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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The highlights of this season revolve around the excellent wetland habitat that existed in the eastern Rainwater Basin as a result of two things: a period of good rains in May and playa wetlands that have undergone restoration. The latter involves removal of accumulated silt and woody vegetation. Silt removal allows for germination of plants of the native soil bank in the original impervious pan, as well as somewhat deeper and more stable water conditions. These conditions resulted in several important breeding records, such as Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Northern Shoveler, and especially Black-necked Stilt. The good water conditions no doubt allowed waterfowl to linger, most unexpectedly Ring-necked Duck and Greater Scaup. Also related to the quality habitat were the increased numbers of lingering shorebirds, probably those which for several reasons may not have completed their northward migration. (Late shorebirds were at L McConaughy also, no doubt for similar reasons.) The removal of woody vegetation at Rainwater Basin wetlands is likely a contributor to the increasing numbers of Greater Prairie-Chicken and Henslow's Sparrow occurring in extensive grassland areas, not necessarily restricted to areas with native grassland species.

There is a clear increase in numbers of southern breeders in Nebraska such as Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Northern Mockingbird, and White-winged Dove appears to be on the verge of becoming a Nebraska breeding species, if it has not already (see account). A major westward movement of Dickcissels was noted; western birders were quite excited to see this species in such numbers, although, as is typical in the west, they disappeared fairly early, perhaps without breeding.

The work being done by Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory personnel with Mountain Plovers and western Sandhills prairie birds, both efforts essentially on private lands, is encouraging. Mountain Plover nests were located and marked, with permission of the land owners, so that disking of fallow wheat ground did not destroy the nests. A surprisingly large number of nests was found in Kimball County, as well as one in Banner County; productivity was good for these nests. An intriguing find in Sheridan County was a Marbled Godwit nest, one of very few records for the state, but raising the possibility that this species indeed breeds in Nebraska in the vast, remote, and rarely-accessed grasslands of the western Sandhills.

Finally, various NEBirds posts highlighted the concept that hummingbirds that show up from late July to early August are very likely not Ruby-throateds, which do not appear until mid- or late August. Although this is no surprise to western birders, observers in central and eastern Nebraska at locations where hummers were not seen during the summer should carefully scrutinize any hummer that appears in late Jul-early August.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co
BBS: Breeding Bird Survey
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co
Cem: Cemetery
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co
CRP: Conservation Reserve Program (USDA)
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co
FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar/Knox Cos
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
MRET: Missouri River Ecology Trail, Neale Woods, Washington Co
NC: Nature Center
NF: National Forest
NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks
NM: National Monument
NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co
Res: Reservoir
e. RWB: eastern Rainwater Basin, southcentral and southeast Nebraska
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co
SHP: State Historical Park
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)
SP: State Park
SRA: State Recreation Area
WLC: West Lawn Cemetery, Gering
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area
WS: Waco WPA/Spikerush WMA, York Co
WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Ash Hollow SHP: Garden Co
Chadron SP: Dawes Co
Deep Well WMA: Hamilton Co
Freeman Lakes WPA: Seward Co
Harvard WPA: Clay Co
Kiowa WMA: Scotts Bluff Co
L Minatare: Scotts Bluff Co
Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co
North Lake Basin WMA: Seward Co
Old Stage Hill Road: Scotts Bluff Co
Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co

Spikerush WMA: York Co
Waco WPA: York Co
Wildcat Hills: Scotts Bluff-Banner Cos

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering
AR: Alice Rumery, Kearney
ARy: Allen Reyer, Bellevue
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City
B&LP: Babs & Loren Padelford, Bellevue
BW: Bruce Walgren, Casper, WY
BY: Ben Young, Salem, OR
CK: Courtney Kerns, Alliance
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue
CT: Christine Thody, Lincoln
DB: Duane Bright, Bellevue
D&CN: Don & Colleen Noecker, Albion
D&JP: Don & Janis Paseka, Ames
DK: Dan Kim, Wood River
DM: Don Maas, Omaha
DSt: Dave Stage, Lincoln
EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue
EM: Erin McFadden, Omaha
GL: Gary Lingle, Grand Island
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma
HA: Henry Armknecht, Ovid, CO
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney
L&CF: Laurence and Carol Falk, Nebraska City
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney
LBl: Laurine Blankenau, Omaha
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln
LF: Lonnie Frimann, Scottsbluff
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton
MU: Mark Urwiller, Kearney
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha
P&DD: Phyllis and Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff
Pdu: Paul Dunbar, Hastings
PK: Page Klug, Omaha
PS: Phil Swanson, Omaha
RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln
RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon

SA: Sue Amiotte, Chadron
SJ: Stephen Jones, Boulder, CO
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
WF: William Flack, Madison
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: The only stragglers reported were 2 at Harvard WPA 17-18 Jun (PDu,JGJ) and one at PL 30 Jul (LE).

Snow Goose: Stragglers were reported from the e. RWB 4-25 Jun, as is usual (JGJ,PDu,LE,WF); best count was only 4 (JGJ). Less usual were 2 in Antelope Co 22 Jun (MB).

Canada Goose: The 200 still in the e. RWB 4 Jun was noteworthy; only 30 were there 11 Jun (JGJ). Summering there is limited, and breeding essentially unreported (JGJ). The 100 at Conestoga L, Lancaster Co, 23 Jul (LE) was the first fall flock noted.

Trumpeter Swan: Three on a BBS route in n. Sheridan Co 18 Jun were unexpected, but their presence may have resulted from drier conditions farther east (CNK); the Gordon area is at the nw. edge of the summer range.

Wood Duck: Many broods were noted throughout the state; this species is doing very well.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: Three on 4 Jun in the e. RWB (JGJ) and 4 on 5 Jun at LM (SJD) were a bit late.

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: A hen with 20 ducklings at Harvard WPA 5 Jun (PDu) had her "hands" full; the several irresponsible males with her fled the scene.

Cinnamon Teal: Numbers appeared to be down at Kiowa WMA, where only 2 males were reported on 4 Jun (SJD). The only other report was of a male at LM 5 Jun (SJD).

Northern Shoveler: Indicative of excellent habitat at a few e. RWB locations this summer was a brood at North Lake Basin 16 Jul (JGJ); breeding is unusual away from the Sandhills.

Northern Pintail: A straggler was at WS 4 Jul (DSt); few occur in mid-summer away from the Sandhills, but breeding occurs on occasion in the e. RWB.

Green-winged Teal: A few summered in the e. RWB (JGJ), probably molt-migrants or non-breeding stragglers.

Canvasback: None were reported; breeds regularly in small numbers in the Sandhills.

Redhead: Several presumed non-breeders were noted in the e. RWB through 9 Jul (JGJ,RE,LR,RH); best count was 25 on 24 Jun (JGJ).

Ring-necked Duck: This species does not breed in Nebraska and summer records are few, especially in the e. RWB, where there were only 5 records prior to this summer. Thus surprising was the presence of 6 males at 4 locations. Singles were at North Lake Basin 4-18 Jun (JGJ), WS 11 Jun-4 Jul (JGJ,DSt), and Sinninger WPA, York Co, 11 Jun-3 Jul (JGJ). Three were at Deep Well WMA 11 Jun-9 Jul (LR,RH) and 2 were there 17 Jul (MB).

