

Wet conditions over most of the Region meant productive shore-birding this summer, if not an immediate rebound of marsh-bird populations, which have been suppressed in recent years. Wet conditions delayed haying in some areas, sparing the nests and nestlings of Bobolinks and other wet-field nesters this season. The northward spread of several species continued to be evident, but there were a few apparent southward expansions as well.

Abbreviations: Hackberry (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Harvard Marsh (Harvard Marsh Waterfowl Production Area, Clay, NE); McConaughy (L. McConaughy, Keith, NE); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (playa wetlands, s.-cen. Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Salt Plains (Salt Plains N.W.R., Alfalfa, OK).

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Single Common Loons were in Pawnee, OK 5 Jun (JWA) and Russell, KS 16 Jul (MR), typical of summer numbers. Some 464 Western Grebes 5 Jun at McConaughy (SJD) were fewer than the thousands recorded during this season in some years; among them were 13 Clark's Grebes (SJD). An ad. Clark's was seen as far e. as York, NE 4 Jun (JGJ). A vagrant Brown Pelican appeared in Carter, OK 9 Jun (M&AC). A possible first for the Region, pending review, was a Northern Gannet seen briefly at Broken Bow L., McCurtain, OK 29 Jul (BHe), perhaps a confused spin-off of Hurricanes Dennis or Emily. Neotropic Cormorants appeared as far n. as Quivira 27 Jun (MR); one was at Hackberry 21-25 Jul (JAG, m.ob.), with up to 2 at Red Slough through the period (DA, m.ob.). An Anhinga in Washington, OK 13 Jun (DR, MP) was n. of usual range.

American Bitterns were seen more often than usual in the Rainwater Basin, with as many as 4 found in mid-Jun (PD, JGJ, LR, RH), but 2 at Red Slough 21-30 Jun (DA, m.ob.) were exceptionally s. of their typical breeding range. Good water conditions produced a few more sightings of Least Bittern this season; up to 9 were noted in e. Nebraska through 17 Jul (*vide* WRS), and one was in Tulsa, OK 2 Jul (JL, PS). A Little Blue Heron in York, NE 11 Jun (JGJ) was a northerly vagrant. Tricolored Herons appeared at traditional Oklahoma sites in late summer; up to 3 were at Red Slough 21-29 Jul (DA, m.ob.), and one was at Salt Plains 29 Jul (JS, JWA). Even with good water, the 200 Black-crowned Night-Herons in Morton, KS 5 Jul (KH, SG) and 60+ at Hackberry in mid-Jul (L&MT, JAG, VF) were exceptional. The northernmost Yellow-crowned Night-Heron reported was a juv. in Seward, NE 3 Jul (JGJ). The only Glossy Ibis reported this

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season were 2 at Salt Plains 29-30 Jul (JWA, JS). Among a handful of confirmed breeding records for White-faced Ibis in Nebraska were the three pairs with nests in Fillmore 3 Jul (JGJ). The only regular Regional location for Roseate Spoonbill and Wood Stork is Red Slough; up to 5 spoonbills were there 1-24 Jul (BH, DA, FH), and up to 27 storks were present 21 Jun-9 Jul (BH, m. ob.).

Maintaining their foothold in McCurtain, se. Oklahoma, up to 3 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were at Red Slough 3 Jun-1 Jul (DA), with a pair of ads. and 14-15 juvs. near Broken Bow 8-11 Jul (BH, NH, CS). Still a significant rarity in Kansas, 2 Black-bellieds were noted near Quivira 21 Jul (MS). Single Greater White-fronted Geese in Clay 17-18 Jun (PD, JGJ) and Lancaster 30 Jul (LE) were rare Nebraska stragglers, as was a Ross's Goose in Oklahoma, OK 16 Jul (BB). At Red Slough, up to 8 Gadwalls 8 Jun-1 Jul (DA) and a Green-winged Teal 21 Jun (DA) were unexpected so far s. in midsummer, as was a Northern Pintail at

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Hackberry 21 Jun (L&MT). A species whose status in the Region is somewhat unclear, a Mottled Duck was seen in *Clark*, KS 9 Jul (PJ et al.); the species may often be overlooked in the Region. A Canvasback was at Quivira 27 Jun (MR), and 2 Lesser Scaup lingered at Hackberry 21 Jun (L&MT); also unexpected were 6 male Ring-necked Ducks at four locations in the Rainwater Basin through 17 Jun (JGJ, m.ob.). Quite exceptional during midsummer was a female Greater Scaup in *Fillmore*, NE 3 Jul (ph. JGJ), Nebraska's first summer record. A Hooded Merganser in *Tulsa*, OK 25 Jun (LMC) continued the pattern of summer reports.

