

idaho-western montana region



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At most locations the summer of 1999 featured a cool, wet June followed by a hot and dry July. Rivers swollen from melting snowpack and ample spring rains filled irrigation reservoirs in July, resulting in few mudflats available for returning shorebirds. June's spring-like weather also delayed bird migration and nesting in some areas. Despite the delay, indications were that overall nesting success was about average.

In a season noted for its few highlights, one exception was a significant early June fallout of birds at Idaho's Camas National Wildlife Refuge. During a stormy six-day period, a few hardy birders sorted through grounded migrants and found several rare "eastern" warblers such as Northern Parula, two Ovenbirds, and Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and Black-and-white warblers. These sightings add to a list of vagrants found at the refuge over the years that includes Bell's Vireo, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole. Such incredible finds help to distinguish Camas as Idaho's premier birding hotspot and to draw needed attention to this underbirded area.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., by American Falls, Idaho); C.N.W.R. (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); Latilong (area encom-

passed by one degree latitude and one degree longitude used in mapping bird distribution in both Idaho and Montana).

LOONS THROUGH SWIFTS

A basic-plumaged **Pacific Loon** at Coeur d'Alene L., *Kootenai*, 9 Jun (KB) provided Idaho's 2nd summer record. A Com. Loon oversummered at Mann L., *Nez Perce*, ID (CS). A Clark's Grebe at Brown's L., *Powell*, MT, 7 Jun represented a first for Latilong 26. Though increasing Regionwide, single Double-crested Cormorants reported in *Bonner* 8 & 21 Jul (PC) were unusual. The Great Egret near St. Maries, *Benewah*, ID, 1 Jun (*fide* SS) was far north of its normal Idaho range. A female Harlequin Duck was seen 19 Jun n. of Missoula, MT (JB), where the species formerly nested. A female Com. Merganser with nestlings in *Boise* 28 Jun (RLR) confirmed breeding in Idaho's Latilong 18. A local rarity was the Swainson's Hawk that wandered to *Kootenai*, ID, 4 Jul (SL). Peregrine Falcons nested in at least 5 cliff eyries in Idaho this summer. One was along the Snake R. in *Nez Perce* (MK), and four were along the Salmon R. in *Custer* and *Lemhi* (HR).

A rare Snowy Plover and Idaho's 10th **Whimbrel** stopped at A.F.R. 25 Jul (JC), and a breeding-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper was w. of A.F.R. on the same date (MCR). Single Idaho Short-billed Dowitchers were reported w. of A.F.R. 18 Jul (MCR), at Indian Creek Res., *Ada*, 25 Jul (RLR, DT), and at Hagerman W.M.A., *Gooding*, 26 Jul (KF). An estimated 1000 phalaropes (800 Wilson's and 200 Red-necked) staged w. of A.F.R. 18 Jul (MCR). Single Franklin's Gulls wandered to n. Idaho in *Bonner* 10 Jun (KD) and Mann L. 27 Jul (CS). A Caspian Tern at McArthur L., *Boundary*, ID, 10 Jun (PC) was unusual. Black Terns were inexplicably absent from 6–8 established nesting areas in *Flathead* and *Lake*, MT, this summer (DC). Single Idaho Band-tailed Pigeons were reported in *Bonner* 8 Jun (RD) and *Latah* 20–21 Jun (JGr). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo stopped in Boise, ID, 8 Jun (MC, FK). An injured Barn Owl captured near Kalispell 20 Jul (LV) was only w. Montana's 5th, but this species is now increasingly reported in that

