

Idaho & Western Montana

The summer of 2003 was unusually hot and dry; in fact, it was Idaho's warmest July and Montana's second warmest in 109 years. Already low from past dry years and insufficient snowmelt recharge, surface water levels plummeted. Evaporation and irrigation draw-downs left waterbirds nesting on reservoirs in dire straits but created expansive mudflats that attracted more-than-usual numbers of migrating waders, shorebirds, and gulls.

Hot, dry, and windy conditions sparked an earlier-than-usual fire season that appeared ominous by summer's end.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., by American Falls, ID); Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID).

PELICANS THROUGH CUCKOOS

American White Pelicans summered in record numbers in the Region's n., with high counts of over 60 in *Benewah* and *Boundary*, ID (SS), about 100 at *Ninepipe N.W.R.*, *Lake*, MT (DC), and unusually high numbers in *Beaverhead* and *Powell*, MT (CA, RG). Double-crested Cormorants also continued their northward expansion; two pairs discovered with nestlings at *Coeur d'Alene L.*, *Kootenai*, ID 12 Jul (DJ, WM) provided n. Idaho's 2nd breeding record and a first record for *Latilong 2*. The season's tally of out-of-range waders included a Great Egret in *Bonner*, ID 12 Jun (SS), a Snowy Egret near *Helena*, MT 4–5 Jun (BM, KO), and a Green Heron in *Fremont*, ID 2–25 Jun (DCL, CW).

Especially rare in summer was a Red-shouldered Hawk in *Canyon*, ID 25 Jun (MC). Even more unusual were summer reports of Broad-winged Hawks in *Boise*, ID 5 Jul (CS) and near *Livingston*, MT 7 Jun (RW). The bird of the season was a Pacific Golden-Plover at A.F.R. 22 Jul (MCr, †CT), a first for Idaho and the Region. Idaho's list of rare-but-regular shorebirds included a Whimbrel at A.F.R. 25 Jul (CT), a Silt Sandpiper at A.F.R. 22 Jul (CT), and a Short-billed Dowitcher in *Nez Perce* 26 Jul (JW). Unexpected in summer were single Bonaparte's and Herring Gulls near *Marsing*, *Owyhee* ID 20 Jul (MC, RLR).

Anna's Hummingbirds are less than annual and most unusual in summer, but Idaho singles appeared in *Gem* 14 Jun–31 Jul+ (M&FZ) and *Boise* 5–31 Jul+ (A&HL). Yellow-billed Cuckoo surveys located a total of 27 in e. Idaho 1 Jun–31 Jul (TR).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Eastern Phoebes provided 7th records in



both states, with singles at *Camas* 9 Jun (RI) and near *Ennis*, MT 25 Jun (CP). A flock of 10 Bushtits was far n. of expected range in *Boise*, ID 21–28 Jul (JC). A heard-only Wood Thrush in *Boise* 6 Jun was interesting (†DT), as there are no previously accepted records in Idaho. Up to 2 Northern Mockingbirds, rare but regular in Idaho, visited *Oneida* 28 Jun–2 Jul (MCr), and one near *Stevensville*, MT 3–24 Jul (WT) was even less expected. A wayward Sage Thrasher near *Somers*, *Flathead*, MT 22–25 Jul (DC) was very unusual but not unprecedented there. Reports of rare-but-regular warblers included single Tennessee Warblers near *McCall*, ID 21 Jun (MC) and *Bigfork*, MT 19 Jul (BR); Ovenbirds at *Camas* 5 Jun (DCL, MCr), *Boise*, ID 26 Jun (DT), and near *Bigfork*, MT 29 Jun (DC); and a Black-and-white Warbler in *Jefferson*, ID 6 Jun (DCL). Idaho's 9th Northern Parula was at *Camas* 3 Jun (DB). A Prothonotary Warbler discovered in *Boise* 3 Jun (CS) provided Idaho's 2nd record.

Now almost expected in summer, Summer Tanagers in *Canyon* 11 Jun and *Payette* 16 Jun (MC) were Idaho's 7th & 8th. Up to 2 Blue Grosbeaks were in *Oneida* 18 Jun–14 Jul (MCr, JW); they are rare and irregular breeders in s. Idaho. Great-tailed Grackles

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were reported at new Idaho locations: one was in *Washington* 4 Jun, and another stopped in *Canyon* 12 Jun (RM). Especially unusual in sw. Idaho were 2 Common Grackles in *Elmore* 14 Jun (MC). A wayward Lesser Goldfinch discovered in *Latah* 5 Jul (KD) provided n. Idaho's 4th record.

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