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Winter Field Report, December 2007 to February 2008

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WINTER FIELD REPORT, December 2007 to February 2008

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INTRODUCTION

This winter in Nebraska was much colder on average than the few previous winters, not so much because of low temperatures, but a lack of warmer days. This kept water bodies frozen most of the winter, with far fewer than usual midwinter water-bird records. Surprisingly, though, passerines, including some surprises, were able to brave the coolness. Notable were three species of wood-warblers; although Yellow-rumped Warblers winter to some extent in the southeast, 9 of the 21 total February records for the species have come in the last two winters. The others were not unprecedented for Nebraska, and are known to be somewhat cold-tolerant: Yellow-throated and Pine Warblers. Sparrows were also in evidence, with Fox Sparrow an occasional winterer, but Chipping and Field Sparrows, especially the latter, are rare in midwinter. Another group usually absent in midwinter involved two icterids, Great-tailed Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Purple Finches were reported statewide in good numbers, a definite incursion or even invasion by this species. Most notable were good numbers in the Panhandle, where Purple Finches are usually rare to absent. Western sections of the state had a minor incursion of Mountain Chickadees, with a few noted at feeders and elsewhere.

A major rarity was a Band-tailed Pigeon that regularly appeared at a feeder in Ceresco and was eventually seen by most who looked; it was only the third for Nebraska.

ABBREVIATIONS

BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co
CBC: Christmas Bird Count
Cem: Cemetery
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, Cedar-Knox Cos
HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos

LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co
LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co
m.ob.: many observers
NC: Nature Center
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co
Res: Reservoir
RWB: Rainwater Basin (playa region in south-central Nebraska)
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)
SP: State Park

GAZETTEER

DeSoto NWR: Washington Co
Funk WPA: Phelps Co
Sutherland Res: Lincoln Co
Wildcat Hills: Scotts Bluff-Banner Cos

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering
AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City
BG: Betty Grenon, Bellevue
BN: Brent Nelson, Scottsbluff
B&DW: Bruce & Donna Walgren, Casper, WY
CM: Connie McCartney, Grand Island
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue
DH: Dave Heidt, Norfolk
DK: Dan Kim, Grand Island
DLe: Denise Lewis, Peru
DMu: Deborah Murphy, Omaha
DW: Duane Wolff, Norfolk
D&CN: Don and Colleen Noecker, Albion
D&JP: Don & Jan Paseka, Ames
GH: Gerard Harbison, Lincoln
GW: Gertrude Wood, Lincoln
G&WH: Glen & Wanda Hoge, Alma
JC: Jennifer Cantrell, Lincoln
JD: Jennifer Dunavan, Cedar Bluffs
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Lincoln
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield
JMu: Jerry Mulliken, Nickerson
JRi: Justin Rink, Omaha
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha
KC: Ken Carnes, Lincoln
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln
KS: Kent Skaggs, Kearney

LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney
LBr: Lisa Bringewatt, North Platte
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln
LG: Linda Grdina, Lincoln
LH: Luther Haige, Omaha
LN: LynnDee Nielson, North Platte
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon
L&CF: Laurence & Carol Falk, Nebraska City
L&BP: Loren & Babs Padelford, Bellevue
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton
MM: Marty Mathieson, Shelton
NF: Nancy Fish, Superior
PD: Paul Dunbar, Hastings;
P&DD: Phyllis & Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA
SR: Sarah Rehme, Lincoln
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln
TH: Tim Hajda, Broken Bow
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
TL: Tucker Lutter, Bronson, IA
WF: William Flack, Madison
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: One in Madison Co 7 Feb (WF) was probably an early migrant; most arrive mid- to late Feb, like the 37 in Lincoln Co 15 Feb (TJW).

Snow Goose: One in Cass Co 26 Jan (CNK) was likely wintering, although 250 appeared near Alma 1 Feb (G&WH). Huge numbers, at least one million, were in the RWB by 29 Feb (JGJ).

Ross's Goose: Routine reports.

Cackling Goose: Best count was 479 at LM 27 Dec (SJD).

Canada Goose: Routine reports.

