

Prairie Provinces



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Weather conditions were highly variable across the Region. June ranged from cool and wet in southern Manitoba and southeastern Saskatchewan to bone-dry in the northwest. July was generally hot and dry. Heavy snow fell in the Alberta mountains in early June and again in late July; provincial compiler Michael Harrison wrote that the province experienced “all four seasons in June and July, sometimes in one day.”

Migrants lingered longer than normal in the south (Table 1), and many did not arrive on the breeding grounds until mid-June or late June. Combined with the cold spring, the summer proved hard on many species. In Saskatchewan, early nesters, such as diurnal raptors, had poor success, while Mallards and Gadwalls were seen with newly hatched young as late as 3 August. Tree Swallows and Mountain Bluebirds were hard hit throughout, while in the southern Alberta foothills and mountains, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Chipping and

White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Pine Siskins were decimated by the cold and snow. High shorebird numbers in early and mid-July indicated widespread nesting failures farther north as well. Similarly, a higher-than-usual number of singing warblers (especially Tennessee) in southern Manitoba in the first half of July probably involved failed breeders.

Abbreviations: O.H.M. (Oak Hammock Marsh W.M.A., MB); S.R.V. (Sheep River Valley, AB).

GREBES THROUGH DIURNAL RAPTORS

Pied-billed Grebes were noted at three different Churchill, MB locations 14-17 Jun (RK, BD et al.). Six Double-crested Cormorants at the Peace-Athabasca delta, AB 20 Jun were far north (RT, KT). Best of the “rare” herons were single Great Egrets at Pelican L., SK 4 Jun (WH) and Clearwater Lake P.P. in cen. Manitoba in late Jun (WD), a Little Blue Heron at St. Ambrose P.P., MB 25 May—4 Jun (L&RJ, CA, RP, LV), 7 Cattle Egrets at Whitewater L., MB 14 Jul (CA, RP, JS, LV), a Green Heron in Winnipeg, MB 23 Jun (JB), and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at O.H.M. 22-25 Jun (PG, NB, m. ob.). An unidentified *Plegadis* ibis near Gravelbourg, SK 1-2 Jun (DH) and a White-faced Ibis near Climax, SK 14 Jun (WH) were notable.

Summering Snow Geese, often injured birds, are not unexpected in the south, but

exceptional numbers this year included about 20 near Killarney, MB (CC), 5+ at Dand, MB (DF, GG, RK, PT), and 5 at Gainsborough Dam, SK (CA, RP, LV). A Ross's Goose at Wascana Park, SK 10 Jul was out of season (FL, m. ob.). A Trumpeter Swan was photographed at Holland, MB 1 Jun (CA, RP, LV). Five pairs of Cinnamon Teal were found at Cypress L., SK 15 Jun (WH), while a molting male was at Oak L., MB in late Jun (DB, PG). Single male Eurasian Wigeon were spotted at Cypress L. (WH) and at Churchill (BD), both 15 Jun. Record numbers of “southern” diving ducks reached Churchill up to 11 Canvasbacks 16 Jun (BD et al.), 8 Redheads 17 Jun (BD et al.), and 24+ male Ring-necked Ducks 15 Jun (RK et al.). The latter species peaked at 53 on 14 Jul (BC). A Barrow's Goldeneye at Churchill 18 Jun was very rare (BD et al.). A duck at Moose Mtn P.P., SK 28 Jun was believed to be a *Bucephala* sp. x Hooded Merganser hybrid (CA, RP, LV) Swainson's Hawks had a poor season in Saskatchewan, while Peregrine Falcons suffered nesting failures at Regina and Saskatoon (*vide* BL).

GROUSE THOUGH WOODPECKERS

A Ruffed Grouse photographed at Churchill 13 Jun was a new species for the area (SI, RK, BS, DW). Yellow Rails were described as scarce in s. Saskatchewan (BL) and at Douglas, MB (CC), but appeared to be thriving near Ste. Rita, MB (PT et al.). For the first time in at least five years, no Black-necked Stilt nests were found in Saskatchewan. About 700 Hudsonian Godwits massed at Beaverhill L., AB 23 Jul (BCa, BR, RT), with another 19 noted at nearby Elk Island P.P. the next day (BCa, BR). Do these large numbers indicate massive nesting failure farther north, or drought-displacement from known gathering areas in cen. Saskatchewan? A Ruff was reported without details near Churchill in early Jun.

Lone Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaegers were rarities at Wood Buffalo N.P., AB 8 Jun (PJ). Little Gulls are doing well at Churchill, with at least 12 ads. present in mid-Jun, while a few Ross's Gulls continued to draw birders from far and wide. Rare anywhere in Alberta, a Band-tailed Pigeon in Calgary 31 Jul—5 Aug was seen by many (D&WL, m. ob.) Mourning Doves appear to be declining in Saskatchewan's urban areas, while increasing in rural regions, mirroring the situation in Manitoba. Increasing corvid numbers may be to blame for the decrease (BL). Eurasian

Table 1. Representative lingerers and late migrants, Prairies Provinces Region, June and July 2002.

