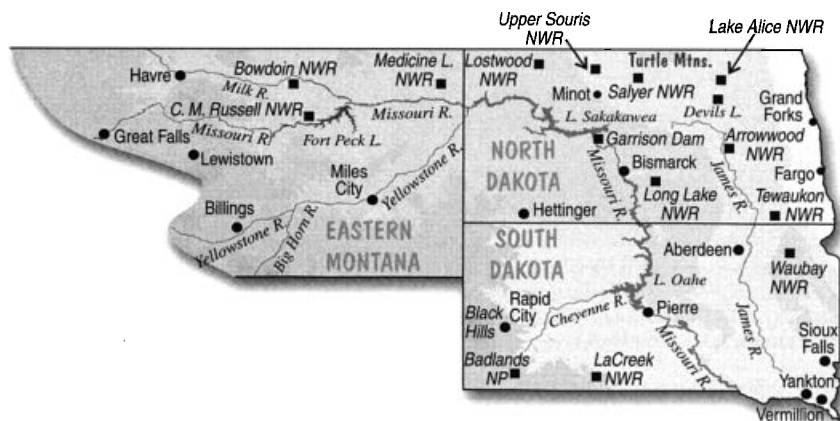


# Northern Great Plains



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Most of the Region had a cool first half of June with average precipitation. The rest of the season was very dry and hot. The average July temperature in Billings, Montana was the second highest on record, and some areas of North Dakota had July temperatures 9° F above average. The fast-drying wetlands produced some good shorebird concentrations. The highlight of the season was the first Regional record for Little Stint.

## LOONS THROUGH CRANES

Accidental in summer, a Pacific Loon was found on Ft. Peck Res., MT 26 Jun (p.a., SJD). A Cattle Egret at Benton Lake N.W.R., MT 2 Jun furnished the 2nd record for the refuge (SM). In North Dakota, a Cattle Egret in *Burke* 15 Jun was nw. of the species' range (TN). In South Dakota, 4000 Cattle Egrets were tallied at Sand Lake N.W.R., Brown 29 Jun (SJD). Casual w. of the Missouri R., a White-faced Ibis was in

Bowman, ND 25 Jul (DAG, CG).

Five Ruddy Shelducks—presumably escapees from a collection—were photographed 22 Jul at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R. (REM, GBB). (The species has been documented as a wild vagrant to Nunavut and Greenland, but U. S. records are considered to be of former captives.) A Bufflehead brood in *Burleigh*, ND 11 Jun provided the 3rd nesting for the state away from the Turtle Mts. (JK). A Broad-winged Hawk nest located 18 Jun in the Sandhills of J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., ND furnished a first *McHenry* record (AH). Accidental in summer, a Rough-legged Hawk was seen in late Jun and again 15 Jul at Freezeout L., MT (p. a., EH, TB, MS)

It was a spectacular year for Yellow Rails in *Grand Forks*, ND. On 4 Jun, 110 were heard in six hours in 33 sections of wet grassland, including 20 birds heard from one spot. Lambeth speculated that the number in the area might have been in the 250–500 range (DOL). Casual in ne. Montana, a Yellow Rail was heard at Medicine Lake N.W.R.

28 Jun (p. a., REM, SJD). The first nesting in South Dakota since 1910, a pair of Sandhill Cranes with young was noted in *Bennett* 2 Jun (p. a., MA).

## SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

A Snowy Plover photographed in *Kidder*, ND 4 Jul provided the 7th report for the state, all but one recorded since 1999 (p. a., JM). A new peak for North Dakota, 241 Semipalmated Plovers were at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R. 27 Jul (REM). Furnishing the 5th nesting for North Dakota, a pair of Black-necked Stilts was on eggs in Jun at McKenzie Slough, *Burleigh* (HCT). The first fall sighting for Freezeout L., MT, a Hudsonian Godwit was photographed 26–31 Jul (MS, CP, WT). In North Dakota, 39 Hudsonian Godwits were among 15,000–20,000 shorebirds at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R. 27 Jul (REM, GBB). Notable Marbled Godwit concentrations included 800 at Horsehead L., ND 27 Jun (LDI) and 774 at Benton Lake N.W.R., MT 9 Jul (SM).

Caspian Terns continue to increase in the Region. At Ft. Peck Res., MT, 525 ads. and 254 nests were counted 26 Jun (SJD). In North Dakota, the species was noted in nine counties. Three Bonaparte's Gulls in *Kingsbury* 19 Jul provided only the 4th record for the summer season in South Dakota (JSP).

