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Spring is the season for birders in Northern Canada: reports from observers throughout the Region this spring were full of the profound excitement that greets the wave of avian diversity that washes over the north country. In the Yukon, the weather folks described the spring as “average,” but to most Yukoners, it felt cold. However, deep and lingering snow in the alpine areas and a few spring blizzards produced excellent birding. In Northwest Territories, after the warmest winter on record, spring ended up having slightly below-normal temperatures in March in the Mackenzie Valley; April and May temperatures averaged slightly above normal. Precipitation was above average in the southern half of the Northwest Territories for the entire period. Arrival dates of some early migrants may have been slightly later than average, but some later species seemed a bit early.

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

In s. Yukon, unusually high numbers of Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, and numerous flocks of Snow Geese, were noted through the season (m.ob.). The Yukon's long-awaited first Ross's Goose, an ad., was with 16 Snow Geese at Shallow Bay 4-11 May (ph. CE, m.ob.). A single Brant at Shallow Bay, s. Yukon 15 May (ph. CE) was record early; as usual, small flocks were seen at various wetlands in the Whitehorse area through late May (m.ob.). In Northwest Territories, the first report of Snow Goose was a flock of 28 at Ft. Simpson 30 Apr (DT). Both Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese were seen at Norman Wells, NWT 1 May (BL). A white goose lingering in Ft. Simpson 10-24 May (EC, vt. DT, m.ob.) caused much local interest; it was found to be a first-year Snow Goose. In Nunavut, the first Canada Goose reports from the Baffin region were flocks of

about 20 birds at Frobisher Bay 1 May and Iqaluit 7 May (MM). At Arviat, Nunavut, the first big movement of Canada and Snow Geese was noted 11 May (LJS). At M'Clintock Bay, s. Yukon, swan numbers peaked 20 Apr at 1001 Trumpeters and 515 Tundras (JJ). A female *Anas* that mostly resembled American Black Duck at Shallow Bay, s. Yukon 5 May appeared to have some genetic material from Mallard (ph. CE); there is as yet no accepted record of an American Black Duck in the Yukon. A male Mallard × Northern Pintail hybrid was at Judas Cr., s.

Yukon 24 May (JH et al.). Eurasian Teal sightings, all of single males in s. Yukon, came from Shallow Bay 7 May (BD, HG, YS), M'Clintock Bay 13 May (CE), and Tagish 17 May (CE, JJ). In Northwest Territories, Long-tailed Ducks and Surf Scoters were present in large numbers on the Mackenzie R. near the Liard R. mouth during the last week of May (JB). An outing in search of Blue Grouse at Montana Mt. near Carcross, s. Yukon 28 Apr was successful, with 5 seen (DK et al.).

Two Horned Grebes were feeding on a very small, ice-free pond 9 May near Rabbitkettle L., Nahanni National Park Reserve (ph. DT, SCam), and a Red-necked Grebe was heard there 16 May (DT, SCam), despite there being only a small fringe of open water present. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was observed taking juncos from a feeder in Norman Wells, NWT 30 Apr (RPo). Feeder-hunting was also observed in Ft. Simpson, NWT, where a Merlin succeeded in taking Snow Buntings 26 Apr and 4 May (HP, DT). A fantastic shorebird migration in the Whitehorse area, s. Yukon in May yielded an impressive 30 species. A sensational late-May fallout at Judas Cr., s. Yukon provided a remarkable opportunity to hear the bizarre songs of high Arctic breeders such as Stilt and White-rumped Sandpipers and Red Knot, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers were seen doing their frenetic trance-like breeding displays. Southern Yukon shorebird highlights included 9 Pacific Golden-Plovers during 5-20 May at Shallow Bay, M'Clintock Bay, and Carcross (CE); a loose flock of 26 Spotted Sandpipers at Lewes Marsh 20 May (CE, PS); a Ruddy Turnstone at Shallow Bay 14 May (CE); 3 Red Knots at Judas Cr. 30 May-2 Jun (ph. CE, PS, DM); 600 Semipalmated and 900 Pectoral Sandpipers at Judas Cr. 29 May (CE); higher-than-normal numbers of White-rumped Sandpipers, with high counts of 6 on 29 & 31 May at Judas Cr (ph. CE, PS); above-average counts of Stilt Sandpipers, such as 19 at Shallow Bay 28 May and 12 at Judas Cr. 29