- Greater Scaup:** Also rare in summer, a female apparently of this species was seen in Fillmore Co 3 Jul (JGJ; www.jorgensencontracting.com/birding.htm). This is the first summer record for the state, and the only record 28 May-3 Oct.
- Lesser Scaup:** Also rare in mid-summer in the e. RWB, up to 7 were noted at various locations through 16 Jul (JGJ,LE).
- Hooded Merganser:** The usual female/immature-plumaged birds were noted in the e. RWB through 24 Jun, peak count 22 on 4 Jun (JGJ); interestingly, none were found 16 Jul or thereafter (JGJ). These birds are probably one-year-old pre-breeders of both genders and apparently depart for molt locations around the end of Jun.
- Common Merganser:** The only report was from a regular molt location (when water is present!), Lake Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, where 24 were present 23 Jul (KD). As many as 200 birds molt here, usually arriving around mid-Jul.
- Ruddy Duck:** A few (peak count 11 on 3 Jul) were noted in the e. RWB (JGJ,LR,RH,RE) but no breeding evidence was found other than displays by males. This species has bred on occasion in the e. RWB.
- Chukar:** One seen in the Little Lake Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, area 16 Jul (P&DD) was presumably an escapee, but the habitat in the area would seem more suitable for a population to be established than, say, Branched Oak Lake or Nebraska City!
- Gray Partridge:** Rather southerly were 2 in Hamilton Co 21 Jul (MB); the last southward expansion was in the 1980s, and this sighting as well as one of 16 birds in Dodge Co in 2003 suggest another may be underway.
- Ring-necked Pheasant:** Routine reports.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Routine reports.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Booming continued well into Jun, with active leks in Custer and Lincoln Cos 12 Jun (TJW), 13 birds on a lek near Grafton 11 Jun (JGJ), and up to 18 birds at Hultine WPA, Clay Co, 24 Jun (JGJ). The Hultine location is significant, as it is a renovated e. RWB playa wetland; use by prairie-chickens of these areas, where trees and brush have been removed, is on the increase (see Spring 2005).
- Wild Turkey:** Routine reports.
- Northern Bobwhite:** This species is doing well in canyon lands in Custer and se. Lincoln Cos; 30-35 were counted on a BBS route there 12 Jun, and a "fair number" of calling males were heard each day in se. Lincoln Co 15-21 Jun (TJW).
- Common Loon:** The only reports were from a regular summering location, LO, where a basic-plumaged bird was seen 21 Jun (SJD), possibly the same bird 3 Jul (MB), and an alternate adult rather early 14 Jul (BY); the latter may have been a failed breeder moving south early.
- Pied-billed Grebe:** The quality wetland habitat this summer in the e. RWB led to "widespread nesting" by this species (JGJ). Specific reports were of 2 broods at WS 16 Jul (JGJ) and an adult incubating at Deep Well WMA 16 Jul (LR,RH).
- Eared Grebe:** Three stragglers were in the e. RWB 11 Jun (JGJ), and as many as 36, including many in alternate plumage, were still at North Platte SL 5 Jun (WRS). Few are found away from breeding areas after the first week of Jun.
- Western Grebe:** Best count was 464 at LM 5 Jun (SJD).
- Clark's Grebe:** An adult at WS 4 Jun was the first e. RWB record and 2nd for the RWB as a whole (JGJ; details). This species is a casual spring migrant eastward. An excellent count was the 13 at LM 5 Jun (SJD).

- American White Pelican:** Best count was 544 at LM 5 Jun (SJD), and the last roving spring bands were 105 at Lewellen 18 Jun (KD) and 82 at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 23 Jun (TJW). First fall returnees were 83 at PL 23 Jul (LE). A few stragglers occur in mid-summer.
- Double-crested Cormorant:** Unexpected in mid-summer in the south and east were singles at HCR 6 Jul (G&WH) and at North Lake Basin 16 Jul (JGJ).
- American Bittern:** More conspicuous than usual in the e. RWB were 1-3 at Harvard WPA 17-18 Jun (PDu,JGJ) and one at Deep Well WMA 11 Jun (LR,RH). Breeding status is uncertain at LM; one was there 21 Jun (SJD).
- Least Bittern:** Good water conditions at a few locations produced several sightings of this elusive species, most in the e. RWB. Two in Madison Co 2 Jun (MB) were furthest north. One was at Harvard WPA 12 Jun (PDu), 1-2 were at Rauscher WPA, Fillmore Co, 18 Jun (JGJ), and up to 4 (on 24 Jun) were at WS 20 Jun-17 Jul (ARy,JGJ, m. ob.).
- Great Blue Heron:** The "typical mid-summer surge" yielded 60 in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ), and 47 were at WS 4 Jul (DSt).
- Great Egret:** Jun usually has the lowest numbers, and this Jun was about normal, with 1-3 at various e. RWB locations (JGJ,ARy,D&JP). Numbers generally increase in Jul, but best count was only 7, in the e. RWB 16 Jul (JGJ). Two at Kiowa WMA 16 Jul (P&DD) and one in Scotts Bluff Co 18 Jul (KD) were among few fall records and the earliest yet for the Panhandle.
- Snowy Egret:** Three singles were reported, all westerly: one stood out in a cattle feedlot in Greeley Co 4 Jun (LR,RH), one was at LM 5 Jun (SJD), and another was in Morrill Co 25 Jun (AK). Late Jun records are unusual.
- Little Blue Heron:** Rare in Jun, an adult was at WS 11 Jun (JGJ). No others were reported.
- Cattle Egret:** Good counts were 41 at wetlands near Verona 18 Jun (JGJ) and 25 at HCR 6 Jul (G&WH). Small groups wander about in summer and may breed if suitable conditions are found.
- Green Heron:** One at LM 5 Jun (SJD) and another at Paxton 21 Jun (SJD) were westerly.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** The only report was of a juvenile at North Lake Basin 3 Jul (JGJ). There are few reports of this rare summer visitor to Nebraska, most in recent years from the e. RWB.
- White-faced Ibis:** Exciting was the 3rd confirmed nesting record for the e. RWB: 6-10 birds were present 24 Jun and 3 pairs were discovered nesting in cattails at Rauscher WPA, Fillmore Co, 3 Jul (JGJ, photos). The two previous attempts were unsuccessful: a pair nesting in 1916 were shot and the marsh dried up to end a 2001 attempt. Others (1-4) were noted through Jun at various locations, including 10 at HCR 30 Jun (G&WH); 1-2 remained there through the period (G&WH) and 2 were at Deep Well WMA 17 Jul (MB).
- Turkey Vulture:** Routine reports.
- Osprey:** One of fewer than 30 summer reports was at Valentine Fish Hatchery 14 Jul (B&LP). Summer Ospreys in Nebraska are likely birds not yet of breeding age.
- Mississippi Kite:** Up to 6 were seen at Ogallala during the period (MB,EB,SJD,AR,KS); the high count was 6 on 3 Jul (MB). Two had returned to Red Cloud, the only other currently known breeding site, and were present from late May to mid-Jun (KS); no breeding activity was noted.

