

Prairie Provinces



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August and September were generally warm and dry in Alberta, but wetter to the east, whereas October was sunny and windy. Huge amounts of precipitation around the start of November in southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba resulted in high water levels and worries about spring flooding. Freeze-up occurred in the first half of November, earlier than in recent years. The latter part of the period in particular provided some exceptional rarities and lingerers. Unfortunately, many worthwhile sightings could not be included.

Abbreviations: L.M.L. (Last Mountain Lake area, SK); Mt. Lorette (Mount Lorette hawk-watch, AB); MWRO (Manitoba Wildlife Rehabilitation Organization); O.H.M. (Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A., MB); R.L. (Reed Lake, SK); S.R.V. (Sheep River Valley hawk-watch, AB); W.L. (Whitewater Lake, MB).

Loons Through Falcons

Thirty Red-throated Loons migrated n. toward Hudson Bay at Dymond L., MB, 20 Oct (DF). A pair of Common Loons with a juv. at Round L.

6 Aug provided the first breeding record in the Qu'Appelle Valley, SK (BMe). A Yellow-billed Loon lingered in Calgary 29 Oct–7 Nov (RSs, m.ob.). Great Egrets were widespread in s. Manitoba, with exceptional counts at W.L. of 36+ on 29 Aug (PJ, ET), 34 on 14 Sep (LV), and 48 on 24 Sep (DCI et al.); lone birds were near Innisfail, AB, until 4 Aug (RT et al.) and at Outram, SK, 21 Aug (G&SWa). Wandering Cattle Egrets were at W.L. 7 Aug (AW, RDM) and 30–31 Aug (PJ, ET); Taber, AB, 30 Aug (LBe); and Stony Mtn., MB, 19–21 Oct (AE, LV). A Green Heron at Midale, SK, 30 Sep was a trip highlight (TK). White-faced Ibises peaked at a record-high 9 at W.L. 28 Aug (AW); 4 remained 30 Sep (TK). More expected were 23 at Okotoks, AB, 7 Aug (RB). Two Turkey Vultures at L. Athabasca in n. Saskatchewan early Aug were far n. of their known breeding range (RWr).

Rare anywhere in the region were 6 Brant at Beaverhill L., AB, 24 Sep (BH); a Black Brant was shot near Biggar, SK, 12 Oct (MN) and 12 were studied at close range at L.M.L. 26 Oct (L&GBr). A Trumpeter Swan at Beausejour, MB, 22 Oct was a good find (PT, RZ, RKO), whereas Frank L., AB, hosted 400 on 29 Oct (MM, BW). Rarely reported in fall, and exceptionally late, was a Cinnamon Teal in Edmonton, AB, 5 Nov (BP). Boosting our knowledge of fall migration at Churchill, MB, were reports of ≤10 King Eiders and 6 Harlequin Ducks 9 Oct (DCo), plus another 2

Harlequins 27 Oct (BCh). Ruddy Duck concentrations of 1000+ at Buck L. 12 Aug (FL) and 600+ at L.M.L. 26 Sep were noteworthy (BL).

A record-high 646 Bald Eagles were counted through the period at Mt. Lorette (PSh et al.). Peak Sharp-shinned Hawk tallies at Whytefold, near the sw. corner of L. Winnipeg, MB, were 133 on 7 Sep and 139 on 10 Sep (MQ). From Aug to Nov, 310 Northern Goshawks, mainly adults, passed S.R.V. (WS et al.); a more dispersed movement in s. Manitoba included 6 received at MWRO after window collisions (*vide* LT). An astounding 550 Swainson's Hawks were feeding in a 6-square km area s. of Taber 23 Sep (LBe). The highest-ever fall count of Golden Eagles at Mt. Lorette totaled 4753 birds, (PSh et al.); an amazing 1071 passed the south end of the Livingstone Range, AB, just on one day, 8 Oct (D&TD). A gray Gyrfalcon seen several times in early Aug at L. Athabasca was noteworthy (RWr).

Cranes Through Woodpeckers

An SNS group found 15 Whooping Cranes in the Radisson-Marcelin, SK, area 7 Oct. Shorebird highlights included a late Killdeer at the Gardiner Dam, SK, 12 Nov (SNS); 100+ American Avocets at W.L. 12 Oct (RKO), plus 7 stragglers at R.L. 2 Nov (WH); 900 Least Sandpipers at W.L. 28 Aug (AW); 600 Baird's Sandpipers at Chaplin L., SK, 4 Oct (TK). Single Purple Sandpipers were noted at Churchill 10 Oct (DC) and nearby Dymond L. 19–20 Oct (DF). A juv. **Ruff**, an accidental species here, was found near Calgary 26 Aug (MH, RSs). Rounding out the W.L. highlights were 100+ Stilt Sandpipers 12 Oct—a large number so late—and 5000+ Long-billed Dowitchers 11 Oct (RKO). A **Red Phalarope** at L.M.L. 16 Oct was Saskatchewan's 8th (BL), others were at Tyrrell L., AB, 3 Sep (LBe) and Calgary 24–25 Sep (RB, m.ob.).

