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Spring Field Report, March–May 2009

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SPRING FIELD REPORT, March-May 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The most obvious pattern this spring was early arrivals, especially among the shorebirds. Dunlin arrived record early, and 5 other species were close to record early dates. However, warblers, sparrows, and buntings were pushing early dates and Brown-headed Cowbird was early in numbers.

Winter finches were scarce except for Pine Siskin, which was present in good numbers, although breeding evidence was nonexistent.

Glossy Ibis continued in numbers as did easterly Lazuli Buntings. Nesting was confirmed at a new location for Red-shouldered Hawk; this is currently the only known active site in the state.

It was a great spring for genuine zooties: Common Crane, a spring Sabine's Gull, Ash-throated Flycatcher, yet another Lincoln Pygmy Nuthatch, first state records for Fish Crow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Baird's Sparrow singing on migration.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City
BOL: Branched Oak L SRA, Lancaster Co
Cem: Cemetery
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co
CRP: Conservation Reserve Program (Federal)
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos
L: Lake
LM: L McConaughy SRA, Keith Co
LNB: Lake North/Babcock, Platte Co
LO: L Ogallala SRA, Keith Co
m.ob.: many observers
NC: Nature Center
NLB: North Lake Basin, WMA, Seward Co
NNF: Nebraska National Forest
NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge
PL: Pawnee L SRA, Lancaster Co
PRSP: Platte River SP, Cass 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
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)
SP: State Park
SRA: State Recreation Area
WGP: Walnut Grove Park, Omaha
WMA: Wildlife Management Area (State)
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln
WPA: Waterfowl Production Area (Federal)
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, s. Sioux Co

GAZETTEER:

Calamus Res SRA: Loup and Garfield Cos
Funk Lagoon WPA: Phelps Co
Harvard Marsh WPA: Clay Co
Jack Sinn WMA: Lancaster and Saunders Cos
Ponca SP: Dixon Co
Rowe Sanctuary: Buffalo Co
Wehrspann L: Chalco Hills Recreation Area, Sarpy Co

OBSERVERS

AB: Andrew Bankert, Melbourne Beach, FL
AG: Alan Grenon, Seattle, WA
AH: Alice Heckman, Kearney
AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering
ARy: Allen Reyer, Bellevue
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City
BG: Betty Grenon, Bellevue
BM: Bruce Mellberg, Lincoln
BP: Becky Potmesil, Alliance
BR: Bud Rogers, Scottsdale, AZ
CG: Cory Gregory, Ames, IA
CH: Charles Hedeon, Three Forks, MT
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue
D&CN: Don & Colleen Noecker, Albion
D&JP: Don and Jan Paseka, Ames
DA: David Alcock, Broomfield, CO
DB: Debra Beck, Bellevue
DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk
DJ: Dee Jordan, Danbury
DL: Daniel Leger, Lincoln
DR: Donna Royer, Bosque Farms, NM
DS: David Stairs, Chambers
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn
EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue
ECT: Edna Claire Thomas, Morrill

EM: Elizabeth Molloy, Omaha
ET: Edward Tickle, Lincoln
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma
GB: Gail Bleidt, Lewellen
GG: Greg Grove, State College, PA
HA: Henry Armknecht, Osborne, KS
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell
JC: John Carlini, Lincoln
JED: James E. Ducey, Lincoln
JG: Joseph Gubanyi, Seward
JGi: Jim Gibson, Chadron
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield
JK: Jay Keller, Arlington, VA
JLL: Jeanine L. Lackey, Ceresco
JM: Jeanne Miller, Bennington
JMu: John Murphy, Kearney
JO: Jim Ochsner, Ogallala
JR: Justin Rink, Omaha
JRe: Justin Reed, Lincoln
JRi: Juanita Rice, Fairmont
JS: Joe Sebastiani, Hockessin, DE
JSh: Jeff Shenot, Upper Marlboro, MD
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha
JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha
KC: Ken Carnes, Lincoln
KCo: Kathy Cohen, Beatrice
KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell
KDy: Keith Dyche, Shenandoah, IA
KK: Ken Kranow, Alliance
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney
LBl: Laurine Blankenau, Omaha
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln
LR: Lanny Randolph, Minden
LS: Larry Semo, Boulder, CO
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton
MD: Marybeth Dodson, Kearney
ME: Mike Ellis, Omaha
MJR: Mary Jo Rome, Omaha
ML: Marian Leach, Omaha
MR: Mike Resch, Pepperell, MA
MS: Matt Sittell, Bellevue
MUs: Moni Usasz, Lincoln
MW: Matt Webb, Fort Collins, CO

PAJ: Paul A. Johnsgard, Lincoln
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings
PS: Phil Swanson, Papillion
RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln
RH: Robin Harding, Minden
RL: Roger Lawson, Curtis
RO: Ryan O'Donnell, Logan, UT
RS: Rick Schmid, Omaha
RSg: Ruben Siegfried, Gering
RT: Rob Tyser, La Crosse, WI
RW: Rick Wright, Tucson, AZ
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA
SM: Steve Morris, Grand Island
SMc: Steve McIlree, Omaha
SQ: Susan Quinn, Nebraska City
SS: Shari Schwartz, Lincoln
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
TP: Theresa Pester, Walton
WF: William Flack, Kearney
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: Small numbers were westerly in Scotts Bluff Co through 8 Apr (KD, AK), with an unexpectedly high count there of 150 on 29 Mar (KD). Also westerly was one at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 30 Mar (TJW). One at Jack Sinn 29 May (LE) was a straggler.

Snow Goose: The e. RWB usually has a good number of stragglers; 70 were counted 9 May, most at Harvard Marsh (JGJ). One in Madison Co 10 May was wounded (MB).

Ross's Goose: Best count was the 170 in Lancaster Co 17 Mar (LE), while in Scotts Bluff Co 90-100 were in the Winters Creek L area 1 Mar (KD, RSg). Straggling were one in York Co 14-17 May (JGJ) and another in Saunders Co 10 May (LE).

Cackling Goose: A good count away from the c. Platte Valley was the 410 in Lancaster Co 2 Mar (LE).

Canada Goose: Best single-location tally was the 5100 at L Minatare, Scotts Bluff Co, 1 Mar (RSg).

Mute Swan: Scattered singles and pairs continue to be reported; 2 adults and an immature near Crete 11 Apr (DL) were at a known hobbyist's location (TEL), 2 were at Wehrspann L 27 Apr (JWH), and a pair was in w. Omaha 30 Apr-1 May (ML). Photos of the 2 Wehrspann L birds (JWH) show second-year plumage; it is likely they were the same two that were there in juv. plumage in the fall of 2008.

Trumpeter Swan: Migrants included 2 in Otoe Co 15 Mar (CNK) and one near the North Platte airport 18-29 Mar (TJW).

Tundra Swan: A group of 5 was near Stapleton 3 Mar, identified by size, bill characters, and a yellow spot at the base of the bill (TJW).

Wood Duck: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

Eurasian Wigeon: One photographed at Funk Lagoon 5-7 Mar (KS, PD) was a bit early; this species has been reported at least once each year recently in the RWB.

American Wigeon: Routine reports.

American Black Duck: Rarely reported recently, a pair was at BOL 6 Mar (JGJ).

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: Earliest were 2 near Niobrara rather early on 7 Mar (MB).

