



Several "southeastern" warblers were found in Manitoba this spring, including this Worm-eating Warbler, a first for the province, at Delta May 21, 1996. Photograph/Dennis Fast.

May 30 (JS), and \geq four W. Tanagers visited Manitoba feeders in the 2nd half of May. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were especially conspicuous during migration at many locations, with reports extending as far west as Banff, AB May 29–31 (SM, M&DM). Alberta's first documented Green-tailed Towhee (HGr) drew many birders at Calgary May 30. Out-of-range were a Lark Sparrow at Good Spirit Lake P.P., SK May 23 (BA), a Golden-crowned Sparrow in Regina May 20 (ES), a Lazuli Bunting at Vegreville, AB May 27+ (RHu), and two σ Indigo Buntings near Medicine Hat Apr. 27+ (BV). Additional highlights of the Regina May Count included 1760 Chipping and 2015 Clay-colored sparrows, and an unprecedented 1850 White-crowned Sparrows. A possible "White-winged" Dark-eyed Junco was an interesting find at Dilke, SK Apr. 20 (MB).

An Orchard Oriole was well north at Lundar May 26 (R&TW), and several birds sustained the species' toehold in s.e. Saskatchewan. Rare in the mountains were two Purple Finches at Mt. Lorette May 11–12 (JS, PS). In the aftermath of last winter's invasion, White-winged Crossbills nested at Cypress Hills P.P., SK, where a fledgling was seen May 28 (RKr, RT), and nesting was suspected in urban settings at Regina, Altona, and Winnipeg. Common Redpolls lingered very late, with many large flocks swarming over feeders in April, and numerous May records in both s. Manitoba and s. Alberta.

Observers (Subregional compilers in boldface): Des Allen, Ray Allen, Bill Anaka, Dennis Baresco (DBo), David Baron (DBa), Stuart & Jean Bawr, Margaret Belcher, Lloyd Bennett, Ron Blakely (RBl), Ron Boese (RBo), Nancy Bremner, Brook Clibbon, D. Crawford, Carolyn Curtis, Rob de Graaf, Ross Dickson

(RDk), Ruth Dixon (RDx), Olga Droppo, D. Duncan, Bruce Dunlop, C. Durr, Adolf Ens, Bob Ewart, Bill & Evelyn Eyolfson, Dennis Fast, Chris Fisher, Lenora Flynn, Hélène Gauthier (HGa), Horst Grothman (HGr), Gordon Grief, Paula Grief, Susan Grief, Michael Harrison, David Hatch, George Holland, Len & Joyce Holmes, Ron Hooper (RHo), Rob Hughes (RHu), Bruce Jennings, Rudolf Koes (RKO), Terry Korolyk, Bruce Kowal, Robert Kreba (RKr), Doug & Vera Laing, Doug Leighton, Bob Luterbach, Shelly Maderos, Ed Mah-Lim, Jennifer Mather (JMa), Mike & Dianne McIvor, Ross Monroe, Carol Morgan, John Morgan (JMo), Rob Nickel, Jamie Noel, J. Paton, John Pollock, Lloyd Powell, Margaret Powell, Jim & Victor Reimer, Ian Richards, John Riddell, Frank Roy, E. Schindler, Al & Dorothy Schritt, Peter Sherrington, Bev & Janice Smith, Wayne Smith, John Steeves, Bob Storms, Andrew Styles, Don Styles, Peter Taylor, Jacqueline Thompson, Ron Tillie, Howard Troughton, Eric Tull, Ben Velner, Bill Walker (BWA), John Weier, Renee & Tom Will, Bill Williams (BWi), Reto Zach.

—Rudolf F. Koes, 135 Rossmere Cres., Winnipeg, MB R2K 0G1 and Peter Taylor, Box 597, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0.

Southern Great Plains Region

JOSEPH A. GRZYBOWSKI

Spring is usually the rainy season. Not so this year over southern portions of the Region, particularly northwestern Oklahoma, large portions of which had almost no rain from October 1995 to May 1996. Perhaps as significant was the drought in Texas, creating a substantive gap of drought-stricken terrain for migrants to traverse. While the season seemed advanced early, it also seemed drawn out, perhaps a little late in the primary migration periods of late April and early May. It may have been that fattening up for the next leg of the migratory trip came more slowly this year.

