

30 (MP). Common Ravens fledged two young on a telecommunications tower in Brandon, MB (RWi). A Carolina Wren was seen just once at Kleefeld, MB May 20 (RDu), while a Winter Wren was an early bird at Banff, Mar. 14 (JRo). Large Am. Robin concentrations included 1000 at Turtle L., SK Apr. 17 (MC), >400 in Stonewall Apr. 22 (KG), and >1000 between Beausejour and Seven Sisters Falls, MB Apr. 23 (RKO, PeT). A Varied Thrush at Pike Lake P.P., SK was last seen Apr. 1 (KP, *fide* MW), and another remained in Winnipeg to Apr. 19 (W&JS). Becoming "rare but regular" in Alberta, single N. Mockingbirds were found at Calgary May 16 (*fide* PS) and Bow Valley P.P., May 29 (MP).

Warbling Vireos seemed more numerous than usual in s. Alberta (DB, TK). Winnipeg's best warbler wave in about 15 years included two Golden-wingeds (rarely seen on migration) in mid-May and a ♀ Black-throated Blue May 21 (all BS). The overwintering Yellow-rumped Warbler at Claresholm, AB was still present at the end of March (J&RA, JS, m.ob.). Rare in the mountains were single Magnolia Warblers at Banff May 29 (M&DM) and Bow Valley P.P., May 29 (MP), a Black-and-white Warbler at Vermilion Lakes May 20 (MM), and an Ovenbird at Mt. Lorette May 23 (PS).

Seven W. Tanagers in mid- to late May (m.ob.) was an unprecedented total in s. Manitoba. Also out of range was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Mt. Lorette May 23 (PS) and eight Black-headed Grosbeaks: four each in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A heavy wave of White-crowned Sparrows paused in Medicine Hat in the first half of May (DB), while Harris' Sparrows were unusually widespread in the Edmonton-Tofield area, with 11 reports May 16-17 (*fide* PM).

Claresholm's other special winter visitor, the **Brambling**, was still present at the end of March (J&RA). A rosy finch at an Edmonton feeder May 8 (SK) was unusually late away from the mountains. The House Finch is edging up the abundance scale in s. Manitoba from rare to locally uncommon, and Saskatchewan records are also on the increase. In contrast, House Finches remain rare in Alberta; a female spent much of the season at a Calgary feeder (JH), and a male was noted in Calgary May 28-30 (CCo). One usually has to scan redpoll flocks carefully to find a few Hoaries, so reports of 175 Hoary with 75 Com. redpolls at Sheep R., AB Mar. 13 (WS, CWe) and >20 Hoaries with four

Commons at Ile-a-la-Crosse, SK Mar. 7 (RH) were notable.

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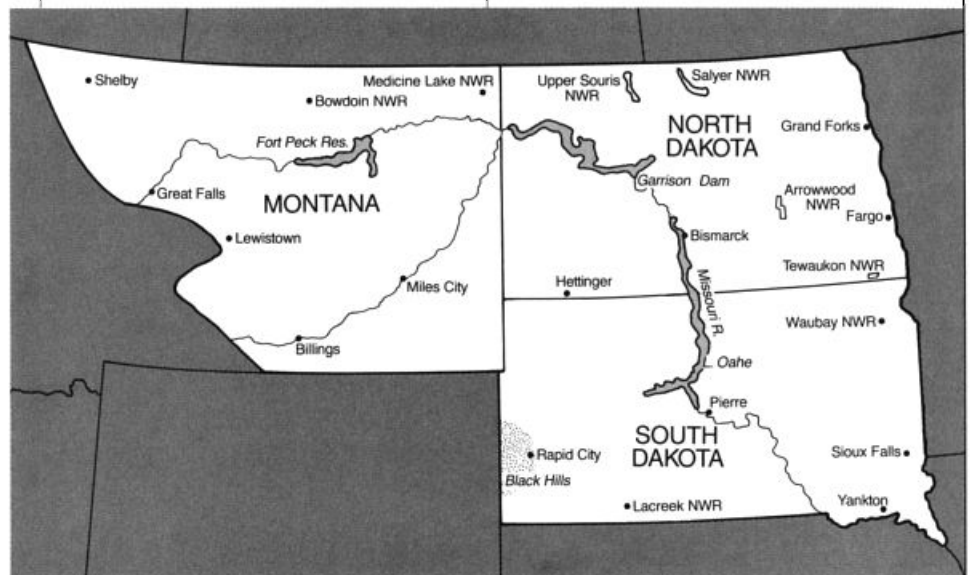
Northern Great Plains Region

