

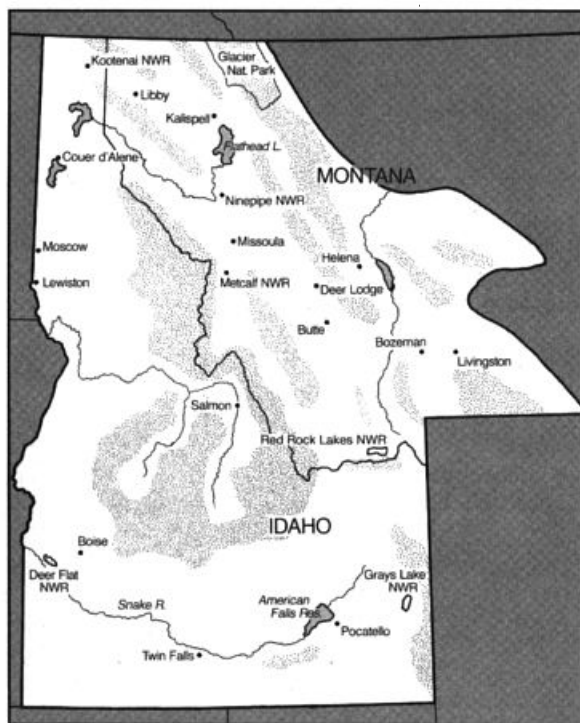
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Idaho-Western Montana



Owl and Clay-colored Sparrow in Idaho and Black-necked Stilt in western Montana. Just as interesting were rare bird highlights that included the Region's first Eastern Towhee and second Yellow-throated Warbler.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., by American Falls, Idaho); Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); Lee Metcalf (Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Ravalli, MT); I.B.O. (Idaho Bird Observatory at Lucky Peak, near Boise, ID); Market L. (Market Lake W.M.A., Jefferson, ID).

LOONS THROUGH MURRELETS

A breeding-plumaged Pacific Loon that stayed in *Bonner*, ID until at least 16 Jun (LH, CS) provided a rare summer record. American White Pelicans were unusually plentiful in s Idaho, and good numbers were reported n. of typical range: 8 showed up in *Boundary*, ID 2 Jul (PC), one stopped in *Nez Perce*, ID 11–12 Jul (KC), and about 20 stayed in *Lake*, MT (DC) throughout the period. Waders also strayed n., including single Great Egrets near Whitefish, MT 5 Jun (BT) and at Lee Metcalf 9–27 Jul (WT), and a Green Heron at Lee Metcalf 4 Jul (CK). An apparent summering Snow Goose at A.F.R. 13 Jul (BD) was noteworthy. Harlequin Ducks made news in both states: one strayed to Coeur d'Alene L., *Kootenai*, ID 24 Jun (SL), and a female with hatchlings near Missoula, MT (MCo) 8 Jul provided the 2nd local breeding record in 30+ years. A Long-tailed Duck that showed up in *Flathead* 20–27 Jul (DC, BR) represented a 2nd summer record for Montana.

A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk in *Madison*, MT 2 Jun (MB, JP) was at least a month late

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The summer of 2001 brought normal to slightly above-normal temperatures and precipitation to the Region. Unfortunately, rainfall was poorly distributed, with storms tracking mainly through northern parts, leaving large areas of southern Idaho critically dry. A surprising snowstorm that hit western Montana in early to mid-June was the weath-

er event of the season, dumping up to 15 inches of wet snow, that caused considerable damage to trees and disrupted nesting birds across an extensive area. The summer rains did little to reverse the trend of declining lakes and reservoirs that was set in motion by last winter's deficient snowpack. The inevitable draw-down of these inadequately filled impoundments resulted in significant nest abandonment by waterbirds but provided expansive mudflats that attracted more than usual numbers of migrating shorebirds.

