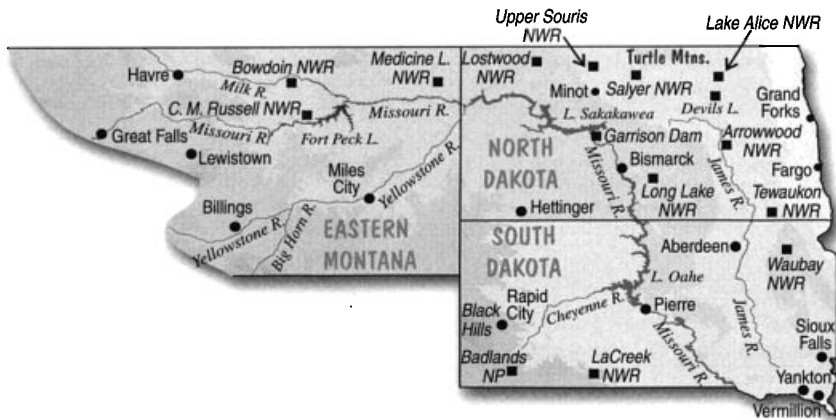


Northern Great Plains



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The hot, dry weather of July continued through October. The Glasgow, Montana weather station tallied a record 39 consecutive days with highs over 85° F. In October, highs over 80° F were recorded on seven days, with 85° F on 21 October. The weather changed abruptly in late October, however, when snow fell across much of the Region. Large areas of Montana and North Dakota recorded subzero temperatures the first few days of November. Freezeout Lake, Montana recorded -16° F on 6 November. The abrupt weather change appeared to have trapped many late migrants, and lingering birds were widespread. On the whole, the migration, except perhaps for larids, was lackluster.

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

A potential 6th record for South Dakota, a Red-throated Loon was noted 16 Nov in Perkins (p. a., JPL, KM, RDO). American White Pelicans peaked at 3000 in Stutsman, ND 15 Sep

(PRS). A new high fall count for North Dakota, 26 Snowy Egrets were in Kidder 20 Sep (HCT, CDE). White-faced Ibis continue to expand in the Region: at a new nesting area for North Dakota, ads. were seen feeding young in Pierce 18 Aug (REM), and in Montana, an impressive peak of 180 was noted at Freezeout L. 4 Aug (MS).

Casual in South Dakota, a Brant was seen 11–14 Nov in Buffalo (p. a., DS, JSP,

KM). Casual at Ft. Peck, MT, a radio-collared Trumpeter Swan was seen 14 Nov (CC). A nice peak of 3450 Canvasbacks was recorded at Medicine L., MT 13 Oct (REM). If accepted, a Harlequin Duck 8–30 Nov at Oahe Dam would provide the 2nd record for South Dakota (p. a., KM). Scoter reports were widespread, with a high of 17 White-winged Scoters noted at Nelson Res., MT 1 Nov (JPL). Unusual for South Dakota, Black Scoters were reported from four counties. Long-tailed Duck reports were also widespread, with a peak of 10 in Buffalo, SD 16 Nov (RDO). Also in South Dakota, 255 Hooded Mergansers was a notably high count in Yankton 1 Nov (JC). Northern Goshawks staged a strong movement into the Region, with the first an early bird in Hughes, SD 4 Sep (RDO). Gyrfalcons also showed up in numbers, with one report in Oct and 11 reports in Nov. Numbers of gallinaeous birds were notably high, no doubt owing to the recent mild winters and drier summers. Gray Partridge seems to have recovered nicely from the lows of the 1990s. Casual in Montana, a Whooping Crane was near Homestead 12–13 Oct (p. a., EM, REM).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

The latest for North Dakota, 15 Marbled Godwits were seen 22 Oct at L. Bertha, Cass (KRC). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 26 Sep at Freezeout L., MT would, if accepted, provide the 2nd record for the state (p. a., MS, JN). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were widely reported, with up to 2 at Medicine L. 24 Aug–11 Sep providing



First noted 8 (here 9) November 2003, this Harlequin Duck remained to the end of the period below Oahe Dam, a second record for South Dakota. Digital photograph by Doug Backlund.

the 12th record for Montana (p. a., TN, REM, JS). The species was also noted in *Harding*, SD 29 Aug (CEM, KM), west of normal migration routes. Furnishing the 15th report for North Dakota, a Red Phalarope was in *Grand Forks* 30 Sep (p. a., EEF).

