

western great lakes



Jim Granlund

Research Associate
Kalamazoo Nature Center
6253 N. Westnedge
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009

It was an excellent season for rarities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Highlighting Minnesota's season were sightings of White-tailed Kite, White-throated Swift, and Plumbeous Vireo, all possible first state records. Wisconsin had exceptional reports of Smew and Long-billed Murrelet, while Michigan missed out on the bonanza but still managed a few good observations, including a Brambling. Shorebird numbers were also impressive in all three states. The season was otherwise rather quiet with no large fallouts of migrants.

As has been the trend over the past few seasons the weather was atypical. Regionwide it was dry and warm in the early part of the season, and wet and warm toward the end. The early warm weather accelerated migration for some species, resulting in a number of new arrival records. A particularly warm spell in early May caused trees to leaf-out, making it difficult to detect migrants in the latter part of the season. Also noteworthy were the near-

record low levels of the Great Lakes, which exposed large amounts of shorebird habitat along the coastlines.

Abbreviations: MBRC (Michigan Bird Records Committee); MORC (Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee); WPBO (Whitefish Point Bird Observatory).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

Minnesota had a record count of Red-throated Loons 31 May, when 30 were counted at Duluth (SW). In Michigan 611 Red-throateds were tallied at WPBO, *Chippewa*, 15 Apr–30 May, with high total of 84 on 11 May. Wisconsin reported 3 different Pacific Loons this season, in alternate, intermediate, and basic plumages 23–24 Apr in *Ozaukee* (TU, DT, et al.); an alternate-plumaged bird was found in Minnesota 29 May in Duluth (SL, SWe). Wisconsin had an above-average number of Horned Grebes, including 600 on 24 Apr in *Ozaukee* (DT) and 440 on 15 Apr in *Dane* (AHO). In Michigan, 5 Eared Grebes 13 May and 2 on 17 May in *L'Anse, Baraga* (LB, JY), and another 2 on 18 May at Calumet, *Houghton* (LB), were considered unusual in the w. Upper Peninsula. Minnesota had a record-early date for Western Grebe, with one 30 Mar at Thielke L., *Big Stone* (BF); a Clark's Grebe at the

same location 23 Apr (PS et al.) was the second-earliest date for that species. American White Pelicans continue to show up in above-average numbers in both Michigan and Wisconsin. All three states had a good showings of southerly herons this season, with the exception of Cattle Egret, which remains scarcer than in the early 1990s. A Tricolored Heron 29 May in Hastings, *Dakota* (TT et al.), furnished only the 13th Minnesota record. In Wisconsin, one was seen 21 & 23 May at Oconto Marsh (JS, KS, JSc, JH), while Michigan had one 18 Apr at Univ. Michigan–Dearborn, *Wayne* (JC, m.ob.). In Michigan, 2 Glossy Ibises were seen 8–10 May at Pt. Mouillee, *Monroe* (WP), pending MBRC review. A White-faced Ibis was seen briefly in Wisconsin 7 May at Deltox Marsh, *Winnebago* (RS) and one was present in Minnesota 3–8 May at L. Washington, *LaSueur* (m.ob.). Minnesota also reported 2 *Plegadis* ibis 14 May in *Swift* (WM). A **Black Vulture** was well-documented in Michigan 10 Mar at L. Erie Metropark, *Wayne* (PCy).

WATERFOWL

Both Wisconsin and Minnesota had outstanding migrations of Greater White-fronted Geese; counts of 1500 on 4 & 11 Mar at *Jackson* (PS) are among the highest ever in Minnesota. Ross's Goose had a similarly good migration in the two states, and again Minnesota had record totals, with 98 on 2 Mar in *Jackson* (KB), 100+ on 4 Mar in *Lincoln* (DN, PJ), and 198 on 11 Mar in *Freeborn* (DN, PJ). The Brant that appeared in Feb in *Columbus* remained through 19 Mar, providing an unusual Wisconsin spring record. Michigan reported a male Eurasian Wigeon 13 Apr at Pt. Mouillee, *Monroe* (WP), while Wisconsin had singles at Madison 25 Mar–9 Apr and Green Bay in mid-Apr and 28 May (AP). Minnesota had its first spring Cinnamon Teal report since 1997, with a pair 10 Apr in *Lac Qui Parle* (LE). Also in that state was a presumed Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teal hybrid 6 May at the same location (PC). In Michigan, a teal seen 1 Apr at Pt. Mouillee appeared at a distance to be a pure Cinnamon Teal, but upon close observation was clearly a hybrid (AB). Also at Pt. Mouillee was a Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies 25 Apr (AB, WP); the record is pending MBRC review. The 4 Harlequin Ducks that overwintered in Michigan remained through 8 Mar at Muskegon (AB, CF). Wisconsin reported a female Harlequin Duck into mid-March in Milwaukee, while Minnesota had 2 reports in April and one in early May in *Cook* and

