An adult was tending a juvenile at SCP 6 Jun (KP).
- Mountain Bluebird:** Adults were carrying food in Scotts Bluff and Banner Cos 2 Jun (AK), and fledglings were seen in Sioux Co 30 Jun (AK). Several were using nest boxes near Chadron 7 Jun (L&CF).
- Wood Thrush:** At the w. edge of the breeding range was one at Hormel Park, Fremont, 27 Jun (RE).
- American Robin:** Routine reports.
- Gray Catbird:** Routine reports.
- Northern Mockingbird:** Good numbers can be found in se. Nebraska; 6 were in Gage Co 21 Jun (L&BP) and 5 singing birds were on an 80-acre site in Pawnee Co 30 Jun (WRS).
- Brown Thrasher:** A nest with 3 young was at SCP 6 Jun (KP) and a recent fledgling at Bellevue 26 Jul (CNK) was rather late.
- European Starling:** Routine reports.
- Cedar Waxwing:** Typical of this species, a rather late flock was seen at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 1 Jun (RS,BG). Nestlings had fledged from a nest in Scotts Bluff Co 11 Jul (AK).
- Northern Parula:** One at Fairbury 3 Jun (LR,RH) was westerly; there are few breeding season records west of the Missouri Valley.
- Yellow Warbler:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** One was carrying food in Monroe Canyon, 30 Jun (AK).
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** One at Chadron 7 Jun (L&CF) was 3rd latest for spring and only the 2nd Panhandle record for spring.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** None were reported; several were reported in spring, but this species becomes inconspicuous in summer.
- Cerulean Warbler:** None were reported, following a few spring reports.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** The only reports were from regular summer locations in Monroe and Sowbelly Canyons 30 Jun (AK).
- American Redstart:** Reports were from regular summering locations on the Pine Ridge and in the east; adults were feeding young in Sioux Co 30 Jun (AK).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** None were reported, following a few spring reports.
- Worm-eating Warbler:** One singing at WSR 8 Jun (HKH) was the 4th Panhandle record for this species, which is a good find anywhere in Nebraska.
- Ovenbird:** Routine reports.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** The only reports from the summer were from traditional areas: one at ADF 17 Jun (L&CF) and 2 at Platte River SP, Cass Co, 6 Jul (L&BP).
- Kentucky Warbler:** The only report was of a singing male westerly and late at Hastings 2 Jun (PD). None were reported from breeding locations.
- Common Yellowthroat:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Two birds west of Alma 7 Jul were at "the only reliable spot in the county" (G&WH); chats are now rare in eastern and much of central Nebraska.

Summer Tanager: As in the last few summers, this species is now being reported from most mature forests in the extreme southeast. One was just north of Omaha in Douglas Co 1 Jul (L&BP), one was at Platte River SP, Cass Co, 27 Jun (RE), and 2 were at ICSP 13 Jul (L&BP). A surprise was a westerly bird at Rock Glen WMA, Jefferson Co, 30 Jun (WRS).

Scarlet Tanager: One at Hormel Park, Fremont, 14 Jun (D&JP) was near the west edge of the summer range.

Western Tanager: One was carrying food in Sioux Co 30 Jun (AK).

Eastern Towhee: Towhees heard at Rock Glen WMA, Jefferson Co, this summer all sang hybrid songs (WRS).

Spotted Towhee: Spottedds were reported in Harlan Co in early Jul (G&WH), where hybrids and Easterns have also been found previously.

Cassin's Sparrow: None were reported; this is a regular, local summer resident in the southwest.

Chipping Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: None were reported; this species breeds in western sand-sage prairie.

Field Sparrow: Rare in the Panhandle, one in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 7 Jul (LR,RH) was only the 3rd Panhandle record in summer.

Vesper Sparrow: A nest with 4 young near Cedar Bluffs in a field planted to soybeans with standing corn stubble was empty 16 Jul, although the adults were nearby (JMu). Joel Jorgensen pointed out that Vesper Sparrows in eastern Nebraska have adapted to this type of habitat and appear to be increasing in numbers and range in recent years. Don Paseka noted also that the recent trend to no-till methods of row-crop farming has allowed this type of habitat to survive through planting, in contrast with the full-tillage methods used formerly that destroyed the previous year's stubble and any nests present. The only birds or nests destroyed by no-till methods would be the unlucky few hit by tractor or planter wheels. Larry Einemann, who has covered Lancaster Co regularly for many years, has also noticed the increase in Vesper Sparrow numbers, and their preference for early stage untilled soybean fields.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: This western species, along with Vesper Sparrows in eastern Nebraska, may be adapting to no-till agricultural practices; 30-40 were using a growing corn field planted into the previous year's wheat stubble in Lincoln Co 28 Jun while few or none were using nearby grasslands (TJW). Numbers were low this summer due to very dry conditions, especially in Kimball (WRS), Keith, Hitchcock, and Hayes Cos (TJW). The BBS route in Kimball Co had its lowest total, only 50, since the observer (WRS) began running the route in 1995. Rare eastward, one in Dixon Co 2 Jun was only the observer's 2nd there in 7-8 years (JJ).

Savannah Sparrow: There are a few locations in the Panhandle and perhaps elsewhere where this species breeds. Although not documented there, one at Facus Springs, Morrill Co, 10 Jun (SJD) was in suitable breeding habitat.

Grasshopper Sparrow: This species was using growing corn in wheat stubble in Keith Co 28 Jun, as with Lark Buntings (see above), but it was also present in nearby grasslands (TJW). Although this is encouraging, Grasshopper Sparrow is not very picky in its choice of "grasslands", as indicated by a

wide range of types, including grazed pastures, used in se. Nebraska this summer (WRS).

