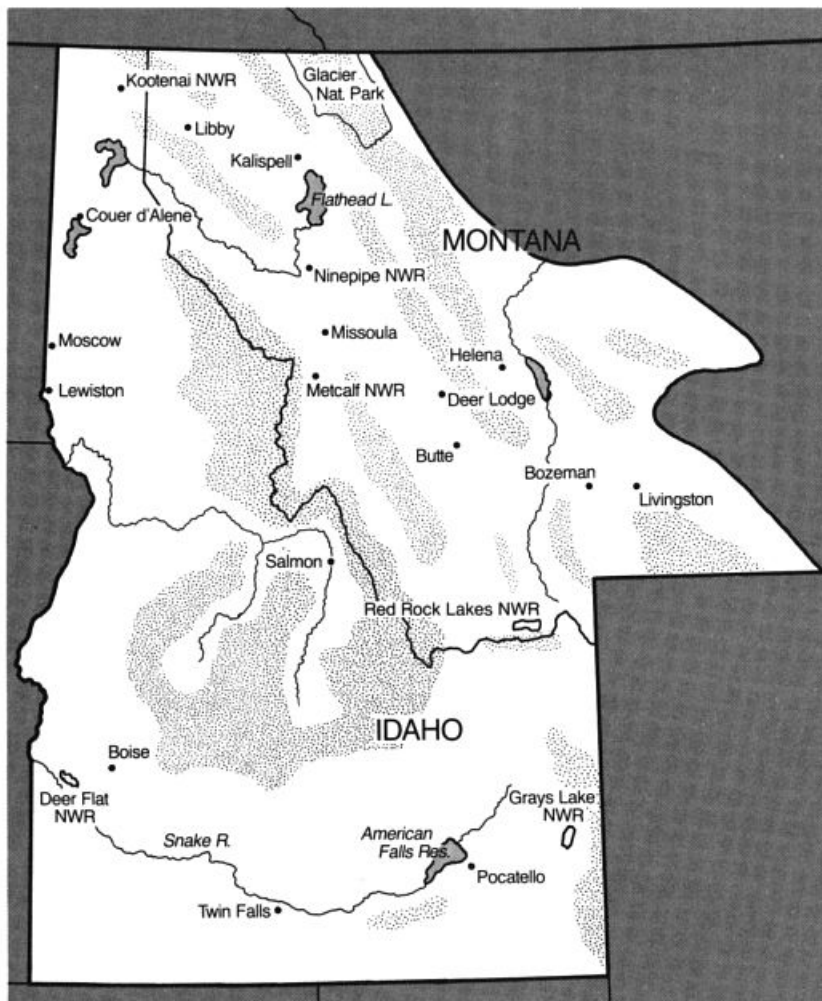


idaho-western montana region



DAN SVINGEN and DAVID TROCHLELL

Mild weather, lingering migrants, and a smattering of vagrants made for enjoyable fall birding. Among the season's trends were incursions of Red-shouldered Hawks, Sabine's Gulls, and Blue Jays. Reports of several shorebird species were above decade averages. The most widespread theme, however, was the tardiness of local breeders to depart, and northern winterers to arrive.

We welcome Jeff Marks as a new subregional editor, and David Trochlell as the

new Regional Editor. Because of these changes, it might be timely to point out a few conventions. Observers for a sighting are listed alphabetically, not by order of observation. Documentation is requested for all sightings of casual or accidental species. Undocumented submissions risk exclusion, if otherwise deemed unlikely.

As always, the participation and insight of subregional editors and observers is gratefully acknowledged. The ornithological importance of our collaboration is great, as neither Montana nor Idaho has a state journal. There is no other outlet for archiving observations of Regional va-

grancy patterns, migration timing, population fluctuations, and range changes. All Idaho and Western Montana birders and ornithologists are encouraged to participate.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (*American Falls Res., by American Falls, ID*); B.R. (*Boise Ridge Hawkwatch, Lucky Peak, n.e. Ada Co., ID*).