Lake Michigan and Wisconsin had average scoter migrations, the latter state reporting an unusually high number of inland reports. Minnesota had few scoter reports, with no White-winged or Black reported from L. Superior, remarkable given that WPBO, on the e. tip of that lake, tallied nearly 2,000 White-winged, with a maximum of 421 on 24 May (WPBO staff). For the 2nd consecutive year the Region hosted a **Smew**; this season a male 24–25 Mar at Wisconsin Point, *Superior* (SP, m.ob.), provided a first Wisconsin record.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Minnesota had its first **White-tailed Kite**, an individual that remained 1–19 May at Afton S.P., *Washington* (RI). Remarkably, Wisconsin also reported this species, with one 7 May in *Trempealeau* (GH). All three states reported Mississippi Kites. In Michigan, one was at WPBO 21 May (ph. CN); Wisconsin's 2 were seen 8 May at Ellison Bay, *Door* (JR); and Minnesota had an ad. 14 May in *Hennepin* (SC, TT). The 476 Bald Eagles tallied at WPBO during the spring census was a record total. Individual Swainson's Hawks were observed in Wisconsin 2 & 5 May in *Bayfield* (DV), and at WPBO 2, 5, & 6 May (staff). A Ferruginous Hawk was reported 18 May at Rothsay W.M.A., *Wilkin* (PS), MN. Rough-legged Hawks streamed through WPBO in record numbers, with 2,600 recorded during the season and a peak of 525 on 23 Apr

(staff). Also a record at that location was the season total of 95 Golden Eagles. A Gyrfalcon was photographed in Wisconsin 26 Mar in *Bayfield* (RB).

A Virginia Rail 14 Mar at Bass Pond, *Hennepin* (BB, SC), was record-early for Minnesota. Dry conditions in the early part of the season provided excellent shorebird habitat in the Region, resulting in an excellent shorebird migration in all three states. Many species arrived early and numbers were above average for most common species. Average numbers of the federally endangered Piping Plover were seen. A **Black-necked Stilt** 24 May at Pierce L., *Martin* (MKe), provided Minnesota's 4th state record; Wisconsin had 2 in the Manitowoc impoundment 23 May (CS, TU). Two American Avocets 31 Mar at Salt L., *Lac Qui Parle* (BF), were record-early in Minnesota, as were 3 on 14 Apr in Green Bay, WI (DT, JR). Also record-early in Minnesota was a Greater Yellowlegs 7 Mar in *Nobles* (CM). A count of 494 Lesser Yellowlegs 28 Apr at Pt. Mouillee, *Monroe* (WP), provided a new high for Michigan. A **Long-billed Curlew** 18–23 Apr at Manston W.M.A. in *Wilkin* (BT) was the first in Minnesota since 1991. A flock of 115 Ruddy Turnstones 29 May in Duluth was the largest in spring in Minnesota since the early 1970s. Very early in Michigan was a Pectoral Sandpiper 6 Mar at Pt. Mouillee (KT), while the 1604 individuals there 19 Apr (AB) was a record total for the state. At

least 2 of the Purple Sandpipers that wintered in Muskegon remained until 10 Mar (AB, GW, ES), providing Michigan's first March record. A breeding-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper was seen 26–27 May at Green Bay, WI (JR). Very rare in the region in spring was the Buff-breasted Sandpiper 13 May at *Blue Earth*, MN (AH). A count of 174 Common Snipe at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw*, MI (DP), provided a record for that location.

The only jaeger reports in the Region came from Michigan, where 7 Parasitics were seen 8–27 May, with a peak of 3 on 27 May at WPBO (staff). In Michigan, Laughing Gulls were reported 15 May at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (WJ) and 16 May at Nayanquing, *Bay* (DD). Wisconsin had a Laughing Gull 12 May at Milwaukee (MK). A Franklin's Gull 2 Mar in *Jackson* (KB) tied Minnesota's earliest arrival record. Little Gulls were seen in Michigan 24 Mar at Pt. Mouillee (AB), 15 Apr on Thorne L., *Jackson* (DBr, MJ), and 6 May at the mouth of the Pilgrim River, *Houghton* (RH); Minnesota had one 13–14 May at Duluth (PS, et al.). An ad. **California Gull** was photographed 8 May in Fond du Lac, WI (TS); another was seen 13 May at Sham L., *Cottonwood*, MI (PE). An adult **Ivory Gull** reported 13 Mar on the St. Croix River (PR) was seen in both Wisconsin (*Pierce*) and Minnesota (*Washington*); the latter record is still pending review by MORC. An Arctic Tern was photographed 27 May near Racine, WI (BH). Also in that state was a **Long-billed Murrelet** on Big Cedar L., *Washington*, 6–7 Mar (RD et al.).

DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** was at a feeder in *Rock*, WI, mid-Jan into late Apr (RP). Also in that state was a Barn Owl 19 Mar in *Pierce* (NCA). Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported Northern Hawk Owls, surprising since neither had reports during the previous winter. In Michigan, there were 7 sightings 7 Apr–1 May of at least 3 birds at WPBO (staff), while Wisconsin had one 15–21 Apr in Thunder L. Marsh. Hawk Owls lingered to 1 Mar in Minnesota in *Aitkin*



The Lark Bunting is rare east or west of its breeding range in the Great Plains, so this male at Stoney Point, Minnesota, 13–17 May 2000 was a nice find. The photo was taken 14 May. Photograph by Peder Svingen

and until early March in *St. Louis*. Great Gray Owls were found nesting in Minnesota in the Sax-Zim bog, *St. Louis*, and also seen in *Aitkin*, *Cook*, *Marshall*, *Pine*, and *Roseau*. In Michigan there were 9 sightings of Great Grays at WPBO 13 Apr–5 May, with a maximum of 2 on 24 & 27 Apr (staff). Michigan reported a good migration of Long-eared Owls during the season and Short-eared Owls were reported in good numbers Regionwide. Windy conditions influenced the Boreal Owl survey in Minnesota, where only 7 calling males were counted, down from 15 in 1999 (BL). In Michigan, 8 Boreal Owls were banded at WPBO 2–19 Apr, with a peak of 3 on 19 Apr (staff). Unfortunately banding was terminated early at WPBO due to a predator problem; prior to the closure, 97 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded, including an impressive 54 on 19 Apr (staff). A **Chuck-will's-widow** was heard calling 5 May in *Ozaukee* (JF), providing a rare record for Wisconsin. Minnesota had its first record of **White-throated Swift** when an exhausted bird was picked up in downtown Minneapolis 10 May; the bird later died and the specimen was preserved at the Bell Museum (RZ). A Three-toed Woodpecker was seen 23 May at the Headwaters Environmental Station, *Houghton*, MI (MS). An Alder Flycatcher in the Lost Nations SGA, *Hillsdale* (JRe), and a Willow Flycatcher in Okemos Township, *Ingham* (BCo), both 9 May, were early for Michigan; a Willow 29 May in *Houghton* (JY) was unprecedented in the Keewenaw Peninsula. Wisconsin reported a Western Kingbird 23–24 May in *Ozaukee* (BC, TU et al.). Also in Wisconsin was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 29 May in *Ozaukee* (NC, TU et al.); another was in Minnesota 6 May at Minneopa S.P., *Blue Earth*. A **Plumbeous Vireo** 13 May in Minnesota (PE) will provide a first state record if accepted by MORC. In Wisconsin, a Blue-headed Vireo 13 Apr in Madison (DF) was record-early.

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

The thrush migration was considered almost nonexistent in Wisconsin. A Townsend's Solitaire was found in Michigan 23 Mar near Eagle Harbor, *Keewenaw* (JY), while Minnesota had individuals 23 Apr in Duluth (*vide* DBe) and 5 May at Thompson Park, *Dakota* (DZ). A **Sage Thrasher** was present in Minnesota from sometime in Feb to 4 Mar in Edina, *Hennepin* (DBr, VK, RJ). The **Curve-billed Thrasher** overwintering in *Wilkin* was last seen 24 Mar (*vide* SM, DM). A Bohemian Waxwing at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw*, 15–17 May (MH, JHu, BG, CSz) was late for cen. Michigan.

Minnesotans characterized the warbler migration as poor, while Wisconsin observers gave varied opinions, noting good concentrations at some locations. Michigan had a fair migration, with many species arriving earlier than normal; a Northern Parula 9 Apr in *Dane* was record-early in Wisconsin (TK). Unusual in the Region was an Audubon's Warbler 29 May in *Lake*, MN (SS et al.). Also in Minnesota, a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was present 23–24 May at Two Harbors, *Lake* (JLi, SLi, et al.). A pair of Yellow-throated Warblers was at Sibley S.P., *Kandiyohi* (RE), site of Minnesota's only nesting record. A Mourning Warbler 8 May at Warren Dunes, *Berrien* (WJ), was early in Michigan. All three states had good numbers of "southern" warblers this season.

