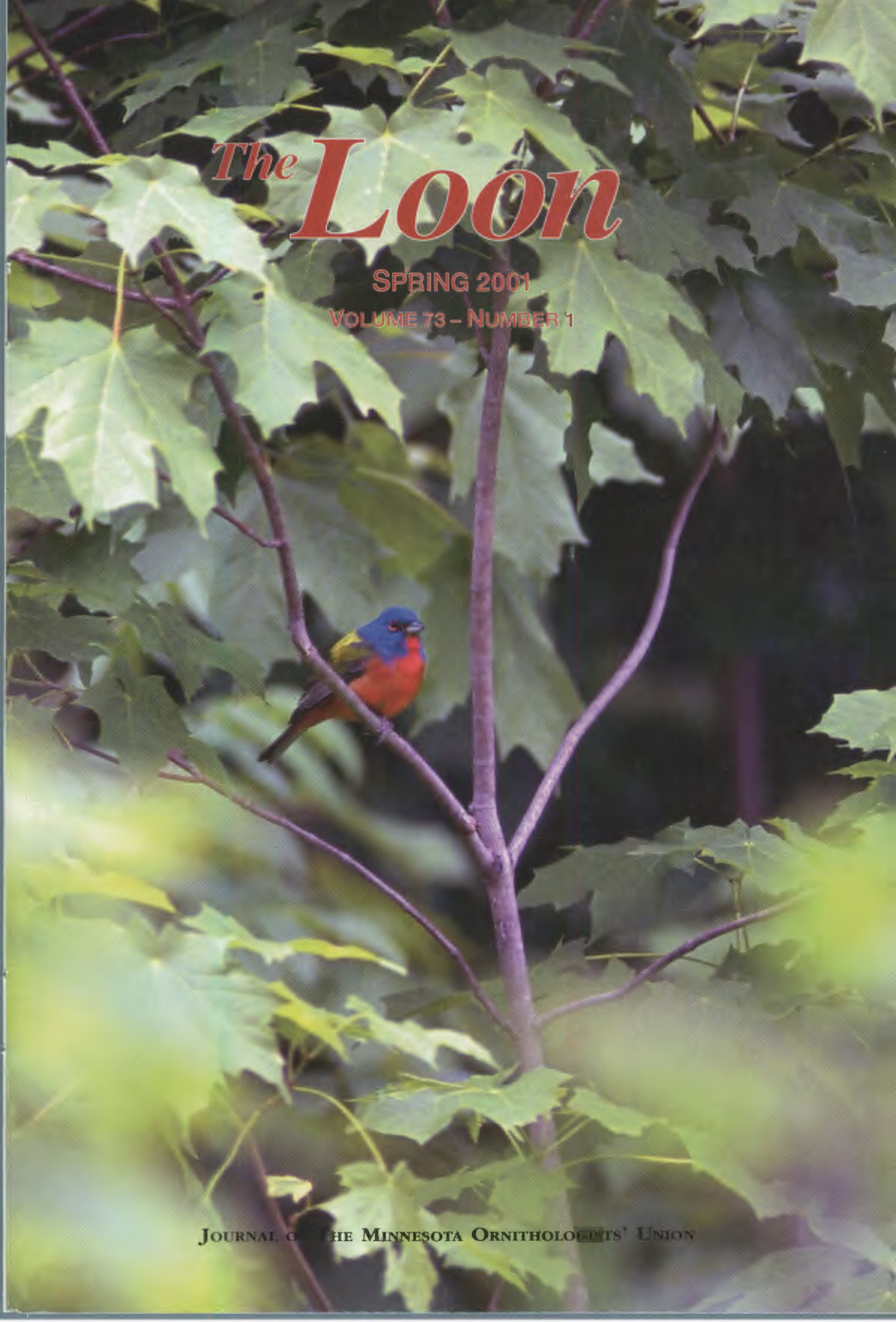

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Influx of Snowy Egrets into Minnesota
Spring 2000 Migratory Movement

Tom Tustison

Snowy Egrets were scattered across the state during the Spring 2000 migration. This exceptional influx is compared to 21 years of migration data. Peak migration, high counts, and nesting records in Minnesota are also reviewed.