What patterns of abundances in species populations did this create? This was hard to interpret from reports, as there were birds to be found, perhaps localized and easier to find by the constraints of surface water. Except for what appeared to be some potential protraction in migration, and perhaps first nesting attempts among more closely observed species, there is not much obvious comment to be made other



than conjecture. In western Oklahoma, Black-and-white Warblers appeared to be less common, and a local pocket of Canyon Wrens "blinked out" this year; Cassin's Sparrows edged east, while Louisiana Waterthrushes and Rufous-crowned Sparrows appeared unaffected. Little comment came from other fronts where rains were better.

While birding continues to grow, and volume of reporting precludes many significant records to be mentioned in this account, the level of documentation continues to be spotty. While some corroboration has been good, it seems that in each round of reports, a regional compiler or two bemoans the poor response to providing documentation, even for first, or near first, state records. This author tends to leave many to most such records out of these accounts, where questions or suspicions arise.

Arguments concerning these records tend to diffuse along two general lines. First, some would argue that data are being lost by not including everyone's observations—documented or not. Others would argue that such inclusion simply devalues the good observations, and inserts a muddle of records destined to historical purgatory with observer names attached. Both data sets are still merely samples of what is actually out there, even if one includes some of which isn't.

Secondly, birders are a diverse group, with mixed orientations of purpose between recreational hobby and avocation. Some separation between more socially oriented and more scientifically supportive birding is appearing in regional and state guides (see review of Small's *California Birds in Auk* 113:522–523). Many or most observers cited in this report should be thanked for their contributions in documenting significant observations; some just need encouragement. Those that are or aren't so inclined should certainly still share together in the fun and social company of their experiences in birding.

Abbreviations: Crescent Lake (*Crescent Lake N.W.R., Garden Co., NE*); Fontenelle Forest (*Fontenelle Forest, Sargy Co., NE*); McConaughy (*L. McConaughy, Keith Co., NE*); N.O.U.R.C. (*Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee*); North Platte (*North Platte N.W.R., Scotts Bluff Co., NE*); Quivira (*Quivira N.W.R., Stafford Co., KS*).

Loons to Waterfowl

Common Loons lingered to May 30 in *Wyandotte, KS* (LM). An impressive count of 5000 W. Grebes was made May 12 at McConaughy (SJD); among these were 16

Clark's Grebes. Several Westerns were reported for e. Nebraska (*vide* WRS) and three for Kansas (*vide* LM). A Clark's Grebe was also identified in *Morton, KS* May 4 (m.ob.). An imm. Brown Pelican was discovered on L. Texoma May 15 (JDT *et al.*). A Neotropic Cormorant May 20–29 near *Holt, NE* (JGJ, WRS) was only the 4th documented for Nebraska. Extralimital Anhingas were noted during May in *Comanche, OK* (*vide* JAG) and Apr. 28 in *Cleveland, OK* (VB). Heck located 16 ad. Anhingas May 29 at a rookery in *McCurtain, OK*, with 6 active nests.

Early was an Am. Bittern Apr. 2 at Crescent Lake (MF), as was a Great Egret Mar. 12 in *Sedgwick, KS* (JNo). A number of heron species appeared in higher than usual numbers in Nebraska, including Great Egrets and Little Blue Herons. Several Yellow-crowned Night-Herons had wandered N by mid-May to *Phelps* (m.ob.) and *Lancaster, both Nebraska* (LE).

Tundra Swans were still present Mar. 16 at Quivira (JNo). Six Trumpeter Swans were noted at Crescent Lake Apr. 1 (MF); birds were observed at nesting locations in *Grant, NE* Mar. 31 and May 22 (BP, LP). A good count of 100,000 Snow Geese was made in *Phelps, NE* Mar. 15 (LR, RH), and 20,000 Greater White-fronted Geese were counted at Quivira Mar. 2 (DB, MW); one tardy White-fronted was present in *Comanche, OK* Apr. 26 (JAG). Up to 33 Ross' Geese were reported Mar. 13 in *Burt, NE* (JGJ), with 35 noted at Quivira Mar. 3 (MR). Other counts of fewer birds were made in Kansas and Nebraska.

