

Northern Great Plains



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Much of the Region experienced very dry conditions and above-average temperatures. Almost no precipitation fell in eastern Montana and the western Dakotas. Rivers and lakes in those areas were very low by the end of the period. In the eastern Dakotas, water levels declined but were still adequate. November was particularly warm, with even small water bodies open until the 25th of the month. A violent storm hit the Fort Peck, Montana area in August, and many birds were killed.

Codes: Sightings marked with a + are subject to review by the appropriate state committee.

LOONS THROUGH GROUSE

A juv. **Red-throated Loon** 8-19 Nov at Ft. Peck, MT would provide about the 10th record for the state (CC+). Furnishing the 7th record for South Dakota was a **Pacific Loon** in *Fall River* 20 Oct (TJ+). In Montana, a single Pacific Loon was noted at Deadman's Basin Res. 22-24 Oct (DC).

A new high count for North Dakota, 110 Great Egrets were tallied in *Sargent* 11 Aug (DNS). A late Cattle Egret was ne. of Billings, MT 13 Nov (GM). The latest report for North Dakota, a Green Heron was in Fargo 27 Oct (DPW). Eight times the previous high for North Dakota, 400 White-faced Ibis were counted in *Sargent* 11 Aug. Notably far n., and a first county record, 51 White-faced Ibis were in *Bottineau*, ND 6 Sep (REM).

A Harlequin Duck in *Grand Forks*, ND 4-11 Nov furnished the 15th report for the state and the 4th documented by photograph (EEF, DOL, ph.). Casual in South Dakota, 2 Black Scoters were in *Stanley* 18 Oct (RDO+). About the 13th report for North Dakota, a Barrow's Goldeneye was studied at Hettinger 26 Nov (DAG, CG+). In Montana, a single was at Bowdoin N.W.R. 25 Oct (DP). The species was also noted at its traditional wintering spot at Canyon L. in Rapid City, SD (JLB).

An Osprey in *Yankton*, SD 22 Nov was late (SVS). Providing the 18th report for North Dakota, and the first for fall, a **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen in *Pierce* 19 Nov (GAE+). Late and notably far e., a Ferruginous Hawk was in *Grand Forks* 11 Nov (RC). Rough-legged Hawks made a good showing in North Dakota, with a peak of 48 in *Grand Forks* 29 Nov (EEF).

Gray Partridge continues its slow recovery in North Dakota and Montana. West of normal breeding areas in Minnesota, a Ruffed Grouse was unusual in Fargo 21 Nov (DPW).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

Three Black-bellied Plovers at Medicine L., MT 2 Nov were late (EM, MR). Details were submitted for a **Pacific Golden-Plover** at Bowdoin N.W.R., MT 24 & 31 Oct (DP+). If accepted, this would provide the first record for Montana and the Region. Furnishing the 4th nesting for North Dakota, a Black-necked Stilt with a large chick was documented in *Cass* 10 Aug (REM, CDE, HCT+). A notable peak of 500 American Avocets was recorded 14 Oct in *Sully*, SD (RDO). Also in South Dakota, a Greater Yellowlegs was late 23 Nov in *Brown* (DAT).

About the 10th record for Montana, a **Red Phalarope** was at Freezeout L. 27-31 Oct (JN, MS+).

Providing the 8th record for North Dakota, an ad. **Mew Gull** was at Garrison Dam 18 Nov (REM, DNS+). An ad. Sabine's Gull found dead 12 Aug at Audubon N.W.R., ND furnished the first record for the state in that month (SW, REM, ph.). A South Dakota Sabine's Gull report came from *Hughes* 22 Sep (JSP, RFS+), and in Montana a single was documented at Bowdoin N.W.R. 3 Oct (DP+). Three times the previous high, 6000 Black Terns were at *Sargent*, ND 11 Aug (REM, DNS).

Eurasian Collared-Doves were noted at four South Dakota and two North Dakota locations. A major invasion of Snowy Owls began across the Region in Nov, with single day counts reaching double digits in some areas of North Dakota. An unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbird documented 3 Sep in Dickinson would provide the 3rd record for North Dakota (JPL, REM, DNS+). Regular fall migrants in ne. Montana, at least 12 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were tallied 12-30 Aug.

The latest report ever for North Dakota, and the first for Oct, an Eastern Wood-Pewee was noted in Fargo 14 Oct (DPW). Casual in Montana, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were again noted in Westby, with a single 19 Aug, 2 banded 30 Aug, and a single seen 1 Sep (TN, JM).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

Casual in South Dakota, a White-eyed Vireo 12 Oct in *Brown* provided only the 2nd fall record for the species (CDE, HCT, REM+). Casual in Montana, **Philadelphia Vireos** were noted at Westby 29 & 30 Aug (JM). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was late 16 Nov in *McKenzie*, ND (JAH). Increasingly noted in the w. Dakotas, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were in Dickinson, ND 3 Sep (JPL) and in *Custer*, SD 19 Aug (JSP). Tying the latest report for North Dakota, a Wood Thrush was a window-kill victim in *Grand Forks* 15 Nov (RC).

