

# Central Southern Region

## ROBERT D. PURRINGTON

June was wetter than normal over much of the Region, and notably so in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi. Resultant flooding along the Mississippi River in northwest Tennessee created extensive new habitat for nesting waders, and along with it a number of interesting records. July was somewhat drier near the coast, and by the period's end a significant precipitation deficit had accumulated.

There was no early tropical weather, but the lingering effects of last year's *Opal* were felt along the northwest Florida coast. Bob Duncan reported improved breeding habitat for Snowy Plovers, Black Skimmers, and Least Terns, but Barbara Stedmann's Breeding Bird Survey route on Santa Rosa Island produced only 39 species, compared to an average of 51 in the previous five years. The season saw the completion of Louisiana's three-year breeding bird atlas censusing (except for some mopping up); the resulting data will appear in Rem-

sen's forthcoming new treatment of Louisiana birds. Some of the data are given below.

As usual, submitted records were divided about equally between presumptive breeding records, and sightings of either post-breeding dispersal or late spring and early fall migration. Along the gulf coast, of course, there is some "lingering" of otherwise migratory shorebirds, always in basic plumage, during the traditional hiatus between the end of spring migration in early to mid-June, and the start of fall migration in early July. Whether these individuals are actually lingering is another matter.

Observers are encouraged to provide comments on weather, wild food crop (if available), and other relevant trends and interpretive information. Somewhat more attention to the local significance of a record would be helpful to this writer as well, who cannot manage to be aware of the importance of every record in every part of a Region as large and diverse as this. Again, data from Breeding Bird Survey censuses are solicited, and, of course, any atlas data from states which might be conducting such surveys.

Records reported here, even though they may be assumed to have considerable documentation, are subject to adjudication by the relevant state bird records committee.

Abbreviations: O.A.S. (*Oktibbeha Audubon Society*) T.O.S. (*Tennessee Ornithological Society*).

## Breeding records or records suggestive of nesting:

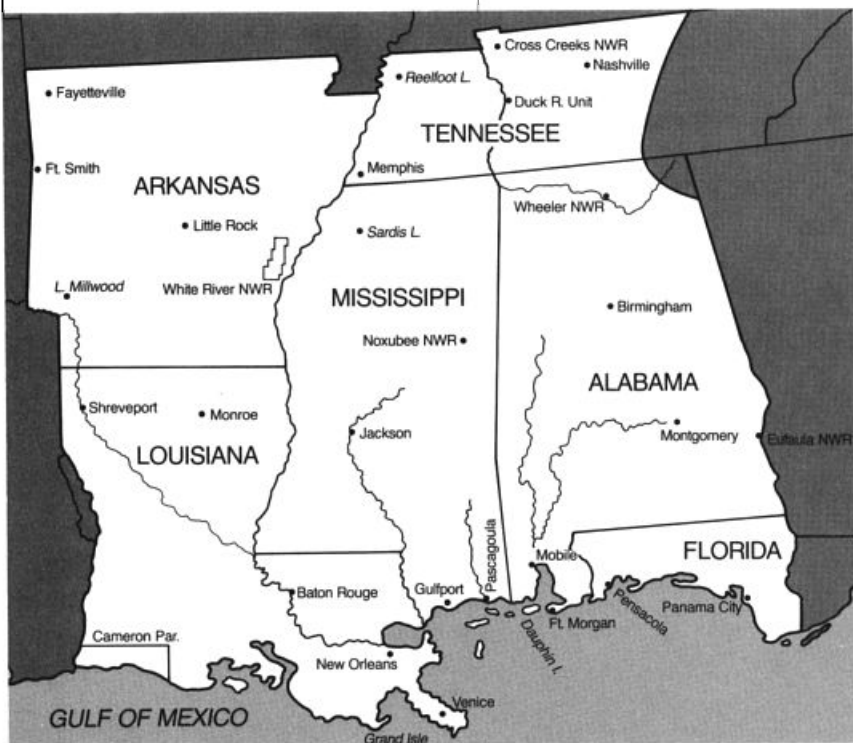
### Grebes to Ibis

Pied-billed Grebes were noted throughout the period in *Lake*, TN (JRW), where nesting was established, and June 7 in *Benton*, AR (MMI), where the species is a rare summer resident. Brown Pelicans in *Cameron Lake*, June 23 and July 9 & 20 (JK, KF, DR, JoK)—totaling 30 individuals—provided evidence of continuing expansion into coastal s.w. Louisiana. Neotropic Cormorants nested in *Lafayette*, AR in June (MC, CC, SSL; one pair, two chicks), possibly providing the first breeding record for the state, and a single bird was seen in *Lake*, TN June 30 (JRW).