Up to five Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were noted again in *Tulsa* (SD, BJ); whether these came from Texas populations or local aviaries is uncertain. Two probable Mottled Ducks were photographed in *Sequoyah, OK* Apr. 25 (SB). About 12,000 N. Pintail were counted Mar. 2 in *Phelps, NE* (LR, RH), highlighting a typical surge period for many waterfowl species. Cinnamon Teal were recorded e. to Fontenelle Forest Apr. 7 (BP, LP) and *Saunders, NE* Apr. 27 (TH). Certainly special finds were single Eurasian Wigeons Apr. 8 in *Keith, NE* (RCR, DJR) and Apr. 27 at *Clay, NE* (JGJ). Do Garganeys count? Adult males were observed in *Tulsa* Apr. 6–7 (BC *et al.*), and in *Jefferson, KS* Apr. 7 (DLS). A Blue-winged Teal x N. Shoveler hybrid was studied in *Comanche, OK* Apr. 19 (JAG) & 21 (JDT).

High counts of Canvasback are never particularly high; the 600 noted Mar. 31 in *Grant, NE* (NR) was thus refreshing. Redheads appear to peak through the Region in early March; this year 4527 were counted at North Platte Mar. 4 (LK).



Male Garganey at Tulsa, Oklahoma, April 6, 1996. Photograph/ Martha Kamp.

Ring-necked Ducks may be undergoing an upsurge. Rather late for a high count were 334 noted at North Platte May 1 (LK); one was present in *Comanche, OK* May 21 (JAG), and seven were still noted at Crescent Lake May 28 (MF). More than usual, 22 Greater Scaup were reported from Nebraska, but only six from Kansas, and seven from Oklahoma; the latest was in *Douglas, NE* Apr. 17 (JGJ). Oldsquaws Mar. 17 in *Tulsa* (JWA), and Apr. 13 in *Pottawatomie, KS* (DK) were the only ones reported for the Region.

Tardy waterfowl included Canvasbacks Apr. 27 in *Oklahoma* and *Kingfisher, OK* (JW), a Com. Goldeneye May 4 in *Tulsa* (JC, JWA, KK), and Ruddy Ducks May 25 in *Tulsa* (BC *et al.*) and May 31 in *Comanche, OK* (JDT). A pair of lingering Com. Mergansers May 31 at McConaughy are suspected as nesting (RCR, DJR).

Raptors to Rails

The Turkey Vulture in *Oro, NE* Mar. 12 (LF, CF) was early. Bald Eagles present during late May at North Platte (LK, LKM) and Crescent Lake (MF) likely nested; a pair in *Holt, NE* had several chicks in the nest Apr. 20 (JJo); one nest in *Noble, OK* contained one chick May 2 (MK *et al.*), and at least one eaglet fledged from a nest in *Tulsa* (*vide* JL).

A Red-shouldered Hawk wandered out to *Buffalo-Phelps, NE* Mar. 14 (CD). Broad-winged Hawks were noted w. in Nebraska to Crescent Lake Apr. 22 (MF) *Buffalo* Apr. 26 (LR, RH), and *Sheridan* May 11 (RCR, DJR); one in *Cleveland, OK* Mar. 23 (NK) was early. Becoming more expected, 19 Peregrine Falcons were reported from Nebraska between Apr. 15–May 19 (*vide* WRS, RCR); another 15–20 were reported for Kansas (*vide* LM) and seven for Oklahoma.