May (ph. CE); 4 Buff-breasted Sandpipers at Judas Cr. 29 May, 9 there 30 May (ph. CE), and 6 at the Whitehorse airport 31 May (WN), and a high count of 25 Wilson's Phalaropes at Swan L. 24 May (HG). A Hudsonian Godwit, rare in sw. Yukon, was at Haines Junction 6-7 May (CD, LD, ph. JB). Two leucistic shorebird species seen in s. Yukon this spring were a Semipalmated Sandpiper at Tagish 17 May (CE, JJ) and a Pectoral Sandpiper at Judas Cr 29 May (ph. CE). In Northwest Territories, single Black-bellied Plovers were seen along with the more common migrant American Golden-Plovers at Norman Wells 27 May (DW) and Colville L. 29 May (SD). Shorebird surveys along the Mackenzie R., NWT in late May suggest it is a good year for breeding boreal shorebirds; Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers, and Wilson's Snipe were all found to be common and widespread (VJ). Shorebird highlights from Northwest Territories included 5 Upland Sandpipers near Wrigley 23 May (VJ); migrant Whimbrels including one at Ft. Simpson 22 May (NL, RPi, HP, DT), 2 there 24 May (DT), and 3 at Norman Wells 24 May (RPo); 2 Hudsonian Godwits at Ft. Simpson 22 May (DT), one at Tulita 22 May (VJ), and one at Colville L. 30 May (OB); 6 White-rumped Sandpipers along the Mackenzie R. s of Tulita 22 May (VJ); 3 Stilt Sandpipers at Colville L. 28-29 May (OB, SD); 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers at the Ft. Simpson airport 24 May (DT, SCat), and 2 at Norman Wells airport, which had an unfortunate collision with a jet 29 May (RPo); up to 2 Short-billed Dowitchers (*hendersoni*) at Colville L. 28-31 May (SD, OB, CS); and a flock of 100 Red-necked Phalaropes on the Norman Wells sewage lagoons 22 May (VJ).

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

A wet blizzard in the Whitehorse area, s. Yukon on 13 May grounded high numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls: 2000 at M'Clintock Bay (CE), 760 at the Whitehorse sewage ponds (HG), and 1000 at Carcross (CE). Mew Gulls staged a strong migration in s. Yukon, with flocks of 2000 at Shallow Bay 11 May (CE, PS), 800 at M'Clintock Bay 13 May (CE), 1000 at Carcross 13 May (CE), and 620 on the Yukon R. in Whitehorse 13 May (MB). A nest-building pair of Ring-billed Gulls in Whitehorse, s. Yukon 19 May (ph. CE, PS) provided the first sign of breeding in the territory; however, the nest was not successful. The first gull reported in Ft. Simpson, Northwest Territories was a Ring-billed Gull 21 Apr (DT). Herring Gull migration peaked in s. Yukon in late Apr, with high counts of 850 at M'Clintock Bay 19-20 Apr (JJ) and 2000 at the Whitehorse landfill 26 Apr (CE). Glau-

cous-winged Gulls were thin this spring in s. Yukon; a first-year bird was in Whitehorse 25 Apr (ph. CE); and another was in Carcross 2 May (CE). The first Glaucous Gulls (200) arrived at Iqaluit, Nunavut around 7 May (MM); a high count of 30 Glaucous Gulls was made at Colville L., NWT 28 May (OB, SD, CS). Arctic Tern migration was still underway late in the season, with 150 on Marsh L., s. Yukon 29 May (CE).

A single Snowy Owl was noted at Arviat, Nunavut 12 May, and 2 were there 24 May (LJS). Uncommon in the Region were a Barred Owl calling at Ft. Simpson, NWT 3-4 Apr (LMC, DT) and a Long-eared Owl on the Ft. Simpson, NWT owl survey 22 Apr (DT). Five Short-eared Owls were noted between Haines Junction and Beaver Creek, sw. Yukon 18 Apr (KA). A Boreal Owl was spotted in a front-yard spruce tree in Ft. Simpson, NWT 22 Mar (JR, DT); this was the most common species on the local owl survey, with 3 heard 22 Apr (DT). Casual in s. Yukon was a Northern Saw-whet Owl heard near Marsh L. 12 Apr (JJ). A pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Dawson, cen. Yukon 24 Apr+ (ph. FB, PB) was at the edge of the species' range. Two Red-breasted Sapsuckers frequented a suet feeder at Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 3-9 Apr (ph. RJ). Observations of sapsuckers at Shallow Bay, s. Yukon during May found that Yellow-bellied Sapsucker × Red-breasted Sapsucker hybrids were far more frequent than pure Yellow-bellieds (ph. CE). A female American Three-toed Woodpecker with a pale bill was a curious sight at M'Clintock Bay, s. Yukon 17 May (ph. CE, JJ). A Northern Flicker at Ft. Simpson, NWT 29 Mar (NL) was early. A Pileated Woodpecker seen 2 Mar at km 765 of the Mackenzie Hwy., n. of Wrigley (SCat), was beyond its typical range.