LOONS TO EAGLES

An early Red-throated Loon was at Cascade Res., Valley, ID, Sept. 22 (MC, FK). The **Red-throated Loon** at Ninepipe N.W.R., Lake, MT, Oct. 18 (ph. DH) provided the 9th state record. Idaho Pacific Loons were particularly numerous and widespread, continuing the recent trend. This year's sightings included five at Cascade Res. Sept. 22 (MC, FK); two on Coeur d'Alene L., Kootenai, Oct. 17 (KB, JS, SS); and two at A.F.R. Nov. 2 (CT). Single Pacifics were at A.F.R. Oct. 12 and Nov. 26 (CT); Coeur d'Alene L. Oct. 19 and Nov. 18 (KB, P&GC, m.ob.); Deer Flat N.W.R., Canyon, Oct. 25 and Nov. 23 (JG, RJ, HK, DL); Bruneau Dunes S.P., Owyhee, Nov. 1 (JG, DL, m.ob.); and Dworshak Dam, Clearwater, Nov. 2 (DBE). Pacific Loons are very rare in Montana, making the single at Great Falls, Nov. 4 (M.B.R.C) really, really cool.

Perhaps the most startling example of the season's lateness was W. Grebes carrying downy chicks at Deer Flat N.W.R. Nov. 3 (JG, DT). The 38 Great Egrets lingering at A.F.R. Oct. 3 (CT) were surprisingly numerous for such a late date. Far north Cattle Egrets occurred in both states, but were particularly numerous in n.w. Montana. Six were near Kalispell, MT, Oct. 24 (JRb); one was by Cataldo, ID, Nov. 15 (SW); and 12–20 were by Kalispell Nov. 20 (BH). Locally rare White-faced Ibises were at Three Forks, MT, Aug. 29 (MD, JP), and Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Ravalli, MT, Oct. 10 (TT). The species again tarried at A.F.R., with three present Oct. 22 (MCa).

A Boise "Black" **Brant** provided Idaho's 8th record Nov. 15–30 (ph. JG, †DNS, DT). Eight Oldsquaws were reported Region-wide (m.ob.), more than double that of



This Brant in Boise, Idaho, on November 16, 1997, provided an eighth state record. The diffuse white neck patch and the strong pale bands on the wings indicate an immature. Photograph/John F. Gatchet



Idaho's only known current population of Upland Sandpipers, discussed in the previous issue of *Field Notes*, is in Valley County, where this bird was photographed on June 16, 1997. Photograph/Marilyn C. Smith

most fall seasons. As usual, a handful of Surf and White-winged Scoters were scattered across Idaho in October and November. Montana had seven Surf and seven White-wingeds at the Frenchtown mill ponds Oct. 13 (DH), and six White-wingeds at Brown's L., Powell, Nov. 5 (JM). Idaho's 3rd **Black Scoter**, an imm. female, was below A.F.R. Nov. 29–30 (TG, †DNS, CT, m.ob.), in the same spot where a female was observed Nov. 4, 1996.

Both states reported **Red-shouldered Hawks**. Idaho's 2nd sighting was at B.R. Sept. 28 (†JC, m.ob.). Incredibly, one to two birds were at nearby Deer Flat N.W.R. Oct. 25–Nov. 5 (KD, †JG, DL, †DNS, DT), for the state's 3rd record. Montana's 4th Red-shouldered Hawk was near Round Butte, Lake, Nov. 8–30 (ph. †CO, m.ob.). As now expected, Broad-winged Hawks were recorded at B.R., with 11 passing through between Sept. 19–28 (GK). An amazing 596 Golden Eagles were recorded at Bridger Ridge, Gallatin, MT, hawk watch Oct. 17 (JBe, JP), far surpassing the previous single-day high count of 250.

PLOVERS TO DOWITCHERS

American Golden-Plover sightings included four–five birds near Kalispell Sept. 18 (DC), eight at Ninepipe N.W.R. Sept. 23–24 (JB, EJ, SSc, TT), and two–eight at A.F.R. Oct. 5–28 (MCA). In most years, two–three Solitary Sandpipers are reported, but this

season six were near Blacks L., Kootenai, ID, Aug. 26 (DNS, PS); two were at Kooskia, ID, Aug. 31 (WH, PJ); and singles were found at 5 other Regional locations Aug. 2–Sept. 28 (m.ob.).

Two late Marbled Godwits were at Cascade Res. Oct. 11 (CSy). The **Ruddy Turnstone** at Tolo L., Idaho, ID, Aug. 19 (†DNS, IS) was the state's 10th. Two more Ruddies were at A.F.R. Aug. 31–Sept. 2 (DB, CT, m.ob.).

