

bers of Brewer's Blackbirds in parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba contrast with an apparent (and not entirely unwelcome) collapse of Common Grackle numbers in se. Manitoba. At least 21 sightings of Orchard Oriole attest to this species' consolidation in se. Saskatchewan. Rare even in sw. Saskatchewan was a Bullock's Oriole at Eastend 3 Jul (WH).

EXOTICS

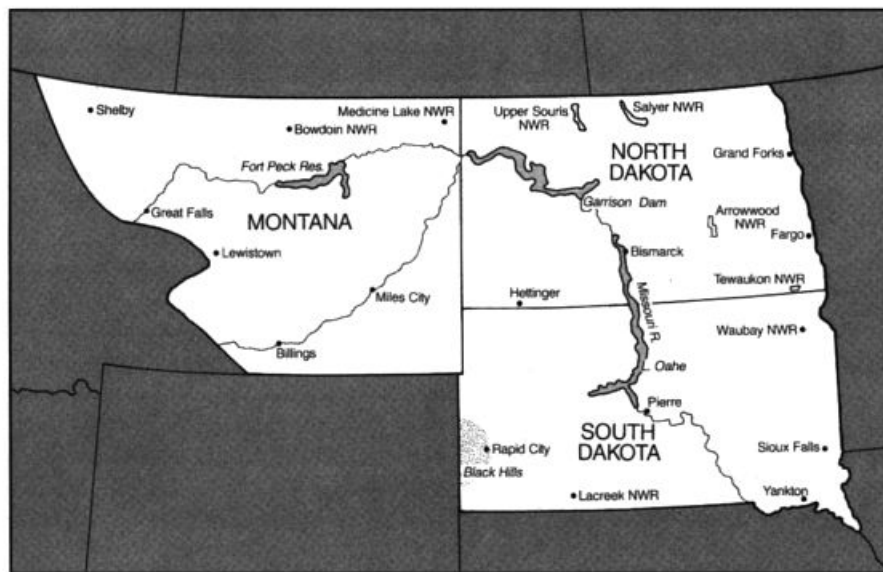
A flamingo at Coldspring L., SK, 5 Jun (MSk) was later identified as Chilean (SS, LW).

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northern great plains



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June was wet and cool and July was hot and humid with average precipitation. After years of very high water levels, many areas finally saw some decreases, however, locally massive rains in some parts of eastern North Dakota kept levels up in those areas. For example, 12–14 June saw 17–19 in. (43–48 cm) of rainfall in western Grand Forks County, North Dakota. Waterbirds again had a very successful year, and migrant shorebirds made a strong showing. Numerous significant nesting records and range expansions were documented.

EGRETS THROUGH DUCKS

The explosion in numbers of large waders that began in the early 1990s continued unabated. Among the thousands of nests at Hecla, Brown, SD, were 240 Great Egret nests (DNS). Snowy Egrets were noted at five locations in North Dakota, and nesting was confirmed at Long L. N.W.R., Burleigh, a first for the refuge (KL). Tricolored Herons have been seen in South Dakota four of the last five years. This summer singles were in Clark 24 Jun (JSP, RFS) and Brown 15 Jul (RDO). Thousands of Cattle Egret nests were in the Hecla, SD, colony, and the now locally common species barely merits a mention in the eastern Dakotas.

A White-faced Ibis was unusual in Stanley, SD, 17 Jun (DB), and 30 nests were

counted at the Hecla, SD, colony (REM). The species was noted from six locations in North Dakota, with a new breeding area documented at L. Alice N.W.R., Ramsey (JB). In Montana, four nests at Medicine L. N.W.R. were a first for the refuge (RS). If accepted, a **Glossy Ibis** at Hecla, SD, 1–15 Jul would be a first for the state (†KB). Turkey Vultures were unusually common in the Bowdoin area in Montana this summer, with a peak of 17 at Nelson Res. 27 Jul (SD).

A **Ross's Goose** in Sully, SD, 3 Jun and 3 Jul provided the first summer record for the state (RDO). A brood of Cinnamon Teal in Grant 2 Jul furnished the 3rd nesting record for North Dakota (REM). A **Long-tailed Duck** in Grand Forks, ND, 19 Jun provided the 2nd summer record for the state (EEF).

KITES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Subject to review, a **White-tailed Kite** in Stanley, SD, 8 Jul would furnish the 3rd record for the state (†ME). A Sharpshinned Hawk in Stanley 5 Jul was well east of known breeding areas in South Dakota (RDO). Cooper's Hawks, which began nesting commonly in North Dakota cities in the past decade, are now beginning to nest in open farm country in shelter-belts and single-row plantings. Murphy has now documented at least nine nests in this habitat. An adult Northern Goshawk 26 Jul in the Little Rockies, MT, was an unusual summer record (SD, AB).

A Red-shouldered Hawk in Renville, ND, 6 Jul provided the 17th record for the state (BM, BR). Furnishing the 2nd and

3rd summer records for North Dakota, **Rough-legged Hawks** were in *Kidder* 2 Jun (DNS) and *Sheridan* 11 Jun (REM). An adult Golden Eagle 26 Jun near Walhalla caused speculation of possible nesting in ne North Dakota (DOL). The recent nesting of Merlins in North Dakota cities documented in previous columns continues to increase. First nests were documented this summer in Minot (REM) and Jamestown (LDI), and a nest was found in farm country in rural *Ward* in a single-row shelter-belt (BM).

