

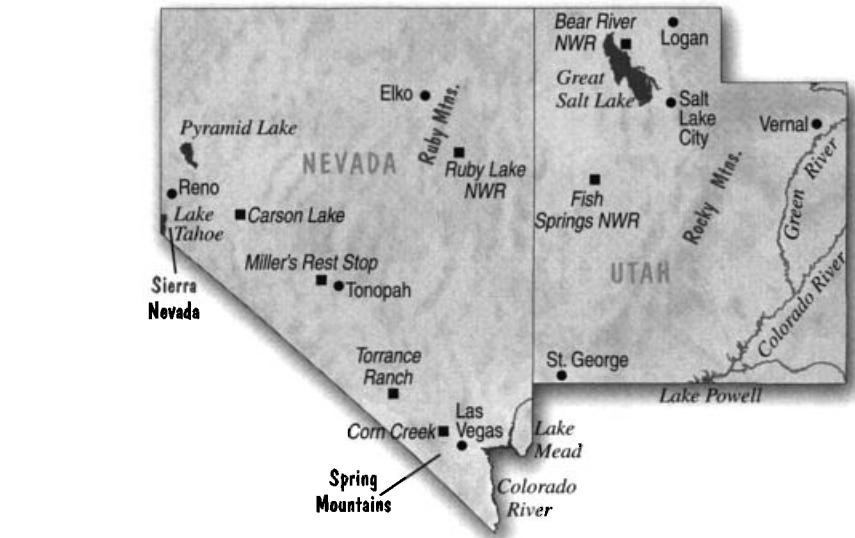
Great Basin

The fall season found the drought slightly broken. Most Utah mountain areas received near-normal or above-normal snowfall, a trend which continued into the winter. Mountain ranges in Nevada also started the season with more snow than in the past five years. There were some minor invasions, perhaps due to continuing drought conditions at the beginning of the season, by woodpeckers and some corvids. Highlights of the season included Utah's first Reddish Egret, a very rare Heermann's Gull, and perhaps the first documented records of Blue-headed Vireo. There was a good showing of eastern warblers, in some part owing to a constant coverage by Nevada birders at vagrant traps.

Abbreviations: A.I.C. (Antelope Island S.P., Causeway, Davis UT); Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Circle L (Circle L Ranch, Dyer, Esmeralda, NV); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); Dyer Pond (Dyer Pond, Esmeralda, NV); Fish Springs (Fish Springs N.W.R., Juab, UT); Garr Ranch (Garr Ranch, Antelope Island S.P., Davis, UT); Gunlock (Gunlock S.P. and Res., Washington, UT); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Red Hills G.C. (Red Hills Golf Course, St. George, Washington, UT); Pahranaagat (Pahranaagat N.W.R., Lincoln, NV); P.L. (Pyramid L., Washoe, NV); Quail Cr. (Quail Creek S.P. and Res., Washington, UT); Sand Hollow (Sand Hollow S.P. and Res., Washington, UT); Soda L. (Churchill, NV); Stillwater (Stillwater N.W.R., Churchill, NV); Washington Fields (Washington Fields, Washington, UT).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Two Red-throated Loons, perhaps the rarest of the four loon species recorded in the Region, were found in Washington, UT this winter. The first was an ad. at Gunlock 8-9 Nov (LT, ph. RF), and the 2nd was an imm. at Quail Cr. 10-14 Nov (ph. RF et al.). Pacific Loons, somewhat regular in the Region, showed up at several locations in both states. A Red-necked Grebe at Pyramid L. was observed 9-11 Nov (GS, JWa). A subad. Brown Pelican was a great find at L. Mead National Recreation Area, Clark, UT 9 Nov (RSa). Least Bitterns were noted at three locations: one at H.B.V.P. through 31 Aug (JBr), plus a juv. there 12-26 Sep (BSt, JBr); up to 5 at Stillwater 6-28 Aug (4 ads., one fledgling 28 Aug; WH); and one at Ash Meadows 30 Oct (SG). The presence of young at two locations in the



Region is quite notable.

