middle western prairie region

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F ollowing 1998's "silent spring" and associated gloomy predictions of decimated bird populations, close attention was paid to the current breeding season. This tight scrutiny produced virtually no evidence of diminished numbers of breeding species; indeed, the summer of 1998 was deemed above average by most correspondents.

June brought above normal precipitation, especially in the western states. Flooding and high waters eliminated much of the traditional shorebird habitat, but thoroughly hydrated most wetlands, resulting in a highly productive season for nesting waterbirds. There was also broad consensus that 1998 was a very fine summer for grassland species, with especially favorable comments about Dickcissels, Bobolinks, and both Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows.

In Missouri, Jim Wilson also noted that the simultaneous emergence of 15- and 17year cicadas, an event that occurs only once every 255 years, also produced a windfall for many woodland birds. Taking full advantage of this bounty, the following unlikely species were observed hawking cicadas: American Robin, Baltimore Oriole, and Red-winged Blackbird.

One distinctive characteristic of the Region's breeding season was an abnormally high number of more northerly breeding species that lingered, summered, or wandered across the Region during the summer. Notable among these was an unusually high number of Common Loons, numerous lingering shorebirds, and assorted midsummer passerines.

Abbreviations: H.B.S.P. (Headlands Beach S.P., OH); L. Cal. (Lake Calumet, Chicago); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St Charles, MO); S.C.R. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., MO); Spfid. (Springfield, IL).

LOONS TO IBISES

Common Loons were more plentiful than normal, with reports from all 6 states; perhaps the most remarkable occurrence was in Missouri where nine were reported at 7 different locations. Pied-billed Grebes successfully bred in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. The season's most surprising grebe report consisted of a **Red-necked Grebe** pair that provided Iowa's first confirmed nesting record. The pair and 4 eggs were noted June 17 (SF), and three young were seen July 8 (LS), but all had disappeared by the end of July, perhaps due to turtle predation (DHa, LS). A late departing Horned Grebe at Wolf Lake, IN, June 7 (JMc, BEt), provided Indiana's first modern summer record.

The expansion of Am. White Pelicans across the Region continued, with summer reports from every state except Ohio. Small numbers of Double-crested Cormorants nested at 4 Illinois sites, and a concentration of 200 nests was found at Carlyle L., IL, June 25 (DKa). American Bitterns nested at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL, where 4 eggs were monitored (June-July) until hatching (JWa, EK). It was a good year for Least Bitterns in the w. states, with nesting in Illinois and Missouri, plus excellent counts in Iowa. Indiana's Great Blue Heron survey yielded 7087 birds at 151 sites (JCs) and in Illinois and estimated 6150+ nests were counted at 29 locations (VK). Six s. Illinois locations yielded an estimated 370 Great Egret nests and 8 Illinois sites along the Mississippi R. produced 975+ nests (VK). A major new heron-egret colony was discovered in Pemiscot in the Missouri Bootheel. On the evening of June 28, 840 Snowy Egrets, 600 Little Blue Herons, 12,000 Cattle Egrets, and 105 Black-crowned Night-Herons were counted as they returned to the site (JHo). Though far smaller, another significant colony was found at the Ayrshire strip mine, s.w. Indiana, where two Little Blue Heron, 15 Cattle Egret, and 13 Black-crowned nests were counted June 29 (JT, fide JCs). The Region's only Tricolored Heron was a subadult in Spfld. July 31 (†DBo). Surveys of Illinois' largest Black-crowned Night-Heron colony yielded an estimated 500 nests at the L.Cal. Big Marsh June 13 (WM) and 250 nests in E. St. Louis May 29 (VK, DTe). The peak Yellow-crowned Night-Heron tally consisted of 17 at Chaney L., KY, July 29 (DR).