The only inland jaegers were a Parasitic at Lesser Slave L., AB, 7 Sep (*vide* SG), a probable Parasitic at L.M.L. 24 Sep (CE), and a possible Long-tailed near Morris, MB, 26 Sep (JG). An imm. Little Gull at Delta, MB, 6 Aug (PV, CD) was followed by an ad. 31 Aug and 9 Sep (PV, CCo et al.). California Gulls, rarely reported in fall, were at Pelican L., MB, 11 Oct (RKO), Wascana L., SK, 31 Oct (RKR), and R.L. 16 Oct and 2 Nov (WH). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was in Calgary 21 Oct (TK). Potentially Alberta's 1st confirmed **Slaty-backed Gull** was a 3rd-year bird at Calgary 29 Sep–4 Oct (FG, RSs, m.ob., ph.); Saskatchewan's 4th Slaty-backed was a well-studied first-fall bird at L.M.L. 4–15 Nov (Regina Nat. Hist. group et al.). Saskatchewan's 5th **Glaucous-winged**

Gull was also at L.M.L., 30 Oct–1 Nov (CP, BL, DG); another was in Edmonton 4 Nov (TT). Four Sabine's Gulls were in the Calgary area 4–14 Sep (TK, BR, ASI). Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to make news in Saskatchewan, the latest being at Moose Jaw 25 Oct (AF).

Since late October at least 22 Snowy Owls, mostly starving immatures, were turned in to MWRO (*fide* LT), whereas only one of 11 banded near Saskatoon was emaciated (MS). Several Northern Hawk Owls ventured well outside the boreal forest, including 2 banded near Saskatoon 22 Sep (LO, MS), one seen at Delta 21 Sep (HdH, PV, CD), and another in Calgary 22 Oct (DM). Great Gray Owls were also prominent, with 18 at Buffalo Point, MB, 29 Sep (VR), 7 banded in Saskatchewan (MS, BD), and numerous other sightings. Peak counts of Short-eared Owls were 12 between Torquay and Oungre, SK, 10 Nov (*fide* BL) and 10 at O.H.M. 16 Nov (RKO, RJ). The first concerted effort to band Northern Saw-whet Owls at Delta, MB, yielded 237 captures on 32 nights between 11 Sep and 24 Oct (PV et al.). The highest count of Common Nighthawk was 224 between Manigotagan and Stead, MB, 24 Aug (DF). Two Chimney Swifts at Estevan, SK, were rare migrants (GWA). Manitoba's first Rufous Hummingbird in over a decade was at Benito 27 Sep (ASa, ph.). Manitoba Red-bellied Woodpecker reports came from Delta, Stonewall, and Winnipeg (m.ob.), and 4 "Red-shafted" Northern Flickers were noted in Saskatchewan (BL, R&GWA).

Passerines

A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was an accidental at Calgary 29 Aug (JC, YA). Unusually late were a Loggerhead Shrike near Camp Morton, MB, 14 Oct (BMa) and a Blue-headed Vireo at St. Adolphe, MB, 29 Oct (ACo). A well-described **Pinyon Jay**, the first reported in Manitoba, visited two St. Adolphe feeders 25 Oct (LL, DP, RH). Breeding of the Common Raven in the Qu'Appelle Valley was confirmed by a dependent juv. at Round L. 6 Aug (BMe). A Black-capped Chickadee was an accidental at Dymond L. 25 Oct (DF), as were Manitoba's 12th Carolina Wren at Headingley 15 and 29 Oct (BS) and an Eastern Bluebird at Riley, AB, 10 Sep (JM). Extremely late were a Gray-cheeked Thrush in Winnipeg 1 Nov (AW, CA) and an American Pipit at Pine Coulee, AB, 11 Nov (TK).