Spring 2000 was truly remarkable for herons, egrets and related species. For the first time, I personally recorded all the herons and bitterns that appear on the current Minnesota checklist by the end of May. The Snowy Egret was not an exception — unprecedented numbers occurred in the state during the spring migration (defined in this article as 1 March to 30 June).

Minnesota Snowy Egret records were gleaned from *Seasonal Reports*, rare bird alert transcripts, and internet resources, including the Bird Central Archives on the web at http://listserv.arizona.edu/lsv/www/birdcentral.html. All reports were reviewed and questionable sightings omitted. During Spring 2000, there were 14 records (minimum of 21 and a maximum of 25 birds). For the entire year in 2000, there were 17 records (minimum of 24 and a maximum of 28 birds). Compare the Spring 2000 data to the number of reports from the five preceding springs (Table 1).

Year	Records	Counties
2000	14	11
1999	7	6
1998	6	5
1997	1	1
1996	6	5
1995	1	1

Table 1. Snowy Egrets during Spring (1 March – 30 June), 1995–2000.

Snowy Egret, 8 May 2000, 40th Avenue West/Erie Pier area in Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Peder H. Svingen.

The Spring 2000 Influx

The first Snowy Egrets to appear were single birds on 22 April in Ramsey and 30 April in Lac Qui Parle counties. About half of the spring influx occurred during the first two weeks of May, though others arrived in the second half of the month. The last record associated with this influx was one bird in Dakota County during the second week in June (Table 2).

Dates	Location	County	No.	Observers
4/22	TCAAP	Ramsey	1	T. Nelson
4/30–5/04	Hwy 75 near Madison	Lac Qui Parle	1	many observers
5/02	East Landfill Reservoir	Olmsted	1	D. M. Anderson
5/02	L. Byllesby	Dakota	1	D. & B. Smith
5/07	LaCrescent	Houston	1	*fide* A. X. Hertzel
5/08–09	Rush Lake WMA	Otter Tail[1]	2	S. & D. Millard
5/08–21	40th Ave. West, Duluth	St. Louis[2]	4	many observers
5/12	Roscoe WPA	Stearns	1	H. H. Dingmann
5/14	CR 27/240th St.	Scott	1	B. Seeliger
5/14–15	Wood Lake N.C.	Hennepin	1	C. R. Mandel
5/17–6/21	L. Alice, Fergus Falls	Otter Tail[1]	4	S. & D. Millard
5/24	near Marion L., Burnsville	Dakota	1	C. Menze
5/27+	three locations	Kandiyohi	3–4	many observers
6/07–13	Farquhar L., Apple Valley	Dakota	1–2	R. & J. Specht
9/24	Heron Lake lagoons	Jackson	1	R. Hoyme
10/01	CR 7, 0.6 N. of CR 30	Lac Qui Parle	1	W. C. Marengo
10/03	section 1, Amiret Twp.	Lyon	1	R. Schroeder

Table 2. All records of the Snowy Egret in Minnesota, 2000. [1]Possibly involved the same birds in both locations. [2]Includes two birds seen at Indian Point 5/18+.

With regard to the Spring 2000 data, note that Snowy Egrets were seen in no fewer than 11 counties (Figure 1) and in all regions of the state except the northwest, north-central, southwest, and south-central. Up to four different birds were observed at three separate locations in Dakota County. The maximum number at any single location was four. This occurred at Lake Alice in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County, and at the 40th Avenue West/Erie Pier area in Duluth, St. Louis County.