Cinnamon Teal: Earliest were 2 males near North Platte 19 Mar (TJW), and easterly were one at FF 23 Apr (EB), rare that far east, and 1-4 at NLB 6-11 May (JGJ).

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-Winged Teal: Routine reports.

Canvasback: Very late were singles at Jack Sinn 29 May (LE) and in York Co 17-23 May (JGJ).



Hooded Merganser, Lincoln Saline Wetlands Nature Center, Lancaster Co., 25 May 2009.
Photo by Edward Tickle.

Redhead: Routine reports.

Ring-necked Duck: Routine reports.

Greater Scaup: A female was rather late at NLB 11 May (JGJ, photo); there are only 5 later spring dates.

Lesser Scaup: Routine reports.

White-winged Scoter: A rare spring occurrence, only the 25th, was one in Johnson Co 25 Mar (KCo, details).

Bufflehead: Routine reports.

Common Goldeneye: Routine reports.

Hooded Merganser: A photo of an apparent hatch-year juvenile (WM) taken in Lincoln 25 May (ET) suggested an early breeding in the area. The presence of 2 "possible juveniles" in North Platte 27 May (TJW) seemed less likely to indicate breeding; ages of the birds were not confirmed. Breeding records to date are along the Missouri River Valley.

Common Merganser: The 2750 in Lancaster Co 2 Mar (LE) was a good count.

Red-breasted Merganser: Best count was a moderate 28 at BOL 27 Mar (LE).

Ruddy Duck: The 450 at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 24 Apr (DA) was an excellent count.

Gray Partridge: Current center of abundance in the extreme ne. Nebraska range seems to be in Cedar and Dixon Cos; the area immediately w. of Laurel has a few (fide MB), and 3 were ne. of Buckskin Hills WMA, Dixon Co, 2 May (RE). Further w. in nw. Pierce and ne. Antelope Cos it is "very rare", although one was seen there n. of Highway 20 on 14 May (MB). Sightings extended nw. to Boyd Co, where one was found 24 May (DH).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: This species continues to do well at the e. and s. edges of its range, notably on public areas in the RWB, where 3 were at Harvard Marsh 18 Mar (JGJ) and a lek with 7 and 17 birds in n. Cedar Co 28 Mar (BFH). Easterly reports included 2 leks with 7 and 17 birds in n. Cedar Co 28 Mar (BFH), 46 birds near Albion 1 Mar and 12 on a lek there 10 May (D&CN), up to 12 during the season at or near SCP (KP), and 33 birds on a newly-discovered lek in extreme se. Butler Co 3 Apr (JG). Elsewhere, grassland conditions precluded use of the public viewing area at Burchard L WMA, Pawnee Co, (WRS), but 13 birds were nearby to the w. on a well-managed private prairie 19 Apr (JC, SS). In sc. Nebraska, where distribution is spotty, a lek with 15 birds was a few miles sw. of Rowe Sanctuary in Kearney Co 8 Mar (LR, RH), two were booming in Furnas Co 5 May (WF), and a lek was found in the canyons of se. Lincoln Co 18 May (TJW).

Wild Turkey: Good counts were the 500 observed along I-80 between Lincoln and Ogallala 17 Apr (RE) and 200 at Calamus Res 25 Mar (JS).

Northern Bobwhite: Northwesterly were singles in Custer Co 10 Mar (TH) and 25 May (WF), in Loup Co 24 Apr (SJD), and 2 along the Logan-Lincoln Co line 27 May (LR, RH).

Common Loon: More than usual, at least 29, were reported e. of the Panhandle 21 Mar (JGJ, LE), rather early, through 10 May (TJW); two later reports were westerly, as expected for later spring dates, with 2 at LO 18 May (MR) and one at Box Butte Res, Dawes Co, 28 May (GG). Best count was the 7 at BOL 8 Apr (JGJ).

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Horned Grebe: The 50 at Capitol Beach L, Lincoln, 14 Apr (JGJ) was an excellent count.

Eared Grebe: The 300 at Box Butte Res, Dawes Co, 1 May (JGi) was a good tally away from a breeding location.

Western Grebe: Routine reports.

Clark's Grebe: The only report was of one at LO, where regular, 18 May (MR).

American White Pelican: The thousand at both Calamus Res 11 Apr (MUs) and LO 17 Apr (RE) were good totals. Rather early were 9 at L Minatare, Scotts Bluff Co, 1 Mar (RSg).

Brown Pelican: An immature at LNB, Platte Co, 15-17 May (D&JP, LE photo) was the 7th documented spring record; there is one for fall.

Double-crested Cormorant: Early arrivals were one in Sarpy Co 5 Mar (JM) and 4 at HCR 6 Mar (G&WH). Nesting was under way at the w. end of HCR by 29 Apr, when at least 25 nests were noted in live trees at the w. end of the reservoir (G&WH), a site used in 1999-2001 then abandoned due to fluctuating water levels. Third or fourth-best spring count ever was the 2000-3000 at Calamus Res 11 Apr (MUs).

American Bittern: One was discovered in shrubs at an office building in Omaha 30 Apr (fide D&JP); it stayed through the next day (JSt, MS).

Least Bittern: This is another southern species being reported more often northward in recent years; singles were at Jack Sinn 10 May (LE) and northerly at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 24 May (GG).

Great Blue Heron: A small colony with 6 nests was found along a small creek in s. Dixon Co 7 May (JJ).

Great Egret: One at Springer WPA, Hamilton Co, 19 Mar (JGJ) was 5th-earliest on record. Best count was the 27 in the e. RWB 27 Apr (JGJ), a typical best spring count (highs are around 40). Rarer westward, one was at North Platte 17 Apr (TJW).

Snowy Egret: A statewide spring migrant, 16 were reported 21 Apr (KK) through 21 May (CG), a typical migration.

Little Blue Heron: Uncommon in spring, the only report was of one in Seward Co 17 May (JG).

Cattle Egret: Third-earliest on record was one at PL 30 Mar (LE). Only about 60 in all were reported.

Green Heron: Rare northwestward, one was at Lisco 25 Apr (WF).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: The 43 in the e. RWB 26 Apr (JGJ) was a good count. High is 84.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: One was at WGP 11 May (KCR); this is a rare spring migrant.

Glossy Ibis: Multiple reports continue, including photos, from experienced observers, with no fewer than 8 individuals reported 23 Apr-17 May (PD, JGJ, CG, TJW). Photos show little or no evidence of hybridization, interesting in that further s., notably in Oklahoma, hybrids occur in numbers of the same order as "pure" birds. Of the 33 documented records to date, 30 were in the period 2005-2009.

White-faced Ibis: Good numbers were reported, as in recent years; total was about 495. Earliest was one in the e. RWB 11 Apr (JJ), rather early. Best count was 2nd-best ever, 120 in Sheridan Co 29 Apr (CG).

Turkey Vulture: Earliest was one in Douglas Co 6 Mar (DB); there are a few late Feb dates.

Osprey: One at FF 5 Mar (PS) is the earliest documented record for this species; another at BOL 27 Mar (LE) was rather early also. A good count was the 6 at LO 17 Apr (RE).

White-tailed Kite: One was reported by an experienced observer hovering and flying across I-80 a few miles w. of Lincoln in extreme e. Seward Co 30 May (LS); this species is another southern species appearing more often northward on the Great Plains.