It was another stellar fall for e. warblers in e. Montana, with 21 species recorded: 19 at Westby and 14 at Ft. Peck. In nw. North Dakota, 25 species were tallied at Minot. Casual in the Dakotas, Blue-winged Warblers were documented 25 Aug in *Ransom*, ND (CC+) and 27 Aug in *Hughes*, SD (RDO+). Casual in Montana, and very late, a **Northern Parula** was in Ft. Peck 3 Nov (CC+). It was a banner year for Black-throated Blue Warblers, with eight individuals in North Dakota spanning 12 Sep-20 Oct. Six South Dakota reports spanned 22 Aug-29 Oct. Casual in Montana, a single male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was in Ft. Peck 23 Sep (CC+) Also at Ft. Peck, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was late 14 Nov (CC).

A Townsend's Warbler banded at Westby, MT 30 Aug provided only the 2nd local record (JM, TN). Furnishing the 6th record for South Dakota, a **Townsend's Warbler** was in *Pennington* 3-5 Sep (TJ, TBW+). If accepted, an imm. **Prairie Warbler** documented at Minot, ND 26 Sep would provide only the 2nd record for the state (REM+). A late Black-and-white Warbler was noted in *Hughes*, SD 10 Nov (KM). Increasingly reported from the Black Hills, but still casual in South Dakota, a Hooded Warbler was in *Pennington* 19 Aug-22 Sep (TJ, JLB+).

TANAGERS THROUGH REDPOLLS

A Western Tanager was well e. in *Hughes*, SD 20 Sep (RDO, EDS). A Clay-colored Sparrow 17 Nov in Hettinger provided the latest report for North Dakota, and only the 2nd for Nov (JPL, HCT, CDE). Rarely reported after Aug, a Baird's Sparrow was noted at Minot, ND 29 Sep (BD). Tying the latest report for North Dakota, a Le Conte's Sparrow was in Fargo 20 Oct (DPW). A

Lincoln's Sparrow was still present in *Yankton*, SD at the end of the period (SVS).

Two **Smith's Longspurs** were documented n. of Westby, MT 7 Oct (REM, TN+). If accepted, this would provide about the 4th record for the state. Northern Cardinals made a notable push into North Dakota, with six individuals noted away from the regular Fargo locations. Farthest nw. were singles at Upper Souris N.W.R. 16 Oct (REM) and at New Town 22 Nov (RS). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was tardy at Ft. Peck, MT 8-15 Nov (CC).

A large flock of 60 Great-tailed Grackles was still in *Douglas*, SD 3 Nov (SVS). White-winged Crossbills were widespread and in fair numbers across the Region. Many reports came from North Dakota, and the species was noted at three South Dakota locations. In Montana, a single was at Ft. Peck 19 Nov+ (CC). Common Redpolls also made a significant push into the Region, and an early Hoary Redpoll was tallied at Minot, ND 12 Nov (REM).

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Southern Great Plains



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This fall season was marked by a high level of species diversity but notably low counts of

many species. Some observers wondered when the sparrows would be arriving; others lamented the absence or low densities of birds at feeding stations. Even juncos seemed uncommon. Some species, such as Carolina Wren, were clearly set back by the severity of last winter, and many wintering species may also have declined. The pattern

of below-average precipitation continued in many areas this fall. The fall season was also notable for the extremely mild weather pattern, which allowed many migrants to linger later than normal and delayed the arrival of many wintering species. Rarities were widely reported, nearly on par with the past several fall seasons.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); L. Ogallala (L. Ogallala, Keith, NE); Oliver (Oliver Res., Kimball, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (pothole area in south-central Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK)

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

A Red-throated Loon at *Noble/Pawnee*, OK 19 Oct (JAG) was quite early; another was in *Oklahoma* 3 Nov+ (JAG, SG, m. ob.). Still rare, but occurring more regularly, Pacific Loons were at Oliver 20 Oct (JF), *Sedgwick*, KS 29-30 Oct (1-2 birds; PJ, KK, B&NB), *Sequoyah/Cherokee*, OK Nov 5-15 (3; JWA, JS, SB), *Kingman*, KS 18 Nov (TH, LH), and *Cowley*, KS 21 Nov (TH, LH). Common Loons built up to an astounding 433 at L. Tenkiller, *Sequoyah/Cherokee*, OK 15 Nov (JWA, JS, SB).

Quite early was a Horned Grebe in *Phelps*, NE 26 Aug (LR, RH). Red-necked Grebes, rare in the Region, were noted on the very early dates of 15