

idaho-western montana region



DAVID TROCHLELL

Spring 1999 started out auspiciously in most locations with mild seasonal temperatures in March. April was somewhat more variable across the Region, but reporters agreed that much of May was unseasonably cool. Waterfowl and shorebirds passed through on schedule or were even somewhat early, but many observers thought that passerines were late by as much as two weeks. Both Casey and Marks indicated that migrating songbird numbers seemed low in northwestern Montana.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (*American Falls Res., by American Falls, Idaho*); D.F.N.W.R. (*Deer Flat N.W.R., Canyon Co., ID*); L.M.N.W.R. (*Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Ravalli Co., MT*).

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

Especially rare in spring, a Red-throated Loon was near A.F.R. 2–3 May (F&MZ, m.ob.). A Yellow-billed Loon on L. McDonald, Flathead, 24 Apr–22 May (MBu, †DC, m.ob.) was Montana's 3rd. Montana reported unexpected waders, with Great Egrets at Cottonwood Res., Park, 22 May (BS, JS) and Seeley L., Missoula, in late May (LK), and a Snowy Egret near Helena 16 May (GH). Idaho's unusual herons featured one–two Cattle Egrets in Canyon 18 Apr–2

May (MJ, RM, RLR), and a Green Heron near Boise 25 May (MC, FK). Fifteen White-faced Ibis near Ronan, Lake, MT, 25–26 Apr (JM, RSt, TT) and five near Helena 16 May (GH) were unexpected.

In a continuing trend, sightings of Ross's Geese were up Regionwide. Outside of their regular range were one near Challis, Custer, ID, 27 Mar (D&EF), ±12 at L. Helena, Lewis and Clark, MT, 17 Apr (JS), one at L.M.N.W.R. 22 Apr (WT), ±30 at Brown's L., Powell, MT, 30 Apr (JB), and singles near Twin Falls, ID, 3 May (KF) and Market Lake W.M.A., Jefferson, ID, 15 May (D&EF). An **American Black Duck** at Lewiston 27 Mar–4 Apr (†KD, †CS) was Idaho's 5th. Both states reported hybrid ducks: the wintering Mallard × N. Pintail at L.M.N.W.R. stayed until 7 Mar (DL, WT), and two male Cinnamon × Blue-winged Teals stopped at Hubbard Res., Ada, ID, 2 May (RLR, †DT).

Reports of Eur. Wigeons were down from last year. Single Idaho Eurasians were reported in Boise 1 Mar–9 Apr (DT), Moscow 7 Mar (DH), near Cataldo, Kootenai, 14–20 Mar (SL, SS), Lewiston 18 Mar–9 Apr (DB, KD, CS), and near Sandpoint, Bonner, 8 May (SS, m.ob.). In Montana, one–two Eur. Wigeons were at L.M.N.W.R. 14–23 Mar (WT, VV), and one–two were at Frenchtown, Missoula, mid-March to mid-April (LW). Harlequin Ducks are rare and local in the Idaho panhandle, so one at Coeur d'Alene 14 Mar–31 May (TP) and a pair at McArthur Lake W.M.A., Boundary, 23 Apr (PC) were newsworthy. Single Broad-winged Hawks were near Twin Falls in late April and below A.F.R. dam 8 May (CT). A flock of over 600 Sandhill Cranes near Letha, Gem, ID, 20 Mar (MC, FK) provided likely a local high count.

PLOVERS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Typical numbers of Black-bellied Plovers were reported, with one at Blacks Creek Res., Ada, ID, 20 May (MC, FK), six near Helena 15 May (JS), and two w. of Missoula, MT, 21 May (LW). Two Am. Golden-Plovers at Market Lake W.M.A. 16 May (GR) were surprising; they are fall

migrants through the Region. Black-necked Stilts are becoming almost common in the Region's n. half. Up to 33 were reported near Helena 17 Apr–21 May (GM, DR, JS), seven were near Ninepipe N.W.R., Lake, MT, 25 Apr (J&ND), and singles were at Salmon, Lemhi, ID, 18 Apr (HR), Brown's L. 30 Apr (JB), Genesee, Latah, ID, 2 May (CS), Mann L., Nez Perce, ID, 7 May (RW), and e. of Moscow 10 May (DH). An estimated 200 Am. Avocets and 120 Marbled Godwits at Blacks Creek Res. 25 Apr (MC, FK) provided a local record. The Long-billed Curlew near Post Falls, Kootenai, ID, 9 Apr (SL) and two at Tolo L., Idaho, ID, 11 Apr (CS) were unusual. A Stilt Sandpiper w. of A.F.R. 24 May (CT) was seasonally rare.