During this influx, two first county records were established: 12 May in Stearns (Roscoe WPA) and 14 May in Scott (New Market Twp.) counties. The four Snowys seen in Duluth were the first ever for that city and only the second St. Louis County record. The first was on 22 April 1985 (***The Loon*** 57:141–142).

The Past Two Decades

Seasonal Reports as published in ***The Loon*** were reviewed for all records of Snowy Egret from 1980 to the present. Compared to the previous 20 years, the Spring 2000 migration looks even more remarkable. The number of records for 1 March through 30 June 2000 represents 15.4% of all spring (March–June) records for the entire period 1980 to 2000!

Figure 2 depicts spring and summer observations for the same 21-year time period. Records without complete date information were omitted. The number of birds reflects the maximum number seen at each location. Only the first day of the observation is plotted even if the bird was seen on multiple dates. Only spring and summer records are shown (1 March through 31 July).

There were 91 spring and summer records involving a maximum of 117 birds during this 21-year span. It is readily apparent that the heaviest spring migration period runs from about 21 April until 18 May. On a cumulative basis, the date on which Snowy Egrets were most frequently observed was 8 May, when nine birds were recorded. The maximum number of birds sighted in any single location since 1980 was four. The record high counts for the state were the 12 nesting pairs at Big Stone NWR in June 1978 (Green 1979), 10 nesting pairs there in 1977 (Ehlers 1977), and 14–15 birds south of Odessa in Lac Qui Parle County, 26 August through 9 September 1978 (Janssen 1978).

From the data shown in Figure 2, we can presuppose that some of the birds observed in June or July may not be true migrants. Some of the later spring records