Anhingas bred along the Mississippi R. in *Lake Dyer*, and *Tipton*, TN (JRW, T.O.S.); few have been nesting in the state in recent years. Nesting was also observed in *Lafayette*, AR June 19 (MC, CC, SSL; 30), and throughout the period in *White*, AR (KN, LDN). Throughout June and July, Tricolored Herons were observed nesting in *Dyer*, TN (JRW), establishing the first nesting record for the state, and they also nested in *Lafayette*, AR (MC, CC, SSL). One at Noxubee N.W.R., MS June 30 (MC) was early, if a post-breeding bird. Although only established in 1993, a heronry at Noxubee N.W.R. has grown quickly to >30,000 birds, as evidenced by a count of 28,795 Cattle Egrets made by O.A.S. members (TS, MS, MC, m.ob.). Black-crowned Night-Herons nested in *Dyer*, TN, where >50 nests were found (JRW, JBG), and in *Lafayette*, AR (MC, CC, SSL). White Ibis nested in *Dyer*, TN, and in *Lafayette*, *Clark*, and *White*, AR; four seen in Noxubee, MS June 10 were early (TS).

### Waterfowl to Raptors

The nesting of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck in Arkansas was confirmed in May and June when 15 adults with a single downy chick



Young Anhingas in a nest in Dyer County, Tennessee, in July 1996. Photograph/J. R. Wilson.

were found in *Lafayette* (MC, CC, SSL). Of 3 Louisiana records—June 1 in *Rapides* (RJB), July 20 at Lacassine N.W.R. (JK, KF, DR), and July 30 on Cameron Prairie N.W.R. (BP, BD)—only the latter provided proof of nesting: a female with 12 young.

Gadwall were seen in *Benton*, AR in June and July (MMI) and in *Lake*, TN June 8–9 (JRW); they are rare summer residents in these areas. While a successful nesting season for w. Tennessee was suggested by five adults and 31 young counted in *Lake* June 9 (JRW), a single female in *Benton* June 1 & 8 (MMI) was unusual for n.w. Arkansas. Records of nesting Ospreys were as follows: an active nest at Venice, LA May+ (RDP); three individuals, including a recently fledged bird, in *Lafayette*, MS July 5; and a possible family group of three in *St. Tammany*, LA July 31 (JC, SH). American Swallow-tailed Kites reported from *St. Tammany*, LA, included two fledglings June 30 accompanied by three adults (JC, TC), and separate roosts of 39 and >20 individuals July 26 & 30 (JC, SH). Single individuals were also seen in *Iberville* and *Beauregard*, LA. Among the records of Cooper's Hawk were several from Louisiana, and especially from the southeast, where they have been thought to be extremely rare in the breeding season. These included one or more in New Orleans proper and two–three at Bayou Sauvage N.W.R. (JC, TC). Another was seen in e. *Feliciana* June 22 (JVR, JK) There were 3 Arkansas records: June 8 in *Johnson* (WMS), June 10 in *Madison* (MMI), and July 5 in *Clark* (DsH, DnH). Another was seen July 4–28 in *Oktibbeha*, MS (TS, MS). At Cookeville, TN, Stedmann had a nest, from which four young Cooper's Hawks were fledged, under observation from April 11–July 20. There were 3 records of Swainson's Hawk: *Benton*, AR June 7 (MMI; two adults), *Acadia*, LA June 8 (DW, MW), and the same day in *Johnson*, AR (WMS, RA). Whether these summer records hint at nesting is an open question.

### Rails to Cuckoos

A series of King Rail records by Wilson in *Lake* and *Dyer*, TN, in June and July culminated in the sighting of two adults and 17 young in *Dyer* July 14. There were 3 records of Am. Coots from n.w. Arkansas, where they are rare in summer (MMI, KN, LDN). Although Black-necked Stilts had a good nesting year in Ensley Bottoms, *Shelby*, TN, based on >40 nests (JRW), the 1200 individuals counted in the rice fields of Vermillion, LA July 20 (JK, KF, DR) must represent some sort of record. Although Black Skimmers and Gull-billed Terns again bred on a Clearview Shopping Center rooftop in Metairie, LA, construction moved nesting

to a location which could not be censused (RDP). Two juvenal-plumaged Forster's Terns in n.w. Florida July 14 (RD) were noteworthy since the species is not known to breed in the state. Further evidence of expansion of the range of Eur. Collared-Doves across s. Louisiana included the sighting of two–three in Cameron June 23 (JK, KF, DR). Four Black-billed Cuckoos found during roadside censuses (500 stops) in Putnam, TN (SS), were unusual.