Henslow's Sparrow: There were several reports this summer; although habitat suitable for this species is limited in Nebraska, birds can be found in areas which meet their requirements, sometimes in large numbers. In a 160-acre CRP/hayfield near Burchard, 39 singing birds were counted 24 Jun, 9 were there on 14 Jul after part of the area was mowed, and 4 were still there 19 Aug after about half was mowed, suggesting that the early numbers were mostly migrants or that the initial mowing activity caused many to leave (WRS). At a nearly pristine 160-acre prairie nearby, 31 Henslow's were counted 19 Aug (WRS). The westernmost known breeding site in the state is at the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust property in Buffalo Co, where Henslow's have been found every year since 1995 and nests have been found in 3 of the last 4 years (DK). Also westerly were 2 in CRP near Tobias 2 Jun; they could not be relocated later (WRS). Other reports were of 5 at Allwine Prairie, Douglas Co, 4 Jun (JMc), 6-8 singing "relentlessly" at Harvard Marsh 22-23 Jun (PD), and one singing at Fort Atkinson SHP, Washington Co, 24 Jun (RM).

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Swamp Sparrow: Reports were from known breeding locations in the central part of the state, including 11 at LM 9 Jun (SJD) and one carrying food near North Platte 9 Jul (TJW).

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: Reports were from the Pine Ridge breeding range, including a fledgling in Monroe Canyon, Sioux Co, 30 Jun (AK).

McCown's Longspur: Routine reports.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Numbers on a BBS route in Kimball Co 16 Jun were the lowest in several years due to very dry pasture conditions (WRS).

Northern Cardinal: Routine reports.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: One at LM 9 Jun (SJD) was westerly and rather late; spring migrants occur westward with some regularity, but there are few reports after May.

Black-headed Grosbeak: A male was feeding a fledgling in West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 7 Jul (LR,RH).

Blue Grosbeak: A female was incubating 2 eggs in Seward Co 9 Jun (JG). Numbers are lowest in the southeast; singles were in Otoe Co 16 Jun (L&CF) and Richardson Co 13 Jul (L&BP).

Lazuli Bunting: One in Keith Co 2 Jun (JM) was somewhat east of the current breeding range and at that date was likely a migrant.

Indigo Bunting: The 8 males in Otoe Co 21 Jul (CNK) would have brightened up the place.

Dickcissel: After last year's major push westward, a minor echo was detected this year. Dickcissels were "doing quite well" in Keith Co with 9 males per stop for stops located in CRP habitat on a BBS route 28 Jun (TJW), and a nest with eggs was at the west end of LM 9 Jun (SJD). Numbers were high in n.-cen. Nebraska, where 200+ were counted around Calamus Res and 200+ in sw. Rock Co 18 Jun (RE), and in Lancaster Co where 78 were tallied 13 Jul (LE).

Bobolink: Most common north of the Platte River, there were several reports from the southeast where few or none are usually found. The species was conspicuous in undisturbed native grasslands in the extreme southeast

(WRS), 12 singing males were at Harvard Marsh 2 Jun (PD), a male was in w. Seward Co (JG), and 2 were singing in ne. Saline Co (LR,RH). A county first for the observer was a pair in irrigated grass in Scotts Bluff Co 14 Jul (KD), and an unusual sight was one in wheatgrass in a sw. Lincoln Co canyon (TJW).

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: This species was abundant in the Calamus Res- sw. Rock Co area 18-19 Jun, with about 400 tallied in all (RE). A nest with 5 eggs was found in Jefferson Co 9 Jun and agitated, calling adults were in attendance (WRS).

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Nestlings 1-5 days old were at NLB 10 Jun (JGJ).

Brewer's Blackbird: Breeding is essentially limited to the northern two-thirds of the Panhandle, and so 7 at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 10 Jun (L&CF) were apparently wandering non-breeders; this has been known to occur previously in Kansas.

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: A nest with 4 eggs was found in w. Seward Co 10 Jun (JGJ) and a fledgling was being fed at Funk Lagoon 3 Jul (KS).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Routine reports.

Orchard Oriole: The 50 in Keith Co 10 Jun (SJD) was an excellent count.

Baltimore Oriole: An interesting observation by a long-time Bellevue bander was that all of the 37 banded 24 Jul were hatch-year birds and had virtually complete breast feathering about 10 days earlier than usual (RG). This raises the possibility that adults departed on a molt migration as a result of hot, dry summer weather in the area. Although Bullock's Oriole has a well-documented molt migration, it would seem to be necessary much less often for Baltimores. Alternatively, of course, conditions earlier in spring may have been conducive to a major advancement of the entire breeding schedule.

Bullock's Oriole: Of 5 birds at Box Butte Res, Dawes Co, 5 Jul, 4 appeared phenotypically pure and one was a hybrid (LR,RH), while, somewhat easterly, one of two birds at LO was phenotypically pure, the other looked so, but was "probably a hybrid" (SJD). A male was feeding a juvenile in Dawes Co 7 Jul (LR,RH). Pure-appearing Bullock's are rare east of the Panhandle.

Cassin's Finch: A pair on 28 Jun, not well seen, south of I-80 Exit 1 in Limber Pines was reminiscent of this species but not conclusively identified (WM). Breeding has occurred in the northern Panhandle.

House Finch: Routine reports.

Red Crossbill: A few were found on the Pine Ridge during the period, including a female and 4 immatures near Chadron 7 Jun (L&CF), and "several" in Monroe Canyon 30 Jun (AK) and 6 Jul (LR,RH). An immature hit a window in the observer's yard in s. Scotts Bluff Co 15 Jul (AK).

Pine Siskin: None were reported; breeding is regular in the west.

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.