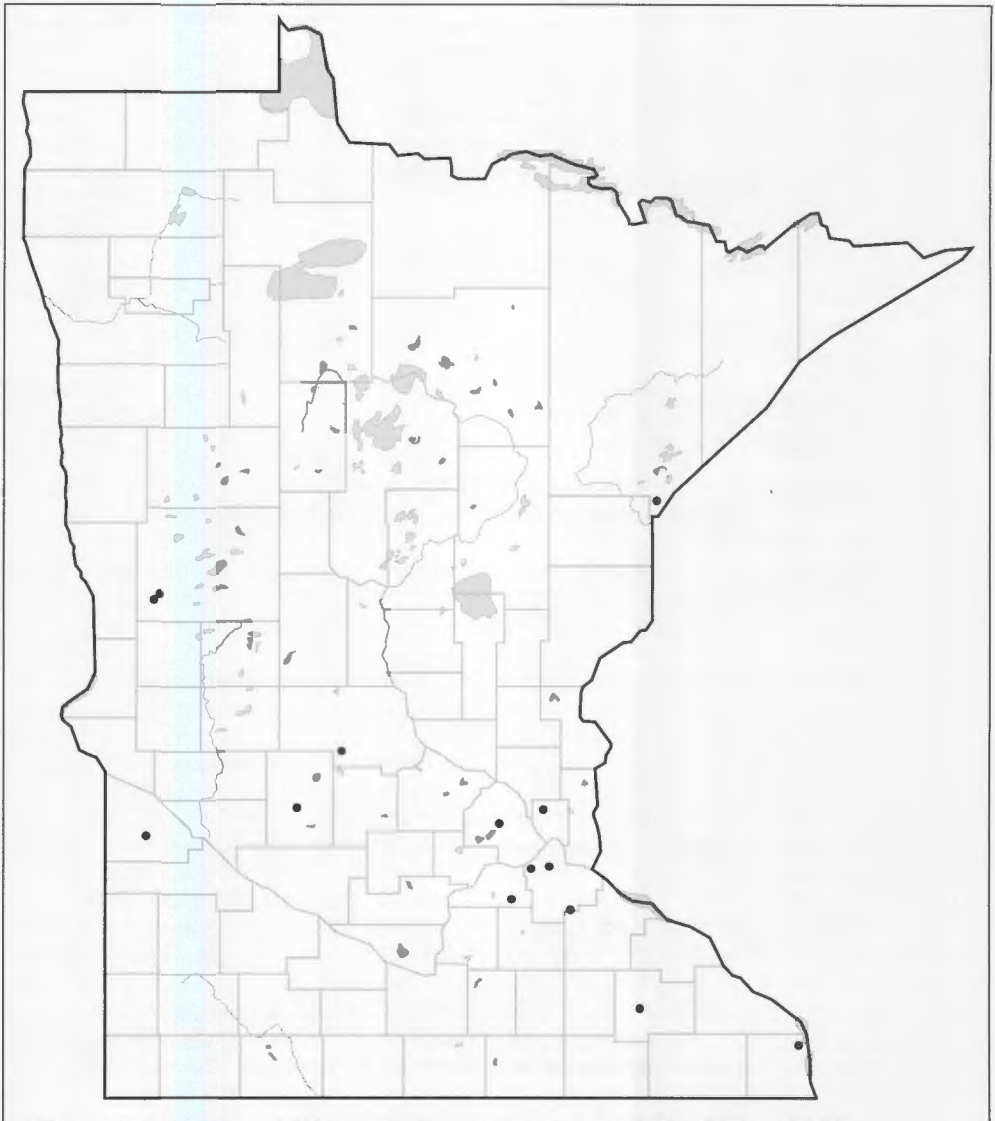

Figure 1. Locations of Minnesota Snowy Egret records for Spring 2000.

may represent Snowys that are breeding, attempting to breed, or simply lingering, while those in late July may be early fall migrants.

During the 21-year period reviewed in this article, only one nest has been found (Mattsson 1986). Since there are only three Minnesota nesting records for this species, it can be assumed that breeding is a very rare event that will not markedly distort the data representing migration. Large-scale colonial breeding should be readily apparent from large "spikes" in the data, or would probably occur at known breeding areas in the state. Admittedly, this is not truly scientific, but it does help us understand this species' spring migration.

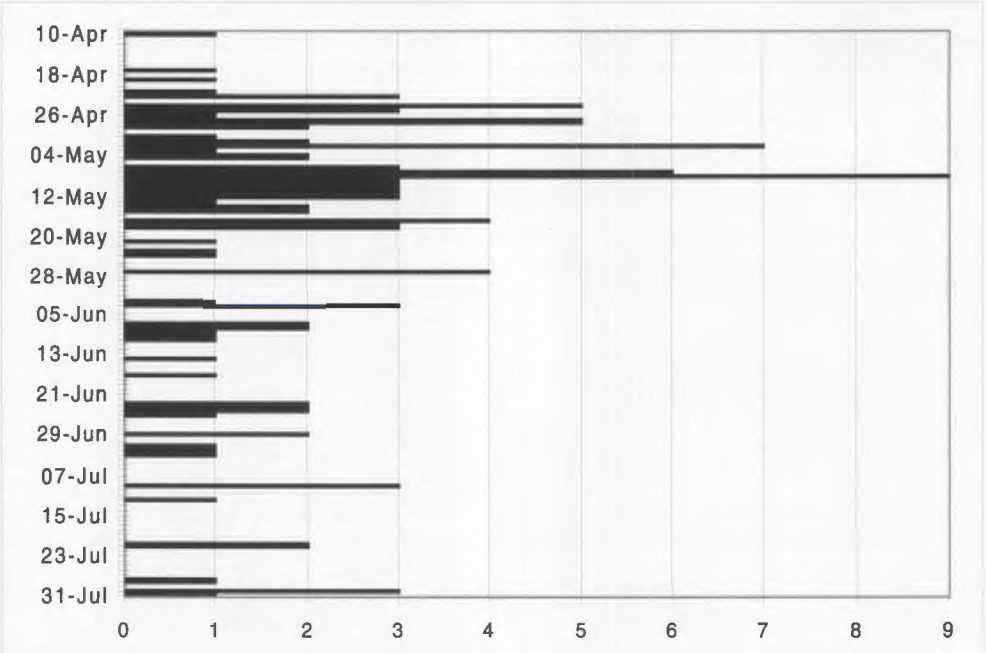

Figure 2. Spring and summer Snowy Egrets (n=117) during 1980–2000.