A Common Crane was detected among migrating Sandhills in *Hall-Adams, NE*

Mar. 30–31 (JWi, BFH, m.ob.). This represents Nebraska's 4th record (*vide* WRS); no concerns were expressed as to source. Whooping Cranes windowed their stay along the Platte River in s.c. Nebraska from Mar. 30–May 10; later observations were of immatures (GL, *vide* WRS). A King Rail in *Grady*, OK Mar. 3 (NK) is among few discovered at any new locations. Of less than regular occurrence, a Purple Gallinule graced *McCurtain*, OK May 21 (BH).

Plovers to Terns

Silcock tallied 226 Black-bellied Plovers from Nebraska observers on the weekend of May 17–18. American Golden-Plovers surged to *Lancaster*, NE by Mar. 22 (NR), an early date for the state. About 16 Piping Plovers were reported for Nebraska from *Keith* eastward (*vide* WRS); if we consider that it is a breeding species, the numbers are quite meager. Ten Pippings were noted at Quivira May 1 (SA), with others in *Rogers*, OK Apr. 21 (JL, PS), in *Cleveland*, OK Apr. 25 (VB), and in *Douglas*, KS May 11 (PW). Far east were five Mt. Plovers in *Tulsa* Mar. 27 (KKi, DL).

Up to 21 Black-necked Stilts were reported from *Sheridan*, NE, where they breed (RCR, DJR). Others were reported from *Canadian*, OK Apr. 12 (RS) to 25 (JW), *Kingfisher*, OK Apr. 27 (JW), *Alfalfa*, OK Apr. 28 (PS, JL), *Keith*, NE May 2–3 (RCR, DJR), *Knox*, NE May 4 (MB), *Comanche*, OK May 5, 6 & 18 (3 locations; *vide* JDT), and Crescent Lake May 28 (MF).

Flocks of Whimbrel were reported, with 25 in *Morton*, KS May 4 (m.ob.), 23 at Crescent Lake May 16 (MF), and 29 in *Phelps*, NE May 18 (*vide* WRS). Three Whimbrel were observed at Quivira May 1 (CH), with singles reported from *Alfalfa*, OK Apr. 28 (PS, JL) to May 5 (JMc *et al.*), in *Cimarron*, OK May 1 (JS), *Woodward*, OK May 4 (JDT *et al.*), and *Sheridan*, NE May 6 (DR, RR). A Long-billed Curlew was noted e. to Oklahoma Apr. 25 (JW). Three Spotted Sandpipers Mar. 1 in *Tulsa* (BN, DH) likely wintered; not normally seen in any concentrations, the 100 Spotted Sandpipers May 3 in *Mayer*, OK were a surprise (JC).

Two Hudsonian Godwits hastened their journey N, arriving at *Kearney*, NE Apr. 13 (LR, RH), and tying the earliest spring migration date recorded for Nebraska (*vide* WRS). Flocks of ≤ 30 –40 were reported from all 3 states. Also pushing the season were three Lesser Yellowlegs in *Canadian*, OK Mar. 17 (NK), a Sanderling in *Phelps*, NE Apr. 14 (LR, RH), a Baird's Sandpiper in *Scotts Bluff*, NE Mar. 8 (LKM), two Stilts Sandpipers in *Phelps*, NE Apr. 14

(LR, RH), Long-billed Dowitchers in *Oklahoma* Mar. 14 (JAG) and at *Clay*, NE Mar. 21 (RB, BP, LP), and 23 Wilson's Phalaropes at Crescent Lake Apr. 14 (MF). A real surprise in the spring is even one Red Knot; this season two and seven were observed at Quivira May 5 (PW) & 11 (SS), respectively, with another flock of seven in *Jefferson*, KS May 12 (DLS). Documented reports of Short-billed Dowitchers included three in *Tulsa* May 11 (JL), four at *McConaughy* May 11 (JGJ), and eight in *Sarpy*, NE May 13 (RB, BP, LP).

The observations of Am. Woodcock at *Buffalo*, NE Mar. 14 (LR, RH) & 31 (LKM) help establish the poorly-known w. limits of this species breeding range in Nebraska. A startling 10,000 Wilson's Phalaropes were noted at North Platte May 6 (DR, RR). A tally of 146 Red-necked Phalaropes were in w. Nebraska May 11–31 (*vide* WRS, RCR); 52 of these were seen in *Greeley*, NE May 20 (JGJ, WRS). This species is a more regular migrant as one moves NW in the Region; thus, singles in *Jefferson*, KS (DLS) and Quivira (SS) May 11 were still noteworthy.