It was a very exciting summer, with new nesting records added for Northern Hawk

Up to 8 **Black-necked Stilts** summered and fledged young in *Flathead* (BR), furnishing w. Montana's long-anticipated first nesting record. Sadly, Idaho's only reported Upland Sandpiper was in *Bonner* 6 Jun (BB); they appear to be dangerously close to extirpation in the Gem State. The best shorebirds of the period were a **Whimbrel** near Missoula, MT 1 Jun (LW), a very early **Stilt Sandpiper** at A.F.R. 28–29 Jun (DCl, CT), and a **Short-billed Dowitcher** in *Flathead*, MT 31 Jul (BR). Unlike in recent years, a **Franklin's Gull** seen at Mann L., ID 3 Jun (KSo) was the only one reported n. of expected range in se. Idaho. Both rare and a bit late was an ad. **Arctic Tern** that graced A.F.R. 18–25 Jun (DCl, CT). An incredible sighting of an **Ancient Murrelet** on a remote section of the Middle Fork of the Salmon R., *Valley* and *Lemhi*, 26 Jul (MH) provided Idaho's 5th record.

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Up to 3 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued near American Falls, ID throughout the period (CT), although no nesting was reported. **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** are one of Idaho's most endangered birds, but surprising numbers were reported this season. Up to 4 were discovered in *Blaine* 24 Jun (DT), and singles were found in Idaho Falls 25 Jun (KJ), *Bingham* 19 Jul (JT), *Boise* 11 Jul (CSy), *Canyon* 14 Jul (CSy), and *Jefferson* 9 Jul (CW). A **ground-nesting Flammulated Owl** with fledglings found in a burned forest near Darby, MT 15 Jun (KS) was likely unprecedented. One of the major highlights of the season was the discovery of a pair of **Northern Hawk Owls** with fledglings at a remote mountain lake in *Boundary* 12 Jul (ph. LB, EC, MCr) that provided Idaho's first nesting record. An out-of-range **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** that frequented feeders near Bozeman, MT in early Jun (JP, R&RW) was newsworthy.

Two **Alder Flycatchers** were found in *Flathead*, MT 10 Jun (DC), where they are less than annual migrants. Idaho's very local **Least Flycatchers** were reported at expected locations in *Boundary*, *Camas*, and *Jefferson* throughout the period, but others in *Adams* 10 Jun (DT), *Custer* 18 Jun (HR), and *Minidoka* 22 Jun (SB) were much more unusual. Idaho's 10th **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was captured 23 Jul at I.B.O. (JC), where all records of this enigmatic species have been made. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** found near Three Forks 10 Jun (BP) was Montana's 11th.

JAYS THROUGH GRACKLES

Blue Jays are now considered common resi-

dents in Kalispell, MT (DC), but one near Bozeman, MT 22 Jun (JP) was very unusual. A **Purple Martin** in *Broadwater*, MT 29 Jul (R&RW) was the Region's first report in many years. **Northern Mockingbirds** were unusually scarce in Idaho; 2 in *Bingham* 14 Jul (JTU) were the only reports. It was an outstanding season for rare **Parulidae**. The lineup of best warblers included a **Tennessee Warbler** in *Boundary*, ID 6 Jun (DD), Idaho's 4th **Northern Parula** at Market L. 8 Jun (GR), Idaho's 10th **Magnolia Warbler** in Moscow 10 Jun (CS), Idaho's 2nd **Yellow-throated Warbler** in *Fremont* 18 Jun (†DCl, ph. CW), a **Black-and-white Warbler** in *Bingham*, ID 11 Jun (DM), and single **Ovenbirds** at Camas 2 Jun (MJ, DT) and near Bozeman, MT 7 Jun (JP). Apparently, Idaho's **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** "invasion" continued past the spring season, with singles found in *Oneida* 2–28 Jun (JS) and near Boise 9–14 Jun (D&EF, m. ob.), and a pair in *Jefferson* 10 Jun (TK).

The bird of the season was the Region's first **Eastern Towhee** at Market L. 3–4 Jun (D&EF, m. ob.). Also exciting was the discovery of a pair of **Clay-colored Sparrows** with nestlings in *Bonner* 15 Jul (DD, m. ob.) that provided Idaho's first nesting record. Idaho's **Great-tailed Grackle** numbers were the lowest in at least three years, with sightings of 5 that included a fledgling at the resident colony in Marsing, *Owyhee*, ID 20 Jul (RLR, DT) and a male near A.F.R. 20 Jul (CT). Idaho **Common Grackles** were observed in *Bingham* and *Fremont*, where they are rare but now expected, but singles at Camas 2 Jun (DT) and in Boise 25 Jun (MC) were more unusual.

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