region. Three Black Swifts that migrated over Boise 4 Jun (MC, FK, DT) were very unusual, and a Vaux's Swift in Boise 25 Jun (DT) was about a month late.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A Regionally rare **Alder Flycatcher** was singing in *Lincoln*, MT, 19 Jun (DS). Although Least Flycatchers were reported singing in Idaho's *Boundary*, *Custer*, *Fremont*, *Jefferson*, and *Valley* (m.ob.), nesting was not confirmed. A Cordilleran Flycatcher was s. of Kalispell 16 Jun, where they are unusual (DC). Montana's first **Gray Flycatcher** near Bannack, *Beaverhead*, 17–19 Jun was studied, recorded, and collected (*PWM, JM, JY). Confirmation of Blue Jay breeding in Idaho was narrowly missed this summer when on 28 Jul a juv. Blue Jay visited the same Sandpoint, *Bonner*, feeder that had been visited since early spring by a pair suspected of nesting (RD). Also reported in Idaho were two courting Blue Jays in Coeur d'Alene 4–12 Jun (SL, PW) and one in *Shoshone* 4–5 Jun (GT). A locally rare Rock Wren was near Kalispell 16 Jun (DC). A pair of nesting E. Bluebirds near Helena, MT, 9 Jun (GW) provided a first for Latilong 28. In Idaho, reports of N. Mockingbirds included singles at Market Lake N.W.R., *Jefferson*, 6–7 Jun (MCR) and Buhl, *Twin Falls*, 25 Jun–20 Jul (KF) and two near Stone, *Oneida*, 7 Jul (CT). The **Brown Thrasher** at Market Lake W.M.A. 5–6 Jun (MC, CT et al.) was Idaho's 9th, and one at Grantsdale, *Ravalli*, MT, 1–4 Jun (EB, WT) was rare.

A surprising tally of Regionally rare warblers at C.N.W.R. included Idaho's first **Northern Parula** 8 Jun (DM, †KS), Idaho's 12th Chestnut-sided Warbler 7 Jun (MC, GR), Idaho's 8th **Magnolia Warbler** 5–6 Jun (MC, †CT et al.), a Black-and-white Warbler 2 Jun (MC, GR), and two Ovenbirds 5–6 Jun (MC, GR, CW). A Black-throated Gray Warbler that strayed to Boise 4 Jun (MC, FK, DT) was far north of its normal range. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Island Park, *Fremont*, ID, 1 Jun (CW). Seven Brewer's Sparrows occupied territories near Moscow, *Latah*, ID, 26 Jun (KD), where there is no documented breed-

ing. A Black-throated Sparrow that strayed to *Elmore* 7 Jun (KD) was a first for Latilong 18. Lark Bunting and Grasshopper Sparrow breeding was confirmed for Latilong 15 in *Clark*, ID, 18 Jul (CT). The small Great-tailed Grackle colony in *Owyhee*, ID, fledged at least four young this season (RE), and another Great-tailed was reported near Market Lake W.M.A. 7–12 Jun (CT). Reports of Idaho Com. Grackles were down from last year, with sightings in *Ada*, *Caribou*, *Fremont*, *Jefferson*, and *Lemhi*; breeding was presumed in *Ada* (MC, FK), *Caribou*, and *Fremont* (CT). The male Baltimore Oriole present since late May in Missoula lingered until 18 Jun (JM).

ADDENDUM

A belated spring report included a pair of Chestnut-sided Warblers at City of Rocks Reserve, *Cassia*, ID, 20 May (TS).

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 358.

mountain west region

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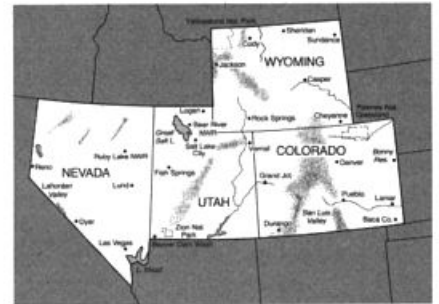
The seasonal moist air masses which move north from Mexico—the "Monsoons"—moved back and forth from west to east throughout the summer; thus precipitation in most areas of the Region was at or above normal, and temperatures were somewhat cooler. In late June through July, areas of Colorado experienced rains well above normal; by the end of July, Colorado Springs had exceeded its annual record precipitation with over 25 inches.