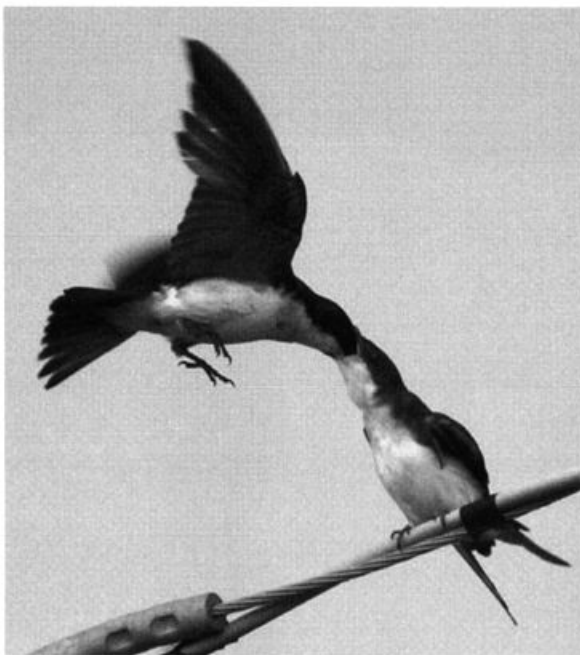
Rare in midsummer, an Osprey in *Cherry*, NE 14 Jul (B&LP) was likely a young bird. Clearly a "zootie" was the Swallow-tailed Kite at Red Slough 12 Jul (TS), one of few records for the state. Good numbers of Mississippi Kites returned to Ogallala, *Keith*, NE (MB, m.ob.), the northernmost breeding site in the Region. An unusual mid-summer report was that of a Sharp-shinned Hawk in *Harvey*, KS 10 Jul (GF); summer reports in the Region are likely of nonbreeding second-year birds. Perhaps part of an erratic s. expansion were 2 Gray Partridges in *Hamilton*, NE 21 Jul (MB); 16 were noted in *Dodge*, NE in 2003 (D&JP).

Even with better water in the Region this season, the only King Rails reported were at Red Slough 8 Jun-1 Jul, with juvs. also noted (DA, m.ob.). Both Virginia Rail and Sora were more noticeable this summer in the Rainwater Basin, although no breeding was observed (JGJ, m.ob.). There are only about 35 Common Moorhen records for Nebraska, now including a bird in *York* 11-20 Jun (JGJ, AR).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Shorebirds were widespread and plentiful this season, and, more than is usual, mid-Jun lingerers, probably nonbreeders, were widely reported. Among late spring migrants was a Black-bellied Plover in *York*, NE 10 Jun (JGJ). American Golden-Plovers included up to 2 birds in *York*, NE 17-26 Jun (JGJ, JSt) and singles 21 & 26 Jun at Hackberry (L&MT), *Hamilton*, NE 9 Jul (LR, RH), and *Seward*, NE 16 Jul (JGJ). Snowy Plovers were at McConaughy, where seven nests were found 5-21 Jun (GW, *fide* SJD); 200+ were at Quivira 27 Jun (MR). Two Semipalmated Plovers were in *Fillmore*, NE 11 Jun (JGJ), with 2 at Hackberry 21 Jun (BH). Impressive numbers of Piping Plovers were at McConaughy, where over 200 nests were located this season (GW, *fide* SJD), an indication that this is a significant site for a species whose world population was estimated at