Heat and drought in the Gulf states stimulated a fine summer ibis incursion, highlighted by a strong movement of White Ibis that produced reports in 4 states. Records included an adult at Cooley Lake W.M.A., MO, June 19 (MB), plus Ohio's 3rd White Ibis record at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., July 7-15 (†TB, LRo, JDu). In addition, single immatures were seen at Otter Slough W.M.A., MO, June 24 (NY); at Bushwhacker W.M.A., MO, July 7 (RHs); in Warren, KY, July 12 and thereafter (DR); at Eagle Bluffs W.M.A., MO, July 7 (DDo); and at R.E.D.A. July 18 (AS et al.). The only multiple record consisted of three immatures at Kidd L., IL, July 26-Aug. 8 (†DKa, †CO, et al.). Other ibis reports included two ad. Glossys that lingered in Frank Holton S.P., IL, May 29-July 29 (KMc, m.ob.) and an ad. White-faced that was reported at Cooley Lake W.M.A., MO, June 19 (MB). The summer ibis report was rounded out by two plegadis ibis in Pocahontas, IA, June 15 (DHo, fide JD).

WATERFOWL TO CRANES

The reintroduced Trumpeter Swan population is expanding into the Middle Western Prairie Region with nesting near Epworth, IA, that yielded three young (BEh), and at Ottawa N.W.R., OH (EPi). Small numbers of geese lingered in the Region this summer, with three Greater White-fronted Geese at separate Iowa locations and one-two Snow Geese in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. Remarkably, the latter included a pair with young seen in *Holt*, MO, in early June (RL). The Region's regularly nesting ducks had a good breeding season. Other nesting reports included two Green-winged Teal broods in Iowa (LS, MK); Blue-winged Teal with eight young at McElroy L., KY, July 17 (DR); two N. Pintail broods at Maynard Reece W.M.A., IA, July 26 (MK); Gadwall broods at 2 Iowa locations (SF, LS); and a Redhead nest at Spring Run W.M.A., IA, June 18 (SF). Notable reports among the non-breeding ducks were 20 N. Shovelers in *Cass*, IL, July 20 (KMc); an imm. male Black Scoter at H.B.S.P. June 1 (KMe); a female Whitewinged Scoter that summered on the Indiana lakefront (JMc, BEt, m.ob.); a female Bufflehead at the Port of Indiana June 7 (JMc, BEt); and a drake Com. Merganser at Bigelow Marsh, MO, July 20 (DE).

Black Vulture numbers remained high in their normal range, and one wandered N to Sangamon, IL, where it was seen June 20 (†DBo). A Turkey Vulture nest near the Iowa R., in Iowa, IA, contained two young in July (NB). Nesting or summering Ospreys were reported in every state except Indiana and Iowa. Mississippi Kites returned to traditional nesting areas, and an adult wandered N to Winnebago, IL, where it remained from July 26 through Aug. 8 (DW, m.ob.). Nesting efforts of Bald Eagle remained favorable with 75 nests reported in Iowa, 30 active nests in Illinois, and 20 fledglings in Indiana. Multiple N. Harrier nests were reported in Illinois and Iowa; a harrier nest was also reported in Seneca, OH (TB). The Region's only Sharp-shinned Hawk nest was observed at Cuyahoga Valley W.M.A. June 28 and July 4 (JBe). Swainson's Hawks returned to their n.e. Illinois nesting area with reports of one-two adults in McHenry June 27-Aug. 10 (AS, SDe, RBa) and two adults and an immature in Kane June 27 (VB).

At Illinois' Prairie Ridge W.M.A. nine Greater Prairie-Chicken nests yielded 19 broods during the breeding season (JWa, EK et al.). King Rails enjoyed a good season with 2 broods at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL, in June and July (JWa, EK); an adult and two fairly large chicks at Errington Marsh, IA, July 25 (BEn); and an estimated 10-12 breeding pairs at Clarence Cannon N.W.R., MO (DE). Both Virginia Rail and Sora numbers were also up. Nesting of the former was confirmed at Beverly Shores, IN, when an adult and two downy chicks were seen June 8 (SB), and at Killbuck Marsh, OH, where at least 3 successful nests were found (TB). For the 2nd time on record, nesting Purple Gallinules returned to the former Mermet L., IL, breeding site where four adults, one nest, and 2 broods were observed July 11-Aug. 9 (†FBe, m.ob.). Additionally, an injured adult, found in