### Flycatchers to Finches

Eastern Wood-Pewees showed a gratifying 50% increase over 1991 numbers in Stedmann's Putnam, TN, censusing. There were 6 reports of Willow Flycatchers: in *Shelby* June 15 and *Lake*, TN June 30 (JRW); *Maurry*, TN June 16 (SJS); *Lafayette*, AR June 18 (MC, CC); *Benton*, AR July 20 & 26 (MMI); and *Tallahatchie*, MS July 21+ (GK, SK). The latter, a pair with singing male, was the first nesting attempt for Mississippi; unfortunately, only cowbirds were raised. There were breeding-season records of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Alabama from the coastal plain and from the extreme n. part of the state. The former was of a nest in *Montgomery*, first located June 19 (PS) and which fledged three young by July 25. The other was of a young bird seen in Decatur July 16 (SWM). Although a Tree Swallow found in *Oktibbeha*, MS June 8 (TS, MS) was possibly nesting, it was not seen thereafter; 2 nests were found in *Putnam*, TN, during the season (SJS). Cliff Swallows were found nesting under the Highway 160 bridge over the Red R. in *Lafayette*, AR June 19 (MC, CC, SSL); according to James and Neal, Cliff Swallows nest primarily in the Ozarks. The species continues to expand its range in Louisiana.

Both White-breasted Nuthatches and Carolina Wrens have shown significant declines over the last 5 years in Putnam, TN (SS). A Bewick's Wren heard singing in *Johnson* June 8 (WMS, RA) and a pair in *Washington* July 15 (MMI) serve as a reminder of the decline of this species in Arkansas and elsewhere in the east. Gray Catbirds continue to nest on Grand Isle, Jefferson, LA, the only spot in s.e. Louisiana where this is known to occur. There were 4 reports of Cedar Waxwings, confirming or suggesting nesting from n.w. Arkansas: June 2 (nest; KS) and July 9 & 18 (MMI), all in *Washington*, and one in *Benton* July 12 (MMI). One was also seen near Reelfoot Lake S.P., TN June 1 (WRP). Loggerhead Shrikes, which in this Region have largely resisted the great declines experienced in the n.e. United States, dropped by >80% compared to 1991 in Stedmann's 500-stop roadside censuses.

Although the possibility of nesting Yellow Warbler in Louisiana was raised by a singing male in w. *Carroll* June 1 (MS), the species is a late migrant and sings during spring migration. Another was heard in *Benton*, AR, on the same day (MMI, KN). Chestnut-sided Warblers, which breed sparingly and locally in n. Arkansas, were found June 8 in *Carroll* (MMI), June 30 in *Newton* (DC, MMI), and July 3 in *Pope* (MMI). The latter record was near where the species has recently nested. An ad. Black-throated Green Warbler with three juveniles was seen in *Pope* June 30 (MMI, DC); again, the species nests locally in Arkansas. Both Black-and-white and Worm-eating warblers showed significant increases over 1991 numbers in *Putnam*, TN (SS), and apparently breeding Worm-eating Warblers were found in Louisiana in *Rapides* June 1 (RJB) and in *Washington* during May and June (DM). The first evidence of probable breeding of Scarlet Tanager in Louisiana came from the observation of a pair in *Union* June 22–23 and July 6–7 (MS). Ten Field Sparrows found in e. *Feliciana* June 22 (JVR) as part of the Louisiana Breeding Bird Atlas program represented an excellent count for this somewhat elusive and scarce breeder. Lark Sparrows were reported from w. *Carroll* in n.e. Louisiana June 1 (MW), where they formerly bred regularly, and near Macon in *Noxubee*, MS June 9 (TS, MS), where it is also a rare nesting species. On the same date, and also near Macon, was a single Grasshopper Sparrow (TS, MS), the 3rd year at this location. The species is a rare breeder in the local 7-country area, and also in Arkansas, where one was found in *Lee* June 1 (WMS). Rare at any time in Arkansas, and especially in the northwest, a group of four Great-tailed Grackles were seen in *Benton* June 1 (KN, LDN, MMI). Although there were a relatively modest nine individuals on 500 roadside stops, this was the best breeding season ever for Baltimore Orioles in Putnam, TN (SS). House Finches continue to expand their breeding range in s.e. Louisiana, as documented by several nesting records this season and their regular occurrence in New Orleans's CBD.