Mississippi Kite: First at the regular Ogallala site was one on 18 May (MR); a surprise, however, was a sub-adult at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 27 May (WF). Recently there have been increasing (but not numerous) reports away from Ogallala, mostly in Sep.

Bald Eagle: The "annual shad die-off" at Calamus Res in early Mar concentrated a large number of Bald Eagles; peak was a near-record count of 273 on 12 Mar (DS). The pair at DeSoto NWR hatched young 10 Apr (SMc).

Northern Harrier: A pair was courtship feeding over CRP grassland near Ceresco 12 May; they had been present since 10 Apr (JLL). Nesting can occur anywhere habitat is extensive enough.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Last reported migrants were one in Seward Co 17 May (PAJ) and a female in Loup Co 21 May (DH).

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Northern Goshawk: None were reported; last dates in spring are in early May.

Red-shouldered Hawk: There was encouraging news of this species. After several sightings of single birds in 2008 in the PL area of Lancaster Co, 2 birds were seen for the first time 9 Mar this year (LE) and breeding was confirmed with the discovery of a pair tending a nest 30 feet up in a Green Ash 30 Mar; 2 chicks were present 9 May (LE, WM). Sightings of singles in the BOL area over the same period may have been the PL birds (LE, JGJ). The only other recently-known breeding site has been FF, where breeding apparently has not occurred for several years, despite regular sightings of single birds. Singles were there this spring 27 Mar-16 Apr (PS, L&BP, JR). Also encouraging were sightings of a one-year-old at Zorinsky L, Omaha, 13 Mar (JK) and at Wehrspann L 17 Mar (RE).

Broad-winged Hawk: Reports were widespread although numbers were low. Of interest is the continuation of the recent trend of increasing numbers of westerly sightings, including this year singles in Perkins and Grant Cos 25 Apr (WF), at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 29 Apr (RO), and at LO 2 May (JGJ). No doubt associated with this trend was the return of the pair which bred for the first time in North Platte in 2008; 2 birds were present 20 Apr (TJW).

Swainson's Hawk: A rare dark morph was with 30 "normal" birds in e. Nebraska 19 Apr (D&JP). An easterly pair with a yearling near Peru 12 May may have bred in the area in 2008 (WRS).

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: Routine reports.

Rough-legged Hawk: Routine reports.

Golden Eagle: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: This species can be numerous at migration peaks; 100 were estimated between Lincoln and Ogallala along I-80 17 Apr (RE). A nest-box

on the Game and Parks building in Lincoln had 4 newly-hatched chicks 7 May, and 5 were present 15 May (JGJ).

Merlin: Routine reports.

Prairie Falcon: Easterly were singles in Cedar Co 25 Apr (DA) and Fillmore Co 16 May (MB), the latter rather late that far east.

Peregrine Falcon: The resident pairs in Lincoln and Omaha initiate nesting early; the Omaha pair, Zeus and Hera, had an egg 30 Mar (CNK). The Lincoln pair's eggs hatched 12-13 May and there were 4 chicks 20 May (JGJ). First migrant was not reported until 23 Apr (DH).

Yellow Rail: Another perplexing rail report was of a clicking sound, as given by this species, emanating "from a grassy clump" at FF 3 May (LBI). Not surprisingly, the perpetrator of the sound was not seen, but the date is good based on the scanty data available in Nebraska.

Virginia Rail: Routine reports.

Sora: Routine reports.

American Coot: The 1711 in Lancaster Co 2 Apr (LE) was a good count.

Sandhill Crane: A pair arrived at the Morrill Co breeding location 19 Mar and had 2 downy week-old chicks 23 May (KD). Other birds in potential breeding locations were a pair at Kiowa WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, 23 May (KD), and singles in Kearney Co 28 May (WF) and at CLNWR 30 May (AK). Another, heard in York Co 17 May, and possibly calling from County Line WPA, York and Fillmore Cos, (D&JP) may have been a late migrant or a potential breeder.

Common Crane: Now being reported each spring, one was photographed on the observer's ranch near Lewellen 18-21 Mar (GB, <http://www.cranevalleyranch.com>); one was there in 2007 also.

Whooping Crane: The usual scattered migrants were reported. A juvenile was near Doniphan rather early 16 Mar (JRe) and a single was flying with Sandhill Cranes near Kearney 26 Mar (MD). A family group was photographed in Kearney Co 28 Mar (JGJ) and a single was there 11 Apr (JGJ). Westerly was a group of 6 adults and a juvenile in Lincoln Co 17 Apr, with 5 still there 19 Apr (TJW).

Black-bellied Plover: An excellent count was the 363 in the e. RWB 14 May, including 253 at Harvard Marsh (JGJ).

American Golden-Plover: Record early by 8 days was one at Tamora Basin, Seward Co, 6 Mar (JGJ); there is only one other Mar record for the e. RWB (fide JGJ). Best e. RWB tally this spring was a moderate 274 on 14 May (JGJ).

Snowy Plover: There were more reports than usual for this now-regular spring migrant; 5 sightings of 6 birds came from the e. RWB 23 Apr-18 May (PD, JGJ, JG). Elsewhere, where still rare away from LM, the observer's 2nd record for Antelope Co was a single 13 Apr (MB), and one (heading for LM?) was at North Platte SL 2 May (JGJ). None were reported from LM.

Semipalmated Plover: Routine reports.

Piping Plover: Three were at CLNWR from 3 May through the period, with one incubating 31 May (CG, SJD); breeding began here in 2007. An intrepid traveler, one of 5 birds in the e. RWB 26 Apr (JGJ), was banded in Saskatchewan in 2006 and re-sighted on Padre Island, TX, in 2008 (fide JGJ).

Killdeer: Routine reports.

Mountain Plover: Two were found 5 May n. of Bushnell in Kimball Co (RE), where there has been a lack of reports in recent years.

Black-necked Stilt: Six at Jensen WPA, Kearney Co, 18 Apr (KS, JMu) were rather early; record early date is 9 Apr. One at HCR 29 May (WF) was unexpected, but 3 additional reports were from expected locations in the w. Sandhills (RO, MR, AK). Surprisingly, none were reported from the e. RWB.

American Avocet: The 100-150 at North Platte SL 1 May (TJW) was a good tally.

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Solitary Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: Singles at Rowe Sanctuary 4 Mar (KS) and at Funk Lagoon 6 Mar (PD) were rather early; record early is 1 Mar. A record count was the 300 in the e. RWB 11 Apr, including 111 at North Harvard Basin, Clay Co, (JGJ).

Willet: The 105 in the e. RWB 24 Apr (JGJ) was a good count.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Four on 9 Mar in Lancaster Co (LE) were 3rd-earliest on record.

Upland Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Whimbrel: Four sightings of this rare but regular spring migrant were reported, a total of 8 birds. One in York Co 24 Apr (JGJ) was rather early, only the 9th record for Apr. One was in Antelope Co 13 May (MB), 4 were at Harvard Marsh 14 May (JGJ), and 2 were in Merrick Co 16 May (WF).

Long-billed Curlew: Earliest were 2 on a Sheridan Co ranch 31 Mar (BP). The 20 in McPherson Co 14 Apr (TJW) was a good count. Rare as far e. as the e. RWB, only the 9th record there was one that flew over Tamora Basin, Seward Co, 18 Apr (JGJ); also easterly were one in Wheeler Co 24 Apr (SJD) and 5 in Loup Co 24 Apr (SJD).