Sanderlings are not reported annually, so 10–12 near Challis, ID, Aug. 23 (DF, EF); three at A.F.R. Aug. 31 (CT); four at Mann L. Sept. 12 (KD, DNS); one near Challis Sept. 20 (DF, EF); one at A.F.R. Sept. 21 (CT); and 23 at A.F.R. Oct. 10 (MCA) were noteworthy. The only Dunlins reported were four early birds at Mann L. Aug. 29 (JH, MH), and one there Oct. 4–12 (DNS, IS).

Stilt Sandpipers made a good showing, surpassing the recent average of one or two seasonal sightings. Five Stilts were at both Market Lake W.M.A., Jefferson, ID (CT), and Mann L. Aug. 17 (KD). Other Stilt sightings included one at Harrison Res., Jefferson, MT, Aug. 22 (MD, JP); 13 at National Bison Range, Sanders, MT, Aug. 23 (WHo, JM); ten near Ninepipe N.W.R., Lake, MT, Aug. 23 (WHo, JM); two at A.F.R. Aug. 24 (CT); nine at Mann L. Aug. 24 (SB, DNS, IS, PS); and one–two at Blacks Creek Res., Ada, ID, Aug. 25 & 30 (SB, JC, SH, PS).

Always rare, Short-billed Dowitchers were relatively numerous this fall, with one–three at or near Ninepipe N.W.R. Aug. 21 & 23 (DH, WHO, JM); Kootenai N.W.R., Boundary, ID, Aug. 27 (†PS); Thompson L., Kootenai, ID, Sept. 28 (JD, R&DY); and Sterling, ID, Oct. 1 (CT).

JAEGERS TO JAYS

The sight of a Parasitic Jaeger and **Pomarine Jaeger** in close association at Deer Flat N.W.R. Sept. 15 (JG) was startling, as either species is very rare. If accepted, the Pomarine would be about Idaho's 5th record. The Parasitic Jaeger at Clark Canyon Dam, Beaverhead, Oct. 14 (BS) was about Montana's 14th. Idaho's first overwintering **Mew Gull** was still at Sandpoint Aug. 28, along with six early Herring Gulls (SB, DNS, IS, ph. PS). Other single Mew Gulls were at Polson, MT, Oct. 18 (DH), and Deer Flat N.W.R. Oct. 25 (JG, DL). A 2nd-winter Glaucous-winged Gull wandered to A.F.R. Oct. 31–Nov. 20 (MCA, DF, EF, CT), while two first-year Glaucous-wingeds were there Nov. 3 (DB). A Glaucous Gull visited Deer Flat N.W.R. Oct. 18 (*vide* JG), and another was at Polson Nov. 22 (DH), where more

expected. Idaho only has 10 records of Sabine's Gulls, so the adult near Buhl Aug. 13 (RC), two at Deer Flat N.W.R. Sept. 13-16 (TE, JG, DL), two at C.J. Strike Res., *Owyhee*, Sept. 18 (†HM), two immatures at Lewiston Sept. 20 (†DNS, IS), and adult on Deer L., s. *Lemhi*, at 9000' elevation, Sept. 21 (JT) were of great interest.

A Band-tailed Pigeon, very rare in w. Montana, was near Cooke City Aug. 7-10 (†ECo). As noted in last winter's report, Montana Barn Owls are very rare, but one was at Pablo N.W.R., *Lake*, Sept. 9 (DH).

Based on previous observations, we assumed Black Swifts nested in northernmost Idaho, with birds likely departing the state in late August/early September. This year **Black Swifts** were finally confirmed as breeders, when 4 occupied nests were found under 2 small (<20 feet high) waterfalls Aug. 28-30 (JA, FH, m.ob.). Instead of being in the expected Selkirk or Cabinet Mts. (where the species was again present this year), the nests were found in the Coeur d'Alene Mts., *Shoshone*, ID. Fledging was completed on or about Sept. 6 (ph. †JA, ph. †KD). Other reports included a flock of 30-35 migrants over B.R. Sept. 25 (JC, SH).

Up to four Anna's Hummingbirds visited Boise feeders mid-November to Nov. 30 (*fide* AL, *fide* GJ). In the early 1990s, fall Blue Jay reports from Idaho averaged about three birds at 3 locations. This year, at least 41 birds were at 24 spots, an invasion second only to that of 1994. Observers are encouraged to continue to chronicle this species' rapid expansion. In Salmon, ID, a Blue Jay was apparently food begging Oct. 29 (DE, EF). Breeding has yet to be documented in the state.