Jersey, IL, June 28, later died and was given to the Illinois State Museum (FBe). Common Moorhens had a better season than in recent years, with nesting reported in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio. Peak counts included 25 young at L.Cal. June 17-July 11 (WM) plus six adults and ten immatures at Bob Brown W.M.A., MO, July 27 (DE). Sandhill Cranes nested at Waukegon, IL, where two young were present May 11 (RBi); in Steuben, IN, where a pair and a small chick were noted June 1 (Haw, SS); and in the Des Plaines River W.M.A., IL, where two adults with young were seen July 25 (AS). In addition, a remarkable flock of 25 was seen in a freshly plowed field at Pigeon River W.M.A., IN, July 25 (Haw).

SHOREBIRDS

Unusual Black-bellied Plover reports included a basic-plumaged bird at Miller Beach, IN, July 10 (JMc, BEt) and an early migrant at McElroy L., KY, July 23 (DR). Also surprising was a Semipalmated Plover at McElroy L. June 23 (DR). Iowa's breeding Piping Plovers had a great year with 4 pair and three young at the MidAmerica Energy Ponds in late June (JD, m.ob.) and 4 pairs at Port Neal that produced 12 fledglings (BH). The only other Piping Plover report consisted of an adult seen at Miller Beach, IN, July 17-23 (JMc, m.ob.). An estimated 1000 Killdeer were at McElroy L. July 23 (DR). Once again, Black-necked Stilts nested across s. reaches of the Region, with a nest containing 4 eggs in Massac, IL, June 1-5 (FB et al.) and 4 pairs in Fulton, KY, that produced at least two young (HC, m.ob.). Elsewhere, a Stilt was at Ten Mile Pond, Mississippi, MO, June 28 (JHo), and two were at that location July 10 (JR). Small numbers of Am. Avocets appeared in every state except Kentucky; the peak tally consisted of five at Michigan City Harbor, IN, July 20 (KB). The most unusual Willet report involved a flock of 20 birds at L. Rathbun that tied Iowa's earliest fall arrival record June 22 (TJ). Summer Whimbrels were restricted to the Great Lakes, where one was seen at Lorain, OH, July 4 (CH), and a total of three were seen on the Indiana lakefront July 13-17 (JMc et al.). A record-late Hudsonian Godwit was at Maynard Reece W.M.A., IA, June 10 (MK). No large shorebird accumulations were reported; indeed, the largest single count of any species was 200 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Lorain, OH, July 29 (CH, KMe). Noteworthy reports included an out-ofsync White-rumped Sandpiper at Spfld. June 20 (DBo), an early Baird's Sandpiper

at L.Cal. June 19 (JMd), a Dunlin at McElroy L. June 8 (DR), and two ad. Buffbreasted Sandpipers at McElroy L. July 24–26 (DR). Clearly, however, the shorebird of the season was an alternate-plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** at Eagle Bluffs W.M A July 15 (TC, BG, †PMc, EPr, ph., m ob), which provided Missouri's first state record. Two broods of Wilson's Phalaropes at Maynard Reece W.M.A., IA, July 26 (MK), provided the Region's only breeding record. Iowa's first summer Red-necked Phalarope in 10 years appeared at Maynard Reece W.M.A. July 10 (MK).

JAEGERS TO TERNS

A Parasitic Jaeger, believed to be in 2nd- or 3rd-summer plumage, was at L. Springfield, IL, June 22 & 23 (†DBo). Laughing Gulls were reported in every state except Iowa and Kentucky. The westernmost record consisted of an adult at R.E.D.A. June 6 (CM) The Region's largest Franklin's Gull accumulation consisted of 400 at Kettleson W.M A, Dickinson, IA, July 26 (LS). For the 4th time in 5 years, a summer period Black-headed Gull was reported in n.c. Iowa. This year an adult was seen briefly at Kettleson WMA June 23 (†RR). Kentucky's first Little Gull consisted of a first-year bird that lingered at McElroy L. from June 9 until June 17 (DR, BPB, ph.). An estimated 12,000 Ring-billed Gull nests and fewer than 200 Herring Gull nests were at L.Cal. this summer (JL).