Hudsonian Godwit: The 24 at Harvard Marsh 11 Apr (JGJ) tied the 3rd-earliest date. Westerly reports are rare; one was at North Platte SL 18 May (TJW).

Marbled Godwit: One at North Platte SL 27 May (TJW) was a rather late migrant.

Ruddy Turnstone: Several were reported 9-23 May, a good showing: 3 were in the e. RWB 9 May (JGJ), 2 in a dry field with Black-bellied Plovers in se. Cumming Co 13 May (D&JP), 3 were at Harvard Marsh 18 May (PD), one was at Bittern's Call WMA, Dawson Co, 19-23 May (TJW, WF), and one was at Harvard Marsh 23 May (JGJ). NOU field trips reported sightings in 5 Cos 16-17 May (m.ob.).

Sanderling: Routine reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Large numbers pass through the e. RWB, peaking in early May; best count was 1400 there 9 May (JGJ). Record spring count is 3500 on 4 May 2008.

Western Sandpiper: The only report of this rare spring migrant was of 2 in Lancaster Co 3 May (LE).

Least Sandpiper: Routine reports.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Arrival was early; 4th-earliest on record were 6 in the e. RWB 26 Apr (JGJ). Also early were 12 in Lincoln 30 Apr (LE).

Baird's Sandpiper: Arrival was early for this species also; 2 in Saunders Co 8 Mar (CNK) tied record early and a single was at LO 10 Mar (TJW). The 1700 in the e. RWB 24 Apr (JGJ) was 2nd-highest spring count on record.

Pectoral Sandpiper: A single in the e. RWB 18 Mar (JGJ) was rather early.

Dunlin: Record early by 10 days was one in the e. RWB 21 Mar (JGJ).

Stilt Sandpiper: Tying 5th-earliest were 11 in York Co 10 Apr (SM).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Five in the e. RWB 25 Apr (JGJ) were rather early, and 25 at Harvard Marsh 23 May (JGJ) rather late. High count was low, only 93 on 9 May in the e. RWB (JGJ).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Reports were in the expected rather narrow window, 3-18 May; earliest were 22-23 at Cracker Barrel Marsh, Lancaster Co, 3 May (LE, BM), and last a single in Antelope Co 18 May (MB). Total reported was about 60.

Long-billed Dowitcher: The 30 in the e. RWB 18 Mar (JGJ) were rather early.

Wilson's Snipe: An indication of peak migration was the 12 around a small pond near Peru 29 Mar (WRS); the 3 highest counts on record are in the period 3-4 Apr.

American Woodcock: This species is extending its range westward along major river valleys (or being looked for more carefully); one was heard near Paxton 28 Mar (WF). It is an early nester, and late Mar sightings are likely to be of breeding birds (WM).

Wilson's Phalarope: Routine reports.

Red-necked Phalarope: Generally a mid-May migrant, 6 at North Platte SL 1 May (TJW) were rather early. Best count was 74 in the e. RWB 14 May (JGJ), a good easterly count; 65 were at CLNWR 9 May (CG). Rather late for a good number were the 50 in Garden Co 29 May (GG); at least one was still at CLNWR 31 May (CG). Uncommon eastward, singles were in Sarpy Co 9 May (CNK) and on the lower Platte River 29 May (JGJ).

Sabine's Gull: Nebraska's first spring record was of one at BOL 28 Mar (CNK, details). This species is very rare in spring on the Great Plains.

Bonaparte's Gull: Routine reports.

Franklin's Gull: Routine reports.

Laughing Gull: One was reported in Platte Co 17 May 2009 (DL, details).

Ring-billed Gull: An estimated 10,000 flew over Omaha 18 Mar (JED), a good number; high counts are 19-30,000.

California Gull: Although regular in occurrence at LM, reports elsewhere are rare. The 3 reports were of an adult, believed to be of the subspecies *albertaensis*, at BOL rather early 8 Mar (JGJ, details), a "probable 3rd-year" in Lincoln Co 26 Mar (TJW), and the first record for Rowe Sanctuary 15 Apr (KS). Easterly spring records, most of which are adults, are likely the prairie-breeding subspecies *albertaensis*; they are larger and not as dark-mantled as summer birds seen at LM, many of which are likely to be the Colorado-breeding subspecies *californicus*.

Herring Gull: The 2000 at BOL 1 Mar (JGJ) was a record spring count.

Thayer's Gull: Two were reported: a first-year at BOL 6-9 Mar (JGJ, LE) and a single at LM 2 May (JGJ), the latter the latest spring date on record. Spring sightings of non-wintering birds are few.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: This species is now a regular spring migrant, as exemplified by the 5 reports of probably 7 birds this spring. An adult was at HCR 19 Mar (KS, DR), another adult was at LM 22 Mar (RL), 3 individuals were at Calamus Res 25 Mar (JS), and an un-aged single was at LM 11 Apr (CG), likely one of the 2 immatures there 2 May (JGJ).

Glaucous Gull: There were several reports, including 3-4 away from LM. One was at HCR 19 Mar (KS, DR) and, possibly a different bird, 12 Apr (G&WH), and a probable 2nd-year was at Winters Creek L, Scotts Bluff Co, 20-21 Mar (KD,

- RSg), which may have been one of the 2 at nearby L Minatare 9 Apr that were documented on YouTube (!) (KD). LM hosted a first-year bird 11 Apr (CG).
- Great Black-backed Gull:** The only report of this casual spring species was of an immature at Alma SL 6-8 Mar (G&WH, details).
- Least Tern:** A good count was the 35 on the lower Platte River 29 May (JGJ).
- Caspian Tern:** More than usual were reported: 2 were at NLB 26 Apr (JGJ, MUs), singles were at CLNWR 5 May (CG) and Rowe Sanctuary 9 May (KS), and 4 were at LO 18 May (MR).
- Black Tern:** Routine reports.
- Common Tern:** One at HCR 9 May (KS) and 2 in Madison Co 10 May (MB) were rather early.
- Forster's Tern:** Routine reports.
- Rock Pigeon:** Routine reports.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** By far most common in rural towns rather than big cities, this species has only become common in Omaha neighborhoods during the last 3 years (JSt).
- White-winged Dove:** Reports continue apace for this increasingly-sighted species, with 5 reports, including 2 birds together in Kearney 30 Apr (WF) and 1-2 continuing there through 13 May (WF, TH). Elsewhere, singles were at Big Springs 13 Apr (BR), s. of Gering 7 May (AK), in Howard Co 9 May (fide SJD), and in se. Lincoln Co 18 May (TJW).
- Mourning Dove:** One in Valley Co 9 Mar (WF) was rather early for the north. A fresh egg shell fragment was found in a Lincoln yard 29 Mar, followed by the presence of 2 recently-fledged young 14 Apr (TEL). This appears to be the earliest documented breeding for Nebraska; young were in another Lincoln yard the last week of Apr a few years ago.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Arrival of any numbers of birds seemed a bit later than usual, even for this species, with only one report prior to mid-May, one at Wehrspann L 6 May (JSt), and only 3 others reported prior to 20 May (CNK, TJW).
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** The only report of this elusive species was from Knox Co 10 May (MB).
- Barn Owl:** Easterly was one in Butler Co 17 May, albeit at a known location (JG).
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** Routine reports.
- Great Horned Owl:** Routine reports.
- Burrowing Owl:** Routine reports.
- Barred Owl:** A nest box near Elkhorn had 3 eggs 15 Mar (DSt), and adults with a juvenile were seen in Seward Co 22 May (JG). One was at the w. edge of the range in Stanton Co 4 Mar (WF).
- Long-eared Owl:** Suggestive of breeding was one at Smith L WMA, Sheridan Co, 2 May (RO), a known breeding location, and at NNF Halsey, where one was "singing" 9 May (RO).
- Short-eared Owl:** Scattered singles were reported (KS, MB, MUs, JC, SS), as well as 3 roosting together in floodplain grassland near Peru 29 Mar (WRS). Singles in Kearney Co 24 Apr (LB) and near Ponca SP 2 May (RE) were possible breeders at those dates.
- Common Nighthawk:** Most arrived from 13 May (RO) on, except for one early bird in Kearney Co 26 Apr (LB).
- Common Poorwill:** Routine reports.