- Bald Eagle:** A nest near Rogers had 3 juveniles standing beside it 1 Jun (D&JP). The long-documented nest at Lake Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, fledged one chick in mid-Jun, the 30th fledged from that nest (Brad McKinney, fide AK).
- Northern Harrier:** Adults seen at locations suitable for breeding were one at Mallard Haven WPA, Fillmore Co, 11 Jun (JGJ) and a pair over CRP grassland in Chase Co 23 Jun (TJW).
- Cooper's Hawk:** A pair in Bellevue ousted by crows (see Spring Report) moved a short distance and nested successfully, fledging 4 young (B&LP).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** Good news was the presence of one at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 6-7 Jun (JT,NR); currently the only known summering location is FF, where one was found 26 Jun (CNK).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** The only report was of an adult in north Omaha 10 Jul (B&LP); summering and breeding birds are reported occasionally in the Missouri River Valley.
- Swainson's Hawk:** South-easternmost were singles in Dodge Co 2-6 Jun (D&JP) and at Springer WPA, Hamilton Co, 11 Jun (LR,RH); both may have been late migrants.
- Red-tailed Hawk:** Three recently-fledged juveniles were seen in Custer Co 12 Jun (TJW).
- Ferruginous Hawk:** Routine reports.
- Golden Eagle:** Routine reports.
- American Kestrel:** Routine reports.
- Prairie Falcon:** Routine reports.
- Peregrine Falcon:** Two birds were at the Capitol Building in Lincoln 12 Jun (WF); no breeding evidence was reported. One chasing shorebirds in Sarpy Co 26 Jul (B&LP) was likely one of the Omaha breeding pair. Another at Harvard WPA 5 Jun (PDu), if not from Omaha or Lincoln, was a very late migrant.
- Virginia Rail:** Reports in Jun from suitable habitat indicate breeding; south-easternmost, where scarcest, were singles at WS 20 Jun (ARy) and Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 8-9 Jun (WF). Also uncommon in the southwest, one was "probably nesting" in Dundy Co 7 Jun (TJW).
- Sora:** Possibly even more rare in mid-summer in the RWB than Virginia Rail, 2-5 were reported at various basins 4-18 Jun (JGJ,LR,RH).
- Common Moorhen:** One of fewer than 10 e. RWB records, and about 35 in all for the state, was a single at Waco WPA, York Co, 11-20 Jun (JGJ,ARy).
- American Coot:** Good water levels at a few e. RWB wetlands resulted in breeding; at least 20 nests were at North Lake Basin as well as a few at other sites 4 Jun (JGJ). At least 4 nests were at Deep Well WMA 11 Jun (LR,RH) and at least one brood with 7 chicks was present there 15-16 Jul (MB,LR,RH). Five broods, one with 6 chicks, were at WS 16 Jul (JGJ).
- Sandhill Crane:** The only report was of a flyover near Sacramento-Wilcox WMA, Phelps Co, 7 Jun (PK); this may have been a late migrant, but there are several recent summer records, including breeding, from the RWB.
- Black-bellied Plover:** A female in York Co 10 Jun (JGJ) was record late for the e. RWB; there is but a handful of later records statewide.
- American Golden-Plover:** Only the 3rd and 4th Jun records for Nebraska were one in York Co 17 Jun (JGJ) and 2 birds, one molting and the other in basic plumage and with an injured leg, at WS 24-25 Jun (JGJ,LE), with one also present 26 Jun (JSt). An alternate-plumaged bird at Deep Well WMA 9 Jul (LR,RH) was the earliest fall date on record; another was at Freeman Lakes 16 Jul (JGJ).

Snowy Plover: The only reports were of 3-4 at LM 5-21 Jun (SJD), where 7 nests were located by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District personnel (Gabe Wilson, fide SJD). The total nests found in 2004 and 2005 is 17, rather amazing considering that the 2 nests found there in 2003 were Nebraska's 4th and 5th breeding records!

Semipalmated Plover: Fourth-latest for Nebraska, but record-late for the e. RWB, were 2 at Wilkins WPA, Fillmore Co, 11 Jun (JGJ). First for fall was one in the e. RWB 16 Jul (JGJ).

Piping Plover: The incredible numbers nesting at LM continue: 202 nests were located by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District personnel (Gabe Wilson, fide SJD) this summer, following the 182 in 2004 and 117 in 2003. The Northern Great Plains population of Piping Plovers was only 1981 in 2001 and the world population was 5945 (*The Birds of North America Online*), which indicates the importance of the LM breeding population since. The Spring Report noted that on 28 May (actually 27 May) the 4 eggs from the nesting pair at L Minatare were removed due to rising water levels and transferred to nests at LM (fide KD). The transfer was unsuccessful, as at LM 2 eggs were destroyed by dogs and the other two were abandoned when the adults departed with two newly-hatched chicks from their own eggs (fide KD). However the L. Minatare plovers renested after the transfer, with 1 egg present 6 Jun (KD). No other eggs were laid in this new nest, and the single egg was moved to LM 9 Jun; it too was predated, apparently by a skunk (fide KD). High water levels prevented any further nesting activity. The female of the nesting pair at L Minatare was one of 3 banded at L Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan, in 2004 (fide KD). Rare in the e. RWB, 2 were in se. York Co 11 Jun (LE). High water reduced the number of nesting sites to two along the Platte River between Columbus and Plattsmouth (CT).

Killdeer: Best count was 182 at a single e. RWB location 16 Jul (JGJ); Jul aggregations are probably local birds and their young.

Mountain Plover: Working with landowners in the s. Panhandle to protect known nests from tillage loss by locating and marking the nest locations has been a success; this year 47 nests in Kimball Co and one in Banner Co, located in about 20,000 acres of dryland wheat fields, were successful (fide CK). A nest with 3 eggs was found in Kimball Co 5 Jun (SJD).

Black-necked Stilt: This species has become quite numerous in the w. Sandhills in recent years, but unexpected was its major incursion into the e. RWB this spring and summer, including nestings at 3 locations, the first for the e. RWB and easternmost for Nebraska (pers. comm. JGJ). These events followed heavy rains that filled playa basins, notably newly-renovated basins at Trumbull Basin, Adams Co, and Spikerush WMA. The Spring Report noted the presence at Harvard WPA of 6 birds and 2 nests in late May; by 19 Jun only 2 birds were present, but the pair had a nest containing 4 eggs (PDu,JGJ). There were 7 birds at Harvard WPA 23 Jun (PDu), but the active nest was empty, with no eggshells present (PDu). No stilts were at Harvard WPA 30 Jul (PDu). A single at Trumbull Basin, Adams Co, 4 Jun and 8 birds there 17 Jun (JGJ) were followed by successful nesting: a pair with 3 downy young, as well as another agitated pair of adults, were seen 24 Jun (JGJ). No further information was received. Two birds were found at Spikerush WMA 15-16 Jun (GW,EBa), and 4 were there, along with a nest containing 2 eggs, on 18 Jun (JGJ). Up to 6 adults were present 20 Jun (ARy) through 17 Jul (DSt,MB), and the nest remained active through 6 Jul (JGJ, m.ob.) but was found predated 11 Jul (DSt). In addition to birds

associated with these 3 nesting events, no fewer than 11 additional were found 13-24 May in Adams, Fillmore, and York Cos; the 2005 e. RWB sightings of around 25 stilts outnumbered the total for all previous years combined (JGJ).

American Avocet: Although no nesting activity was noted, 1-4 were found 4 Jun-3 Jul at the same locations that Black-necked Stilts nested (JGJ,LE). There are a few previous breeding records and several summer sightings for the e. RWB.