RON MARTIN

The season was generally cool and dry in North Dakota. After an early rush of waterfowl the first half of March, the later part of the month and April were cool, with most birds slow to arrive. A late spring snowstorm hit much of the Dakotas near the end of April. Eastern North Dakota had a good fallout of passerines May 13. Despite the dryness of the period, wetland water levels remained good because of last year's reserves and the spring runoff.

Montana was warmer and wetter than average, especially in May, and the migrant flow was observed as being about average.

Several interesting records for North Dakota were tallied—including two species new for the state—but numbers of migrants, especially shorebirds and many passerines, were generally unimpressive. Some observers missed usually reliable migrant species. On the other hand, with the increased water levels in wetlands, numbers of breeding waterfowl, rails, and wetland dependent passerines increased significantly. After last year's cool summer with poor nesting success, many nesting passerines appeared in reduced numbers.



Loons to Raptors

A Com. Loon in *Sargent* Mar. 16 was a week earlier than any previous in North Dakota (DRL). Early grebes in *Cass*, ND included a Pied-billed Mar. 20 and a Red-necked Apr. 12 (GEN). Freezeout L., MT hosted tens of thousands of Eared Grebes for one day only Apr. 30 (MS). A colony with 17 Great Blue Heron nests in *Pembina*, ND, May 8 provided a rare breeding record for e. North Dakota (DOL). Bittern, heron, and egret numbers rebounded dramatically in the Dakotas, with the best spring water conditions in several years. A Little Blue Heron in *Grand Forks* furnished the 16th record for North Dakota (EEF).

Ross' Geese were widely reported and a flock of 12 at Ft. Peck Apr. 16 was quite unusual there (CC). North Dakota's third *Garganey* record was furnished by a male May 1 in *Burleigh* (EAB). With the drought apparently past and the return of numerous wetlands, breeding ducks increased astronomically. The breeding pair index was up 105% from last year and was the 2nd highest since 1976. The pair index was also 52% higher than the 1948–1993 average (North Dakota Game and Fish). The massive number of ducks was undoubtedly responsible for an increase in Cinnamon Teal records, with 9 sightings in North Dakota and 7 in South Dakota. Regional rarities in spring, Oldsquaw were noted Apr. 28 at Fargo (CMN) and Apr. 19 in *Yankton*, SD (DGP). A Black Scoter in *Kidder* in late May provided the 3rd spring record for North Dakota (KR).

A Sharp-shinned Hawk nest in *McHenry*, ND May 8 provided only the 3rd record for the Souris loop and the first in perhaps 50 years (REM). Only 2 of 10 Ferruginous Hawk nest sites were occupied around Hettinger (D&CG), and breeding pairs were notably reduced in *McHenry*, ND and around Westby, Montana. In *Meade*, SD 22 were observed Apr. 5 (EM). Unprecedented were 75 Rough-legged Hawks hunting over CRP lands in *Grand Forks* Mar. 17 (EEF). Two Prairie Falcons in *Minnehaha*, SD Apr. 30 were east and late (JL).

Partridges to Gnatcatchers

Gallinaceous birds were greatly reduced after last year's poor reproduction, with Gray Partridge apparently most affected. Estimates ranged to 25% of normal in some areas. Rail and Am. Coot numbers jumped dramatically with the good water conditions. Shorebird migration in the Dakotas was dismal, with incredibly low peak numbers. Most probably overflowed the region due to high water levels. In Montana, however, some interesting species and numbers were observed, with seven Hudsonian Godwits at

Medicine L., May 11 (RR), 1400 Sanderlings near Westby May 29 & 30 (PL), and three Red Knots at Freezeout May 15. Also at Freezeout, Long-billed Dowitchers peaked at 6500 May 7–14.