Individual **Western Tanagers** were seen 3 May in Byron Center, *Kent*, MI (FS), 13 May in Morris, *Stevens*, MN (DS), and 27 Apr–1 May in *Trempealeau*, WI (FL). The only Spotted Towhees in the Region were in Minnesota, where individuals were seen 30 Apr at Elizabeth and in *Otter Tail* (SM, DM) and *Lac Qui Parle* (PC, PS). In Michigan, Lark Sparrows were seen 12 May at Tahquamenon S.P., *Luce* (AB) and another was at WPBO 28 May (JG, JRe, m.ob.). Unexpected along the North Shore of Minnesota were Lark Sparrows were unexpected along the North Shore 13 May in *St. Louis* (TW) and 14 May in *Lake* (JLi).

Lark Buntings were present in Minnesota 13–17 May at Stoney Point, *St. Louis* (RKO, et al.), and in Michigan 14–15 May at WPBO (ST, LD). A breeding-plumaged male **McCown's Longspur** 8 May in Duluth (DB et al.) provided only the 3rd Minnesota record in the past 100 years. Also in Minnesota was a female **Black-headed Grosbeak** 13 May in *Lyons* (PE). Blue Grosbeaks were recorded in Wisconsin in May in *LaCrosse* and in Minnesota 14–16 May in Grand Marais, *Cook* (NB, KH, MHo). Minnesota provided the only reports of **Lazuli Bunting**, a male 16–20 May at Lynd, *Lyon* (RM), and of **Painted Bunting**, a male that returned 5 May to the same feeder it visited last year in *Hennepin* (MN). In Michigan, a **Boat/Great-tailed Grackle** was seen 29 May at WPBO (PC, GB, DJ et al.); the record is pending MBRC review. In Minnesota, a male **Great-tailed Grackle** was photographed 14 May in *Cottonwood* (BBo), while at least three pairs were found at the Grovers Lake W.M.A., *Jackson*, where nesting was first confirmed in 1998. For the 2nd consecutive spring Michigan hosted a

Brambling, an individual present 31 Mar–10 Apr near Atlanta, *Montmorency* (MM, BGr, AB, m.ob.).

Corrigenda: The Sage Thrasher reported 21 May 1999 in *St. Louis*, Minnesota (*N. Am Birds* 53:283), was found by MORC to lack sufficient documentation.

Observers (Subregional editors in bold-face): Adam Byrne, Bruce Baer, Glenn Belyea, Dave Benson, Brad Bolduan, Ryan Brady, Dorothy Brindle (DBr), Nick Brisson, Don Brooks (DBr), Nathan Carlsen (NcA), Steve Carlson, Phil Chu, Bruce Cohen (BCo), Bill Cowart, Julie Craves, Noel Cutright, Paul Cypher (PCy), Robert Domagalski, Louis Dombroski, Dan Duso, Paul Egelund, Ron Erpelding, Bruce Fall, David Fallow, Jim Frank, Jim Granlund, Bob Grefe, Bill Grigg (BGr), Glenn Helgeland, Anthony Hertz, Jan Hewitt, Ken Hoffman (KH), Molly Hoffman (MHo), Aaron Holschbach (AHo), Mark Hubinger, Joanie Hubinger (JHu), Bob Huges, Robert Janssen, Don Jennette, Wendy Jones, Margaret Jowett, Vija Kelly, Matthew Kenne (MKe), Rachel Kostelic (RKO), Mark Korducki, Thomas Kozlovsky, Jim Lind (JLi), Sharon Lind (SLi), Sue Levy, Paul Jantscher, Craig Mandel, William Marengo, Barbara Martin, Dennis Martin, Robert Meyer, Mike Moran, David Neitzel, Chris Neri, Mary Ann Novak, Andy Palios, Walt Pawloski, Dave Peters, Ray Potter, Shaun Putz, John Regan, **Jack Reinoehl** (JRe; Michigan), Peter Rodewald, Frank Schermer, Robert Smidt, Karen Smith, James Schei (JSc), Steve Schon, Tom Schultz, Micheal Scheiwe, Ellen Slater, Charles Sontag, Jerry Smith, Douglas Stemke, **Peder Svingen** (Minnesota), Carolyn Szaroletta (CSz), **Daryl Tessen** (Wisconsin), Scott Terry, Brett Tilly, Kevin Thomas, Tom Tustinon, Tom Uttech, Terry Wiens, Steven Weston (SWe), George Wickstrom, Scott Wolff, Joe Youngman, Robert Zink, David Zumeta.



ABA Sales

Every birder's source for
birding supplies

- reference books
- regional guides
- videos
- CDs
- software
- optics and birding gear

800/634-7736