Greater Yellowlegs: Reports 10 Jun in Seward Co (JGJ) and 15 Jun in Morrill Co (AK) were likely fall migrants; there are several records ending 31 May and then beginning 10 Jun, with only one in between. An additional 13 birds were reported 18 Jun-23 Jul (JGJ,AK,LE,BY).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Reports were almost continuous through the period, but with a significant 10-day gap 8-16 Jun, which corresponds well with previous data indicating that spring migration ends around 7 Jun and fall birds appear around 16 Jun (compare with Greater Yellowlegs, above). Last was one in Douglas Co 7 Jun (JSt) and first for fall was one at Harvard WPA 17 Jun (PDu). A good early fall count was 84 in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ), and best count was 120 in Sarpy Co 26 Jul (B&LP).

Solitary Sandpiper: One in the e. RWB 18 Jun (JGJ) was likely an early fall migrant; continuous fall dates begin 24 Jun. About 7 more were reported through 10 Jul (JGJ,WF,LE).

Willet: A bit early for fall, but not by much, were 3 in the e. RWB 24 Jun, including 2 at WS (JGJ). The only other report away from the breeding range was of one in Sarpy Co 26 Jul (B&LP).

Spotted Sandpiper: The only report of potential breeding activity was of 2 territorial pairs in Dundey Co 7 Jun (TJW). This species is an uncommon breeder statewide.

Upland Sandpiper: Routine reports (whew!).

Long-billed Curlew: One in se. Lincoln Co 23 Jun (TJW) was probably a fall migrant, as breeding birds start to leave around mid-Jun, although the se. limit of the breeding range is not well-defined. A good count was the 70 at Winters Creek L, Scotts Bluff Co, 23 Jul (KD).

Hudsonian Godwit: Two birds at Freeman Lakes 4 Jun (JGJ) tied the 5th-latest spring date.

Marbled Godwit: Exciting was the discovery of a nest with 3 eggs in s. Sheridan Co 16 Jun (CK). This is only the 4th breeding record for the state, but the 3rd since 1990, and it suggests that this species may be breeding in small numbers in the vastness of the w. Sandhills. This species moves through early in spring and so early Jun sightings are likely immatures or failed breeders returning southward. Singles were at Harvard WPA 5 Jun (PDu) and LM the same day (SJD). One at Freeman Lakes 12 Jun was designated the "first fall shorebird" (JGJ). Definite fall movement was indicated by the 35 at LM 21 Jun (SJD).

Ruddy Turnstone: One at Harvard WPA 4 Jun was record-late for the e. RWB (JGJ) and tied the 2nd-latest ever for Nebraska.

Sanderling: The only reports were from LM, where 7 were found both 5 Jun and 21 Jun (SJD). These may have been the same birds, lollygagging there instead of migrating. There are only 5 records in all from 5 to 30 Jun, all but one at LM.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Generally a late spring migrant, 300 were still in the e. RWB 4 Jun (JGJ) and 41 at LM 5 Jun (SJD). Until this year there were only 8 records 12 Jun-1 Jul. This year there were 3: singles were in the e. RWB 18

and 24 Jun (JGJ) and at LM 21 Jun (SJD). In addition, there were 2 late spring migrants in the e. RWB 11 Jun (JGJ) and another at North Lake Basin the same day (LE). First for fall were 3 at Waco WPA, York Co, 3 Jul (JGJ), rather early.

Western Sandpiper: None were reported.

Least Sandpiper: Routine reports.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Although a notoriously late spring migrant, huge numbers were still at Harvard WPA into Jun, with 3200 there 4 Jun (JGJ) and 3000 the next day (PDu). Some 600 were still in the e. RWB as late as 11 Jun (JGJ) and 60 on 18 Jun (JGJ). Last in the e. RWB was one on 19 Jun (JGJ), but 5 were still at LM 21 Jun (SJD), rather late even for this species.

Baird's Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Another species that tends to linger in spring, 2 were still at Rauscher WPA, Fillmore Co, 12 Jun (JGJ), but 4-5 in the e. RWB 18 and 24 Jun (JGJ) were very late. There are only 3 previous records 21 Jun-3 Jul. One at WS 4 Jul (DSt) was rather early; first fall dates are 4-5 Jul.

Dunlin: New late records for the e. RWB were provided by a single at Harvard WPA 4 Jun (JGJ), another at Freeman Lakes 5 Jun (JGJ), and probably the same bird still at Freeman 11 Jun (LE), a record late date for the state.

Stilt Sandpiper: As with other species this spring, several stragglers were reported. Singles at Conestoga L, Lancaster Co, 18 Jun (LE) and in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ) joined only 6 other reports 15 Jun-6 Jul. Some 85 had returned to the e. RWB by 16 Jul (JGJ).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: After record-breaking numbers were found during this spring, it might not be too surprising that the only two Jun records ever were made this year. Singles were at Harvard WPA 4 Jun (JGJ) and WS 25 Jun (LE). Previous late date for the state was 28 May and early fall date 17 Jul.

Short-billed Dowitcher: The only report was a rather early "very orange *hendersoni*" identified by call at Deep Well WMA 15 Jul (MB).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Two birds in the e. RWB 24 Jun (JGJ) provided only the 2nd record for the state 14 Jun-5 Jul. In the west, 23 in Scotts Bluff Co 18 Jul (KD) were rather early.

Wilson's Snipe: First for fall was one in Sarpy Co at a sod farm 26 Jul (B&LP). This is only the 3rd Jul report away from breeding areas, all in the period 26-31 Jul, and indicates that fall movement indeed begins at this time despite the fact that the next earliest fall record is 9 Aug.

American Woodcock: This species has moved westward along the Platte River Valley in recent years, previously as far as Kearney and Elm Creek (fide LR,RH). A report has come to hand, however, of one as far west as Sarben, se. Keith Co, 18 Jun 2002 (TJW). Another westerly record was of one near the dam at Calamus Res, Garfield Co, Jun 2000 (LB), and one was displaying at Willow Creek Res, Pierce Co, 14 Jun (WF). These reports suggest that woodcocks may occur in low numbers in damp, wooded areas throughout much of e. and c. Nebraska. Presumably a fall migrant was the one that dropped into the observer's Lincoln yard 24 Jul (LE; homeowners' insurance covers falling objects). There are few fall records.

Wilson's Phalarope: Although not very common in mid-summer in the e. RWB, there are a few breeding records. One was presumed nesting based on its behavior at Harvard WPA 17 Jun (PDu), and others were reported in the e. RWB through 18 Jun (JGJ) and 3 Jul (LE). A male in Merrick Co 25 Jun (WF) was out of place, and 8 birds in e. Wheeler Co 23 Jun (MB) were at the east edge of the breeding range.

Red-necked Phalarope: None were reported.

Laughing Gull: Nebraska's 8th summer record, 15th in all, was an alternate adult at GPD, Cedar Co, 26 Jul (MB). The summer records include birds of all ages.

Franklin's Gull: Last spring migrants were 21 at LM 21 Jun (SJD), and first for fall was one in the e. RWB 3 Jul (JGJ). As many as 200 were still present in the e. RWB 11 Jun (JGJ). A leucistic bird, white with bright orange bill and legs, was at Harvard WPA 4 Jun (JGJ).

Little Gull: Nebraska's first Jun record, 15th overall, was a first alternate-plumaged bird at LM 21 Jun (SJD).