5945 in 2001. A female Piping at L. Minatare, *Scotts Bluff*, NE was banded as a young bird at L. Diefenbaker, SK in 2004 (*fide* KD). The only other report of the species was of 2 in *York*, NE 11 Jun (LE). Another species of conservation concern, Mountain Plover, was found in sw. Nebraska, with 47 nests located in *Kimball* and one in *Banner* (*fide* CK). Black-necked Stilt has become quite numerous in the w. Sandhills of Nebraska, and this year it expanded much farther eastward, with nesting at three locations in the Rainwater Basin (JGJ, m.ob.);



This Tree Swallow (with fledgling) at Lake Stanley Draper, Cleveland County, Oklahoma 24 June 2005 was part of the species' gradual range extension southward. Photograph by Pat Velté.

there were numerous other sightings in between (*fide* WRS).

Reports of Greater Yellowlegs have become routine in Jun, although not easily assigned to status; this year's reports included singles 10 Jun in *Seward*, NE (JGJ), 15 Jun in *Morrill*, NE (AK), and 18 Jun in the e. Rainwater Basin (JGJ). Single Lesser Yellowlegs in *Douglas*, NE 7 Jun (JSt) and at Harvard Marsh 17 Jun (PD), also difficult to categorize, were possibly nonbreeders. Probably a very early fall migrant was a Solitary Sandpiper in the Rainwater Basin 18 Jun (JGJ); 3 on 1 Jul at Red Slough (DA) were also early. Often early as southbound migrants, 3 Willets were noted in the e. Rainwater Basin 24 Jun (JGJ), and one was at Quivira 27 Jun (MR). A Long-billed Curlew in *Lincoln*, NE 23 Jun (TJW) was likely southbound; a good count was the 70 in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 23 Jul (KD). A Whimbrel 18 Jun at Quivira (AM et al.) was unusual for the date.

Two Hudsonian Godwits in *Seward*, NE 4 Jun (JGJ) were tardy. A Marbled Godwit nest with three eggs in *Sheridan*, NE 16 Jun

(CK) was only the 4th for the state but the 3rd since 1990. Other Marbleds were already moving southward in Jun, with one in *Seward*, NE 12 Jun (JGJ), 2 at Cheyenne Bottoms 15 Jun (ML, TSw), and 35 at McConaughy 21 Jun (SJD). A Ruddy Turnstone in *Clay*, NE 4 Jun was record late for the e. Rainwater Basin (JGJ). Also exceptional for Jun were 7 Sanderlings at McConaughy 5 & 21 Jun (SJD) and 2 at Quivira 15 Jun (ML, TSw). Some 300 Semipalmated Sandpipers were still in the e. Rainwater Basin 4 Jun (JGJ), and 41 were at McConaughy 5 Jun

(SJD), with 8 (likely the first of the fall migrants) at Quivira 27 Jun (MR). In addition, over 9000 White-rumped Sandpipers were still at Cheyenne Bottoms 8 Jun (HH), with up to 3200 estimated in *Clay*, NE 4 (JGJ) & 5 Jun (PD). The last White-rumped noted were the 48 at Quivira 27 Jun (MR). Two Pectoral Sandpipers were seen in *Fillmore*, NE 12 Jun (JGJ), with 4-5 in the e. Rainwater Basin 18 & 24 Jun (JGJ) and one at Quivira 27 Jun (MR). Mid-summer Stilt Sandpipers included singles in *Lancaster*, NE 18 Jun (LE) and the e. Rainwater Basin 24 Jun (JGJ); there were apparently six other reports 15 Jun-6 Jul for Nebraska (*fide* WRS). Dunlins lingered through 11 Jun in *Seward*, NE (JGJ). Single Buff-breasted Sandpipers in *Clay* 4 Jun (JGJ) and *York* 25 Jun (LE) represented the first Jun records for Nebraska. Eight returning Buff-breasted were found in *Marion*, KS 29 Jul (MR), with 37 in *Sedgwick*, KS 31 Jul (PJ). A Short-billed Dowitcher, clearly *hendersoni*, was noted in

Hamilton, NE 15 Jul (MB). Quite early were 2 Long-billed Dowitchers in the e. Rainwater Basin 24 Jun (JGJ).