Bonaparte's Gulls were widely reported, and included six at L.M.N.W.R. 24 Apr and two there 11 May (JM), one at Mann L. 3 May (RW), three in Bozeman, MT, 7–8 May (JP), and one at Tolo L. 23 May (CS). Idaho's 9th **Kumlien's Iceland Gull** lingered at A.F.R. until 19 Mar (MCR). Seasonally-rare gull sightings included a Thayer's Gull at Hebgen L., Gallatin, MT, 10 May (CW), Glaucous-winged Gull at Hubbard Res. 11 Apr (MC, FK), and Glaucous Gull at Polson, Lake, MT, 20 Mar (AP). Reports of unusual Idaho terns included four Commons at Blacks Creek Res. 11 May (MC, FK) and an Arctic below A.F.R. dam 2 May (F&MZ). Single Idaho Band-tailed Pigeons were reported on Moscow Mt., Latah, 5 May (J&JC), and n. of Ola, Gem, 22 Apr–24 May (F&MZ). The wintering Barn Owl in the Mission Valley, Lake, MT, departed after mid-April (CO). A **White-headed Woodpecker** in Helena in mid-May (†RS) was about Montana's 8th. Like last year, one–two Least Flycatchers were at Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID, 23–31 May (CW, MCR, CT).

BLUEBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES

Three locally-rare W. Bluebirds in the Helena area 27 & 30 Mar (JKr, SSh) were newsworthy. Idaho's N. Mockingbird sightings were average, with two near Nampa 20 Mar–7 May (BT), and singles in Owyhee 27 May and Elmore 28 May (CSw). A Virginia's Warbler strayed to the Boise area 18 May

(MC, FK). Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warblers were unusually numerous and widely reported this season. Single male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found in Idaho at Camas N.W.R. 29 May (MCr, CT), in Valley 25 & 30 May (JGe, CSw), and at Island Park, Fremont, 31 May (CW). Montana featured one near Bozeman 15 May (MB), a pair near Winston, Broadwater, 20 May (JK), and one in Helena 26 May (JL). A Regionally-rare Indigo Bunting stopped near Bozeman 30 May (DC).

A Black-throated Sparrow in Boise 21 May (MC, FK) was an unexpected stray, but more unusual was Montana's 6th **Black-throated Sparrow** near Noxon, Sanders, 24 May (CR). Idaho's only Lark Bunting report was from Blaine 30 May (LB, RG). Rare Idaho sparrows included a Swamp in Elmore 5 Mar (SH), and White-throateds in Boise 1-12 Mar (DT) and Challis 17 Apr (D&EF). Golden-crowned Sparrows made an unusually good showing this season, with two in Coeur d'Alene 2-20 May (JSe, PW), up to six in the Moscow area 9-18 May (m.ob.), and one near Missoula 29 May (CM). White-crowned Sparrows staged throughout the Region in unusually large flocks and in unexpected locations (DC, DS, SS); these flocks harbored a total of eight Harris's Sparrows throughout Idaho (m.ob.). A Lapland Longspur, rare in any season in n. Idaho, stopped in Moscow 17 May (CS).

Undoubtedly the bird of the season, a breeding-plumaged male **Brambling** visited a yard s. of Moscow 6 Apr (†KD), providing Idaho's first record. Idaho's Great-tailed Grackle reports featured one at A.F.R. 7 Mar (CT), two at D.F.N.W.R. 1 May (LB), and a pair in Gooding 11 May (KF). Nest-building was observed 1 May at the colony in Marsing, Owyhee, ID (DT). Common Grackle reports were up slightly from last year, with scattered observations from Ada (MC, FK), Blaine (PWP), Custer (LB, RG), Fremont (CW), and Gooding (KF). A Regionally-rare Baltimore Oriole was in Missoula, 30-31 May (JM, AP). A pair of Purple Finches visited a residence near Bigfork, Flathead, MT, 8-9 May (LH); there is no confirmed breeding of this species in the Region.