Very rare in Montana, a Yellow Rail was far west at Bowdoin N.W.R. 25 Jul, in the same area where the species has been noted in the past (DP). Unusual in late June in South Dakota, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, and Hudsonian Godwit were all recorded 22 Jun in *Brown* (KB). A pair of nesting Black-necked Stilts were photographed 16 Jun in *Towner*, ND (RH, WM). This provided the 3rd breeding record for the state. A single Dinlin noted several times in July at Bowdoin, MT, was very unusual for summer (DP, SD, AB). An American Woodcock was west of its known range in *Hughes*, SD, 16 Jul (RDO).

GULLS THROUGH NIGHTJARS

A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was documented at Devils Lake 26 Jun (†JHa). This furnished the 6th record for North Dakota and the second for summer. **Caspian Terns** have been increasing in recent years, and new nesting areas were recorded this year in all three states. An adult on a nest at Bowdoin, MT, 5 Jun provided a first refuge record (DP, KE, MG, PW). South Dakota's 2nd confirmed nesting was documented from Bitter L., *Day*, 22 Jun (KB). In North Dakota nesting was photographed at L. Alice N.W.R., the first nesting record away from the traditional L. William's area (JB, MC, WM). A large colony of 600 Common Terns was noted at Horsehead L., *Kidder*, ND, 2 Jun (DNS, REM). An Arctic Tern nest at Bowdoin, MT, 24 Jun hatched 3 young, but they quickly disappeared (SD, AB) A Least Tern nest was found at Medicine L. N.W.R., providing the first refuge record and the first nesting away from a major river in Montana (RS).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** was photographed at Ft. Peck, MT, 11-12 Jul (†CC), providing only the 2nd record for the Northern Great Plains portion of Montana. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in two locations in *Pembina*, ND, 17 & 26 Jun furnished the state's 7th and 8th records (†DOL). Present since the spring season, a

pair was videotaped copulating in Dickinson, *Stark*, ND, during the season (SW).

Casual in Montana, a Barn Owl was s. of Malta 26 Jul (PW, MG). An adult **Barred Owl** with 3 begging young in *Richland*, ND, 7 Jul provided only the 2nd confirmed breeding record for the species, which is uncommon and local in the Sheyenne R. valley (†REM, CDE). Two adult **Chuck-will's-widows** with a recently fledged young were documented below Oahe Dam, SD, 4 Jul in the area where a bird was calling in May (†SL, DB, RDO). This provided the first nesting record for South Dakota and the region.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt N.P. 21 Jul was well west of normal breeding range (SSP, KLP). In Montana a Red-naped Sapsucker in the Little Rockies 16 Jul was east of known breeding areas (DP). A **Western Scrub-Jay** was photographed just east of Great Falls, MT, 30 May (†CM). If accepted, this would furnish the first record for Montana and the region. Summer Common Raven sightings in North Dakota are on the increase. This year a single was in *Stark* 8 Jul (HCT).

Two singing Brown Creepers in the Little Rockies, MT, 21 Jul indicated possible breeding east of their range in the state (SD, AB). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were feeding young 23 Jun at the Denbigh Experimental Forest, ND, for the 2nd confirmed nesting in the state (†REM). A **Sage Thrasher** in *Bowman*, ND 1 Jul provided about the 10th state record (†DAG, CG). An Orange-crowned Warbler in good habitat at Denbigh Experimental Forest, ND, 23 Jun was south of known breeding areas (REM), and a Yellow-breasted Chat singing in *Richland*, ND, 24 Jun was well out of range (SSP, KLP). There are no breeding records for the eastern half of North Dakota.

SPARROWS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

A pair of Baird's Sparrows in *Ransom*, ND, 22 Jun was southeast of their present range (SSP, KLP). For the 3rd consecutive year, Henslow's Sparrows were found in North Dakota. Providing about the 18th and 19th records, up to 3 individuals were noted in two *Ransom* locations 20 Jun-10 Jul (SSP, KLP, DMS). A dependent young **White-throated Sparrow** in the International

Peace Gardens, *Rolette*, ND, 22 Jul provided the 2nd state nesting record for the species, which is rare but regular in the Turtle Mts (†REM, DNS). Furnishing the 5th summer record for South Dakota, a Harris's Sparrow was in *Charles Mix* 10 & 15 Jul (RM). Three Pink-sided Juncos noted 3 Jul in the Little Rockies, MT, were e. of confirmed breeding range (DP). Prellwitz observed that numbers of McCown's Longspurs in the Bowdoin, MT, area continue to fall.

Casual in North Dakota, a Blue Grosbeak was at the Schnell Ranch, *Stark*, 8 Jul (JH). A major invasion of Dickcissels occurred in North Dakota, and the species was easily found in counties adjoining or south of I-94. Talkington recorded the species in 21 North Dakota counties. In Montana, the species was noted for the 2nd consecutive year: a bird e. of Colstrip was still being seen 15 Jul for the 17th Montana record. **Great-tailed Grackles** invaded se North Dakota. With only one previous record, the species was noted at three locations in *Richland* and *Ransom* 21 Jun-15 Jul (SSP, KLP, SMS, DZ, †DMS). Up to 5 individuals were at one location, and nesting was strongly suspected. A few Lesser Goldfinches have been regular in the last decade, exclusively in *Fall River* in the southern Black Hills of South Dakota. This year the species was noted 13 Jun-4 Jul in *Butte* in the northern Black Hills (RAS).

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