The Nevada Breeding Bird Atlas (NBBA) is well under way, and field observers are providing excellent distribution data on breeding birds in the state. We appreciate being provided with atlas data, which we hope will continue to be utilized in this and other media prior to publication of the final product.

Abbreviations: @ (rare bird form submitted to the Colorado Birds Records Committee); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, NV); S.W.A. (State Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH SANDPIPERS

An ad. **Red-throated Loon** found at Wolford Mt. Recreation Area, *Routt*, in mid-July (*fide* NE) and again 18–31 Jul and into August (NK, VZ, TL, RL, m.ob.) was the first summer record for Colorado. Also rare in summer, a Pacific Loon was at Baseline Res., *Boulder*, CO, 27–31 Jul and continuing (KH, m.ob.). Two ad. Pied-billed Grebes with three young at Corn Cr., *Clark*, NV, 4 Jun (m.ob.) provided an uncommon nesting record for this site. A count of 98/ adult and 300 juvenile Eared Grebes at Walden Res., *Jackson*, CO, 20–21 Jul (RL, TL) was high. A W. Grebe summered at Silverthorne, *Summit*, CO (SB). With the dam work completed at Antero Res., *Park*, CO, breeding Am. White Pelicans returned and produced 33 juveniles (TL, SB); 146 juveniles were also noted at MacFarlane Res., *Jackson*, CO, 21 Jul (RL, TL). At least two **Brown Pelicans** appeared in s.e. Colorado this season. An immature and an adult were in *Bent* 1–31



Jul (DN, BM, m.ob.); an adult reported at L. Meredith, *Crowley*, 17 Jul (SM) could have been one of the *Bent* birds.

A Great Egret, rare in the San Luis Valley in summer, was in *Alamosa*, CO, 30 Jun (TL, DF). Also seasonally rare, an imm. **Trumpeter Swan** summered in *Boulder* (BK). The **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** remained at H.B.V.P. through the summer (m.ob.). A male Am. Black Duck was at John Martin Res., *Bent*, CO, 2 Jun (DN, BG, m.ob.) for one of the few summer records in the Region. A male Greater Scaup at Carson L., *Churchill*, NV, 3 Jul (DS, m.ob.) was quite unexpected. Up to 40 Bufflehead (mostly females) were at MacFarlane Res., CO, 21 Jul (TL); a female summered at H.B.V.P. (m.ob.). One to three imm. Com. Goldeneyes summered at H.B.V.P. (m.ob.), and a male was in Browns Park N.W.R., *Moffat*, CO, 7 Jun (DE, RL). Hooded Mergansers are rarely reported in Colorado in summer; reports this season included single females at Jumbo S.W.A., *Logan*, 2 Jun (NK), Antero Res., *Park*, 5 Jul (TL, SB), and Wolford Mt. Res. 26 Jul (TL, DF), and 18 females at N. Poudre Res. #3, *Larimer*, 28 Jul (NK). At Adobe Creek Res., *Bent*, one or two Com. Mergansers were observed 13–25 Jul (BKP, LS); two female Red-breasted Mergansers 22 Jul (DSi) were even rarer. A Red-breasted was also observed at Willard Bay S.P., UT, 12 Jun (K. Evans, A. Smith).

Three juv. Ospreys 17 Jul (BKP) indicated successful breeding at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, CO. An ad. N. Goshawk at Pueblo City Park 25 Jun (PH) was extremely late for the plains. The bird of the season, a first record for Colorado, was an ad. **Zone-tailed Hawk** at Colorado N.M., *Mesa*, 17 Jul (JD, NB, m.ob.). A pair of Peregrine Falcons nested at Frisco, *Summit*, CO (SB, AH). An ad. female Ruffed Grouse and three young were observed eating grasshoppers within the city limits of Morgan, UT, 20 Jul (VAS). Possibly due to high reservoir water levels,