As is typical in fall, larids provided their share of unusual sightings. About the 11th report for North Dakota, a Parasitic Jaeger was at Long Lake N.W.R. 15–18 Sep (p. a., PVN, GK, HCT). Two ad. **Little Gulls** were at Devil's L., ND 27 & 28 Sep (p. a., REM, DNS), the 9th and 10th state records. A new high for the state, 2600 Bonaparte's Gulls were on Devil's L. 28 Sep (REM, DNS). An ad. Mew Gull on 1 Nov provided a first report for *Burleigh* (p. a., CDE, HCT), and single ads. documented at Garrison Dam 7–9 (p. a., REM) & 30 Nov (p. a., DNS) represent the 12th through 14th reports for North Dakota. In South Dakota, the 8th through 10th reports for **Mew Gull** were documented 13–19 Nov in *Buffalo* (p. a., RDO, KM), 29–31 Oct at Pierre (p. a., RDO, KM), and 10 Nov in *Fall River* (p. a., DS, JSP). The 17th report for North Dakota, an Iceland Gull was at Garrison Dam 27 Nov (p. a., REM, DNS). Two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Bismarck, ND 31 Oct–2 Nov provided the first *Burleigh* report (p. a.,



Present in late October and early November 2003 (here date unknown), this **Painted Bunting** provided a second state record in Lawrence County, South Dakota.

Digital photograph by Bonnie Jones.

CDE, HCT, DNS), while a third-year bird was at Garrison Dam 22–27 Nov (p. a., REM, DNS). In South Dakota, single **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were at Pierre 9–11 Sep and 9 Nov (p. a., RDO, KM). Seven reports of **Sabine's Gull** from the Dakotas included peaks of 4 in mid-Sep at Pierre, SD (p. a., RDO) and 5, including one ad., at Devil's L., ND 28 Sep (p. a., DNS, REM).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

The 7th report for Montana, 4 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were in Choteau 10 Aug



This **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge 24 August 2003—the 12th record for Montana—was later joined by another individual.

Digitiscoped photograph by Ron Martin.

(p. a., BM), and in North Dakota, first county records were reported for *Stutsman* 22 Sep (HAK) and *Hettinger* 23 Nov (JPL). Only about the 20th report for North Dakota, a **Barn Owl** was collected in *Burleigh* 13 Sep after being killed by a **Red-tailed Hawk** (*; p. a., MAG, CDE). An unidentified screech-owl was seen 8 Sep at Benton Lake N.W.R., MT, providing a first refuge record for a screech-owl of any kind (SM). Rarely reported in the Region, a **Great Gray Owl** was noted 26 Oct in the Little Belt Mts., MT (JG). Single **Calliope Hummingbirds** in *Lawrence* 17 Aug (p. a., RDO, KM) and *Edmunds* 8 Sep (p. a. MZ) provided the 7th and 8th reports for South Dakota. Eight reports of **Rufous Hummingbird** were received for South Dakota.