Discussion

As shown in Figure 2, spring migration for the Snowy Egret peaks between late April and mid-May in Minnesota. To optimize your chances of seeing a Snowy Egret in Minnesota during spring migration, you should concentrate your field searches between 21 April and 18 May at Big Stone NWR in Big Stone/Lac Qui Parle counties; Pelican Lake in Grant/Douglas counties; the rookery at Long Lake in Kandiyohi County; Agassiz NWR in Marshall County; and wetlands in the Twin Cities area, especially within the Minnesota Valley NWR.

In the last 21 spring/summer seasons, the distribution of records by the top five counties (in rank order) is as follows: Lac Qui Parle (13), Marshall (9), Kandiyohi (7), and Dakota, Hennepin, and Big Stone (4 each). The high number in Lac Qui Parle is probably attributable to the annual Salt Lake trip, because 7 of the 11 records are before May, which coincides with the traditional time for this event.

Post-1970 breeding has occurred only in Marshall and Lac Qui Parle, according to Hertzel and Janssen (1998). These also represent the only known nesting records, since suspected breeding at Lake Johanna, Pope County, was never confirmed (Hitman 1972). It remains to be seen whether Kandiyohi, Dakota, Hennepin, and other counties in southern Minnesota provide suitable habitat for possible breeding by Snowy Egrets. Lake Alice in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County, should also be closely watched.

Because this species does not overwinter in Minnesota, it is relatively easy to ascertain the start of spring migration. The earliest date ever recorded was 10 April 1981 at Carlos Avery WMA in Anoka County by Ken LaFond. The next earliest date was 17 April 1988 in Lincoln County by Al Bolduc and the author. However, the endpoint of spring migration is more difficult to analyze due to possible breeding or other factors previously discussed.

Distribution of records over the last 21

years by month is as follows: April 22.8%, May 50.0%, June 16.3%, and July 10.9%.

The top Spring migrations out of the last 21 were (in descending order by number of records): 2000 (14), 1999 and 1985 (7 each), and 1998 and 1996 (6 each).

Conclusion

Given the accumulation of records over the past two decades, we now have sufficient data to discern some patterns about migration of the Snowy Egret in Minnesota. It seems relatively clear that the main spring migratory movement is approximately 21 April to 18 May.

Less clear is whether the Spring 2000 influx indicates possible range expansion to undiscovered breeding areas within the state, or whether this is merely an unusual occurrence or perhaps a cyclical event.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people for their support, review, advice, and technical expertise in putting this article together: Steve Carlson, Kim Eckert, Anthony Hertzel, and Peder Svingen. Anthony Hertzel also created the map. I would also like to thank all the many birders who contributed their sightings over the years.

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Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Response to Blow-down

Alan Haney and John Thomton

During the first week of June 2000, we encountered Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (*Empidonax flaviventris*) on five research plots in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) that had significant wind damage (> 25% canopy loss) from the severe storms on 4 July 1999. On none of these plots had we previously recorded this species. We did not observe the species on any of the other five research plots we surveyed in Spring 2000 in the same general area. Three plots where the flycatchers were observed are located near Red Rock Bay on the southwest side of Saganaga Lake, one on Three Mile Island in Seagull Lake, and another on the south shore of Seagull Lake, all in northern Cook County.

Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were not

present when we surveyed the Red Rock Bay sites in late May and early June 1976, 1994, 1995, 1998, and 1999, or when the Three Mile Island site was surveyed in spring 1977 and 1996. This year, breeding pairs were conspicuous with apparent territories at all three Red Rock Bay sites. At the Seagull Lake sites, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers also were conspicuous on both research plots. Our criterion for a breeding territory is the presence of singing males in the same location on three or more mornings. We surveyed birds only one morning at the Sea Gull sites, so we did not confirm the presence of territories there by our standard.