Trumpeter Swan: This species can be found in small numbers during winter almost anywhere in the state; occasional large groups occur, usually in or near the Sandhills, such as the 23 between Hyannis and Merriman 23 Feb (TH).

Wood Duck: There are very few reports into Jan; 1-2 were in Lincoln 7 and 26 Jan (LE).

Gadwall: The 124 at LO 27 Dec (SJD) was a good count for the rather late date.

American Wigeon: One at HCR 16 Feb (G&WH) was likely an early migrant.

American Black Duck: None were reported; best looked for in wintering Mallard flocks in the east. Recent sightings have been few.

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: One at Funk 29 Feb (JGJ) was only 6 days from being earliest ever.

Northern Shoveler: One in Scotts Bluff Co 9 Jan (AK) was unexpected; midwinter reports are rare, even in the North Platte Valley.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-winged Teal: The 116 at LM 29 Dec (SJD) was a good count for the date.

Canvasback: Best tally was the 300 at Funk 29 Feb (JGJ).

Redhead: This species passes through the RWB in high numbers; thus the 7000 at Funk 29 Feb (JGJ) is moderate relative to the record 40,500 there in 2001.

Ring-necked Duck: Late fall and early spring migrants were the 12 in Omaha 5 Jan (LH) and 2 in Madison Co 7 Feb (WF). There are a few wintering records however.

Greater Scaup: Routine reports.

Lesser Scaup: Last were 6-8 rather late in Douglas Co 2 Jan (JT).

White-winged Scoter: The only report was of an ad. male and a fem./imm. at BOL 7 Dec (LE); the latter was still present rather late 10 and 15 Dec (LE).

Bufflehead: Routine reports.

Common Goldeneye: Routine reports.

Barrow's Goldeneye: A rare but regular winter visitor in the North Platte Valley, singles were somewhat easterly near North Platte 23 Jan (TJW) and at the Scottsbluff SL 15 Dec (AK).

Hooded Merganser: Rather late were singles in Omaha 5 Jan (LH) and Lincoln 5 Jan (LE); late dates away from LM and Sutherland Res are in early Jan.

Common Merganser: Best count was a moderate 9792 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD).

Red-breasted Merganser: Last were 2 at LM 29 Dec (SJD), where a few can usually be found with the large Common Merganser flock.

Ruddy Duck: Last was a report of 33 from the Grand Island CBC 15 Dec (fide CM). Late dates are at the end of Dec.

Gray Partridge: None were reported.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Easterly were 16 at the Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Co 28 Dec (JGJ), only the second report from Clay Co since 2000; both reports may have been of birds moving southeastward in fall, well-known in this species. Amazing was the 174 counted on the Beaver Valley CBC 16 Dec (fide D&CN); other good counts were the 83 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) and 60 near Callaway 16 Feb (TH).

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Northern Bobwhite: This species appears to be in good numbers in the Loup Drainage, with CBC counts of 30 at Norfolk 15 Dec (fide DW) and 15 at Calamus-Loup 29 Dec (fide DH); in addition, 8 were at Broken Bow 13 Dec (TH). Surprisingly, 12 were found on the Harrison CBC 30 Dec (B&DW); the species is rare in the northwest.

Common Loon: One at LM 29 Dec (SJD) was late; there are only 2 Jan records.

Pied-billed Grebe: One in Lincoln 5 Jan (LE) was latest ever except for a handful of wintering reports, most in the LM area.

Horned Grebe: None were reported; late dates are in mid-Dec.

Eared Grebe: None were reported; most depart by early Dec.

Western Grebe: Lingering was one at LM 28-29 Dec (SJD); recent years have seen larger numbers dallying through Dec.

American White Pelican: A single was wintering in Lincoln (JGJ, LE), 2 at Sutherland Res (JGJ), and up to 5 at LM (SJD, MB). One at BOL until 7 Dec (LE) may have been the bird that wintered at Lincoln.

Double-crested Cormorant: Routine reports.

Great Blue Heron: The 9 found on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was a good count for the date.

Bald Eagle: Breeding numbers continue to increase; there were a record 50 active nests in the state in 2007 (fide JGJ).