The most surprising finds of the season were Utah's first and 2nd Reddish Egrets. On 14 Aug, LT found an imm. at Gunlock, which stayed through 21 Sep (ph., m. ob.). Amazingly, another imm. was found 3-9 Sep at James Walter Fitzgerald W.M.A., Tooele (ph. MMo, MW), 390 km n. of the first sighting. Green Herons at the Provo Airport Dike, Utah, UT 14 Aug-4 Sep (JR et al.) and Cottonwood Bend Ranch, Grand, UT 15 Aug (DF) were in areas where not often reported. A California Condor with wing-tag #32 was spotted at Kolob Res., Washington, UT 13 Sep (KW, PL et al.).

Tundra Swans are rarely reported from Washington, UT, so 11 at Gunlock 8 Nov and one at Sand Hollow 23 Nov were nice finds (RF, KCo). A Greater White-fronted Goose, rare for s. Nevada, was at H.B.V.P. 10 Oct (JHe, fide JBr). Ross's Geese were reported in scattered small numbers throughout the Region, as is normal. Three reports of Eurasian Wigeon were remarkable, as most years there are none. A male was at Hyrum S.P., Cache, UT 5 Nov (SD, fide MSt), 2 males were seen at Fish Springs 18 Nov (JBa), and a male was at Lakeridge G.C., Reno, Washoe, NV for its 4th consecutive winter. Long-tailed Ducks put in appearances at A.I.C. 2-24 Nov, where up to 7 were seen (DGr et al.) and at Duff's Pond, Lahontan Valley, Churchill, NV 14-21 Nov (WH). It was an average fall for scoters: small numbers of Surf Scoters were reported

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from Elko and Washoe, NV and Morgan and Washington, UT, all late Oct-Nov dates. White-winged Scoters were found in similar numbers and on similar dates in Nevada (Clark & Washoe), but there was only one Utah sighting (Morgan).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Common Black-Hawks are found in small numbers throughout the summer every year now in sw. Utah, but successful breeding evidence is scant. Although nests are located, fledged young birds are almost unreported. Two ads. with at least one fledged young were found 23 Aug at Gunlock (LT et al.). Several Red-shouldered Hawks were found in w. and s. Nevada but only one in Utah and at the same location as the Common Black-

Hawk on 23–24 Aug (LT et al.). A Zone-tailed Hawk was photographed soaring by Lava Pt., Zion N.P., *Washington*, UT 25 Aug (RF). A small flock of 7 Gambel's Quail was found 25 Sep at Minersville Res., *Beaver*, UT. This location is 100 km n. of the species' regular known range in Utah and quite far from its usual Mohave Desert habitat, so the question of origin arises (RF, LT). A Black Rail spent 11–24 Sep at H.B.V.P. (JBr). Breeding records of Common Moorhen are scarce for the Region, especially for n. Nevada. This season there were two: on 7 Aug, WH observed 2 ads. feeding 3 chicks at Carson R., *Churchill*, while on 16 Sep–28 Oct, he saw an ad. and a young bird at Taber-Rose Ponds, Lahontan Valley, *Churchill*.

Single American Golden-Plovers were found at three locations: H.B.V.P. 25 Sep (JBr), A.I.C. 2 Nov (DGr), and at East Canyon S.P., *Morgan*, UT (J&KB). Two Snowy Plovers at Sand Hollow 20 Aug were considered a first fall record for *Washington* (RF, KCo). A very nice find was a Mountain Plover at Carson L., *Churchill*, NV 16–19 Aug (†DS, GS). At Bear River on 21 Aug, American Avocet numbers peaked at 13,832 and Marbled Godwit numbers peaked at 8965 (BO). A

juv. Ruddy Turnstone 24 Aug at P.L. was the only one reported (DT). Small numbers of Sanderlings were reported from *Clark & Washoe*, NV and *Washington*, UT 5 Sep–22 Oct, well away from the Great Salt L., where Sanderlings were numerous as usual. Semipalmated Sandpipers are rare to scarce migrants through the Region (occasionally large numbers can be found around the Great Salt L., but not this year). Ones and twos were found this fall in *Churchill* and *Clark*, NV and *Box Elder* and *Washington*, UT. Nine Pectoral Sandpipers at