Four Eastern Kingbirds at Norman Wells, NWT 31 May (RPo) were at the n. edge of their range. An Eastern Phoebe banded at Teslin, s. Yukon 27 May (ph. BS, JH, WN) provided the first local record. Rare at Norman Wells, NWT were a Blue-headed Vireo 24 May and an American Crow 3 May (DW). In s. Yukon, heavy snow conditions in alpine ar-

reas resulted in high numbers of migrant Horned Larks in the lowlands (m.ob.). Very unusual was an apparent Boreal Chickadee × Mountain Chickadee hybrid banded at Teslin, s. Yukon 20 May (ph. BS). In Northwest Territories, Mountain Bluebird reports included one s. of Enterprise 6 Apr (RPi), one at N'Dulee Crossing 10 Apr (NL, DA), and 2 at Liard R. crossing 13 Apr (SCat, MC). Bohemian Waxwings were common in late Apr and early May at Rabbitkettle L. (KS, MC, DT, SCam); 170 were seen there 9 May.

The two Yukon banding stations provided a concise account of warbler migration; the most common warblers at Albert Creek banding station, se. Yukon during 22 Apr-4 Jun (TMK) were: Wilson's Warbler (387), Yellow-rumped Warbler (364), Yellow Warbler (306), Orange-crowned Warbler (214), Northern Waterthrush (89), Blackpoll Warbler (62), and Tennessee Warbler (53). At Teslin, the most common warblers 22 Apr-11 Jun (BS) were Yellow-rumped (63), Wilson's (54), Yellow (50), Orange-crowned (25), and Blackpoll (21), followed by Northern Waterthrush (14). A second-year male Black-and-white Warbler banded at Albert Cr. 21 May provided the 3rd record for the station (TMK); one was at Norman Wells, NWT 23 May (DW). In Northwest Territories, warbler migration was in full swing 12 May, when 55 Orange-crowned and 140 Yellow-rumped Warblers were counted passing through the Rabbitkettle L. area (DT, SCam).

An American Tree Sparrow at Mayo, cen. Yukon 8 Apr was early (MOD). A Sooty Fox Sparrow frequenting a Whitehorse feeder 22-23 Apr (ph. CE, PS) provided the Yukon's first record away from its limited breeding grounds in the Coast Mountains. Golden-crowned Sparrow is rare e. of the mts. in Northwest Territories; one at a feeder 2 May (ph. DW, RPo) furnished Norman Wells' first record. The first Harris's Sparrow arrived at Arviat, Nunavut 14 May (LJS); the species was found to be locally common around Colville L., NWT in May (OB). Several thousand Dark-eyed Juncos flocked to feeders in Norman Wells, NWT during a snowstorm 29 Apr (RPo, m.ob.);

among these was a leucistic individual that stayed until at least 2 May (vi. DW, ph. RPo). A male Oregon Junco frequented a Whitehorse-area feeder 25 Apr+ (LK, JH, BD, HG). Massive flocks of thousands of Lapland Longspurs were seen in the Shallow Bay area, Yukon 4-5 May (CE; BD, HG). Small flocks of Snow Buntings were in Iqaluit, Nunavut by 10 Apr (MM). A male Brewer's Blackbird at M'Clintock Bay 13 Apr (JJ) provided the Yukon's only report this season. In Northwest Territories, Rusty Blackbird arrivals included one on 23 Apr in Ft. Simpson (DT) and 2 in Norman Wells 29 Apr (RPo). A Common Grackle was at Norman Wells, NWT 5 May (RPo). A flock of up to 80 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were noted in Dawson, cen. Yukon 9 Apr (ML, JF). A male Purple Finch at Mayo, cen. Yukon 29-30 Apr provided a first local record (MOD). Numerous newly fledged Common Redpolls seen from Whitehorse, s. Yukon e. to Ft. Simpson, NWT 6 May+ were indicative of widespread breeding in lowland areas as a result of the heavy snow conditions in the sub-alpine areas this spring.

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