Northern Harrier: Routine reports.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Routine reports.

Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.

Northern Goshawk: The only report was of a "first-year" bird in Cedar Co 18 Feb (MB).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Encouraging sightings continue from the PL area, where hopefully a second breeding territory will be established in addition to the current lone known site at FF; single birds were seen at PL 7 and 10 Dec (LE) and 16 Feb (JGJ). Another was on the Omaha CBC 16 Dec (fide BG), presumably one of the FF birds.

Red-tailed Hawk: A total of 93 birds in Dodge Co 30 Dec (D&JP) and Sarpy Co 7 Jan (CNK) included 5 "Harlan's", 11 dark morphs, and one rufous morph.

Ferruginous Hawk: Easternmost was at Republican City 3 Feb (G&WH).

Rough-legged Hawk: Best counts were in the north and northeast; 18 were found on the Ponca SP CBC 22 Dec (fide BFH).

Golden Eagle: Easternmost adult was in Harlan Co 26 Feb (G&WH).

American Kestrel: Courtship was noted in Lincoln 25 Feb (TEL).

Merlin: Best count was the 5 on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG).

Prairie Falcon: Easternmost was in n. Saunders Co 27 Dec (D&JP).

Peregrine Falcon: A young bird chasing geese in Adams Co 29 Feb (D&JP) should retrain to shorebirds to avoid cold weather and increase its success rate; this is only the 9th record for Feb (but see next sentence). One at the Capitol in Lincoln 19 Dec (JGJ) and another in Lincoln 13 Feb (TEL) were presumably part of the resident pair; both this pair and the Omaha pair appear to remain through winter.

Virginia Rail: The usual 1-2 were found on the LM CBC 29 Dec (SJD).

American Coot: Two lingered rather late in Douglas Co 2-3 Jan (JT, L&BP) and 3 were on the Lincoln CBC 5 Jan (fide RE); 140 was a good count at BOL as late as 9 Dec (JGJ).

Sandhill Crane: Probably the earliest migratory species to arrive each spring, first reported were two over North Platte 3 Feb (LN), followed by flyovers near Grand Island 8 Feb (DK). By 29 Feb, "thousands" were in the RWB (D&JP).

Killdeer: Wintering birds were, as expected, at LO, with 7 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD), and, more surprisingly, at North Platte, with 6 on 28 Jan (TJW).

Wilson's Snipe: As usual, several CBCs statewide reported this species; best count was 9 at LM (fide SJD).

Bonaparte's Gull: One at Sutherland Res 28-30 Dec (JGJ, SJD) was tardy; most depart by mid-Dec.

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Unexpected was a first year bird at BOL 9 Dec (JGJ), while less surprising were the 6-14 at LM 27-29 Dec (SJD).

Herring Gull: A record fall count was the 540 at Sutherland Res 30 Dec (SJD, JGJ, WRS).

Thayer's Gull: Three were reported, all adults: one was at LM 27-29 Dec (SJD) and 2 were at Sutherland Res 30 Dec (SJD).

- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** An adult and a second-basic were at LM 27-29 Dec (SJD), and possibly the same two birds were at Sutherland Res 30 Dec (SJD, JGJ, WRS).
- Glaucous Gull:** Sutherland Res hosted 2-3 juveniles 28-30 Dec (JGJ, SJD, WRS) and a single was at LM 15 Feb (MB).
- Great Black-backed Gull:** An adult at LM 15 Feb (MB) may have been the same one that was there 14 Sep.
- Rock Pigeon:** The 1208 counted on the Norfolk CBC 15 Dec (fide DW) was the second-highest CBC total on record.
- Band-tailed Pigeon:** An exciting surprise was the appearance of a Band-tailed Pigeon at the Dale and Lucy Fisher feeder in Ceresco around 15 Nov; birders were not aware of its presence until Feb 19 (fide KP), when it was seen and photographed by many 22 Feb-2 Mar (m. ob.). It was Nebraska's third record.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Winter flocks continue to get bigger; 200 were at Shelton 25 Dec (MM), and 77 at Brady 18 Feb (TJW). Best CBC tallies were 122 at LM 29 Dec (fide SJD) and 101 at Scottsbluff 15 Dec (fide AK).
- White-winged Dove:** Only the 7th report for mid-Oct through mid-Apr was one in Scottsbluff 2 Feb (BN).
- Mourning Dove:** One in Scottsbluff 10 Feb (P&DD) was unexpected, although wintering occurs in the North Platte Valley on occasion.
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** Routine reports.
- Great Horned Owl:** This is an early nester, with earliest Nebraska egg date 6 Feb, but one incubating in late Jan near North Platte (TJW) was exceptionally early.
- Snowy Owl:** Two, possibly 3, were reported. A male near Mead 26 Jan (JD) may have been the same bird seen just east of Wahoo 23-24 Feb (TL, m.ob.), and an emaciated female was picked up for rehabilitation near Peru 24 Feb (DLe).
- Barred Owl:** Routine reports.
- Long-eared Owl:** The 14 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was a good count.
- Short-eared Owl:** Two were hunting around baled cornstalks during a period of snow cover in Dodge Co 8 Jan (JMu); the observer suspected such bales would be a good source of mice. Other singles were also in Dodge Co 13-14 Jan and 28 Feb (D&JP), and one was found on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (JGJ, LE).
- Northern Saw-whet Owl:** The only report was of one on the LM CBC 29 Dec (SJD).
- Belted Kingfisher:** Routine reports.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** A few winter each year in the extreme se., but an immature near Genoa 15 Feb (WF) was northwesterly for the date. A molting juvenile at Broken Bow 7 Dec was also westerly, probably a late migrant.
- Downy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Hairy Woodpecker:** Routine reports.
- Northern Flicker:** Routine reports.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** The only reports were from regular locations: one each at FF on the Omaha CBC 16 Dec (fide BG) and at ICSP 15 Feb (L&CF).
- Northern Shrike:** This species was widespread this winter; good counts were the 19 in the west 27-30 Dec (SJD) and 11 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** Rare in winter, but most likely in the extreme se., one in Otoe Co 24 Feb (L&CF) may have been an early migrant, but one photographed in

Dodge Co 10 Jan (JMu) was unexpected; this is only the 5th documented record for Jan.

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: The only report was of one near Crawford in late Dec (B&DW); this species is erratic in its occurrences.

Black-billed Magpie: Continuing occasional winter reports in Lancaster Co was one on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG). Others eastward were 2 on the Clay-Adams Cos line 16 Feb (LR, RH) and 2 on the Norfolk CBC 15 Dec (fide DW).

American Crow: "Huge flocks" wintered in the Merna-Callaway area of Custer Co, with "thousands" seen in mid-Feb (LB, TH).

Horned Lark: Huge counts were reported from the south and west; "tens of thousands" were along highways in sw. Nebraska 14 Dec (TJW), and a count record of 4788 occurred on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec (fide AK).

Tree Swallow: An incredibly early arrival was a Tree Swallow near Lincoln 13 Feb (GH); this is record early by a month.

Black-capped Chickadee: Numbers are still "reduced and localized" in Lancaster Co (LE), and an all-time low count of 10 was made there on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG).

Mountain Chickadee: There was a moderate incursion this winter, with a total of 8 birds reported in addition to the 2 in fall (see Fall Report). Four were on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec (fide AK), one was in Harrison 28 Dec (SJD, details), another or the same one on the Harrison CBC 30 Dec (B&DW), and singles were at Wildcat Hills NC 31 Dec (JRi) and 15 Feb (AK).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: This species was widely reported at feeders statewide, usually fewer than 5 at each site; best CBC totals were 37 at LM 29 Dec (fide SJD) and 49 at Lincoln 5 Jan (fide RE).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Pygmy Nuthatch: The 35 on the Harrison CBC 30 Dec (fide B&DW) was a good count.

Brown Creeper: A good count was the 5 at Wyuka Cem, Lincoln, 22 Dec (LE).

Carolina Wren: Westerly were 2 at HCR 16 Feb (KS) and one at Johnson L, Dawson and Gosper Cos, 29 Feb (JGJ).