### Records presumed to be of non-breeding, post-breeding, or migrant birds:

#### Loons to Stork

There were 2 records of out-of-season Com. Loons in basic plumage: June 8–10 in *Lake*, TN (JRW, GWC), and July 20 in *Cameron* (JK, KF, DR). The latter, found dying, was photographed. Two Pacific Loons, accidental in Tennessee, were found on Mud L. in *Lake*. The first, seen June 4–10 (JRW, GWC), was

an adult molting into alternate plumage, while the second, seen June 22 (GWC, JRW, NM, ph.), was in first-winter plumage. Four **Cory's Shearwaters** seen 70–78 mi s. of Baldwin, AL June 15 (GDJ, LFG, m.ob.) represented the 3rd Alabama record. The same trip yield  $\geq$ ten **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** (GDJ, BCG, m.ob.; 68–90 mi offshore), four **Leach's Storm-Petrels** (GDJ, BCG, m.ob.; 2nd Alabama record, 62–90 mi offshore), and eight **Band-rumped Storm-Petrels** (GDJ, AMB, m.ob.; first state record, 62–90 mi offshore). Details on all species were convincing. It would perhaps be excessively chauvinistic to point out that the land nearest the southernmost observations is in Louisiana. The prize of a June 9 pelagic trip out of Venice, LA to waters s. of Mississippi was a **Red-billed Tropicbird** (DP, MM, m.ob.) about 130 mi due south of the latter state, but only 50 mi s.e. of South Pass of the Mississippi R. This would be a first state record for either state (or both?). That trip also produced two **Wilson's Storm-Petrels**. Five **Gannets** observed from shore in n.w. Florida July 30 (DM) documented their regular occurrence offshore during the summer. Lingering **Am. White Pelicans** were noted in *Dyer* and *Lake*, TN June 9–July 20 (JRW) in numbers  $\leq$ 71 (all first-year), and in *Johnson*, AR July 2 (KS, TM; 50). As usual, some summered along the Louisiana coast. Among the records of **Double-crested Cormorants** received were two–three in *Baton Rouge* June 7 & 9 (JVR, GM, MM), and one in nearby *Iberville* June 16 (JVR). An immature in *Putnam*, TN was the first summer occurrence for the county. A well-described **Neotropic Cormorant** seen in *Lake* June 30 (JRW) provided the 2nd record for Tennessee. Six **White-faced Ibis**, rare post-breeding visitors to n.w. Tennessee, were seen in *Dyer*, TN June 3–4 (WGC *et al.*). An imm. **Roseate Spoonbill** in *Colbert*, AL July 13–18 (GM, FM) provided the 11th record for the state and the 2nd for the Tennessee Valley. Evidence of **Wood Stork** dispersal came in the form of 10 records from June 19+, all but one from Louisiana. Between five–fifty were seen June 19 through the end of July at Noxubee N.W.R., MS (MC, TS, m.ob.), and  $>$ 260 were noted in the nearly contiguous s. Louisiana parishes of *Cameron*, *St. Martin*, *Iberville*, and *Vermilion* between June 23–July 30, highlighted by 150 seen from the w. levee of the Atchafalaya Basin in *St. Martin* July 13 (BE, GG).

### Waterfowl to Raptors

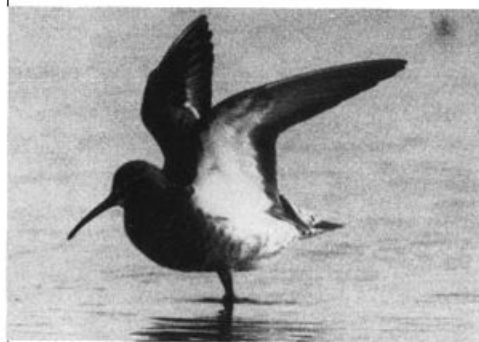
The records of summering waterfowl briefly summarized here should be interpreted cautiously, since in many cases it is difficult to know whether a bird was a cripple or not. A single ad. **Snow Goose** (blue-