## PIGEONS THROUGH KINGBIRDS

If accepted, a Band-tailed Pigeon 29 Jun–2 Jul in *Jones*, SD would provide the 7th record for the state (p. a., RDO, KM). The 6th report for Montana, 2 Eurasian Collared-Doves were at *Culbertson* 29 Jun (p. a., SJD). There were several new localities for this species in North Dakota: 9 at *Bowman* 22 Jun (REM, DNS) and 8 at *Beulah* 24 Jun (HCT, BM). A potential 3rd record for Montana, a White-winged Dove was photographed near *Roundup* 26 Jul (p. a., LH, WH).

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was well nw. of usual range at *Harvey*, ND 7 Jul (SE). For the 2nd consecutive year, Broad-tailed Hummingbird was reported from the Black Hills of South Dakota. One individual was in *Pennington* 12 Jul (RDO).

Only the 2nd report e. of the Missouri

**SA** The bird of the season, an alternate-plumaged Little Stint, was photographed at the Minot Sewage Lagoons, ND. Seen briefly in the evening of 4 Jul, the bird was identified on 5 Jul and was subsequently seen by 12 observers. Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated on 6 Jul. Casual on the coasts in the lower 48, this species has been recorded only a few times in the interior of the continent. If accepted, this will furnish a first state and Regional record (p. a., REM, BD, DNS, PHS).

R. in South Dakota, a Western Wood-Pewee was in *Bon Homme* 23 Jun (p. a., JC). The earliest recorded fall migrant for the state, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was banded in *Brown*, SD 30 Jul (DAT). A singing Alder Flycatcher in *Lawrence*, SD 6–18 Jul was well s. of normal range (p. a., RDO, DS). If accepted, a **Hammond's Flycatcher** 28 Jun–3 Jul in *Lawrence*, SD would furnish the 2nd record for the state (p. a., RMBO). About the 11th report for South Dakota, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in *Sully* 1 Jun (p. a., KM). A pair of Box Elder trees near Decker, MT were host to a pair each of Cassin's, Western, and Eastern Kingbirds (BW).

### VIREOS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

A Bell's Vireo was ne. of usual haunts in *Marshall*, SD 30 Jun (SJD). A rare breeder in North Dakota, 8–12 Violet-green Swallows were noted in *Billings* 11 Jul (MAG). Accidental in summer in South Dakota, a Carolina Wren was in *Brown* 30 Jul (DAT).

Late migrant warblers were numerous in the Dakotas. The 7th report for South Dakota, a **Yellow-throated Warbler** was documented at Lake 6–7 Jun (p. a., KB, JSP, RFS, DS). Casual in North Dakota, a MacGillivray's Warbler was in *McKenzie* 9 Jun (CD). The 2nd summer report for South Dakota, a Summer Tanager was in *Minnehaha* 14 Jun–12 Jul (p. a., DC, RFS, JSP). Casual in North Dakota, a Western Tanager was documented 7 Jun at Fargo (p. a., DPW).

An Eastern Towhee spent the season in *Ward*, ND, an area where only Spotted Towhees are usually present (DW). Henslow's Sparrows were noted in North Dakota for the 6th consecutive year, with a single in *Eddy* 21 Jun and a pair in *Kidder* 25 Jun (LDI). The species was also seen in South Dakota again, with a single in *Day* 13 Jun (LDI). A Nelson's



North Dakota's seventh Snowy Plover was nicely documented at *Kidder* 4 July 2003; all but one of the state reports of the species are from 1999 and later. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.



Casual in summer in Montana, Rough-legged Hawk was seen near *Freezeout Lake, Fairfield* 30 June 2003 (here) and again in July. Photograph by Ed Harper.



Only Montana's third, this White-winged Dove was captured on film 27 July 2003 at *Roundup*. Photograph by Waneta Harris.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow singing at *Bowdoin N.W.R.*, MT 27 Jun would, if accepted, provide a first refuge record and the first record for the state away from the extreme ne. corner (p. a., REM). A Slate-colored Junco 6 Jun in *Brown*, SD provided the first Jun report for this subspecies (DAT).

Northern Cardinals nested at *Grand Forks*, ND, the first documented nesting there in over 40 years (EEF, DOL). Dickcissels were widespread in North Dakota. In *Montana*, 2 were singing in *Sheridan* 29 Jun (p. a., REM), and a single was se. of *Ekalaka* during the 3rd week of Jun (p. a., JPL). There are now about 20 reports for the

state. Casual in North Dakota, an Eastern Meadowlark was in *Eddy* 21 Jun (LDI). The 4th report for North Dakota, a black-backed Lesser Goldfinch was documented in *Bowman* 21 Jun (p. a., JPL).

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