H.B.V.P. 27 Sep was a somewhat high count (GS et al.). Dunlin are regular in the Region only around the Great Salt L., where up to 7 were seen this fall. Other records were: one at Soda L. 17 Sep–10 Oct (JWa, RSk), one at H.B.V.P. 19–25 Oct (CP, JBr), 2 at Pahrnagat 12–13 Oct (RF, KCo, JWa), and one at Hurricane sewage ponds, *Washington*, UT 11–12 Oct (ph. SS, RF). Two alternate-plumaged Stilt

SA Acorn Woodpeckers practically exploded across the w. Nevada scene this fall. Many long-time Nevada birders were finally able to add this bird to their state lists. This species is very rarely recorded e. of the Sierra Nevada range. Word from California is that this year was apparently the worst in a long time for acorn production, which may explain the widely wandering woodpeckers. The Nevada tally follows: 2 in *Verdi*, *Washoe* 15 Jun–23 Aug (RB et al.), a male in *Lida*, *Esmeralda* 13 Sep (ph. MMe, GS), one at Circle L 21 Sep (ph. GS, DT), one female at Corn Cr. 26 Sep–11 Nov (RSa, GS, MMe), one male at Corn Cr. 27 Sep (GS) and another (or the same?) male there 23 Oct (JWa), one male at Spring Mountain S.P., *Clark* 27 Sep (JBr et al.), one at Dyer Pond 5 Oct (NB, MBI, JT), and one in a *Fernley*, *Lyon* yard 14 Oct (DT).

Sandpipers were found at Bear River 2 Aug (GB, Ath, MSt), and singles were found at Sun River G.C., *Washington*, UT 22 Aug (JV) and H.B.V.P. 12 Sep (JBr et al.). Short-billed Dowitchers were reported from *Churchill* and *Clark*, NV and *Washington*, UT 2 Aug–14 Sep. A high count of 10,152 Wilson's Phalaropes was made 21 Aug at Bear River (BO). A rare Red Phalarope was found at Soda L. 10 Oct (ph. JWa).

The gull find of the season was Utah's 2nd Heermann's Gull on 2 Oct at Southgate G.C., *Washington*, UT (MD, ph., †KW, ph. RF, ph. SS et al.) This gull, which appeared to be in second-winter plumage, stayed for only about five or six hours. Three Glaucous-winged Gulls were at P.L. 9–29 Nov (DS, FP, GS). Sabine's Gulls were found at the following locations: 2 at Soda L. 5–19 Sep (GS, JWa,

increase, with over 70 individuals reported this season in 10 locations. The most northerly records were one at River Lane, *Utah*, UT 3 Aug (TR, JBi) and at a new northernmost Nevada location at P.L., where up to 6 were regularly found at Sutcliffe trailers 8–30 Nov (DT, JT, GS, MMe). High counts were a flock of 22± on 7 Nov—which also contained 3 Ringed Turtle-Doves—in *Mesquite*, *Clark*, NV (SS, PS) and 24 in *Washington*, *Washington*, UT 13 Nov (RF). Single birds in *Beaver*, *Beaver*, UT 21 Aug (EH) and in *Reno*, *Washoe*, NV 19 Sep (ph. RH) added to the ever-growing list of Regional sites. An Inca Dove in *Kanab*, *Kane*, UT 15 Sep (ATi, *fide* CTi) provided an extremely rare out-of-*Washington* record for Utah. A Greater Roadrunner reported from *Tropic*, *Garfield*, UT 3–21 Oct (HGP) provided another very unusual and hard-to-

comprehend record at an elevation of 1905 m and certainly not in roadrunner habitat. A Flammulated Owl was a very nice yard bird 2 Oct in *Reno* (ME). Another *Reno* "yard owl" was a Northern Saw-whet Owl in FP's yard 6 Oct; unfortunately, this one was found dead. Only 2 Vaux's Swifts were found: at *Gunlock* (LT) and at *Corn Cr.* (RSa), both 7 Sep. Anna's Hummingbirds are a regular feature now in s. Nevada and fast becoming so in *Washington*, UT. Up to 4 or more were at a feeder in *Leeds*, *Washington* 21 Sep–19 Oct (CS). A

female at a North Ogden feeder, *Weber*, UT 30 Nov+ was far n. of where they are usually recorded. A Calliope Hummingbird at H.B.V.P. 31 Aug was at an unusual desert location (MBa, *fide* JBr).