WRENS TO CROSSBILLS

Bewick's Wren sightings were up this fall, with at least 10 birds reported from 5 locations in *Kootenai*, *Latah*, and *Nez Perce*, ID (m.ob.). A N. Mockingbird was near Florence, MT, Nov. 14-30 (WT, m.ob.).

A late Townsend's Warbler was at Minidoka Dam, *Minidoka*, ID, Nov. 2 (MCa). A Palm Warbler, rare in w. Montana, visited Yellowstone N.P. Aug. 25 (†TM), while two were in Missoula Oct. 12 (EJ, SSc). Idaho's 9th **Palm Warbler** was in n.e. *Bonner* Oct. 18 (EC, †DNS, IS). A Com. Yellowthroat lingered at Heyburn S.P., *Benewah*, ID, Nov. 8 (M&MD, m.ob.).

Monitoring activities at Boise Ridge hawk watch near Boise, ID, were expanded this fall to include mist-netting migrating passerines. Among the surprises were the state's 15th Tennessee Warbler Sept. 1 (ph.



The first Mew Gull known to have spent the summer in Idaho, this bird was still present at Sandpoint on August 28, 1997. Photograph/Peder Svingen

†JC, SH), 10th **Palm Warbler** Oct. 1 (ph. †JC, SH), 6th **Black-throated Blue Warbler** Sept. 21 (ph. †JC, SH), and a rare Golden-crowned Sparrow Sept. 25 (†JC, SH, ph. CT, m.ob.).

As usual, a few Harris's Sparrows were scattered across s. Idaho and w. Montana, but the single near Whitebird, ID, Oct. 26 (JH, MH, DNS) provided a latilong first. Great-tailed Grackle news included 11 at Deer Flat N.W.R. Oct. 25-Nov. 31 (JG, DL); nine at Marsing, ID, Oct. 26 (JG); and one at A.F.R. Nov. 23 (CT). Two Com. Grackles visited Deer Flat N.W.R. Oct. 26 (JG), where this vagrant has now appeared several times.

Eleven Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches explored Cottonwood Butte, *Idaho*, ID, Oct. 19 (JH, MH). White-winged Crossbills were found in many unusual Idaho locations, including two at Orphan Pt., *Shoshone*, Aug. 23 (ZP); 10 at Grandmother Mt., *Shoshone*, Aug. 31 (CS); "several" at Wilderness Gateway Campground, *Idaho*, in September (*fide* MK); and three in s.w. *Benewah* Oct. 12 (CS). Four White-winged Crossbills were in McCall, ID, Aug. 13 (TE, JG), near where the species nested this summer.

Observers cited (subregional editors in boldface): IDAHO: Jim Acton, Sue Barton, Deb Beutler (DBe), Kris Buchler, Dave Bur-rup (DB), Jay Carlisle, Earl Chapin, Ray Clark, Marty Collar (MCa), Mark Collie

(MC), Pat and Gordon Comrie (P&GC), Mike and MerryLynn Denny (M&MD), Jean Dodge, **Kas Dumroese**, Terry Edwards, Dave Faike, Elise Faike, Todd Garlie, John Gatchet, Sarah Hamilton, Fran Haywood, Winnie Hepburn (WH), John Hirth, Marty Hirth, Pat Jacks, Greg Johnson, Ron Jutzy, Greg Kaltenecker, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Kolinier**, Harry Krueger, Al Larson, Dave Lawrence, Harry Mudd, Zoltan Porga, **Hadley Roberts**, John Shipley, **Shirley Sturts** (SS), Dan Svingen (DNS), Ila Svingen, Peder Svingen, Colleen Sweeney (CSy), Charles Swift (CS), Joel Tinsley, Dave Trochlell, **Chuck Trost**, Susan Weller, Roger and Donna Young (R&DY). MONTANA: Jason Beason (JBe), Jim Brown (JB), **Dan Casey** and Elaine Consolo (ECo), Mark Donahue, Bruce Hinle, Wes Hochachka (WWho), Denver Holt (DH), Elizabeth Johnston, **Jeff Marks**, Terry McEneaney, Montana Rare Birds Committee (M.R.B.C.), Chad Olson, John Parker (JP), Jean Roboeker (JRb), Bill Schuster, **Don Skaar** (DS), Suzanne Stickney (SSc), Terry Toppins, Wayne Tree.

Dan Svingen, P.O. Box 271, Springfield, CO 81073, and **Dave Trochlell**, 1931 Tallwood Ln, Boise, ID 83706.