A Franklin's Gull in *Lancaster*, NE Mar. 2 (JGJ) was early. An ad. Mew Gull at *McConaughy* May 11 (JGJ) still needs to be ruled on by the N.O.U.R.C.; if accepted, it would constitute the first or 2nd record for Nebraska. A California Gull (possibly two) at *Douglas*, NE Mar. 27–28 (JGJ, BP, LP) was unexpectedly far east; three ad. and one 2nd-year California in *Cimarron*, OK May 2 (JMc *et al.*) were also noteworthy. First winter Thayer's Gulls (one–two) were noted in *Keith*, NE Mar. 31 (RCR, DJR). The Rosches described a sub-ad. Iceland Gull at *McConaughy* Mar. 31. A first-summer Herring Gull lingered to May 12 at *McConaughy* (SJD).

Almost unheard of 5 years ago, Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to be observed. This season, an adult was present until Mar. 28 in *Oklahoma* (JGN); this bird may be the same one noted here since 1984—now 12-years-old. Two were present at *Lancaster*, NE Mar. 5–23 (JGJ), with singles at *Douglas*, NE Mar. 24 (JGJ) and *McConaughy* Apr. 19 (RCR). Six Glaucous Gulls lingered to at least Mar. 31 at *McConaughy* (RCR, DJR). An ad. Great Black-backed Gull at *Lancaster*, NE, Apr. 3 (LE) provided only the 5th report for Nebraska.

Doves to Shrikes

White-winged Doves Apr. 20–22 in *Tulsa* (BC, PS, JL) and May 15–18 in *Comanche*, OK (K&SM) protract the recent surge in reports of this species. Also noted was an Inca Dove May 20–25 in



White-winged Dove in Lawton, Oklahoma, in mid-May 1996. This record extended a recent series of sightings in the Region. Photograph/ Kurt Meisenzahl.

Jackson, OK (JT). Burrowing Owl reports from the e. edge of the Region included one at *Clay*, NE Apr. 20 (JGJ) and another at *Fillmore*, NE Apr. 27 (JGJ).

With the spring migration of Rufous Hummingbirds favoring the Pacific slope, the male noted Apr. 12–14 in *McCurtain*, OK (BW) was likely a more local winter survivor. Several Black-chinned Hummingbirds were noted n. to *Blaine*, OK May 29–30 (JAG). White-throated Swifts, not often reported, were observed at *Scotts Bluff*, NE May 4 & 16 (AK). A count of 91 Red-headed Woodpeckers at Fontenelle Forest May 11 (m.ob.) must have furnished a pleasant spectacle. An Acorn Woodpecker, the first reported for Nebraska, came to a feeder stocked with oranges in *Holt*, NE May 19–22 (NR, m.ob.).

Two Lewis Woodpeckers May 4 in *Morton*, KS (DB, LB) were e. of most. An Acadian Flycatcher May 30 at *Sarpy*, NE (RB, NR) was the northernmost reported for the Region. A W. Wood Pewee heard in *Comanche*, OK May 14 (JAG) represented only the 2nd record for the main body of Oklahoma. A suspiciously late collection of one–twelve Tree Swallows in *Comanche*, OK (JDT *et al.*) May 6–27 may indicate local breeding. A Purple Martin May 7 in Crescent Lake (LKM), and six May 11 in *Sheridan*, NE (RCR), were w. of most occurrences.

Although most of the modest outburst of wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches seemed to disappear before late March, one was still present in *Tulsa* May 4 (PS, JL), another in *Leavenworth*, KS May 6, and six in *Morton*, KS May 4 (*vide* LM). Pygmy Nuthatches were observed breeding at *Scotts Bluff-Banner*, NE Mar. 10 (LKM) and Apr. 18 (AK)—apparently the

first record of breeding for Nebraska. Rock Wrens appeared e. to *Lancaster*, NE Apr. 28–30 (PK) and *Sarpy*, NE May 10 (RB). A Golden-crowned Kinglet May 15 at *Scotts Bluff*, NE was a very tardy migrant or straggler (LKM).