Chuck-will's-widow: A surprise was the 2 calling 30 May about 2 miles e. of Barneston, s. Gage Co (WRS). It is likely that this species is more common in the row of counties adjacent to Kansas and possibly w. to at least Jefferson Co than previously known; the first Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas had reports from Thayer and Webster Cos.

Whip-poor-will: Nests are rarely reported, indeed one with 2 eggs found at Ponca SP 16 May (fide D&JP) may be one of only 2 or 3 for the state. Westerly, but at known locations, were 2 at Oak Glen WMA, Seward Co, 9-10 May (JC, SS, LE) and 2 in Knox Co 30 May (TJW).

Chimney Swift: Two at Brady 18 Apr (TJW) were rather early so far west.

White-throated Swift: One in Scotts Bluff Co 13 Apr (CG) was 2nd-earliest on record.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Earliest were singles 30 minutes apart in separate Bellevue yards (ARy, BG) on 23 Apr. One was far w. at WSR 18 May (HKH); this is the westernmost record of this species in spring.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.



Red-naped Sapsucker, Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co., 18 May 2009. Photo by Helen K. Hughson.

Red-naped Sapsucker: One was at WSR 18 May (HKH, photo); the observer noted that usually one is seen there each spring and fall. This is only the 2nd documented spring record for Red-naped Sapsucker, although there are 8 in

fall. A sapsucker was reported in East Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 29 Apr without details; this bird was very likely also a Red-naped at this date and location.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Pileated Woodpecker: Up to 4 were reported from FF during the period (JR, ARy), although no evidence was noted for breeding. At the only other regular location, ICSP, a female was seen in flight 12 May (WRS).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Rare westward, one at CLNWR 16 May (CG) was unexpected. The 4 at WGP 24 May (JWH) was an excellent count.

Western Wood-Pewee: One in Hooker Co 30 May (SJD) was easterly; there are very few reports e. of the Panhandle during migration.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Westerly was one in Custer Co 19 May (TJW). Small numbers occur in summer w. to the LM area.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: The only report was of one photographed at FF 30 May (PS).

Acadian Flycatcher: Singles were reported at WP 23 and 28 May (DL, LE) and at PRSP 24 May (D&JP). This species is usually located in ravines in lower Missouri Valley forests.

Alder Flycatcher: This species can be numerous and vocal during the last week of May; a total of 16 was reported, earliest one in Adams Co 23 May (PD) and most the 4 at FF 30 May (JR).

Willow Flycatcher: One reported as a "Traill's" was at FF 7 May (JR) and another reported as this species was at ADF the same day (SQ). Nine others were reported around the state. This and Least are the only *Empidonax* flycatchers expected before mid-May.

Least Flycatcher: One in Omaha 24 Apr (JWH) was rather early; another was at FF 30 Apr (JR). Last were 6 at WGP 24 May (JWH).

Cordilleran Flycatcher: The only reports were of 3 at a known breeding location, Sowbelly Canyon in Sioux Co, 27 May (GG), and an apparent migrant in Scotts Bluff Co 23 May (AK).

Eastern Phoebe: One in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Mar (AK) was rather early for the Panhandle; arrival is later there than in the east, where earliest was one in Omaha 15 Mar (JR). The 7 at FF 8 Apr (AG) was a good count.

Say's Phoebe: Routine reports.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One at WSR 4 May (HKH) was well-described; if accepted by the NOU Records Committee it would be the 3rd record for the state.

Great Crested Flycatcher: Arrival was rather early, but involved several reports within a few days, earliest the singles at Neale Woods in Washington Co 24 Apr (CNK) and FF 25 Apr (JR).

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

Western Kingbird: One at CLNWR 22 Apr (CG) was rather early for the Panhandle. The strange affinity of this species for Eppley Airfield in Omaha was shown again by the count of 38 there 11 May; only 4 Eastern Kingbirds were found (JT).

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Reports continue apace for this species which is expanding northward into Nebraska. Singles were in York Co rather early 24 Apr (JGJ), Lancaster Co 9 May (LE), and with the Eppley Airfield plethora of Western Kingbirds 11 May (JT).

Northern Shrike: Routine reports.

Loggerhead Shrike: Routine reports.

White-eyed Vireo: An obliging bird hung around in FF for a week or so 2-9 May (PS photo, JC, SS, m.ob.). This is only the 22nd record since 1981 for this less-than-annual species.

Bell's Vireo: Second-earliest on record were 2 in Butler Co 11 Apr (JG); arrival is usually in late Apr.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Two reports from Knox Co were at the w. edge of the current Missouri Valley range; one was there 10 May (MB) and the other was at Weigand Campground 30 May (TJW).

Plumbeous Vireo: The only migrant(s) reported was at CLNWR 14-15 May (CG). Other singles were at breeding locations in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 27 May (GG) and Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 28 May (GG).

Blue-headed Vireo: About 15 were reported 4-17 May from the e. half of the state, a typical spring for this species (m. ob.).

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Philadelphia Vireo: As many as 10 were reported, a good showing. All were in the east, although one in Hamilton Co 18 May (LE) was a bit westerly. Others were singles at Peru 10 May (JLL), in Otoe Co 21 May (SQ), and in Douglas Co 26 May (ME). An excellent count was the estimated 3-6 at WGP 21 May (RS).

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Steller's Jay: One was reported from a Sheridan Co ranch 10 May (BP); there are 3 previous records from Sandhills locations, two with dates, 26 Apr and 26 May. There are about 30 reports for Nebraska.

Blue Jay: The 122 at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 4 May (JT) was a good count.

Pinyon Jay: The only report was of 2 in a burn area at Pants Butte, Sioux Co, 27 May (GG).

Black-billed Magpie: Interesting were 2 reports from the se.: singles were in Jefferson Co 3 May (LR, RH) and Nuckolls Co 27 May (WF), dates suggestive of breeding birds. Also easterly was one in Stanton Co 26 Apr (D&JP).

American Crow: Routine reports.

Fish Crow: This species has been expanding northward in recent years and its appearance in Nebraska has been expected. There were two reports, pending acceptance by the Records Committee. An observer experienced with the species in Arkansas saw and heard 4 birds flying overhead in Omaha 5 Mar giving the distinctive double-noted call (DL, details). A second report was of one seen and heard giving the double-note call at mile 1.2 on the lower Platte River 29 May (JGJ, details).