moprh) seen in *Benton*, AR July 3 & 5 (MMI) was the same individual that arrived around Nov. 1, 1993, and has remained since; a lone **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen with 23 **Canada Geese** June 22 in *Dyer*, TN. There were single  $\delta$  **Green-winged Teal** and **Am. Black Ducks** in *Lake*, TN June 8–9 & 14, respectively (JRW). Mlodinow had several sightings of  $\leq$ three **Blue-winged Teal** in *Washington* and *Benton* during June; three **N. Shovelers** were in *Benton*, AR June 6 (MMI) and two were in *Lake*, TN June 23 (JRW). Wilson had an **Am. Wigeon** in *Dyer* June 4–15 (first summer record for w. Tennessee), a **Redhead** was at Tallahatchie N.W.R., July 13–25 (WMD), and five  $\delta$  **Ring-necked Ducks** in *Obion*, TN June 30. A total of 14 **Lesser Scaup** were seen on the gulf during June and July in *Cameron*, LA (JK) and two were seen in *Washington*, AR June 1 & 6 (MMI). There were **Bufflehead** June 3 & 5 in *Benton*, the first n.w. Arkansas record for June–July. A  $\delta$  **Ruddy Duck** was in *Washington*, AR June 1 & 8 (MMI).

- Records of **Bald Eagles**, which are unusual in the Region during June and July, were as follows: an immature in *Iberville*, LA June 2 (JVR),  $\geq$ one adults in *Lake* June 9 & 16 and a sub-adult in *Dyer*, TN July 20 (JRW), and an adult in *Poinsett*, AR June 16 (KN, LDN). A **N. Harrier** July 28 (NPM, SNM) established the first summer record for *Carroll*, TN, and similarly unusual for mid-summer was a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** seen in *Lincoln*, LA June 22 (MS).

### Shorebirds to Terns

At least 30 records of shorebirds were received, many from the traditional June 10–July 10 coastal shorebird hiatus (inland this may be 3 weeks or less, with southbound movement commencing as early as June 25; see below). The  $>$ nine **Am. Golden-Plovers** found in *Lake* and *Dyer*, TN June 30 and July 6 (JRW) may have been northbound migrants, since they are uncommon in the Region in fall, but two **Snowy Plovers** in *Cameron* July 20 (JK, KF, DR), could have been nesting. An early returning **Semipalmated Plover** was in *Shelby*, TN July 18 (JRW), and ten **Piping Plovers** were seen in *Cameron*, LA July 20 (JK, KF, DR). Unexpected June 23 in *Cameron* were 35 **Am. Avocets** (JK, KF, DR); also unusual were three **Whimbrels** in the same area July 20 (JK, KF, DR), in this case because **Whimbrels** are primarily spring migrants in the Region. Another **Whimbrel** was found on *Fourchon Beach*, *Lafourche*, LA July 21 (RDP, GG). Also unusual were **Long-billed Curlews** in *Cameron* June 23 and July 20 (JK, KF, DR). **Western**, **Least**, and **Pec-**



**Curlew Sandpiper in Dyer County, Tennessee, June 4, 1996. First state record. Photograph/J. R. Wilson.**

toral sandpipers were southbound in *Lake*, TN by June 22–23 (JRW), but **Least Sandpipers** in *Oktibbeha*, MS July 10 (TS) missed by only one day being earliest ever. First ever for Tennessee was a **Curlew Sandpiper** in *Lake*, TN, found by Criswell July 3 and photographed by Wilson the next day. The excellent photographs suggest an alternate-plumaged female. A displaying **Com. Snipe** was observed in *Tallahatchie*, MS June 13 (FB). A single **Pomarine Jaeger** seen 73 mi s. of *Baldwin*, AL June 14 (GDJ, AMB, m.ob.) represented approximately the 15th state record.

Although unrecorded in Louisiana before 1982, records of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** must now be approaching 75, mostly from September–May. Thus a 2nd-summer bird at *Cameron* June 23 (JK, KF, DR) was interesting, but not unprecedented. There were records of inland **Caspian Terns** during June and July from *Lake*, TN (JRW) and from July in *Lonoke*, AR (KN, LDN); **Com. Terns** in *Lake*, TN June 4–23 (JRW); and **Forster's Terns** June 8–9 in *Lake*, TN (JRW), and *Benton*, AR June 7 and July 7 (MMI). Among several records of **Least Tern** from *Benton*, AR, one June 16 (MMI) was the most interesting. The pelagic trips mentioned above produced 29 **Bridled** and eight **Sooty terns** about 50 mi s.e. of *South Pass* June 9, and 30 **Bridled** and five **Sooty** 50–90 mi off the Alabama coast June 15. Southbound **Black Terns** with young began to arrive in n.w. Tennessee by June 22 (JRW), while on the coast 5000 were seen on *Fourchon Beach*, *Lafourche*, LA, June 23 (RDP, GG), a record high for s.e. Louisiana; 540 were noted in *Cameron* July 20 (JK, KF, DR), and  $\leq$ 10,000 were estimated on the n.w. Florida coast July 22 (EC). These totals represent mostly non-breeding individuals which summer along the gulf coast and offshore.