Observers cited (subregional editors in boldface): IDAHO: Larry Barnes, Deb Beutler, Marty Collar (MCr), Pat Cole, Mark Collie (MC), Joan and Jack Cooper, **Kas Dumroese**, Dave and Elise Faike, Kent Fothergill, Robin Garwood, **John Gatchet** (JG), John Gebhardt (JGe), Sarah Hamil-

ton, Liz Hill, Dave Holick, Marlin Jones, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Steve Lindsay, Russ Manwaring, Theresa Potts, Greg Rice, **Hadley Roberts**, R.L. Rowland, Jan Severtson (JSe), **Shirley Sturts** (SS), Colleen Sweeney (CSw), Charles Swift (CS), Bonnie Tague, Dave Trochlell, **Chuck Trost**, Phil Waring, Cliff Weisse, Rick Welle, **Poo Wright-Pulliam**, Fred and Melly Zeillemaker. MONTANA: Mike Becker (MB), Jim Brown, Milo Burcham (MBu), **Dan Casey**, Jeanette and Norm Davis, George Holton, Jess Karp (JK), Lynn Kelly, Joyce Kronholm (JKr), Joanne Lace, Dave Lockman, **Jeff Marks** (JM), Charles Miller, Gerald Mueller, Chad Olson, **John Parker**, Alison Perkins, Don Reimer, Cal Ryder, Jeff Safford, Sandy Shull (SSh), Bob Sisk, **Don Skaar**, Rex Smart, Ralph Stockstad (RSt), Terry Toppins, Wayne Tree, Virginia Vincent, Larry Weeks.

David Trochlell, 1931 Tallwood Ln, Boise, ID 83706 (dtrochle@cyberhighway.net)



It takes more than luck...



to preserve,
protect, and
restore our heritage —

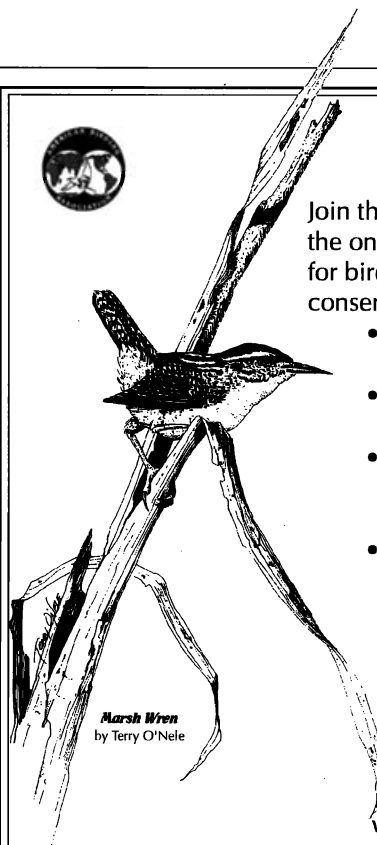
It takes you.



Call us at 415.403.3850
or visit us at www.alcnet.org

**AMERICAN LAND
CONSERVANCY**

A non-profit organization.
456 Montgomery Street, Suite 1450
San Francisco, CA 94104



Marsh Wren
by Terry O'Nele

Join the **American Birding Association** — the only North American association of and for birders. Help support bird education and conservation projects and receive:

- **Birding** magazine and **Winging It** newsletter
- **The Birder's Catalog**, featuring books, optics, and accessories
- **Membership Directory**, listing ABA members willing to help traveling birders
- Join us at birding **conferences and conventions**

American Birding Association

PO Box 6599
Colorado Springs, CO 80934
Phone: 800/850-2473 or
Fax: 719/578-1480
e-mail member@aba.org
web site: <http://www.americanbirding.org>