Raven sp.: Details were provided for one seen soaring overhead and calling near Enders Res, Chase Co, 22 May (TJW).

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

- Purple Martin:** Only the 8th Panhandle report away from the small colony in Lewellen was a female at CLNWR 31 May (SJD, CG).
- Tree Swallow:** Rather early were 2 at BOL 17 Mar (LE) and one at HCR 19 Mar (KS). There are only 2 dates prior to 17 Mar.
- Violet-green Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Record early by one day was one in Lancaster Co 30 Mar (LE).
- Bank Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Cliff Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Barn Swallow:** Routine reports.
- Black-capped Chickadee:** First sightings for some time were noted in 2 yards: one near Mitchell was the first "for several years" (KD), and "first for a while" was at Albion (D&CN). Numbers are still low in Lancaster Co (LE).
- Mountain Chickadee:** The single bird in a Scotts Bluff Co yard from Dec 2008 (see Winter Report) was last reported 5 Mar (fide KD).
- Tufted Titmouse:** Routine reports.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Single birds were fairly widespread, although the only ones lingering into late May were in Oxford 20 May (RE), a Lincoln yard 21 May (RE) and in Ogallala 22 May (JO).
- White-breasted Nuthatch:** Routine reports.
- Pygmy Nuthatch:** Rather incredibly, one was at Holmes L, Lincoln, 24 Apr-6 May (LE). There are only 2 other documented records east of the Panhandle, both also in Lincoln, which defies explanation for a species which rarely leaves Ponderosa Pines.
- Brown Creeper:** Singles in Omaha 26 Apr (MJR) and at Wehrspann L 27 Apr (JWH) were rather late away from breeding areas. Speaking of which, 1-2 were at FF, a known breeding site, through the end of the period (JR, CNK, RW, MUs).
- Rock Wren:** Routine reports.
- Carolina Wren:** This species continues westerly in the Republican Valley at Barnett Park, McCook, with 2 there 22 Apr (TJW). One was westerly in Dawson Co 29 May (WF). Nesting for the 3rd year in the observer's Bellevue mailbox, first egg was laid 11 Apr (ARy).
- Bewick's Wren:** A rare bird in Nebraska, averaging about one record every 2 years, one was at Holmes L, Lincoln 13 Apr (LE).
- House Wren:** One at Danbury 3 Apr (DJ) was rather early; there are a few earlier reports, most undocumented.
- Winter Wren:** This was an outstanding spring for this species, with multiple reports of 21 birds but who knows how many individuals at FF 25 Mar-25 Apr (m. ob.). One observer tallied 17 for the season in the Bellevue-Omaha area (JED) and the 5 at FF 19 Apr (JR) tied the single-location high count for spring. The only other report was of one in Lincoln 16 Apr (RE).
- Sedge Wren:** These birds migrate through Nebraska mostly in May, as this year, with few remaining to breed; there is only one report of possible nesting in May, and only about 3 instances in Jun. The bulk of breeding activity in Nebraska has occurred Jul-Aug. Thus several reports in late May of good numbers of apparently territorial birds were of interest, including discovery of 2 nests, possibly dummy nests, as no eggs were present and no female was sighted with the 2-3 males, near Hastings 23 May (PD). At George Syas

WMA, Platte Co, 2-10 birds were present in each of 3 locations 28 May (DH), and 10 birds were at Wehrspann L 29 May (JWH).

Marsh Wren: Both eastern and western song types were heard in the e. RWB, a western in York Co 17 May (WF) and an eastern in Buffalo Co 4 May (WF). This provides additional evidence that the two overlap during spring migration; all singing birds later in summer in the RWB have been easterns (JGJ).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: The 20 in FF 7 Apr (PS) was a good count.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: The 30 at PL 19 Apr (KC) was a good count. Arrival is later westward; one in Lincoln Co 29 Mar (TJW) was rather early there.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Nest-building was underway at PL on the rather early date of 24 Apr (KC), and a female was on a completed nest at FF 4 May (RW).

Eastern Bluebird: Pairs checking nest boxes were rather early at SCP 10 Mar (KP) and near Peru 29 Mar (WRS).

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Townsend's Solitaire: Last reported was at CLNWR 10 May (CG); last dates in the west are around 20 May.

Veery: One found dead in a Morrill yard 23 May (ECT) was unfortunately discarded; its subspecies would have been of interest.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: The 15 reported was more than usual; reports were in the period 4-22 May w. as expected only to Fillmore and Clay Cos (m. ob.).

Swainson's Thrush: The 50-60 found in FF 16 May in 8.5 hours of birding (JR) indicated peak migration; 30 were at FF 23 May (JR) and 23 at WGP 9 May (JWH, JSt).

Hermit Thrush: This was an excellent showing, with about 50 birds reported, all from the east 15 Mar-27 Apr (m. ob.). Best tally was a record 20 at FF 5 Apr (RW).

Wood Thrush: Westernmost were 3 in Jefferson Co 3 May (LR, RH) and singles in Fillmore and Dodge Cos 16-17 May (WRS, D&JP).

American Robin: Most are on territories by late Mar, but a flock of 18 presumed migrants was near Peru 29 Mar (WRS).

Varied Thrush: A surprise was one in the observer's yard in Kearney 17 May (KS, photo); this is the 3rd-latest on record.

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: Now rather common in s. and w. Nebraska, fewer are reported northward; one was in Garfield Co 22 May (DH), 3 were in Knox Co 30 May (TJW), and 3 males were at CLNWR 29-30 May (SJD, GG).

Brown Thrasher: Routine reports.

European Starling: Routine reports.

American Pipit: A record count was the 100 using burn areas at SCP 12 May (KP). Spring migration is protracted; reports were in the expected period, 17 Mar-17 May (m. ob.).

Sprague's Pipit: Reports are increasing for this species, probably as observers learn its habits and habitat. SCP is the location of choice: one was there 26 Mar (KP), 3rd-earliest on record, and 25, a record spring count, were using a burn area there 7 May (LE). Elsewhere, singles were near Ashland 9 Apr (AG), in Loup Co 24 Apr (SJD), and at Ponca SP 2 May (RE).

Cedar Waxwing: Best count reported was a moderate 151 in Lancaster Co 2 Mar (LE).