### Doves to Finches

There were 2 records of **Inca Dove**, rare in Arkansas: June 27 in *Clark* (DH, BP, MP)

and July 26–29 in *Little River* (CM). A Black-billed Cuckoo in *Shelby*, TN June 2 (JRW) could have been a very late migrant, or, conceivably, nesting. Surprisingly far east were single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in *Drew* and *Lonoke*, AR June 14 & 19, respectively (WMS). Latest ever for s.e. Louisiana in spring—but only by 5 days—was a ♂ Am. Goldfinch in *Tangipahoa* June 19 (PL).

### Corrigenda

The following records by Gene and Sharon Knight reported in last year's summer season report (*NASFN* 49 (5): 937–941) are from n.c. Mississippi, and not from the Starkville area, as reported: Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck, Am. Coot, Lark Sparrow (all *Tallahatchie*), and Anhinga (three in *Grenada* and one in *Tallahatchie*).

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# Prairie Provinces Region

### RUDOLF F. KOES AND PETER TAYLOR

Southern Alberta was generally dry, but some severe thunderstorms in the south-east in July locally impacted ground-nesting birds. Rainfall was above average in Saskatchewan, where warm weather prevailed from mid-June to early July, but the remainder of the period was cool and wet. Conditions were more seasonal in southern Manitoba. Northern Manitoba was cool and wet in June, resulting in a poor shorebird nesting season. Frequent rainfall kept most prairie sloughs topped up, resulting in a good nesting season for many water birds. This situation was marred by a severe outbreak of botulism at Whitewater Lake, Manitoba, that killed more than 80,000 birds by mid-August.

Local concern was expressed about low numbers or poor breeding success of several species: Pied-billed Grebe and Black-crowned Night-Heron in Saskatchewan; American Avocet and Wilson's Phalarope in southeast Manitoba; both Eastern and Western kingbirds in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and Least Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole in southeast Alberta.

### Grebes to Hawks

At least seven Clark's Grebes accompanied 50 W. Grebes at the e. end of Cypress L., SK June 13 (RKR); two Clark's Grebe chicks and three adults were found at Valeport, SK July 5 (BL). Great Egrets visited 4 Alberta localities: two at Rochon Sands P.P., June 1 (MAL, IS) and singles s. of Calgary May 30–June 2 (m.ob.), near Big Hill Springs P.P., June 12–14 (CG, m.ob.) and s. of Rocky Mt. House June 25 (JM, ABr). A Snowy Egret was seen at Nicolle Flats, SK June 18 (KS). Cattle Egrets made a fair showing, with two at Oak Hammock Marsh June 1 (DFA, GG, RKO, PT), four e. of Craven, SK July 1 (SB), and singles at Reed L., SK July 15 (MP) and e. of Katepwa, SK in late July (*vide* RH). A Green Heron visited Fish Creek P.P. near Calgary May 30–June 5 (AS, ph. TK, m.ob.). Three pairs of White-faced Ibises nested at Pakowki L., AB in late July (MAn), and one was among the botulism victims at Whitewater L., MB (*vide* CCT).

Three swans, possibly Trumpeters, were at Oak Hammock Marsh June 29–30 (GG, RZ). A Greater White-fronted Goose lingered at Pelican L., MB June 14 (RKO), and a probable escapee of the "Greenland" race, *A. a. flavirostris*, was identified at Ryley, AB July 4 (BH). The cold spring apparently triggered a lot of egg-dumping by Wood Ducks in Winnipeg: One nestbox custodian found a phenomenal 234 unhatched eggs in 20 of 26 boxes (*vide* PW). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was e. of the breeding range at Beaverhill L., AB June 13 (TT), and a Barrow's Goldeneye visited Turtle L., SK June 4 (MC). Flocks of 200 Buffleheads were