Janssen (1987) listed the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher as a regular summer resident in northeastern Minnesota. Most observers associated these birds with lowland coniferous forests (Bent 1963). At least in the upper Midwest, such habitat commonly consists of a mosaic of black spruce, tamarack, and northern white cedar with other species (Niemi *et al.* 1997), such as black ash and speckled alder. Wetland habitat of the flycatcher territories that we observed was contiguous with aspen, balsam fir, white spruce, paper birch, and jack pine, consistent with observations of Walkinshaw and Henry (1957).

We established our first permanent research plots at Red Rock Bay in 1976, and on Three Mile Island in 1977. The forests of both areas originated following an 1801 fire (M. Heinselman, pers. comm.) and were largely mature spruce-fir with scattered pockets of wetland consisting of either black spruce or a combination of black ash and alder. In 1998, we added two additional research plots near the original plot in Red Rock Bay, and in May 2000, we replicated the Three Mile Island plot with one on the south shore of Seagull Lake. Each research plot consists of an upland area (usually with embedded wet pockets) of 250 x 250 m., flagged at 50 m. intervals. Birds are plotted from each grid intersection on five or more mornings during the last week of May or first two weeks of June. Composite sheets for each species are compiled from field plots.

Bird populations from 16 research plots (including the original Red Rock Bay and Three Mile Island sites), representing a fire succession sere, were summarized previously (Apfelbaum and Haney 1986). A small blow-down adjacent to the Three Mile Island site was included for comparison. In contrast to recently burned communities, the blow-down community had more species, but comparable density of birds. In none of these previous surveys did we encounter Yellow-bellied Flycatchers.

The 1999 storm provided us an opportunity to extend our observations to the effects of large-scale blow-down on bird communities. Shortly after noon on 4 July 1999, a massive storm passed across much of the BWCA, up-rooting and snapping off trees in a swath 6–20 km. wide for a distance of 50 km. At Red Rock Bay, along the northern edge of the severe wind damage, we estimated canopy loss at 25–30, 40–50, and 50–60% on our three permanent plots. Our plots in Seagull Lake were more heavily impacted with canopy losses of 70–80 and 80–90%. In all cases, wetland pockets were less disturbed by the wind than uplands. Alder and black ash wetlands often had little or no disturbance while black spruce pockets usually had less than 10% of the trees tipped or broken. Surrounding forest vegetation, however, was heavily impacted; tip-ups along the edges of wet pockets were especially common. When broken, the trees tended to snap off 5–10 m. above the ground.

At Red Rock Bay, where we found Yellow-bellied Flycatchers on each of the three grids, males were observed or heard on at least four of the six-day survey periods from 31 May – 5 June. When we checked the Seagull Lake plots on 6 June, Yellow-bellieds were present on or near both grids in apparent territories. They had not been on these plots, however, on 21–23 May when grids were first surveyed, nor had they been recorded in bird surveys from 31 May – 3 June.

The very distinctive call of the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is a plaintive *tu-weee*, described variously by others as *peeh peeh*, *pu-weee*, or *per-wee* (Bull and Farrand 1997, Bent 1963). Bent (1963) cited Chapman (1912) who, from our observation, correctly described the call as a soft, two-noted whistle with the second note higher pitched and prolonged, with rising inflection. Our observations support Walkinshaw and Henry (1957) who considered this call to be a "position call" given by either the male or female.