Lewis's Woodpeckers were widely reported and scattered throughout the Region in more areas than expected. Most unusual was a concentration of 27 at *Kolob Res.*, *Washington*, UT 28 Sep (KCo, RF).



Utah's first confirmed Reddish Egret was found by Larry Tripp at *Gunlock State Park*, *Utah* on 14 August 2003 (here). This immature remained through 21 September 2003 and was enjoyed by dozens of observers. Remarkably, another turned up at the *James Walter Fitzgerald Wildlife Management Area*, *Utah* 3–7 September 2003. Photograph by *Rick Fridell*.

RSk, DGH), one at *Gunlock* 7 Sep (LT, ph. RF), up to 2 at A.I.C. 21 Sep–1 Oct (RR, BBr, TJ, J&KB), and one at *Deer Creek S.P.*, *Wasatch*, UT 19 Oct (TR, MMo). Common Terns were reported from *Churchill*, NV and *Box Elder* and *Washington*, UT 6–25 Sep.

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to

An ad. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported from Harker Canyon, Sheeprock Mts., Toole, UT 3 Sep (p. a., †MMo, MW). This would be an unprecedented early date for this species in the West. An imm. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Lytle 8 Nov (p. a., LT) occurred at a more typical date for the West. Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsuckers were reported at Corn Cr. 15 Oct (MSM et al.) and at Central, Washington, UT 27 Nov (LT). Red-breasted Sapsuckers were widely reported in w. Nevada. One at Lytle 17–25 Oct provided Utah with one of its very few documented records (ph. RF, KW, LT). Many observers also noted an abundance of Red-naped Sapsuckers at many locations; it seemed that any small patch of trees in the w. Utah desert had one or more. Gilded Flickers continue to be reported in extreme s. Nevada, where there were two reports: 2 at Corn Cr. 8–10 Oct (J&MC, RSa) and one at H.B.V.P. 14 Nov (JBr).



Utah's second confirmed Heermann's Gull was discovered by Marilyn Davis at Southgate Golf Course, St. George, Utah on 2 October 2003. Although it only remained for a few hours, several individuals were able to observe and photograph this second-winter bird. Photograph by Rick Fridell.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

Three Least Flycatchers were reported, all without details: at Garr Ranch 6 Sep (RR), at Miller's R.A. 7 Sep (JWa), and at Circle L 5 Oct (GS). The only Eastern Phoebe reported was at Corn Cr. 15 Oct (MSM). A very late Cassin's Kingbird was at H.B.V.P. 10–29 Nov (CP, *fide* TLa). An Eastern Kingbird was at Beryl Jct., Iron 30 Aug for a rare s. Utah record (LT). Three Blue-headed Vireos were found, 2 of which were photographed: at Red Hills G.C. 2–4 Oct (LT, ph. SS, PS, RF), at Lytle 5 Oct (ph. RF, KCo, ph. SS, PS), and at Corn Cr. 23 Oct (p. a., †JWa). The Utah records would be the first documented records for the state if accepted, and there is only one accepted Nevada record. A very late Warbling Vireo was at Miller's R.A. 2 Nov (JWa, BHa). Four Red-eyed Vireos were found this season in Utah: at Jordanelle Wetlands, Wasatch 17 Aug (J&KB et al.), Santa Clara R. near Gunlock, Washington 19 Aug (RSt, GB, ATH), Garr Ranch, Davis 21 Aug (LL, AO et al.), and Red Hills G.C. 24 Sep (LT).