- Blue-winged Warbler:** The only report of this rare spring visitor was of one at WGP 7 May (JWH, JSt).
- Golden-winged Warbler:** A typical spring saw 2 reports: singles at Towl Park, Omaha, 11 May (JSt) and ICSP 17 May (SM).
- Tennessee Warbler:** Rare in the Panhandle with fewer than 40 reports, singles (or same bird) were at CLNWR 16 and 23 May (CG).
- Orange-crowned Warbler:** Routine reports.
- Nashville Warbler:** The 7 at ICSP 12 May (WRS) was a good count.
- Northern Parula:** Good numbers were at FF late Apr, with 17 there 23 Apr (JR), an excellent count. A surprise was one at CLNWR 30 Apr-24 May (CG), the 14th Panhandle record.
- Yellow Warbler:** One at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 2 May (JGi) was rather early.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** A typical tally for spring was the 7 reported 12-31 May (m. ob.), one of which was at WSR 29-31 May (HKH) for the 16th Panhandle record.
- Magnolia Warbler:** A very similar spring for this species involved 7 birds 6-17 May in the east (m. ob.), and 2 at a Sheridan Co ranch 18 May (BP), also the 16th Panhandle record.
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** This taxon strays eastward fairly often; easternmost were one in Custer Co 24 Apr with Myrtles and an intergrade Audubon's/Myrtle (TH, photos), and another with "many Myrtles" in Howard Co 25 Apr (LR, RH).
- Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler:** Earliest arrivals were rather early: singles in Gage Co 2 Mar (WF) and Lancaster Co 6 Mar (LE).
- Black-throated Gray Warbler:** Good details were provided for one in s. Sioux Co 5 May (RE); this is the 5th documented spring record.
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** Only 6 were reported, all in the east 14-24 May (JR, JJ, JGJ), including 3 at FF 14 May (JR).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Later migrating warblers are usually females; 3 were at WGP 23 May (JWH, JSt). Elsewhere, singles were in Douglas Co 22 May (RO) and at WGP 24 May (JWH). Unexpected was a male seen and heard far to the nw. in Coffee Park, Sioux Co, 27 May (GG), the 13th for the Panhandle.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** The 10 at FF 23 Apr (JR) was a record spring tally. Yet another westerly "eastern" warbler was a Yellow-throated at CLNWR 26 May (CG, photos), the 4th Panhandle record; unfortunately this time it wasn't a Grace's!
- Palm Warbler:** One at FF 15 Apr (JR) was rather early; it was identified as of the brownish western subspecies, which, along with intergrades, accounts for most Nebraska records. Another "brown" bird was in Omaha 11 May (JSt). One reported as the yellowish eastern subspecies far west in Dawes Co 29 Apr (RO) seems most likely to have been a yellowish intergrade, although there are 2 other records of this subspecies in the LM area. In all there were 11 birds reported 15 Apr-12 May (m. ob.), a good tally for this uncommon spring migrant.
- Prairie Warbler:** A song that "sounded good" for this species was heard at Brady 8 May, but the bird could not be seen to confirm the identification (TJW).
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** The only report of this rare spring migrant was of one at FF 14 May (JR).

Blackpoll Warbler: Reports were widespread from Brady (TJW, 9 May), Calamus Res (MUs, 9 May), and Holt Co (DH, 24 May) east, with some 65 birds, including 14 at WGP 23 May (JWH, JSt).

Cerulean Warbler: The usual handful was detected in the expected locations; one was at ICSP 12 May (WRS) and apparently at least 2 different birds were at FF 14-30 May (JR, RS).

Black-and-white Warbler: The 16 at WGP 9 May (JSt, JWH) was an excellent count.

American Redstart: The 30 at ICSP 12 May (WRS) was a good count.

Prothonotary Warbler: One of the "southern" warblers apparently expanding northward, at least 3 different birds were at FF starting with one 24 Apr (JR, m. ob.), and one was at Neale Woods, Washington Co, 9 May (L&BP).

Ovenbird: Migrants were still moving through in late May; one was at WGP 24 May (JWH) and another was rather late in Antelope Co 27 May (MB), neither location suitable for breeding.

Northern Waterthrush: This was a great spring for this species, with about 30 reported 23 Apr-17 May (m. ob.) w. to Hall Co (PD, 9 May) and Knox Co (MB, 10 May). Arrival was rather early, with sightings at FF from 23 Apr (EB).

Louisiana Waterthrush: At least 8 were reported from 5 expected locations along the lower Missouri and Platte Rivers, but surprisingly also from se. Butler Co 17 Apr (MB). Reports away from breeding locations are rare.

Kentucky Warbler: The 2 reports were from apparently the most reliable site in the state for this species, ICSP; 3 were counted 12 May (WRS) and another on 17 May (SM).

Connecticut Warbler: The only report, about par for spring in Nebraska, was of one at FF 21 May (JR).

Mourning Warbler: There were 8 reported 13-30 May in the east, about usual (m. ob.).

MacGillivray's Warbler: Four were reported, 3 in the west as expected 29-31 May (RSg, AK, CG, SJD) with a possible seen by one observer easterly at Geneva Cem 16 May (KDy); it was described as having "bright eye arcs". This would be the 6th documented record from the east.

Common Yellowthroat: Apparently a record single-observer count was the 60 at Wehrspann L 29 May (JWH).

Hooded Warbler: Nowadays regular in spring in small numbers, with records statewide, this spring's only report was of one in Morrill 30 Apr-3 May (KD, photo).

Wilson's Warbler: Routine reports.

Canada Warbler: A respectable total of 8 was reported of this late May migrant, all in the east 17-29 May (m. ob.); the 3 at WGP 24 May (JWH) is a record single-location count.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Rare in the east, one in the observer's Dixon Co yard 21 May was the first there since 1996 (JJ).

Summer Tanager: Reports continue apace as numbers increase in se. Nebraska. As well as the good numbers at lower Missouri and Platte River Valley forests, including 11 at ICSP 17 May (SM) and 7 at FF 16 May (JR), out of range were an immature male at a Fairmont feeder 25-27 Apr (JRi, photo), 2nd-earliest on record; an adult male at CLNWR 15 May (CG, details), the 8th

Panhandle record; one in Seward Co 17 May (JG); a pair courting in Lincoln 19 and 23 May (TEL, MUs); and one in Albion 30 May (D&CN).

Scarlet Tanager: One was reported at FF 22 Apr (CH, no details), rather early. Westernmost, but where migrants are expected in low numbers, were singles at Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 23 May (GG) and at Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co, 24 May (GG).

Western Tanager: One was in an Omaha yard 28-30 Apr (EM, details); the 2 earliest on record (including this one) are from Omaha. There are about 7 records from Missouri River locations.

Green-tailed Towhee: None were reported; migration is in May.

Spotted Towhee: Last to leave the east were rather late singles in Platte Co 16 May and Hamilton Co 16 May (LE).

Eastern Towhee: One at Rowe Sanctuary 22 Mar (JSh) was early at that westerly location; at about the west edge of the range for non-hybrid Easterns was one near Orleans 5 May (WF). The 24+ at Ponca SP 2 May (RE) was an excellent count.

Cassin's Sparrow: the only report was of one at Enders Res, Chase Co, 22 May (TJW).

American Tree Sparrow: An extremely late bird was in Kearney Co 20 May (KS, details); departure dates for this species are poorly-documented, but appear to be in early May.

Chipping Sparrow: One at Rowe Sanctuary 22 Mar (JSh) was rather early. A single flock of 250 at WGP 28 Apr (RS) must have been impressive.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: Usually restricted to the Panhandle in summer and as a migrant, one was a bit eastward near Haigler 21 May (WM).

Field Sparrow: Rather early were singles in Gage Co 20 Mar (RT) and Lancaster Co 21 Mar (TEL). One at Barnett Park, McCook, 25 Apr was gray-cheeked, presumably of the western subspecies (WRS).

Vesper Sparrow: The 30+ in Dixon Co 10 May (JJ) was a good count.

Lark Sparrow: One in Hall Co 23 Mar (JSh) was rather early.

Lark Bunting: Rare as far east as the e. RWB, 4 were in Fillmore Co 10 May (JGJ), apparently only the 5th e. RWB record.