Winter Wren: Unexpected so far northwest was one at Calamus Res 29 Dec (DH); sightings after Dec are few, even in the southeast, and so one in Gage Co 26 Jan (JGJ) was also unexpected.

Marsh Wren: Routine reports.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: By midwinter most are in the southeast; outliers this winter were 2 at Broken Bow 28 Jan (TH) and singles in Boone Co 6 Feb (WF) and Greeley Co 20 Feb (WF).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: This species is a rarity in midwinter, especially away from the Missouri Valley where it is rare at best; thus one in Adams Co 13 Jan (LR, RH) was unexpected and 2 on the Omaha CBC 16 Dec (fide BG) were a rare find.

Eastern Bluebird: Two singing males in Dodge Co 23 Feb (D&JP) were likely early migrants. A pretty sight must have been the flock of 100 in Hitchcock Co 14 Dec (TJW).

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Townsend's Solitaire: The 94 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was an excellent count. Easternmost were 3 on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG), one on the Ponca SP CBC 22 Dec (fide BFH), and one in Omaha 24 Feb (JRi).

Hermit Thrush: Over-wintering is rare, and usually occurs in the southeast; one wintering in Bellevue was still present 13 Feb (fide L&BP). A few lingered into Dec, as expected, but one on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was westerly.

American Robin: The 10,712 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was the 2nd-highest all-time CBC total for the state behind 13,136 at Calamus Res in 2003.

Varied Thrush: A brightly-plumaged male was in an Omaha yard 13-19 Dec (DMu, photo); it was the 2nd for the season, the other in Sioux Co in Oct (Fall Report). There have been several sightings in recent years; this is the 8th for 2005-Feb 2008.

Brown Thrasher: One lingered at Broken Bow until 27 Dec (TH); over-wintering is rare, generally in the southeast, and so one present through the period in Lincoln (LG) was unexpected.

European Starling: A count high for the Seward-BOL CBC was the 3275 there 15 Dec (fide JG); all-time high CBC count is 101,384 at Lincoln 1975-76.

Bohemian Waxwing: Good numbers were found in the extreme northwest: a flock of 325 was in Harrison 28 Dec (SJD), and apparently the same flock was found on the Harrison CBC, which tallied the same number two days later (fide B&DW). On 28 Dec, 32 were west of Crawford (SJD). Easternmost were 18 on the LM CBC 9 Dec (fide SJD).

Cedar Waxwing: Routine reports.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Prior to this winter, there were few Jan and especially Feb reports. This winter, reports through Dec were widespread, including 2 as far west as the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD), and several were found into Jan and even Feb in the southeast and south. Prior to 2007 there were only 12 Feb records for the state, but there were 5 in 2007, and 4 more in 2008: singles were in Otoe Co 1 Feb (LE), at BOL 10 Feb (JGJ), in Nance Co 15-16 Feb (WF), and at HCR 16 Feb (KS). Swanson Res hosted 1-2 on 19-20 Jan (LR, RH), late for that westerly location.

Yellow-throated Warbler: Extraordinary, but not unprecedented, was one at a Lincoln feeder 11 Dec (JC, photo). Previously, one was at an Omaha feeder through 24 Dec 1980.

Pine Warbler: Another very late suet feeder visitor was one in North Platte 24 Dec (LBr, photo). Surprisingly, this is about the 7th record for Dec.

Spotted Towhee: A few winter from the Platte River Valley south; the 2 on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec provided a high for that count (fide AK).

American Tree Sparrow: Routine reports.

Chipping Sparrow: A single at a feeder, typical of late reports for this species, was present in Lincoln 6-21 Jan (TEL); this is only the 2nd documented Jan record.

Field Sparrow: One, and possibly 3, although the two additional were not seen by the reporter, were found on the LM CBC 29 Dec (SJD); this is only the 4th documented report for Dec away from the southeast.

Savannah Sparrow: The only report was of one near Broken Bow 26 Jan (TH, details), the 4th record for Jan.