A Blue Jay visited an Ogdan, Weber, UT feeder 7–30 Nov (PM, SF et al.). Western

Scrub-Jays were noted by several observers to be plentiful outside of their normal habitats. Winter Wrens were widely observed, with 11 reports from 21 Aug to 19 Oct from four Nevada counties (Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye, and Pershing) and four Utah counties (Beaver, Box Elder, Davis, and Washington). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were far from

typical habitat at Corn Cr. 26 Oct (MMe). Three reports of Swainson's Thrush included singles at Kaufman Ranch, Millard, UT 27 Sep (SS, PS, RF, LT), Tonopah 5 Oct (NB, MBI, JT), and Pahrnagat 11 Oct (KW, JWe et al.). One of the great finds of the season was a Wood Thrush at Pahrnagat 11–13 Oct (†KW, JWe, ph. RF et al.); there are very few records for the Region. Varied Thrushes were widely scattered across w. Nevada, with 10 reports ranging from 11 Oct to 21 Nov in Churchill, Clark, Esmeralda, Lyon, and Nye. Utah, where this species is much rarer, had only one, in Logan, Cache 27 Nov (SD, *fide* MSt). Gray Catbirds breed sparingly in the Region but are seldom reported in migration, so singles in Utah at Scott M. Matheson Wetlands Preserve, Grand 19 Aug (DF) and Lytle 1 Nov (LT) were notable. Brown Thrashers put in a good showing, with four reports: Miller's R.A. 4 Oct (GS et al.), Corn Cr. 5 Oct (RSa), Lytle 17 Oct (RF, KW), and Corn Cr. 23 Nov+ (RSa). A Phainopepla was unusually far n. of its normal range in the Region at Willard Bay S.P., Box Elder 3 Oct (PF, JM, KL).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Warbler migration was generally reported as average, with many of the usual e. vagrants reported. Tennessee Warblers were reported from Gunlock 7 Sep (LT), Dyer, Esmeralda, NV 21 Sep (GS, DT), and H.B.V.P. 25 Sep (JBr). Northern Parulas were "numerous," with 5–6 found: one at Torrance Ranch, Beatty, Nye, NV 7 Sep (JBo), one at Kaufman Ranch, Millard, UT 14 Sep (PF, JM, DGr), one or 2 at Tonopah, Nye/Esmeralda, NV 21 Sep (ph. GS, D&BS), one at Miller's R.A. 27–28 Sep (GS), and one at Dyer Pond 4 Oct (GS). The 2 Chestnut-sided Warblers were probably about normal for the Region: a female at Circle L 6 Sep (GS) and an imm. at Springville, Utah, UT 4 Oct (TJ). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was at Corn Cr. 15–17 Oct (MSM et al.), and a female was at Lytle 18 Oct (LT). Traditional wisdom used to be that Hermit Warblers were very rare and not regular through Utah. Recent years have proved that this species

is a scarce but annual fall migrant through at least s. Utah, with peak passage mid-Aug to mid-Sep in montane coniferous forests. Reports this fall included singles at Gunlock 23 Aug (LT et al.), Pine Park, Washington 23 Aug (JV), and Lava Pt., Zion N.P., Washington 25 Aug (ph., †RF). In Nevada Palm Warblers were at Dyer, Esmeralda 11 Oct (GS), Corn Cr. 12 Oct (GS, RSa), and Miller's R.A. 22 Oct (JWa). Blackpoll Warblers are one of the scarcer "regular" vagrants in the Great Basin, so 3 this fall was a good number: an early one at Porter Springs, Pershing, NV 29 Aug (JWa, RSt, DGh), one at Box Elder Campground, Mantua, Box Elder, UT 6 Sep (DW), and one at Circle L 20 Sep (GS). Black-and-white Warbler records spanned 1 Aug–5 Oct in Clark and Washoe, NV and Box Elder, Davis and Washington, UT. American Redstart reports were similar: 29 Aug–21 Oct in Clark, Esmeralda, and Mineral, NV (none in Utah). A male Prothonotary Warbler brightened up Circle L 18–19 Oct (JWa, DT). Only a single Ovenbird was reported, that from McCaran Ranch, Washoe, NV 3 Oct (JL et al.). Northern Waterthrushes were reported