Caspian Terns were widespread, with reports from all 6 states; nesting was not confirmed at last year's site in Indiana Seven young Com. Terns fledged from the Waukegon, IL, colony July 13-27 (DDa, AHo), and 30 reportedly nested at Pipe Creek W.M.A., OH (CH). A Forster's Tern nest was found at Gladfelter Marsh, IA, June 27 (SF), and two adults were observed feeding a young bird at Dan Green Slough, IA, July 18 (LS). It was a superb nesting season for Least Terns. In Missouri, researcher Rochelle Renken reported 880 pairs nesting in 8 colonies along the Mississippi R between Cairo, IL, and the Arkansas line The largest colony, near Portageville, MO, contained 460 nests (fide JWi). Indiana's Gibson colony hosted a maximum adult population of 80 birds and 62 nests; 35-40 young fledged (fide JCs). At Port Neal, IA, four Least Tern pairs fledged seven young (BH); though nine adults were present at the MidAmerican Energy Ponds June 22, there was no evidence of nesting (JD) The only reports of nesting Black Terns came from Gladfelter Marsh and Spring Run W.M.A., both in Iowa (SF).

DOVES TO VIREOS

By July 27 the Eurasian Collared-Dove, first seen at Chicago's Lincoln Park in April, had made 4 unsuccessful nesting attempts (JL). Greater success occurred in Nokomis, Montgomery, IL, where 10 young were seen June 22 (MRe). In addition, small collareddove populations were confirmed in 4 s.e. Missouri locations and in the St. Louis area (fide JWi) and one was still at the Grinnell, IA, site in June and July (JD, MPr). Whitewinged Doves continued their expansion into the Region. A first Illinois record was seen and heard in Homer, Vermilion, July 22 (†JS), and another was reported in Springfield, MO, July 18 (LB). Though Black-billed Cuckoos remained scarce, many correspondents noted increased numbers of Yellow-billed Cuckoos. The peak count of the latter consisted of 12, detected on a Monroe, IL, Breeding Bird Survey, June 13 (KMc). The s.w. Missouri Greater Roadrunner population appears to be expanding. In addition to reports in Tany, MO, which is within the expected range, singletons n. of Doniphan July 17 (CS) and near Marquand July 16 (D. Roe) were well e. of previous locations.

Nesting Barn Owls were reported in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri. Illinois' first know Short-eared Owl nesting since 1994 was logged this summer when 3 nests were found at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL (JWa, EK et al.). In addition, Short-eared Owls likely nested in Seneca, OH (TB), and two were observed together at Taberville WMA., MO, in early June (NM). Several correspondents expressed concern about depressed Com. Nighthawk and Whippoor-will numbers; these species warrant watching. Five or six Yellow-bellied Sapsucker nests were discovered in Ashtabula, OH (D&JH et al.), and 2 nests were found in Winneshiek, IA (WN).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen in Sangamon, IL, on the extraordinary date of July 25 (DBo), to provide that county's earliest ever fall arrival. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher barely vacated the Region; a late spring migrant was heard in n. Porter, IN, June 20 (JCd) and a returning bird was detected in Sangamon, IL, July 23 (DBo). Nesting Willow Flycatchers were found at Wolf L., Chicago, Aug. 5 (DS) and at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL (JWa, EK). According to Larry Herbet, W. Kingbirds are erupting in s w Missouri, where they associate with electric power sub-stations. This may account for the increased number of nesting reports farther east. This summer W. Kingbirds apparently nested in Spfld. (DBo); Granite City, IL, where 3 family groups were noted (KMc); and at the traditional *LaPorte*, IN, site (CF, m.ob.), which was also associated with a sub-station. One W. Kingbird wandered E to Killdeer Plain W.M.A., where it was seen June 30 (†TB). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were confined to the w. states, where singletons were reported at Lexington, MO, in late July (WP) and in Madrid, IA, June 12 (MMe).