A Laughing Gull in *Cedar* 26 Jul (MB) and, quite exceptionally, a Little Gull in first-alternate plumage at McConaughy 21 Jun (SJD) were gull highlights in Nebraska. California Gulls away from McConaughy included one in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 15 Jun (KD), 3 there on 9 Jul (KD), and one in *Reno*, KS 5 Jun (PJ). Unusual in summer, 2 Herring Gulls and a Lesser Black-backed Gull were at McConaughy 21 Jun (SJD). Surprising for summer were an ad. Common Tern at McConaughy 5 Jun and 3 ads. there 21 Jun (SJD). An excellent count for Black Tern was the 1569 at McConaughy 5 Jun (SJD).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

White-winged Doves are still pressing into Nebraska. A young bird downed by a storm in *Albion* 21 Jun (ph. D&CN) may have fledged in Nebraska, and 4 others were reported: singles at *Harlan* 3 Jun (G&WH), at McConaughy 5 Jun (ph. SJD), in *Dawes* 5 Jul

(SA), and in *Lincoln* 23 Jul (TJW). About 20 Black-billed Cuckoos were reported in Nebraska, a high number; cedar canyons in *Lincoln* produced some of the largest counts (TJW). Two Burrowing Owls in *Fillmore*, NE 11 Jun (LE) were e. of usual areas. Four juv. Long-eared Owls 25 Jun in *Brown*, NE (PD) provided the only report of the species.

Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, once considered exceptional, are now almost expected, if rare, beginning in Jul. A Calliope was noted in *Pawnee*, KS 28 Jul (DK), while Broad-taileds were found in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 20 & 26 Jul (KD), *Kearney*, NE 22-23 Jul (†GL), and 27 Jul in *Finney*, KS (T&SS). Rufous Hummingbirds began appearing 16-18 Jul in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (AK), with reports of 9 birds from Kansas (*vide LM*) but only one from Oklahoma, in *Osage* 26 Jul (KR). An absolute surprise for location, habitat, and season was a young male American Three-toed Woodpecker that scaled bark on mesquite in a campground in *Morton*, KS 3-9 Jul (MG, AM, m.ob.). Strangely, the only two other Regional records for the species are also from mid-summer, but from Nebraska: a specimen collected 16 Jun 1916 in *Scotts Bluff* and a sighting 18 Jul 1994 in *Sioux*.

Cordilleran Flycatchers in *Scotts Bluff*, NE (SJD, WRS) and *Kimball*, NE (WRS) 4 Jun were tardy. A southbound Alder/Willow Flycatcher, possibly Alder, was early in *Wagoner*, OK 23 Jul (DG, JM), while 4 Willows at Red Slough during the period (DA, m.ob.) continued their very local summer presence there. An Ash-throated Flycatcher was in *Morton*, KS 3 Jul (DS, GP), where regular but rare, the same status applicable to 4 Vermilion Flycatchers in *Cimarron*, OK 23-25 Jun (BH et al.). A Great Crested Flycatcher was noted westward to *Scotts Bluff*, NE 14 Jun (*vide AK*). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, expanding into s.-cen. Nebraska, nested near *Kearney*, NE (MU, KS, m.ob.), with single birds in *Sarpy* 10-18 Jun (DB, m.ob.) and *Saline* 24 Jun (RE).

Black-capped Vireos continue to thrive in the Wichita Mts., OK, with over 2000 pairs estimated present this season (JAG, VF, JW). Two Plumbeous Vireos in *Dawes*, NE 3 Jun (EB) were e. of the known breeding range but may have been late migrants. Following the winter's incursion, Clark's Nutcrackers remaining in Monroe Canyon, *Sioux*, NE included as many as 40 ads. 3 & 14 Jun; however, no breeding activity was noted, possibly the result of a cone-crop failure in 2004 (WM). Encroaching northward were 2 Fish Crows in *Montgomery*, KS 3 Jul (PJ, KG). Usually only migrants in cen. and w. Oklahoma, an ad. and 3 juv. Tree Swallows in *Cleveland* 24 Jun (PV, TU) and a nest in *Comanche*, OK in Jun (in mesquite grassland; VF, JAG, m.ob.) provided first local breeding