The 13th report for North Dakota and the first since 1995, a **Lewis's Woodpecker** was in *McKenzie* 4–10 Aug (p. a., MAG). **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** were more mobile than usual in North Dakota, with reports from four counties nw. of usual range. An **American Three-toed Woodpecker** 12 Sep in *Malta*, MT was well ne. of usual haunts (DP, TP). In South Dakota a **Pileated Woodpecker** 5 Nov in *Day* provided a first county record (WS). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** in *Custer*, SD 1 Sep provided the 2nd documented report for the state (p. a., JC). The 4th record for Montana, a **Great Crested Flycatcher** was near *Fromberg* 6 Sep (GF).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

The first Oct report for South Dakota, a **Yellow-throated Vireo** was in *Hughes* 22 Oct (p. a., RDO), while one in *Bismarck*, ND 19 Sep was the first there in eight years of observation by Ellingson and Talkington. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was well



Sabine's Gulls made a good showing in the Dakotas this year. This adult and juvenile (top) were two of five found on the first-ever "pelagic" trip onto Devil's Lake, North Dakota 28 September 2003. Also casual in fall in South Dakota, a juvenile Sabine's Gull (bottom) at Pierre 21 September 2003 was one of four present there in mid-month. *Photographs by Ron Martin (top) and Doug Backlund.*

n. of normal Montana range in Ft. Peck 7 Aug (CC). Philadelphia Vireo made a strong w. showing, with a single 22 Aug in Williams, ND (JPL) and three reports from Westby, MT 24 Aug–6 Sep (p. a., REM, TN, JM).

The 13th report for North Dakota, a Blue-winged Warbler was documented at Minot 20 Sep (p. a., REM). Late and w. of usual, a Golden-winged Warbler was in Hughes, SD 29 Sep (RDO). Providing the second-latest records for North Dakota were a Tennessee Warbler 29 Oct and an Orange-crowned Warbler 2 Nov at Arrowwood N.W.R. (PRS). Five Cape May Warblers were reported from Westby, MT 25 Aug–20 Sep, the only location where they are regular in the state. The 11th sighting for Montana, a Black-throated Blue Warbler was near Worden 18 Oct (p. a., GF, HC). A Black-throated Green Warbler at Westby 2 Sep would provide the 11th record for Montana if accepted (p. a., JM, TN). A potential 8th record for South Dakota, a Townsend's Warbler was reported 7 Sep in Pennington (p. a., TBW). Providing the 2nd Nov report for the state, an Ovenbird was documented at Fargo 6 Nov (DPW). A MacGillivray's Warbler was late in Harding, SD 2 Oct (CEM). A Canada Warbler was far west in Great Falls, MT 20 Aug (GS).



Casual in North Dakota, this Barn Owl was killed by a Red-tailed Hawk in Burleigh County 13 September 2003. Digital photograph by Mark Gonzalez.

TANAGERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

A Summer Tanager photographed in Grand Forks, ND 9 Nov furnished the 2nd fall record for the state (EEF). Very unusual in fall, a Baird's Sparrow was singing 30 Sep in Stutsman, ND (PRS). The latest on record for South Dakota, a Le Conte's Sparrow was in Clay 15 Nov (DS, JC), and the second-latest for North Dakota were 2 Le Conte's in Sheridan 19 Oct (REM, SE). Casual in Montana but possibly regular in the ne corner, 4 Swamp Sparrows were seen at Medicine L. N.W.R. 20-28 Sep (p. a., JPL).

Providing the 2nd record for South Dakota, a Painted Bunting was photographed in Lawrence in late Oct and early Nov (fide DB). A Dickcissel was late in

Clay, SD 18 Oct (DS). A new high for North Dakota, 568 Bobolinks were counted 9 Sep in Grand Forks (EEF). A Cassin's Finch in Ft. Peck, MT 29 Sep–1 Nov was ne. of normal range (CC). A flock of 200 House Finches in Grand Forks, ND 26 Nov was an unusually large gathering of this species (DOL). Good numbers of Common Redpolls had invaded the Region by the end of the period, although Pine Siskin numbers remained very low, with few birds reported. A Lesser Goldfinch in Shannon, SD 12 Aug provided a first county record (p. a. KCJ).

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Representing the first North Dakota record since 1995, this Lewis's Woodpecker spent a week in early August 2003 (here date unknown) in the Badlands of McKenzie County. Digital photograph by Keith Corliss.