Five Sage Thrashers, along with one Curve-billed Thrasher, were noted in *Morton*, KS Apr. 6–5 (RCR, DJR). Fair numbers of Mt. Bluebirds wandered into central stretches of the Region, with 100 in *Lincoln*, NE Mar. 6 (WW), and 39 in *Payne*, OK Mar. 9 (NK). Veeries were noted from *Dakota* (BFH) and *Douglas*, NE (CJ), with one, likely of w. origin, in *Sheridan*, NE May 11 (RCR). The spring migration count May 10–11 occurred at peak fallout times for Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes in Nebraska, with 499 and 55 counted, respectively, in *Sarpy*, NE (*vide* WRS). A 3:1 ratio of Swainson's to Gray-cheekeds was noted in the slightly more eastern e. Kansas (*vide* LM). Several observers commented on the abundance of Am. Pipits. Four N. Shrikes were reported from Kansas, and four from Nebraska, the latest noted Apr. 11 at Crescent Lake (MF).

Vireos to Warblers

A White-eyed Vireo May 11 in *Lancaster*, NE (JMo) was an overshoot. Yellow-throated Vireos were reported w. to Dodge, NE May 18 (JJo). Early was a Warbling Vireo in *Sarpy*, NE Apr. 14 (BP, LP). Everyone hopes for warblers, especially in the warbler-starved c. and w. portions of the Region. This season's special guests included Blue-winged Warblers in *Douglas-Washington*, NE May 4 (JGJ) and Omaha May 15 (JGJ). Thirteen reports of Golden-winged Warblers were received for e. Kansas May 2–15 (*vide* LM), eight from e. Nebraska May 11–16 (*vide* WRS), and only two in Oklahoma, in *Tulsa* May 4 (J&JS, DI) and *Cleveland* May 11 (VB); the latter was the most westerly. Two Nashville Warblers appeared early in *Tulsa* Apr. 6 (JL).

Eleven N. Parulas were counted in *Sarpy*, NE May 11 (m.ob.), with another in *Douglas*, NE May 15 & 22 (JGJ); the most westerly were two Mar. 31 in *Cleveland*, OK (NK). A Cerulean Warbler was seen May 5 in *Linn*, KS (CH). Among the "zootiest" warblers for the Region were a Black-throated Blue Warbler in Rogers, OK May 12 (BC), one in *Thomas*, NE during mid-May (RG), and a Cape May Warbler May 9 in *Linn*, KS (CH, MRo).

A well-described Townsend's Warbler in *Sarpy*, NE May 11 was well e. of normal haunts (SG, SK). Chestnut-sided Warblers were found w. to *Woodward*, OK May 3 (BG, m.ob.), and *Dawes*, NE May 21 (BP,

LP). A Prairie Warbler was a pleasant surprise May 14 in Fontenelle Forest (RB, BP, LP). Palm Warblers were noted w. to *Hall*, NE May 11 (LR, RH), with three–four in *Dawes*, NE May 5 (RCR, DJR) and three in *Sheridan*, NE May 11 (RCR, DJR).

Worm-eating Warblers made it n. to Dodge, NE May 9 (JG) and Fontenelle Forest Apr. 28 (*vide* NR), and w. to *Morton*, KS May 4 (m.ob) and Quivira May 11 (SS). Several more were reported from the e. third of the Region. Connecticut Warblers, a rarity, were discovered May 20 in Fontenelle Forest (JG), and *Lancaster*, NE May 27 (JGJ, WRS), with one–two in *Sarpy*, NE May 28–30 (BP, LP *et al.*). Surprisingly, Yellow-breasted Chat numbers appear to be higher in w. Nebraska than eastern (*vide* WRS), while the opposite is true in Oklahoma.