records. Apparently rare in both states, but probably underdetected, were 3-4 Cave Swallows in *Carter*, OK 8 Jun (BF) and one in *Morton*, KS 22 Jun (SP). Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were in Omaha, NE in Jun (PSw), one possibly injured (*vide WRS*). A Carolina Wren singing in *Red Willow*, NE 21 Jul was w. of usual range (LR, RH). A late migrant of the w. Veery subspecies group *salicicolus* was in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 4 Jun (SJD, WRS). A late fallout of Swainson's Thrushes was detected 4 Jun in the Nebraska Panhandle, where 37 were counted (SJD, WRS). Single northbound Swainson's were in *Garden*, KS as late as 8 Jun (T&SS) and *Chase*, NE 11 Jun (MB). The only Sage Thrasher report was one in *Sioux*, NE 23-24 Jul (HKH). The *Sioux*, NE Curve-billed Thrasher, first



This White-faced Ibis nest at Rauscher Waterfowl Production Area, Filmore County furnished one of only a few confirmed breeding records for Nebraska.

Photograph by Joel Jorgensen.

noted in Oct 2002, was still present 7 Jul and for the second summer, fed both grackle and robin nestlings (LF). A mid-summer Cedar Waxwing 24 Jun in *Cimarron*, OK (BH et al.) was noteworthy.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Quite a surprise was a female Blue-winged Warbler in *Scotts Bluff*, NE 4 Jun (WRS, SJD), only the 3rd Nebraska Panhandle record. A female Virginia's Warbler in *Sioux*, NE 4 Jun (SJD, WRS) provided the 3rd spring record for Nebraska. A Northern Parula 3 Jun (PS) and a Black-throated Green Warbler 1 Jun, both in *Alfalfa*, OK (AW), a singing Cerulean Warbler in *Morton*, KS 22 Jun (SP), and a Prothonotary Warbler at the same location 5 Jul (KH, SG) were e. warbler highlights. At least two pairs of Louisiana Waterthrushes were n. of usual range in *Thurston*, NE 4 Jul (BFH). A Yellow-breasted Chat in *Knox*, NE 8 Jun (MB) furnished only the 9th record since 1981 from e. Nebraska. Enigmatic was a Western Tanager in *Wagoner*, OK 21 Jul (B&KG). It is rumored that Canyon Towhees noted in *Platte* and *Madison*, NE in 1999 and 2000 may have been transported from Arizona in 1998 and released (WF). Found rarely, and mostly in the se. corner of the Region, 3 Bachman's Sparrows were in *Osage*, OK 21 Jun (JL et al.). Surprising for the date

and location were 2 White-throated Sparrows in *Tulsa*, OK 30 Jun (BG, m.ob.), while a White-crowned in *Scotts Bluff* 9 Jun (KD) may have been tardy. Good numbers of McCown's Longspurs were noted in the expected Nebraska summer range along the Wyoming border in *Sioux* 4 Jun (EB) and also in *Kimball*, NE 4 Jun (WRS). A Black-headed Grosbeak in *Greeley*, NE 3 Jul (LR, RH) was at the e. edge of the nesting range. There was a strong westerly push of Dickcissels in Nebraska this summer, including one in *Kimball* 20 Jun (AR) and 8 in *Banner* 18 Jun (CK).

At a hayfield study area in *Hall*, NE, all but 15 of 150+ Bobolink nests had fledged young by 4 Jul; their nesting success was a clear result of the delay of haying until mid-Jul (DKi). Surprisingly rare in the e. Rainwater Basin, an Eastern Meadowlark at Harvard Marsh 18 Jun was noteworthy (JGJ). Six Red Crossbills as far e. as *Boone*, NE 3-4 Jun (D&CN) were unexpected. Several spring nestings of Pine Siskins away from the usual summer range were corroborated by observations of a hatch-year bird in *Sarpy*, NE 16 Jun (RG) and 16 juvs. in *Finney*, KS (T&SS). A surprise so far e. was a Lesser Goldfinch in *Wichita*, KS 25 Jun-17 Jul (BR), possibly the same bird that was there Jul 2004 (*vide LM*). A small colony of three Lesser Goldfinch pairs was found in *Comanche*, OK (VF).

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