The Glaucous Gull in *Grand Forks* Apr. 18–May 1 was not only rare for spring, but one of only a few records in any season away from Garrison Dam. Arctic Terns were in North Dakota for the 2nd consecutive year, with two at Grand Forks May 14 for the 4th state record (DOL). Burrowing Owls continued to decline, but Long-eared and Short-eared owl numbers were the highest since 1982. The latter species was generally distributed and breeding over much of North Dakota, with reports from at least 13 localities. Five were noted at Westby in late May, and 10 were in *Edmunds*, SD Mar. 31 (JDW).

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird in *Custer*, SD May 17 would be only the 3rd record w. of the river (MMM). The status of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in w. South Dakota is still uncertain, so one May 2 in *Fall River* was notable (RAP). Common Ravens were unusually late May 9–12 s. of Valley City (JML) and May 15 in *Stark*, ND. A Carolina Wren in *Minnehaha*, SD provided the 3rd May record for the state (JL). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was in Fargo May 15, where they are becoming regular, with observations 5 of the last 6 years (MAO).

Wheatear to Warblers

The first North Dakota record of *Northern Wheatear* was furnished by an individual of the Greenland race at Lostwood N.W.R., May 23 (R&MF). Wood Thrushes were very early at Tewaukon N.W.R., ND Apr. 28 (KLA), and in *Brookings*, SD April 26 (JAK). Northern Mockingbirds staged a good showing, with 9 observations region-wide. An Am. Pipit Mar. 18 in *Stutsman*, ND was record early by 6 days (JTP). After very low winter numbers, a flock of 3000 Bohemian Waxwings in Grand Forks was exceptional.

A "Plumbeus" Solitary Vireo at Minot May 16 was the first known sighting of this form for North Dakota (GBB). The Chestnut-sided Warbler at Medicine L., May 22 provided the 7th record for Montana (SM, JR, WW). The first Yellow-rumped Warbler at Ft. Peck Apr. 28 was an "Audubons," the more unusual form. Low numbers of this common species were seen there and also in North Dakota, where the peak was only 90 May 14. The first North Dakota observation Mar. 23 was record early by 10 days (D&DW). North Dakota warblers in the casual category included Blue-winged at Fargo May 17, Cerulean May 21 at Fargo, and Hooded May 13 at Jamestown (CJJ) and May 26 at Grand

Forks. The first North Dakota record of *Prairie Warbler* was provided by a singing male in *Burleigh* May 22 through at least June 25 (SG). Record high for North Dakota were 500 Tennessee Warblers in *Grand Forks* May 19.

Casual category warblers in South Dakota included Worm-eating May 13 in *Brown* (JCS), Kentucky May 30 in *Lincoln* (JL), and Prothonotary May 12 in *Brown* and May 14 in *Minnehaha* (AH).

Tanagers to Crossbills

Tanagers made a good showing at Fargo with a Summer May 17 and a Western May 13 & 14 (LS). Chipping Sparrows peaked at 400 in *Grand Forks* May 13 and 1000 Clay-colored were in Jamestown the same day (AP). Rare away from breeding areas, migrant Brewer's Sparrows were at Hettinger May 14 & 21. Indicative of the favorable conditions this year, LeConte's Sparrows produced a record high of 65 at Grand Forks May 13. The 3rd record of *Sharp-tailed Sparrow* for Montana showed up near Westby May 29 and was apparently on territory (PL, SF, TN). A "White-winged" Dark-eyed Junco was in Fargo April 1.

A "Bullock's" Oriole was e. of the species' usual haunts at New Town May 25 (BCH), and the record-early Orchard Oriole in *Meade*, SD Apr. 26 survived a late winter storm in a barn (EM). House Finches can now be found in nearly every city and town in North Dakota. There was evidence of a strong influx in March and birds continued occupying new territories into May. Begging young Red Crossbills were at the Denbigh Experimental Forest, *McHenry*, ND April 23, where they have been breeding with some regularity in the last few years.

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