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Small numbers begin to drift in to LM by late Jun, presumably after breeding or breeding failure; only one bird was there 5 Jun (SJD,WRS), but 30 were counted 21 Jun, including 19 adults and 11 immatures (SJD). The only other reports were of a 2nd-summer bird at L Minatare 15 Jun (KD, photo) and 3 birds there 9 Jul (KD).

Herring Gull: Only the 2nd documented record for the state of adults in the period 14 May-20 Sep was of two at LM 21 Jun (SJD).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: The first alternate-plumaged bird at LM this spring continued through 21 Jun (SJD) for only the 2nd summer record; there are now nearly 50 records in all for the state, most in spring and fall.

Caspian Tern: The only reports, all within expected migration periods, were of 3 at LM 5 Jun (SJD) and singles at HCR 20 Jul (G&WH) and at GPD 26 Jul (MB).

Common Tern: The only reports were from LM, where an adult was found 5 Jun and 3 adults 21 Jun (SJD), the latter a late spring date. There are no documented records 22 Jun-21 Jul.

Forster's Tern: Presumably a spring straggler was one in Scotts Bluff Co 17 Jun (AK); reports away from breeding areas 11 Jun-3 Jul are scarce. Also rather late were 2 at WS 11 Jun (LE). First fall arrivals are in early Jul; 2 were at Deep Well WMA 9 Jul (LR,RH).

Least Tern: As with Piping Plover, which often nests in association with this species, high water reduced the number of nesting sites to two along the Platte River between Columbus and Plattsmouth (CT); sightings were made along the eastern Platte River west to Buffalo Co (WF,D&JP). At LM, 13 were present 5 Jun and 6-8 on 14 Jul (BY). A few were noted along the Niobrara River, including 5 in Holt Co 14 Jul (B&LP,D&JP) and 6 at GPD 26 Jul (MB). Unexpected for the date was one at WS 11 Jun (LE); at this time most are at breeding locations. At LM, 19 nests were located by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District personnel (Gabe Wilson, fide SJD).

Black Tern: An excellent count for this late migrant was 1569 at LM 5 Jun (SJD); peak numbers usually occur around the end of May. Late spring migrants (adults and non-breeding year-old immatures) occur well into Jun or early Jul; 12, mostly immatures, were in the e. RWB 11 Jun (JGJ), and 4-7 non-breeding adults were at WS 25 Jun-3 Jul (LE). No age was noted for one at North Lake Basin 25 Jun (LE). The first juveniles appear in mid-Jul and most migrants pass through in Aug.

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: There were two new counties reporting this species: one was at Laurel, Cedar Co, 10 Jun (WF) and another in Saline Co 30 Jun (D&JP). There are only the following 11 counties without reports, most in

the Sandhills except for Jefferson and Pawnee: Blaine, Boyd, Cherry, Grant, Hooker, Jefferson, Keya Paha, Loup, Pawnee, Sherman, and Thomas.

White-winged Dove: Following in the footsteps of the preceding species, reports are increasing rapidly for this species, which, in contrast to Eurasian Collared-Dove, does not seem to hang around during winter. Including a spring record at Kearney, 6 have been reported this spring and summer. Most intriguing was a young bird downed by a storm at Albion 21 Jun (D&CN; photo) that may have fledged in Nebraska, but appeared old enough to have dispersed northward into the state (WM). Others were singles at Alma 3 Jun (G&WH), LM 5 Jun (SJD, photo), near Chadron 5 Jul (SA), and in Brady 23 Jul (TJW). The Chadron and Brady birds were at feeders. There are now about 40 records for Nebraska, all since 1985.

Mourning Dove: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: This was the best season for this species for several years, with about 20 birds reported statewide. A BBS route near Brady tallied 4 (TJW), and 4 were found in e. Otoe Co 14 Jun (L&CF). An adult at a nest with 1-2 young and an egg was seen at Goose Lake WMA, Holt Co, 4 Jul (LR,RH). The cedar canyons in se. Lincoln Co appear to hold a good population, with 3-4 seen per day 15-21 Jun (TJW).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Good numbers were reported for this cuckoo also, including 20 at ICSP 18 Jun (KD) and 8-10 per day in the cedar canyons of se. Lincoln Co 15-21 Jun (TJW). One at WSR, where unusual, was first seen in spring and continued through the period (HKH).

Barn Owl: Routine reports.

Eastern Screech Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: The first e. RWB record since 1998 was of two birds using an old badger hole near Fairmont in n. Fillmore Co 11 Jun (LE); extralimital easterly nestings usually are found in similar situations rather than in (the usually nonexistent!) prairie-dog towns. It is interesting that there is an active prairie-dog town not far away at Wilkins WPA, Fillmore Co, that has not recently hosted Burrowing Owls. Numbers continue high in Scotts Bluff Co; 26 were counted in the Kiowa WMA area 16 Jul (P&DD). Other good counts were 15 at Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry Co, 15 Jul (D&JP,B&LP) and 12 on a Dundy Co BBS route 6 Jun (DM).

Barred Owl: Near the west edge of the current range were 2 at Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, 2 and 9 Jun (WF). There are a few CBC records from Madison Co.

Long-eared Owl: Four juveniles well-seen 25 Jun in sw. Brown Co (PDu) provided the only report. Breeding probably occurs statewide, especially in areas mostly unpopulated by humans.

Short-eared Owl: The only 3 reported were from Panhandle locations: singles from near Kiowa WMA 4 Jun (EB) and 16 Jul (P&DD), and one near Gordon 18 Jun (CNK).

Common Nighthawk: Considered migrants were the 31 in Kimball Co 5 Jun (SJD); spring aggregations are unusual, and, somewhat surprisingly, this is a record high spring count.

Common Poorwill: This species occurs some distance eastward in spring, but probable local breeders were singles in different se. Lincoln Co canyons 18-19 Jun (TJW). There are only 2 other records from se. Lincoln Co, one a road-killed bird last year (TJW). A good count was 5-7 at Chadron SP 3 Jun (EB).

Chuck-will's-widow: None were reported.

Whip-poor-will: Routine reports.

Chimney Swift: Perhaps the last town in the Panhandle without a record of this species, Harrison had 2 on 16 Jun (BW); another possibility might be Redington (is it a town??), where none were found 25 Jun despite their presence in nearby open spaces (AK).

White-throated Swift: Routine reports.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: A belated but significant report is of a nest in Hitchcock Co in 1975 (JSt); this is the only nest reported for the Republican River Valley, although since 1990 this species has occurred each year and young birds have been seen at Alma (fide G&WH). The Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas shows no summer records west of 97 degrees, roughly south of Jefferson Co.

Calliope Hummingbird: Perhaps of annual occurrence with knowledgeable Panhandle feeder watchers reporting, this fall's first was one at the observer's feeder 21-26 Jul (KD; photo). This is the earliest of the 12 fall records to date.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: First for fall was a female near Mitchell 20 Jul, with another or the same one there 26 Jul (KD). Easterly was a hatch-year or second-year male at a Minden feeder 22-23 Jul (GL; details); this is about the 10th record from Keith Co east. A belated report was of two at Culbertson 13 Aug 2003 (JSt).