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Leucistic Sandhill Crane among other Sandhill Cranes, southern Hall Co.,
26 Feb 2007. Photo by Paul Dunbar.

Upland Sandpiper, Chet & Jane Fleisbach
WMA (Facus Springs), Morrill Co.,
23 June 2007. Photo by Kathy DeLara.



Lazuli Bunting, Box Elder Canyon,
15 mi. SE of North Platte, Lincoln Co.,
20 May 2007. Photo by Jerry Mulliken.



Piping Plover on nest, Lake McConaughy,
Keith Co., 14 May 2004.
Photo by Stephen J. Dinsmore.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Pierson farm, 3 mi. SE of Arcadia, Sherman Co., 22 April 2008. Photo by Conn Pierson.



Least Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher, Funk WMA, Phelps Co., 25 Aug 2007. Photo by Paul Dunbar.



Yellow Warbler, Olive Creek SRA, Lancaster Co., 6 May 2008. Photo by Heather York, Doane College.

Fox Sparrow: More than usual were reported in Dec, including an amazing 13 on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG). Reports late Jan-Feb are few, most from the southeast; this winter one was a bit westerly in Adams Co 15 Jan (PD), two were at BOL 27 Jan (JGJ), and singles were in Cass Co 1 Feb (LE) and Lancaster Co 3 Feb (JGJ).

Song Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lincoln's Sparrow: This species may linger late in fall on occasion; there are some 35 Dec records and others into mid-Jan, but one at a Lancaster Co feeder present through 21 Jan was apparently attempting to over-winter, although it was not seen after that date (TEL). Otherwise, last was one in Lancaster Co 5 Jan (LE).

Swamp Sparrow: This species winters in the southeast most years in small numbers; up to 8 were at PL through the period (LE), 3 were at ICSP 15 Feb (L&CF) and one was in Lancaster Co 16 Feb (JGJ).

White-throated Sparrow: This species was present as expected throughout the southeast, where it is rare in winter; best count was only 5, on the CBCs at Omaha 16 Dec (fide BG) and Lincoln 5 Jan (fide RE).

Harris's Sparrow: Rather rare westerly, 8 were counted on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD).

White-crowned Sparrow: This species is scarce in midwinter in most of the state except the south and west; thus unusual were up to 20 in Broken Bow through 26 Jan (TH) and one at a feeder in Albion 5 Jan (D&CN). These are only the 8th and 9th midwinter records for the north-central and northwest parts of the state (north of the Platte Valley). Best count was the 136 on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec (fide AK).

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: More than usual were reported, all from the Panhandle except for 8 (out of 1494 juncos) on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD). Two (out of 458) were on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec (fide AK), 32 (out of 191) were on the Harrison CBC 30 Dec (fide B&DW), and "several", the observer's first ever, were at a Sidney feeder 30 Dec (AS).

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

Dark-eyed (Oregon and Pink-sided) Junco: The 28 "Oregons" (out of 1570 juncos) on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG) was a good easterly count. Single "Pink-sided" juncos at Broken Bow 27 Dec and 12 Feb (TH) were good finds for the eastward location.

Lapland Longspur: Routine reports.

Snow Bunting: More than usual were reported statewide, about 100, with best counts 58 in Cass Co 1 Jan (GW) and 20 in Morrill Co 27 Dec (SJD).

Northern Cardinal: This species continues in very low numbers in Scotts Bluff Co; one was found on the CBC there 15 Dec (fide AK). One was singing 13 Jan in Lincoln (JGJ).

Red-winged Blackbird: A flock of 500 in Scotts Bluff Co 10 Feb (P&DD) was unusual; they were likely early migrants, although 50 were there 28 Jan (P&DD).

Western Meadowlark: First singing bird reported was in Sarpy Co 21 Feb (WF).

Rusty Blackbird: Apart from 5 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD), where this species is rare, there were numerous reports from the east totaling about 40 birds during Dec. Best count was 22 on the Grand Island CBC 15 Dec (fide CM); latest were 6 in Cuming Co 28 Dec (LE); and northernmost was one on the Norfolk CBC 15 Dec (fide DW).