Pacific Loon	1	4 Jun	Lac la Biche, AB	PJ
Pacific Loon	1	4 Jun	Lesser Slave L., AB	PJ
Ross's Goose	1	2 Jun	Tofield, AB	PJ
Ross's Goose	6	12 Jun	Reed L., SK	GG
American Golden-Plover	1	13 Jun	Frank L., AB	TK
Western Sandpiper	1	10 Jun	Calgary	TK
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	10 Jun	S.R.V.	WS
Swainson's Thrush	2	11 Jun	Lethbridge, AB	D&TD
Hermit Thrush	1	6 Jun	Winnipeg	CA
Blackpoll Warbler	1	13 Jun	Lethbridge, AB	D&TD
Blackpoll Warbler	1	19 Jun	Regina	TH
American Redstart	1	12 Jun	Lethbridge, AB	D&TD
Mourning Warbler	1	11 Jun	Wascana Park	BL
Wilson's Warbler	1	12 Jun	Regina	TH, SA
Canada Warbler	1	13 Jun	Wyndham-Carseland P.P., AB	TK
Snow Bunting	1	5 Jun	Indian Cabins, AB	PJ
Harris's Sparrow	1	14 Jun	O.H.M.	<i>fide</i> CBr
Common Redpoll	1	mid-Jun	Airdrie, AB	LM
Common Redpoll	1	28 Jun	Calgary	BJ

Collared-Doves fledged 2 young at Red Deer, AB (DP); in Saskatchewan, they were reported at Eastend, Val Marie, and Mortlach (WH, MF). At the latter location, a nearly fledged young bird died in a thunderstorm.

A Snowy Owl at Churchill 22 Jul was unseasonal (BC, DF et al.), while an ad. Long-eared Owl with 2 "branchlings" 20 Jul furnished a rare n. breeding record (BC). Out-of-range Rufous Hummingbirds were near Saskatoon 29 Jun (RKr), near La Corey, AB in early Jun (M&SR), and near Cold L., AB 1 Jul (ME). A pair of Hairy Woodpeckers at Churchill in mid-Jun provided the 3rd record for the area, the others being from 1999 and from the 19th century (RK et al.).

PASSERINES

At least 2 Willow Flycatchers near Biggar, SK 19 Jul were at the n. edge of their range (AH). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher made a brief appearance at St. Adolphe, MB 17 Jun (SC). Unexpected in cen. Manitoba was a Northern Shrike near the Hargrave River 14 Jun (PT). Up to 3 Brown Creepers, including an obvious pair, were present at Churchill in mid-Jun (RK et al.). A Northern Wheatear was at

Churchill 16 Jun, but no details were provided (BC). Snow forced 150 Swainson's Thrushes out in the open in S.R.V. 10 Jun (WS). A Varied Thrush was a rare summer visitor at Regina 2 June (JC).

Each province had Northern Mockingbird reports, with notable sightings at Fish Creek P.P., AB 28 Jun (DJ) and Cypress Hills P.P., SK 2 Jul (L&RD). A Sage Thrasher near Ravenscrag, SK 15 Jun was rare (WH), while Alberta's first nesting since 1992 was noted at Manyberries 29 Jun—6 Jul (RKL). Two Sprague's Pipits at East Shoal L., MB 25 Jun showed that the species continues to maintain a toehold at the ne. edge of its range (KG). Notable warbler sightings included a Nashville at Cold L. 14 Jul (J&MM), and single Black-throated Blues at Winnipeg in early/mid-Jun (RB) and S.R.V. 17 Jun (WS), Churchill's 2nd Bay-breasted 13 Jun (J&BL), and a Hooded reported without details at O.H.M. 14 Jun (*fide* CBr).

A Lark Sparrow was unexpected at the Columbia Icefields, AB 7 Jul (J&MM). Lark Buntings were widely reported only in sw. Saskatchewan (CB et al.). A McCown's Longspur near Radville, SK 18 Jul was at the

e. edge of its range (CB, MB). A possible sighting of a pair of Blue Grosbeaks at Teulon, MB in late May (*fide* KG) was followed by a well-described male at a feeder in the Wauchope-Redvers area, SK 5 Jun (BH). Unfortunately, neither sighting could be confirmed, and the species remains on the hypothetical lists of both provinces. A probable Eastern x Western Meadowlark hybrid was near Kronau, SK 8-9 Jun (BL, TR).

Observers (provincial compilers in bold-face): C. Artuso, S. Ayer, M. Bailey, N. Bays, R. Berger, C. Bjorklund, D. Boutang, C. Braden (CBr), J. Bradley, B. Carroll (BCa), B. Chartier, J. Clarke, S. Courcelles, C. Cuthbert, B. DiLabio, D. & T. Dolman, L. & R. Dudragné, W. Dunlop, M. Ellenwood, D. Fast, M. Flack, K. Gardner, G. Grief, P. Grief, W. Harris, **M. Harrison**, A. Hartley, T. Herriot, B. Hjertaas, D. Hjertaas, S. Isacco, L. & R. Jansson, B. Johner, P. Jones, D. Jullyean, R. Klauke (RKL), R. Koes, T. Korolyk, R. Krahn (RKr), F. Lahrman, D. & W. Lentjes, J. & B. Leupold, **B. Luterbach**, L. Mahar, J. & M. McDonald, R. Parsons, D. Prescott, T. Riffel, M. & S. Rindero, B. Ritchie, J. Rogers, B. Shanks, W. Smith, J. Swartz, P. Taylor, R. Thomas, K. Tomoney, L. Veelma, D. Wilson