A Tennessee Warbler at Winnipeg 29 Oct was very late (RC). Rare warblers in Alberta included a Northern Parula banded at Calgary 8 Sep (RDi, ph.) and another found dead at Morinville 28 Oct (*fide* JH, ph.); and 2 Black-throated Blue Warblers at Medicine Hat 24 Sep

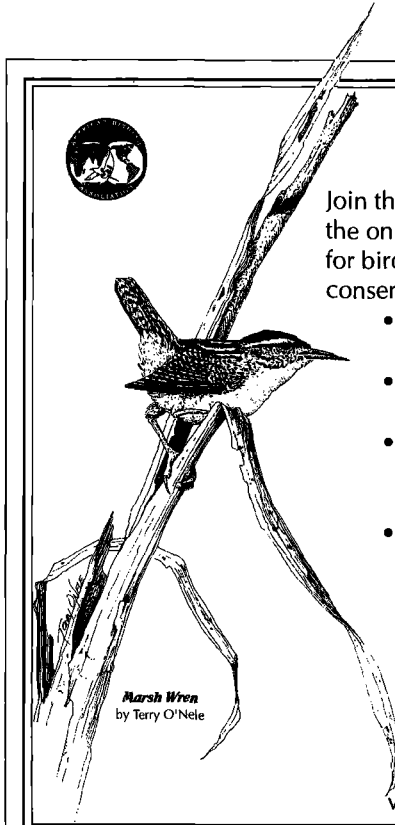
(BV), plus one at Calgary 15 Oct (CS). Audubon's Warblers were e. of their range, both on 24 Sep, at Weyburn—a window-kill (MB, CB)—and Regina (FL). Alberta's 2nd **Hooded Warbler** was a long-lingering, well-photographed female at Banff N.P. 3 Sep–9 Oct (ACh, HM, m.ob.); Manitoba's 11th and latest-ever was in Winnipeg 10 Nov (RKO). Summer Tanagers, almost annual in Manitoba now, were at St. Adolphe 3 Oct (RDC et al.) and Grand Beach 4 Nov (MNS party). Late Manitoba sparrows included a Vesper at River Hills 10–11 Nov (PT, RZ), a Savannah near Niverville 13 Nov (ACo), and a White-throated at Dymond L. 18 Oct (DF), whereas a Harris's Sparrow at Delta 2 Aug was exceptionally early (HdH, PV). Also lingering were a Clay-colored Sparrow at Calgary 5–20 Nov (AS), a McCown's Longspur near Val Marie, SK, 2 Oct (WH), and a Smith's Longspur near Patricia Beach, MB, 24 Oct (GH, RSh), whereas Snow Buntings at Patricia and Victoria Beaches 12 Sep (GH, RSh, CCs) and Camrose, AB, 10 Sep (BP) were a month ahead of schedule.

Addendum

The first documented breeding of Arctic Tern in Alberta was confirmed when three nests with eggs were found at L. Athabasca 19 June (BCa, RT).

Observers (subregional compilers in boldface): C. Artuso, Y. Attia, M. Bailey, R Barclay, L. Bennett (LBe), C. Bjorklund, L.&G Brotzel (L&GBr), B. Carroll (BCa), B. Charter (BCh), A. Chen (ACh), R. Clarke, D. Clayton (DCI), J. Collyer, D. Couchman (DCo), A Courcelles (ACo), C. Curtis (CCs), C. Cuthbert (CCT), B. Dalziel, R. De Cruyenaere (RDC), R De Mey (RDM), H. den Haan, C. De Ruyck, R Dickson (RDi), D.&T. Dolman, C. Ellington, A Ens, D. Fast, A. Fox, K. Gardner, D. Gilroy, S Gosche, F. Grenon, G. Grief, J. Grief, R. Hancox, W. Harris, **M. Harrison**, G. Holland, P Horch, B. Hornby, J. Hudon, R. John, P. Jones, I.&K. Kingdon, R. Koes (RKO), T. Korolyk, R Kreba (RKR), F. Lahrman, L. Layman, **B. Luterbach**, B. Maciejko (BMa), J. Manchuk, Manitoba Naturalists Society (MNS), D McKibbin, B. Metzler (BMe), H. Moss, M Mulligan, M. Newton, L. Oliphant, B. Parsons, E. Peterson, D. Pohl, C. Pollock, M. Quigly, V Reimer, B. Ritchie, P. Sargent (PSa), Saskatchewan Nature Society (SNS), A. Satz (ASa), P. Sherrington (PSh), B. Shettler, A. Slater (ASL), W. Smith, R. Staniforth (RSh), C. Stevens, M Stoffel, R. Storms (RSs), P. Taylor, R. Thomas, T. Thormin, E. Thornton, L. Tretiak, L. Veelma, B Velter, D. Vetter, P. Viola, B. Walker, A. Walleyn, G.&S. Wapple (G&SWa), R. Wapple (RWA), S Wilson (SWi), R. Wright (RWr), R. Zach.





Marsh Wren
by Terry O'Nele

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