Savannah Sparrow: Routine reports.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Baird's Sparrow: Exciting reports were received of singing birds by a Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory surveyor at 2 nw. Nebraska locations; 2 birds were singing a few miles nw. of Crawford 17 May (AB) and 4 birds were singing in w. Sioux Co 18 May (AB). A subsequent check on 26 May of the Crawford site found no Baird's Sparrows (WM), suggesting that these birds were singing migrants. These are the 11th and 12th documented records for spring.

Henslow's Sparrow: The only report was of one heard in Fillmore Co 16 May (MB).

LeConte's Sparrow: Routine reports.

Nelson's Sparrow: None were reported; migration is in late May.

Fox Sparrow: This species was widely-reported in good numbers 9 Mar (LR, RH, WF) through 2 May (RE), the normal migration period. Best counts were excellent, including a record 25 at FF 5 Apr (RW) and 22 there 22 Mar (JR). Westerly, where rare, were 2 in Valley Co 9 Mar (WF) and 2 in Howard Co 12 Mar (SM).

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: The 35 at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 3 May (JT) was a good count.

Swamp Sparrow: Good numbers were noted at FF, with 25 there 21 Apr (ARy) and 20 the next day (PS).

White-throated Sparrow: Routine reports.



Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco, Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co., 7 May 2009.

Photo by Helen K. Hughson.

White-crowned Sparrow: Distribution of gray-lored and black-lored birds in Nebraska is a bit unsettled. Black-lored birds, presumably eastern *leucophrys*, are common during migration in cen. Nebraska (a flock of 16 at McCook 25 Apr had 12 black-lored birds) but seem less often reported in the east or Panhandle. Occasional black-lored birds in the Panhandle may be Rocky Mountain *oriantha*.

Harris's Sparrow: Routine reports.

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: Routine reports.

Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco: Routine reports.

- Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** Last junco of any type to leave the observer's Scotts Bluff Co yard was a pink-sided 29 Apr (KD), providing the latest date on record for this form.
- Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco:** One was at WSR 7 May (HKH, photo), rather late, and only the 8th documented record for the state.
- McCown's Longspur:** A flock of 20 at WSR 14 Apr (HKH) provided the 4th-earliest date on record.
- Lapland Longspur:** A loner was record late by 12 days on 10 May in Madison Co (MB); despite its health problems (the observer could hear it gasping), it was in alternate plumage (MB).
- Smith's Longspur:** Although apparently a regular spring migrant restricted to the se. corner of the state, this is a difficult bird to find, except after snowstorms when it appears along roadsides with Horned Larks. However, a flock of 18 was located in a "chemically-fallowed" field 2 miles e. of Arlington in Washington Co 23 Apr (SJD, details). The 14 reports are essentially all in Apr, bounded by a line from Webster Co through Lancaster Co to Dixon Co.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** None were reported; arrival is in late Mar.
- Snow Bunting:** None were reported; last date (28 Feb) was during the Winter Report period.
- Northern Cardinal:** Routine reports.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Not unexpected westward in spring, a male was at an Ogallala feeder 8 May (JO) and another male was in Lincoln Co 15 May (TJW).
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Two at an Ogallala feeder 30 Apr (JO) were rather early. A male at Fairmont 22 May (JRI) was easterly.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Routine reports.
- Lazuli Bunting:** The invasion of the east continues, with at least 7 reports from Adams Co eastward in the period 8 May (at FF; RS) through 23 May (PD, TP, JJ, CNK), including one in a Dixon Co yard 10 and 19 May (JJ) and another in a Lancaster Co yard 13-17 May (TP).
- Indigo Bunting:** Arrival was early, with one 2nd-earliest on record 16-19 Apr at an Ogallala feeder (JO, photo). Another was in Bellevue 25 Apr (KCR). A good count was the 20 at ICSP 12 May (WRS). One was westerly in Scotts Bluff Co, where uncommon, 20 May (AK).
- Dickcissel:** A few had reached northwesterly points by late May; 2-3 were in Logan Co 24-25 May (LR, RH) and one was in se. Lincoln Co 18 May (TJW). Recent years have seen increased numbers in the west.
- Bobolink:** Arrival was a bit early, with singles in Dixon Co 2 May (RE) and Saunders Co 3 May (KC). An excellent count was the 125 in Sheridan Co 18 May (BP).
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Routine reports.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** This species occupies patches of suitable habitat throughout the Sandhills, but it is not clear what migration pattern these westerly birds follow. Do they move northwestward or directly north from southwesterly wintering areas? A clue may be the sighting of one near Haigler 29 Mar (MW, fide HA).
- Western Meadowlark:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Routine reports.

Rusty Blackbird: A total of 22 was reported 1 Mar (LR, RH) through 15 Apr (JR, JJ, JS) from Calamus Res eastward, a typical spring migration.

Brewer's Blackbird: Six in Keith Co 25 Mar (TJW) were rather early for a westward location. A mixed-gender flock of 200 was sw. of McCook 25 Apr (WRS).

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: This species is now essentially statewide in distribution, with fewest in the Sandhills, although one was at CLNWR 30 May (AK).

Brown-headed Cowbird: One in Lincoln Co 29 Mar (TJW) was rather early for the westerly location. The 750 in Clay Co 22 Mar (JSh) was a record spring tally, and a bit early compared with other high spring counts. Early flocks are mostly males; a flock near Peru 29 Mar had 121 males and 7 female (WRS).

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: Routine reports.

Bullock's Oriole: Easterly was one at LO 18 May (MR); there are very few reports e. of the Panhandle.

Purple Finch: Only 4 were reported, a single at Nebraska City 3-8 Mar (SQ), a female at FF 27 Mar (RS), a female at a Bellevue feeder 13 Apr, the observer's first for the winter (ARy), and a female at FF 21 Apr (ARy).

Cassin's Finch: This species is erratic in its occurrences, but tends to be more often reported in the early spring. Two were reported, neither with certainty: a "possible" male at LO 10 Mar (TJW, details), an area where the LM CBC has reported this species a few times, and in Sheridan Co 10 Apr by an observer familiar with the species (BP).

House Finch: Routine reports.

Red Crossbill: There were only 3 reports: a female at Niobrara SP, Knox Co, 8 May (MB), 15 at the Wood River Cem 9 May (PD), and one in Sheridan Co 18 May (BP). A juvenile at a Kearney feeder 10 Mar had wing-bars, suggestive of White-winged Crossbill (AH), but juvenile Red Crossbills can have these also.

Common Redpoll: Lingerers from winter were one in Elkhorn 1 Mar (JM) and 2 at a Wayne Co feeder 5-17 Mar (JJ).

Pine Siskin: This is the only "winter finch" present in good numbers this spring. Best counts were 50-60, both at Forest Lawn Cem, Omaha, 21 Mar (JR) and Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co, 5 May (RE). One of the birds at Forest Lawn Cem was thought to be gathering nest material (JR) and a "suspiciously cozy" pair was at FF 8 Apr (AG), but there was no positive evidence for breeding. Numbers dropped off into late May; at a Bellevue feeder 9 were present 13 May but only one by 31 May (L&BP). The only other reports after 20 May were from the north and west, singles in a Dixon Co yard 23 May (JJ) and in Custer Co 25 May (WF).

Lesser Goldfinch: A major surprise for the east was a black-backed male in an Elkhorn yard 20 May (DSt). Of the 21 reports to date, about half of which have been since 2000, this is the only one east of the Panhandle (there is a winter report from Buffalo Co).

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.