Tanagers to Finches

A rare find in c. Oklahoma was a Scarlet Tanager Apr. 20 in *Cleveland* (VB). Wandering W were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Cimarron*, OK May 2 (JS), one May 4 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (AK), and three in *Sioux*, NE May 12 (SL). Lazuli Buntings seemed to make a good showing for another year in c. portions of the Region, with seven reported from *Tulsa* (*vide* JL); the most easterly was in *Linn*, KS May 11 (MM). Painted Bunting (one male and 2 females) were noted n. to *Morrill*, NE May 1 (MH), with another female photographed in *Hall*, NE May 30–31 (EV).

It may take several seasons, and some poking through the older literature, before migration distributions and phenologies of the recently split Eastern and Spotted towhees are resolved. In Nebraska, Easterns were reported w. to *Harlan* Apr. 27

(JGJ). Spotted Towhees occur as migrants probably to almost the e. limits of the Region; several were noted e. to *Sarpy*, NE (*vide* WRS).

A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was observed briefly in *Tulsa* May 7 (MK). A Field Sparrow was noted w. to North Platte May 5 (LKM). Early was a Vesper Sparrow Mar. 16 at Quivira (JNo, CG), as were Savannah Sparrows in *Clay*, NE Mar. 16 (JGJ). A presumed, but seldom seen and documented, migrant in w. Nebraska was a Baird's Sparrow observed May 10 in *Banner* (JGJ). The dry spring weather may have influenced the distribution of Cassin's Sparrows, which shifted e. into *Alfalfa*, *Blaine*, *Comanche*, and *Cotton*, OK (JAG, JDT). A possible Black-chinned Sparrow, seen briefly Apr. 26 in *Comanche*, OK (RZ), will undergo review by the O.B.R.C.; it is the first even suspected for Oklahoma.

For the 3rd time in the past 8 years, a "Gray-headed" Dark-eyed Junco has appeared in n.e. Oklahoma, this time in *Delaware*, OK (B&EW); random event or phenomenon? A Lincoln's Sparrow in *Clay*, NE Mar. 21 (BP, LP, RB) was somewhat early. A Swamp Sparrow at *Otoe*, NE Mar. 10 (LF, CF) was more likely wintering than an early migrant. Westerly for the species were eight White-throated Sparrows at Crescent Lake May 5 (MF), with another five at North Platte May 5 (LKM).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds in *Grady*, OK Mar. 3 (NK), and in *Phelps*, NE Mar. 10 (LR, RH) were surprisingly early. Unsuspected, or under-identified, 585 Brewer's Blackbirds in *Tillman*, OK May 4 (NK) was high so late in the season, and would indicate a greater abundance of Brewer's in this area than previously expected. Great-tailed Grackles are now being counted in



Hard to explain was the occurrence of this "Gray-headed" Junco in Delaware County, northeastern Oklahoma, April 20, 1996. This was the third recent record of this form in that section of the state. Photograph/Bill and Ellie Womack.

numbers >100 in Nebraska; 112 were in Eckhardt Lagoon Mar. 16 (JGJ) and 110 in Lancaster Mar. 23 (JMo).

Another recent split, bringing back Baltimore and Bullock's orioles, will cause some problems for birders in the Region as a hybrid zone does exist here. The limits of pure birds are likely established by earlier workers, such as Jim Rising and Sievert Rohwer, among others; it will be both the vagaries of these birds and birders' identifications that will be punctuate further consideration. Those observing orioles should examine them for extent of orange onto neck and head, extent of white in wings, and extent of orange in the outer tail feathers; such details should be included in reports of birds observed (WRS, JAG).

Always of note are White-winged Crossbills. This season, three were present at North Platte Feb. 23– Mar. 6 (WW); a male was in *Sarpy*, NE Mar. 15 (BP, LP) and seven were photographed Mar. 17 at Lancaster, NE (JGJ). A Cassin's Finch in *Cimarron*, OK May 2 (JMc, JS) was tardy.