The largest Purple Martin accumulation consisted of 515+ birds in Jersey, IL, July 20 (KMc). Sizable swallow colonies included 157 N. Rough-winged Swallows, including many young, at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, IL, July 9 (DS), and 200+ Bank Swallows in Fulton, KY, June 28 (MMi, CPe). Breeding period Brown Creepers were recorded in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. Bewick's Wrens nested at Siloam Spring S.P., IL, where two adults plus young were seen July 24 & 26 (KMc, DJ). Sedge Wrens were widespread and unusually abundant, with reports from every state except Kentucky. The peak count was 250 at Prairie Ridge W.M.A. July 20 (JWa, EK). Eastern Bluebird boxes near Jefferson City, MO, fledged 245 young (fide JWi). An extremely early Hermit Thrush arrived at Jackson Park, Chicago, July 31 (PC), to provide Illinois's earliest fall record. A June 16 singing Blue-headed Vireo at Pigeon River W.M.A. in n.e. Indiana was apparently a late migrant (Haw).

WARBLERS TO FINCHES

A number of northbound warblers lingered well into June. Notable among these were: a Tennessee in Lake, IN, June 13 (BEt, CF); a Magnolia in Mason City, IA, June 10 (RG); a Blackburnian at Tower Grove Park, St. Louis, June 6 (BW); a Bay-breasted also at Tower Grove Park June 19 (JZ); a singing male Black-throated Green e. of Madison, MO, June 6 (†Pmc); a Connecticut at Grammer Grove, IA, June 10 (MPr); and a Canada Warbler in Columbia June 1 (WB). Interesting nesting reports included 58 Yellow Warblers at Ottawa N.W.R., OH, June 7 (EP); one-two territorial male Magnolias in Shades S.P., IN, through June 15 (AB); 114 Ceruleans on a late May census of the Current R., MO (MRo); 17 Prothonotarys on the 10-mi drive at Kankakee W.M.A., IN, June 6 (SB, JCd); and one-two Swainson's Warblers in Carter, MO, June 2, 15 & 18 (JWi, CPr, SH), plus two more in Shannon, MO, May 21 (MRo). Summer wanderers or early fall migrants included a Chestnut-sided at Lima, OH, July 21 (MS); a male Blackburnian in Spfld. July 22 (DBo); a Black-and-white in Spfld. July 27–31 (DBo); an Ovenbird in Jackson Park, Chicago, July 31 (PC); and a N. Waterthrush at L.Cal. July 29 (JL).

An impressive 69 Indigo Buntings were counted in Monroe, IL, July 27 (KMc). In addition to several Painted Bunting reports from within their expected range, a nesting pair was reported from W. Plains, MO (DBi), and a male was sighted in the St Louis area June 29 (HB). Dickcissels were widespread and abundant, with reports from every state except Missouri. The maximum count was at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL, where 130 nests were counted during the summer (JWa, EK). A bumper Chipping Sparrow count of 100+ birds was logged at Sand Ridge S.F., IL, June 28 (RCh). This summer's only Clay-colored Sparrows were in Dickinson, IA, where four males were found in late June (LH). Both Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows fared well; peak counts included 117 Grasshoppers reported at Savannah Army Depot, IL, June 3-4 (AHa) and 40 territories (10 fledglings) at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL (JWa, EK et al.). A remarkably tardy Fox Sparrow lingered at Whiting Park on the Indiana lakefront until June 13 (JMc, BEt), and a very late Lincoln's Sparrow was still in Pokagon S.P. June 7 (AB). White-throated Sparrows also tarried in the Region, with singletons reported June 28 at Michigan City Harbor, IN (JO), and at Tower Grove Park, St. Louis, June 13 (JZ).

Bobolink numbers were up across the Region with good counts from every state Most surprising was a count of 132 W Meadowlarks at Savannah Army Depot June 3–4 (JHe). Much farther east, a W Meadowlark was found in *Greene*, OH, June 14 (DO). The peak Yellow-headed Blackbird count consisted of 25 adults and young at Moraine Hills S.P., *McHenry*, IL, June 27 (JMd). Four Brewer's Blackbird pairs, with at least 2 nests, were at Illinois Beach S P June 18 (AS). In Iowa and Missouri, Greattailed Grackles were found at locations occupied in previous years.