- Brewer's Blackbird:** One on the Scotts Bluff CBC 15 Dec (fide AK) was unexpected and the only one reported; few remain in the state past mid-Dec.
- Common Grackle:** Scattered birds were found on CBCs in the east, and 20 were seen on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD), also the latest reported for the season.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** The only reports away from the southeast were of 65 in Dawson Co 30 Dec (SJD) and one at Alma 5 Feb (G&WH). There are few records of over-wintering.
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** The 30 on the Beaver Valley CBC 16 Dec (fide D&CN) were a little farther north and west than usual in mid-Dec, and one on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) was unexpected there at that date.
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch:** None were reported.
- Purple Finch:** Following a good fall for this species, winter reports were numerous and widespread. Best counts included 124 at Calamus Res 29 Dec (DH) and 82 on the Seward-BOL CBC 15 Dec (fide JG). Generally rare in the west, one on the Scottsbluff CBC 15 Dec was only the second time the species had been found on that CBC (fide AK). The 33 in Monroe Canyon, Sioux Co 28 Dec (SJD), may have been unprecedented, and 33 on the LM CBC 29 Dec was a count high there (fide SJD). Even eastward, 2-3 at a Dodge Co feeder were the first ever there (D&JP), and 2 at a Gibbon feeder were "unusual" there (LR, RH). In all, about 520 were reported for the period.
- Cassin's Finch:** The only report was of 2 on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD). This is the 4th time for this species on this CBC.
- House Finch:** Routine reports.
- Red Crossbill:** This species was also widely reported in good numbers, a total of about 190 birds. Best counts were the up to 40 wintering in Hastings: 40 were at one feeder 14 Feb (PD) and 20 at another 9 Jan (fide KC). Also, 25 were at PL 21 Jan (SR, JG) and 22 were there 19 Feb (LE). It is believed that resident birds in Nebraska are Type 2 (Groth: <http://research.amnh.org/ornithology/crossbills/>), which is a ponderosa pine specialist. An observer suggested that, based on recordings, the birds in Hastings might be Type 2 (PD), but 4 in Omaha 16 Feb were thought to be Type 4 (JRi). Evidence, which is rather sketchy, to date (*Birds of Nebraska*) suggests that Types 2, 3, 5, and 7 have occurred in Nebraska, and so Type 4 would be new to the state.
- Common Redpoll:** There were more reports than usual, but not surprisingly so. CBC compilers reported 2 at Seward-BOL 15 Dec (fide JG) with a single at BOL 28 Dec (TEL); one was at Harrison 30 Dec (fide B&DW); 4 were in Sheridan Co 28 Dec (SJD); one was at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 2 Jan (KD); and 2 were in Superior for 2 weeks through 5 Jan (NF). This species is rare as far south as Superior.
- Pine Siskin:** This species was widespread in good numbers; an impressive 665 were found on the LM CBC 29 Dec (fide SJD) and 225 were at Wildcat Hills NC 27 Dec (SJD). Best easterly count was the 60 on the Omaha CBC 15 Dec (fide BG).
- Lesser Goldfinch:** The second report for winter was of a male at a Scottsbluff feeder 19 Feb (P&DD); the only similar prior report was of one at a Morrill feeder 13 Jan 2002.
- American Goldfinch:** Routine reports.



Osprey on nest near Winters Creek Lake, Scotts Bluff Co., 18 May 2008.
Photo by Wayne Mollhoff.



Short-billed Dowitcher, Burchard Lake,
Pawnee Co., 14 May 2006. Photo by
Stephen J. Dinsmore.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird, DeLara yard,
4 mi NW of Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff Co.,
14 July 2007. Photo by Kathy DeLara.



Le Conte's Sparrow, Harvard Marsh
WPA, Clay Co., 16 Oct 2006.
Photo by Paul Dunbar.



Merlin, southern Cherry Co., 29 Sept 2007. Photo by Paul A. Johnsgard.



Marbled Godwit, Harvard Marsh WPA, Clay Co., 13 Sept 2007. Photo by Paul Dunbar.

Burrowing Owl, north of Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co., 29 June 2004.
Photo by Bruce Walgren.