Rufous Hummingbird: First was a female in the observer's Scotts Bluff Co yard 16-18 Jul; it was followed by a male 21 Jul, and one of each 28-30 Jul (AK). Two females were near Mitchell 29 Jul (KD). A female/immature hummingbird at McCook 20 Jul (fide TJW) and another hummer that "zipped by" the observer at Fort Kearny SHP, Kearney Co, 24 Jul (GL) may have been Rufous or Broad-tailed Hummingbirds based on date and location; Ruby-throats do not normally appear until mid-Aug.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: First brown-headed immatures were noted 30 Jul in Lancaster Co (LE).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: A pair excavating a nest hole in Chase Co 15 Jun (MB) provided a westerly nesting record; breeding occurs westward to northeast Colorado and regularly westward to Keith Co in Nebraska.

Downy Woodpecker: A "very dark" bird in a Scottsbluff yard 9 Jun (P&DD) resembled the dark Pacific Coast subspecies. Although the occasional melanistic bird does appear, it is not uncommon for this species (and Hairy Woodpecker) to pick up soot from burned trees or to have feathers soiled with suet and adhering dirt after visiting feeders.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: The removal of Russian Olives and cedars as part of habitat restoration work along the Republican River in Dundey Co created a cottonwood/willow savannah which resulted in the presence of 2 pairs of flickers 7 Jun (TJW).

Pileated Woodpecker: The only report was from FF, where one was seen 4 Jul (B&LP).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The only report was of the last spring migrants: 2 in Dawes Co 3 Jun (EB). This species is rare in the west.

Western Wood-Pewee: A good count was the "dozens" at Chadron SP 3 Jun (EB). The easternmost regular location in summer is probably the Valentine City Park and Fish Hatchery, where one was found 15 Jul (D&JP,B&LP). Both pewee species summer here, although Easterns far outnumber Westerns.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Records from the Loup River drainage are erratic, especially northwesterly; thus of interest were singles at Goose Lake WMA, Holt Co, 4 Jul (LR,RH) and at Pibel Lake SRA, Wheeler Co, 4 Jun (LR,RH).

Acadian Flycatcher: None were reported.

Willow Flycatcher: Although a statewide breeder (rarest in the southwest), reports from the western North Platte Valley are scarce; one was at WSR 4 Jun (SJD,WRS).

Least Flycatcher: The status of singles at WLC and WSR, both 4 Jun (SJD,WRS), was unconfirmed, although both were probably late migrants. There are no confirmed breeding records for the state, although breeding apparently occurs in cottonwoods at Smith L WMA (fide R. Rosche) and possibly elsewhere in the north and west.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: Late migrants were singles at WLC (SJD,WRS), and Oliver Res (WRS), both 4 Jun. Intriguing was a report of one calling from tall trees at Harrison 17 Jun (BW); habitat at this date suggests a migrant also, albeit very late, or even a wanderer from nearby Pine Ridge breeding locations.

Eastern Phoebe: Rather westerly was a pair nesting in Chase Co 14 Jun (MB); adding interest was a nesting pair of Say's Phoebes 10 yards away on the same structure (MB). This species is rare in sw. Nebraska, but does breed rarely in ne. Colorado.

Say's Phoebe: Easternmost was one near Merna in Custer Co 10 Jun (MB).

Great Crested Flycatcher: Although breeding in some numbers in the Pine Ridge, Panhandle occurrences elsewhere are rare, with fewer than 10 such reports. Evidence suggests that in recent years this species is expanding its numbers westward, adapting to habitats other than forest. Singles were at WSR 10-11 Jun (HKH), and in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 14 Jun (fide AK). Sightings have been few in the southwest also, and so the 3 pairs in restored riparian habitat in Dundy Co 7 Jun (TJW) and at least 3 birds s. of Benkelman 11 Jun (MB; possibly the same birds?) were encouraging.

Cassin's Kingbird: Routine reports.

Western Kingbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: This species is clearly expanding its range northward into sc. Nebraska. A pair, accompanied by an apparent immature male, nested in extreme nw. Kearney Co (MU,KS,m.ob.), the 11th nesting record for Nebraska. Nest building was underway 12 Jun (KS) and 2-3 young were present 17 Jul (KS), but the young were gone, possibly predated, 24 Jul, even though the adults were still present (KS). Two other reports involved single birds: one in Sarpy Co 10-18 Jun (DB, m.ob.) and another in Saline Co 24 Jun (RE).

Loggerhead Shrike: This species is doing well in nc. Nebraska according to results from a BBS route near Gordon (CNK).

Bell's Vireo: As usual, best numbers were found in cen. Nebraska; 8-9 were found on a BBS route near Brady 30 Jun (TJW) and 7 were in Greeley Co 4 Jun (LR,RH).

Yellow-throated Vireo: At the west edge of the range, one was at WP 18 Jun (LE). There are few summer records west of the Missouri River Valley.

Plumbeous Vireo: Two at Chadron SP 3 Jun (EB) were east of the currently-known breeding range, but may have been late migrants.

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: Six at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun (SJD) was a good westerly count.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: None were reported.

Clark's Nutcracker: Following winter's incursion in the Pine Ridge, activity suggestive of breeding was noted in Monroe Canyon 18 May (SJD). Later visits to Monroe Canyon 3 and 14 Jun found as many as 40 birds, all adults, but no further evidence of breeding (WM). This was attributed to the almost total lack of cones following an "almost complete cone crop failure" in 2004 (WM).

Black-billed Magpie: Routine reports.

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: Best count was 52 at ADF 27 Jul (L&CF); first fall flocks are noted at the end of Jul. Also westerly were 3 in Benkelman 11 Jun (MB), where breeding has occurred since the late 1980s.

Tree Swallow: Summering in Scotts Bluff Co is still noteworthy; one nesting in a tree hole at L Minatare 9 Jun (KD) appears to be the first nesting record for the county; the first Scotts Bluff Co report of the species was in 1993. Also westerly was a pair nesting in Chase Co 11 Jun (MB); nesting has occurred in the southwest only since about 1990.

Violet-green Swallow: The only report was of "dozens" at Chadron SP 3 Jun (EB).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Uncommon in the Panhandle, a colony of 30 nests was at Berggren Pond, Scotts Bluff Co, 15 Jun (KD), and 100 birds were near Kiowa WMA 18 Jul (KD), the latter likely staging migrants.

Cliff Swallow: Routine reports.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: This species remains scarce in Lancaster Co; only 12 were found on 13 regular trips around the county during the period, 4 of these birds in Lincoln (LE). Two birds in the observer's yard 29 Jun were the first seen there since Jan (LE).

Tufted Titmouse: One at Rose Creek WMA, Jefferson Co, 17 Jul (LR,RH) was at the west edge of the range.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: The first fall arrivals are usually seen in early Aug, and so one in Omaha 20-21 Jul (PS) was record early. Even more surprising was the presence of one at a different Omaha feeder for 3 weeks through 24 Jun (fide LBI, fide DB); the only other similar records away from breeding areas are for Lancaster Co 8 Jun 1978 and 30 Jun 1992, and for Adams Co 3 Jul 1986. These may be wintering birds that did not migrate due to injury or other causes.

White-breasted Nuthatch: One at Wildcat Hills NC 17 Jul (KD) was one of fewer than 10 summer reports for Scotts Bluff Co; those identified to subspecies so far have been eastern *cookei*, which appears to be spreading westward along the North Platte River valley.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: None were reported; a family group was reported at FF in spring, however.