from Garr Ranch 21 Aug (BHt), Porter Springs, *Pershing*, NV 29 Aug (JWa, RSt, DGh), Dyer Pond 6–7 Sep (GS), and Clover Springs, *Toole*, UT 9 Sep (EH). A most unusual Kentucky Warbler record came from the unlikely location of Tropic, *Garfield*, UT on 5 Nov (HGP). The bird was a stunned window-strike victim that was examined in hand; the bird revived before photos could be taken and was released. There are only two or three pre-

species. A Lark Bunting at Bear River 9 Aug (BBe) was somewhat expected, but one in the Washington Fields 28 Aug (RF) was more surprising. Several Fox Sparrows were reported, as usual, but 2 were reported as Sooty Fox Sparrows, which until recently were not expected in the Region: one at Porter Springs 10 Oct (JWa) and one at Circle L 11 Oct (JWa). Four single Swamp Sparrows was more than expected for fall: H.B.V.P. 9 Oct (JBr),

Bunting was found at Corn Cr. 29 Aug (†RSa). This bird was a female, which may make the possibility of natural occurrence more likely. A Dickcissel at Lytle 31 Aug (†LT, RF et al.) was the first for *Washington*. Bobolinks were reported from Corn Cr. 11 Oct (RSa) and the Washington Fields 14 Oct (RF). Five+ Common Grackles at Taylorsville, *Salt Lake*, UT 17 Oct were said to have been present since early summer and to have nested in the area (CD). White-winged Crossbills were regularly found through the fall in *Cache* and *Salt Lake*, UT mountains. A male Lawrence's Goldfinch put in a one-day appearance at Corn Cr. 18 Oct (†RSa).

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Unprecedented numbers of Acorn Woodpeckers were observed in Nevada during the fall season, as elsewhere in the West. This individual was photographed on 9 September 2003 at Lida, Esmeralda County, Nevada. Photograph by Martin Meyers.

vious Utah records of this species. A male Hooded Warbler first reported from Corn Cr. 6 Jun remained through 1 Sep (RSa et al.), a remarkable summering record at this desert location. It was seen 11 times 13 Jul–1 Sep. On 13 Jul, most of its tail was missing, but by 5 Aug the tail had grown back in. Two other reports of Hooded Warbler came from Utah: a female at Pineview Res., *Weber* 14 Sep (AS) and a well-described male at Horse-shoe Canyon, Canyonlands N.P., *Wayne* 12 Oct (†SM). An extremely late Wilson's Warbler was at Gunlock 1 Nov (LT). A well-described Canada Warbler was found at the Carson Diversion Dam, *Churchill*, NV 2 Oct (p. a., †DT), one of very few Regional reports.

A Summer Tanager at Dyer Pond 5–11 Oct (N&MBi, JT, GS) was a bit n. for this

Red Hills G.C. 9 Nov (LT), Timpanogos Wastewater Treatment Plant, *Utah*, UT 14 Nov (PF, JV), and Gunlock 30 Nov (LT). Nine White-throated Sparrows made for a healthy showing this season, ranging from 7 Oct–28 Nov in *Clark*, *Esmeralda*, and *Lyon*, NV and *Salt Lake* and *Washington*, UT. The only Harris's Sparrow report came from Circle L 25–28 Oct (GS, MMe). A nicely photographed Chestnut-collared Longspur was at Miller's R.A. 26 Oct (ph. GS, ph. MMe). Only 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported: one at Dyer 20 Sep (GS) and one at Indian Springs, *Clark*, NV 16–22 Nov (ph. RG). Indigo Bunting reports were scant also, with only three: 2 males at Gunlock 3 Aug (LT), one male at Lytle 31 Aug (LT), and a female at Circle L. 25 Oct (GS, MMe). The always enigmatic Painted