An ad. male Purple Finch at Porter, IN, July 21 (CF) was an early migrant, and numbers of this species were up in n e Ohio (*fide* LRo). The season's only Pine Siskin appeared at a Johnson, IA, feeder June 14 (DTh). A Eur. Tree Sparrow nest, containing 6 eggs, was found near Burlington, IA, June 28; four young were observed July 12 (PL).

CORRIGENDA

Iowa's 2nd **Roseate Spoonbill,** reported in the fall 1997 *Field Notes* (*FN* 52:67), should have read as follows "an immature that lingered at Waubonsie W.M.A. from Aug. 4 through Aug. 13 (†SDi, †MPr, †TK,†JFu, ph. m.ob.)."

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central southern region



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he breeding season was dry and hot, almost unprecedentedly so. At New Orleans, virtually no rain fell in May and June, and much of July was dry as well, although normal July precipitation was reached in some areas with rains late in the month. The effect of this drought, coupled with record high temperatures throughout the period, was to cause shallow ponds and marsh habitat to go dry in many areas. In the absence of real comparative population data or studies of breeding success, one can only guess at the weather's full impact. There was no tropical weather to affect colonial nesting on the barrier islands along the gulf coast, a fact which contributed to the dry weather of June and July.

At least three trips were made to Louisiana's Chandeleur Islands, data from which will be presented below.

As usual, a little more than one-third of the records submitted for the period actually pertained to breeding species. The others are a mix of late spring or early fall migrants (mostly shorebirds), postbreeding dispersal (largely herons and allies), and the results of pelagic trips. This year there were two pelagic excursions, one out of Venice, Louisiana, June 13, and another off the Alabama coast July 11 (see below).

Abbreviations: Louisiana Ornithological Society (*L.O.S.*); Louisiana Bird Records Committee (*L.B.R.C.*); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey (*BBS*).

BREEDING RECORDS, OR RECORDS SUGGESTIVE OF BREEDING

ANHINGAS TO WATERFOWL

Anhingas nested in White, AR, for at least the 2nd consecutive year, with an adult with two nestlings June 22 (KN). Other records June 6-July 25 in Dyer, Shelby, and Lake, TN (JRW), as well as in Noxubee (TS) and Lowndes (DP, JP), MS, June 7 and July 5, respectively, were of interest. As indicated last year, Brown Pelican numbers have exploded in Louisiana, with new nesting sites being exploited as the populations grow. Some of these include Grassy, Martin, Brush, and Mitchell islands., all in St. Bernard, censused June 17 (BV, MC). A careful count of 26,726 Cattle Egrets coming to roost on Bluff L., Noxubee, MS, July 25 (MC, m.ob.) was impressive, and up to 118 Wood Ducks were at the Arkadelphia Oxidation Ponds, Clark, MS, during June and July (DlH). A female N. Shoveler with at least five young in Lake June 27 (JRW, BMN) was unprecedented for w. Tennessee; there was one in Lonoke, AR, on the same date (LY, RD), and three summered at Tallahatchie N.W.R., MS (FB). One in Clark, AR, July 15-25 (DlH, DnH) was probably an early migrant.

DIURNAL RAPTORS

There were at least 3 active Osprey nests on Sardis L., MS, between March and late June (WMD), and single birds were in Prairie, AR, July 11 (KN, LDN) and at Noxubee N.W.R., MS, July 19 (PW). Around Blackwater Bay, FL, Morris Clark counted 15 active nests, and nests were found in St. Martin, LA, June 9 & 17 (BV, MC). Jennifer Coulson had 19 Swallow-tailed Kite nests under study during the nesting season, which produced 31 young, of which 23 fledged. Mortality was thought due to avian predation. Coulson had high counts of 93 in the Pearl R. Basin July 30, and 43 in the Pascagoula R. Basin, MS, Aug. 3. At least 20 were noted in St. Martin, LA, June 25 (LeR, LyR, RN), and post-breeding dispersal brought at least 14 to Hale, AL, July 18 (DPG, PJ et al). Although White-tailed