Rock Wren: Good numbers were noted in dirt cut-banks in se. Lincoln Co cedar canyons during the period (TJW); this is probably the easternmost regular Platte River Valley breeding site.

Carolina Wren: Far to the west was one singing at McCook 21 Jul (LR,RH); westernmost summering birds have been at HCR, although this outpost may have been extirpated (G&WH)

House Wren: Routine reports.

Sedge Wren: One at Flatsedge WMA, Polk Co, 24 Jun (JGJ) was only the 2nd Jun record for that region. Ten birds in about 1.5 km at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 2 Jun (JT) may have been late migrants, although 4-5 were present there in Jul (JT). A few drifted in in Jul as is usual; first of these was one at Troester WPA, Hamilton Co, 3 Jul (LE), which may have been present in Jun also, and 2 at Deep Well WMA 16 Jul (LR,RH).

Marsh Wren: "Several" apparently were summering at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster/Saunders Cos, where 3 were counted 25 Jun (LE). Summering south of the Platte River Valley is irregular.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Scattered reports from Panhandle locations indicate the western population is expanding: 2 were at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun (SJD), 1-2 were at CLNWR 24 Jun (HA), and several were seen in Morrill, Banner, and Scotts Bluff Cos 25 Jun (fide AK), where most were found in Mountain-mahogany. Westerly for eastern birds were 1-3 in Lancaster Co 11-18 Jun (LE).

Eastern Bluebird: A good total of 80 had fledged from boxes at ADF by 31 Jul (L&CF).

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Veery: A late migrant of the expected non-rufous western subspecies *salicicolus* was at WLC 4 Jun (SJD,WRS).

Swainson's Thrush: A rather late fallout of this species was detected 4 Jun in the s. Panhandle, where 37 were counted (SJD,WRS). A single calling in Chase Co 11 Jun (MB) was rather late, although migration in the Panhandle usually extends into Jun, with late dates Jun 17,18,19.

Wood Thrush: One singing at Dead Timber WMA, Dodge Co, 15 Jul (LE) was westerly.

American Robin: Flocking had begun as usual by 15 Jul, with 87 seen in se. Cuming Co in 2 miles (LE).

Gray Catbird: Routine reports.

Northern Mockingbird: Good numbers continue to be reported, as this is another southern species expanding slowly northward. Best counts were 8, including 3 pairs, on 30 Jun on a 10-mile segment of a BBS route near Brady that passes through cedar canyons (TJW), and 5 in Gage Co 15 Jun (B&LP). A pair was nest-building at SCP 23 Jul (LE), presumably a second brood. One in sw. Brown Co 25 Jun was northerly, as was the observer (PDu).

Sage Thrasher: The only report was of an early fall migrant at WSR 23-24 Jul (HKH); most pass through in Aug.

Brown Thrasher: Routine reports.

Curve-billed Thrasher: The Sioux Co bird was still present 7 Jul, and for the second summer fed both grackle and robin chicks (LF). It has been present since Oct 2002.

European Starling: First flocking noted was 100 birds in Dixon Co 25 Jul (JJ).

Cedar Waxwing: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Warbler: Quite a surprise was a female at WLC 4 Jun (WRS,SJD); this is the 3rd Panhandle record.

Tennessee Warbler: Last spring migrants were one rather far west at WLC 4 Jun (SJD,WRS) and another in Dodge Co 6 Jun (D&JP).

Virginia's Warbler: A female at WSR 4 Jun (SJD,WRS) provided the 9th state record, 3rd in spring.

Northern Parula: Routine reports.

- Yellow Warbler:** Two reports indicated uneven distribution of this species: none were found on a BBS route in Custer and Lincoln Cos 12 Jun (TJW) but 32 were counted at Dannebrog 25 Jun (LR,RH).
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Rather often found into Jun, a singing bird was westerly at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun (SJD), the 15th Panhandle spring record. Even later was one singing in the observer's Hastings yard all day 17 Jun (PDu). The latter is the 7th record from 12 Jun through the last date, 19 Jun.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** One along Old Stage Hill Road 4 Jul, although reported as "race unknown" (AK), was likely *auduboni*; although there are 6 summer reports for this form, breeding has not been confirmed in the Wildcat Hills.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** None were reported; a few were found in spring at FF.
- Cerulean Warbler:** The only report was of one at FF in early Jul (fide EM); none were reported there in spring.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** Routine reports.
- American Redstart:** Routine reports.
- Prothonotary Warbler:** None were reported, although a few were found in spring.
- Ovenbird:** One at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun (SJD) was rather late. A good count was 6 at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, 4 Jul (BFH), where breeding is regular.
- Northern Waterthrush:** The only report was of a late migrant at WSR 4 Jun (SJD,WRS); this species is an uncommon migrant west.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** Of interest was the presence of at least 2 birds and possibly 2 pairs at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, 4 Jul (BFH), where there have been previous summer sightings in 1999 and 2002 without confirmation of breeding. The northernmost confirmed breeding to date is in Washington Co.
- Kentucky Warbler:** None were reported.
- Mourning Warbler:** None were reported; migrants regularly occur into Jun.
- Common Yellowthroat:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** One west of Niobrara 8 Jun was unexpected (MB); this is only the 9th record since 1981 from the eastern half of the state, 3 of these from Knox Co.
- Summer Tanager:** A few continue to be reported from FF, which has only recently been occupied in summer by this species; one was there 19 Jun (TP). Two were at ICSP, a regular location, 28 Jul (B&LP).
- Scarlet Tanager:** A female with young was at FF 26 Jun (CNK).
- Western Tanager:** Two females at WSR 4 Jun (SJD,WRS) were late migrants.
- Spotted Towhee:** This species was reported east to Harlan Co, with 2 on 6 Jul (G&WH); in this area most birds are Spotted, although Easterns are at the west edge of their range here and hybrids occur also. The "vast majority" of calls in the cedar canyons of se. Lincoln Co this summer were typical of Spotted as expected, but one was likely a hybrid (TJW).
- Eastern Towhee:** Routine reports.
- Canyon Towhee:** In the Summer Report for 2003 (NBR 71:124), I mentioned a sighting of this species in Platte Co 5 Jul 2000 (TJW). Since then I received interesting information from William Flack, who visits Madison Co regularly from Arizona. After seeing 1-2 Canyon Towhees at different times mid-Jun 1999 in Madison, with additional sightings through 5 Jan 2000, he was told that a few had been brought from Arizona in 1998 and some had survived the winter 1998-99 at feeders. It seems plausible that one of these towhees survived the winter 1999-2000 and drifted to Platte Co, not too distant, where it was seen in summer 2000.

Cassin's Sparrow: The only report was of 5 birds south of Imperial in Chase Co 12 Jun (MB). Two observers (TJW,MB) noted, however, that none were located in Dundy Co at sites previously used west of Benkelman. This species is variable in numbers from year to year, however, at times being absent.

Chipping Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: The only report was of 1-2 at a regular location west of Harrison 4 Jun (EB).

Field Sparrow: Routine reports.