Cited observers (area editors boldfaced):
KANSAS - Steve Addinall, David Bryan, Linda Bryan, Chet Gresham, Chris Hobbs, Dan Kluz, Dan LaShelle, Mick McHugh, **Lloyd Moore**, John Northrup, Mike Rader, Mark Robbins (MRo), Scott Seltman, Phil Wedge, Mike Whited.
NEBRASKA - Roland Barth, Mark Brogie, Stephen J. Dinsmore, Claire Drenowatz, Larry Einemann, Carol Falk, Lawrence Falk, Marlin French, Sue Gentes, Ruth Green, Joe Gubanyi, Robin Harding, Thomas Hoffman, Mary Hunt, Bill F. Huser, Clyde Johnson, Jan Johnson (JJo), Joel G. Jorgensen, Paul Kaufman, Alice Kenitz, Lucy Koenig, Sandy Kovanda, Sandy Lemmon, Gary Lingle, Larry K. Malone, James Mountjoy, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Lanny Randolph, Neal Ratzlaff, Dorothy J. Rosche, **Richard C. Rosche**, Doug Rose, Roger Rose, **W. Ross Silcock**, Eric Volden, Jim Williams (JWi), Wilma Wyman.
OKLAHOMA: James W. Arterburn, Sandy Berger, Vicki Byre, Jeff Cox, Bill Carrell, Scott Dingman, Bonnie Gall, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Berlin Heck, Donna Horton, Doloris Isted, Bob Jennings, Martha Kamp, Kenn Kaufmann, Kerrie Kirkpatrick (KKi), Nathan Kuhnert, Douglas Lister, **Jo Loyd**, **Louis McGee**, Jeri McMahon (JMc), Kurt & Sharon Meisenzahl, John G. Newell, Bruce Nixon, Richard Sawin, Janet & John Slater, Pat Seibert, John Sterling, J. Tinsley, Jack D. Tyler, Bonnie Whitten, Bill & Ellie Womack, Jim Woodward, Robert Ziegler.

—Joseph A. Grzybowski, 715 Elmwood Drive, Norman, OK 73072.

Texas Region

GREG W. LASLEY, CHUCK SEXTON, WILLIE SEKULA, AND MARK LOCKWOOD

There were four subplots to the migration saga this season: The good migration, the bad migration, the drought, and—oh, yes—the drought. Every spring we are so intent on encountering birds which are “migrating” that our first reaction to a season such as this one might be to lambaste it as “a poor migration.” In fact, Ross Rasmussen reminded in better phrasing that it was a “poor [season] for birders searching for migrants,” which in fact was probably quite a good migration for the birds themselves. Relentless strong south winds through much of the season presumably allowed most of our feathered friends to move merrily and quickly on their way, right past (or over) us. There was only one really good grounding of migrants on the Upper Texas Coast (more on that in a moment) where the birding community relies on strong frontal passages to drop birds into their lap. Curiously, what was bad for central and east Texas birders was a

boon to west Texas, where a myriad of uncommon eastern migrants boosted the usually low diversity of the spring array. Francis Williams in Midland surmised that the winds simply “may have blown some of the vagrants our way.” But how are those populations of neotropical migrants doing, even with the benevolent winds of 1996? Jim Morgan included a detailed count not only of the single substantial fallout of this year (Apr. 6), but also a rigorous analysis of 20 years of migration data on the Upper Texas Coast. It paints a grave portrait of diminishing migrant populations observed under conditions which used to cause good groundings. We will defer recitation of the extensive quantitative data to a future publication by Morgan and his colleagues, but they conclude that: A) We continue to have fallouts, but they are fewer in number and, in general, much “lighter” than in the past; B) Fallouts in the 1990's are no longer as predictable as they were in the preceding 13 years; and C) We are witnessing a precipitous decline in the number of neotropical migrant songbirds that pass through the Upper Texas Coast. It is important to be cautious about making grander (and grimmer) generalizations beyond these statements at this point, but the data do not paint an optimistic portrait.

Did we mention the drought? Everywhere. Terrible. As we began speculating in spring 1995, the effects of such broad-scale, severe conditions are being manifest-