Vesper Sparrow: This species breeds in low numbers in eastern Nebraska, where it has adapted to nesting in roadside grasses adjacent to field crops; a nest with 5 eggs in Douglas Co 12 Jun was in mowed brome adjacent to a soybean field (PK). Vesper Sparrows are rare to absent in summer in the Loup drainage and most of the area south of the Platte River from about Lancaster Co westward; only the 9th-11th records from this area were 2 singing birds in Seward Co 18 Jun and singing singles (could they find mates online?) were in Polk and Clay Cos 24 Jun (JGJ). More common in the northeast, 9 were in Dixon Co 31 Jul (JJ). At the east edge of the Loup drainage a fledged chick was found in Dodge Co 5 Jun (D&JP).

Lark Sparrow: A nest with 6 eggs was found in Greeley Co 6 Jun but was empty 18 Jun (LR,RH).

Lark Bunting: Two observers in the Panhandle thought numbers were lower than usual (AK,CNK). Several were noted 18 Jun in sw. Nebraska in foot-tall corn and wheat stubble, some courting, whereas few were in sandsage prairie (TJW); this may have been related to "invertebrate abundance and/or ease of prey capture on the bare ground between crops" (CK).

Savannah Sparrow: One at LM 5 Jun (SJD) was rather late, although several were noted singing in damp sedgy habitat at LM in 2004.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Henslow's Sparrow: Of the 4 reports, 2 were at previously-known locations: 2 birds at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 2 Jun (JT) and one at SCP 8 Jun (KP). Unexpected were only the 3rd and 4th e. RWB records, singles at Lange WPA, Clay Co, 11 Jun (JGJ) and Harvard WPA 18 Jun (JGJ). Presence of this species, along with Greater Prairie-Chickens, is encouraging at these managed grasslands.

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Swamp Sparrow: This species breeds at various preferred sites with wet meadows or cattail marshes mainly in cen. Nebraska, and so likely breeders were one in Madison Co 2 Jun (MB), 1-2 at LM 5 and 21 Jun (SJD), one in a wet meadow near Spalding where one was seen in 2004 (LR,RH), and 2 at Lake Ericson, Wheeler Co, 3 Jul (LR,RH).

White-crowned Sparrow: One at a Scottsbluff garden center 9 Jun (KD) tied the 4th latest ever spring date.

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: A pair at Chadron SP 3 Jun (EB) was at the e. edge of the breeding range; there are no summer reports east of Dawes Co.

McCown's Longspur: Good numbers were noted in the expected summer range along the Wyoming border west of Harrison 4 Jun (EB) and on a Kimball Co BBS route the same day (WRS). Another was found in Kimball Co 20 Jun (ARy).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The only reports were from expected locations: 3 west of Harrison 4 Jun (EB) and 10 in Kimball Co the same day (WRS).

Northern Cardinal: The small population along the North Platte River in Scotts Bluff Co continued (AK), and the quest for the western edge of the summer

range in the Loup Drainage found none in Arthur, McPherson, or Garden Cos in Jun (JT); thus westernmost in that area currently are in Thomas and Logan Cos.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: One in Scottsbluff 4 Jun (SJD,WRS) was a late migrant; there are a few similar records from the Panhandle. Two that looked like "pure adult males" in Wheeler Co 4 Jun (LR,RH) were also likely late spring migrants. Westerly were small numbers in the cedar canyons of se. Lincoln Co 15-21 Jun (TJW), presumably summering, and one at Goose Lake WMA, Holt Co, 4 Jul (LR,RH) was one of fewer than 10 summer records for the western Elkhorn River drainage.

Black-headed Grosbeak: In contrast to the small numbers of Rose-breasted encountered in se. Lincoln Co, 12+ Black-headed per day were found 15-21 Jun (TJW). Easternmost was one in Greeley Co 3 Jul (LR,RH), the east edge of the summer range.

Blue Grosbeak: Best numbers were on a Brady BBS route, with 12 counted there 30 Jun (TJW). Numbers were thought to be down in Dixon Co (JJ).

Lazuli Bunting: Routine reports.

Indigo Bunting: A hybrid reported in May was still present at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun (SJD). A good count was 13 at WP 18 Jun; one was carrying nest material (LE).

Dickcissel: There was a strong westerly push of this species this summer, although as is typical in the Panhandle, the birds departed rather early, likely without breeding. One near Gering 3 Jul-2 Aug was described as a "happy surprise" (AK), a description rarely used by eastern birders! "Surprising numbers" were in se. Lincoln Co, where a BBS route came up with a remarkable 89 (TJW). Good numbers were in Dundy Co 6 Jun (DM), and they were "numerous" at CLNWR 24 Jun (HA). Observers were "amazed at how many we saw and heard" in Scotts Bluff Co 25 Jun (fide AK), and 12 were around a small pond at Winters Creek L, Scotts Bluff Co, 9 Jul but had gone by 23 Jul (KD). There are fewer than 10 records from the Panhandle south of the North Platte River, and so significant were one in Kimball Co 20 Jun (ARy) and no fewer than 8 perched on an alfalfa pivot in ne. Banner Co 18 Jun (CK). Out west, alfalfa is candy to a Dickcissel!

Bobolink: At a hayfield study area in Hall Co, all but 15 of 150+ nests had fledged by 4 Jul, indicating that delaying haying until mid-Jul would significantly reduce mortality among Bobolinks nesting in hayfields (DK).

Red-winged Blackbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Surprisingly common in certain wet meadows in the Sandhills, 6 were found at CLNWR 24 Jun (HA), and one was at LM 14 Jul (BY). In contrast, it is surprisingly rare in the e. RWB, where one at Harvard WPA 18 Jun was noteworthy (JGJ).

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: A lone yearling male was decidedly out of place at an abandoned Kimball Co farmyard 4 Jun (WRS), although it was likely a late migrant; flocks of immatures occur into late May.

Brewer's Blackbird: Routine reports.

Common Grackle: First fall flocking was noted in Fillmore Co 3 Jul: a flock of 180 (LE).

Great-tailed Grackle: A small breeding population continues at Kiowa WMA, where 2 were seen 2 Jun (SJD), while a first Morrill Co record was a single there 25 Jun (AK). The RWB is the current center of abundance: "lots of breeding" was taking place there 18 Jun (JGJ).

Brown-headed Cowbird: Routine reports.

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Baltimore Oriole: Westernmost report was of 3 in Dundy Co 7 Jun (TJW), where it occurs regularly in summer in small numbers.

Bullock's Oriole: Pure birds are rare anywhere east of the Panhandle; a male was at Sandy Point, LM, 21 Jun (SJD). A BBS route north of Dalton found 6 Bullock's Orioles 5 Jun and a hybrid which looked like a Baltimore with large white wing patches (WRS).

House Finch: In Nebraska, this species is usually found near human habitations, and so a pair in se. Lincoln Co 2 miles from the nearest house and 20 miles from the nearest town was unexpected (TJW).

Red Crossbill: Six birds as far east as Albion 3-4 Jun (D&CN) were unexpected and probably unexplainable; such birds may be either late spring stragglers or possibly even early post-breeding wanderers. Up to 12 birds of all ages were at the Wildcat Hills NC feeders through the period (WRS,KD), a regular occurrence, even though breeding has not been confirmed in the Wildcat Hills.

Pine Siskin: Several nesting records away from the usual summer range were noted in the Spring Report; further evidence was the presence of a hatch-year bird in a Bellevue yard 16 Jun (RG). Also out of range were 2 at Ash Hollow SHP 5 Jun and 2 at LM the same day (SJD).

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.