Walkinshaw and Henry (1957) reported the song to be a double-syllable, metallic *kill-tnk* with the accent on the second note. We observed the male often to alternate the call and the song, as reported by Allen (1903), although the call was heard more frequently. Bull and Farrand (1997) described the metallic vocalization, presumably the song, as a "flat *chilk* or *killic*", although to us, it was distinctly two-syllable, sounding like *je-bunk*, similar to that described by Walkinshaw and Henry (1957). From a distance, it can be confused with the *che-bec* of the Least Flycatcher (*E. minimus*). There are, however, at least three differences in the vocalizations of these two species. The Least Flycatcher is an incessant singer whereas the Yellow-bellied sings or calls more tentatively, and primarily during nest building and incubation (Ehrlich *et al.* 1988, Bent 1963). In all our observations, the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher frequently gave the distinctive *tu-wee* vocalization in conjunction with its song; the Least Flycatcher has no similar vocalization. Finally, the Yellow-bellied's song is distinctly more metallic and less emphatic than that of the Least Flycatcher.

Did the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher find the blow-down habitat more suitable and move from less desirable habitat to occupy sites where it was previously uncommon or absent? Alternatively, its conspicuous presence on the blow-down sites in June 2000 might have been coincidental. This is unlikely given the frequency of its occurrence on our research plots where blow-down had occurred.

Ehrlich *et al.* (1988) and Bent (1963) noted that the species sometimes nests in "upturned roots" of trees that have blown down. Certainly there was a tremendous increase in such nesting sites as a result of the 1999 storm. The habitat where we found males defending territories was similar to the nesting habitat described by Walkinshaw and Henry (1957) and Bent (1963), but other than structural changes associated with the blow-down, the habitat was no different than in previous years when Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were either very inconspicuous or not present.

In northern Wisconsin, this flycatcher was positively associated with the Winter Wren, Veery, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-and-white Warbler, and Canada Warbler, occurring in about 20% of the stands examined in Chequamegon National Forest (Niemi *et al.* 1997). We also found a positive association between Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and Nashville and Magnolia warblers and the Winter Wren on sites after the blow-down; other species listed by Niemi *et al.* were generally present both before and after the blow-down.

Our observations suggest that the habitat for the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was improved by the 1999 blow-down. If so, the number of observations on this attractive species in the BWCA will likely increase during the next few years.

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The Summer Season
(1 June to 31 July 2000)

Terry P. Wiens

A wet and cool summer produced a record-breaking 277 species, many of which were reported in above-average numbers. Waterbirds were well represented, and the late July shorebird migration was impressive. Among the passerines, sparrows seemed especially abundant. Species of note included a ***Tricolored Heron*** *lingering from spring; two* ***Scissor-tailed Flycatchers****; repeat appearances by* ***Yellow-throated Warblers****,* ***Painted Bunting****, and* ***Eurasian Tree Sparrow****; and a first Minnesota nesting record for the* ***Great-tailed Grackle****.*

Extensive spring rain in many areas of the state ended talk of widespread drought conditions for the summer, and helped mitigate the wildfire threat in northern Minnesota. Rainfall in June was near normal to above normal in most regions, with the northwest and the southeast particularly wet. A few of these communities endured record high totals for the month of roughly 12 inches! The wet weather during both May and June produced inundated fields, soil erosion, and urban flooding in some counties. There were not many severe thunderstorms in June, but there were numerous days with strong winds — gusting over 40 miles per hour in many places. Total precipitation in July was more modest,

with the notable exception of the weekend of 7–10 July, when torrential rains pummeled the Twin Cities metro area, causing extensive erosion and flooding.

June temperatures generally ranged from 2 to 4 degrees F cooler than normal statewide; record low temperatures were recorded in the northeast near the end of the month. This trend continued into July, and was highlighted by an amazing week at mid-month during which the temperatures averaged 10 to 20 degrees F colder than normal! Based on daytime temperatures, it was the coldest 18 July in Minnesota history.

Seasonal Highlights

No fewer than **277 species** were seen this season, exceeding the record set last year (please note that the 1999 total was originally 275, but a belated report added another species). The average number observed over the past ten years has been only 267 species. *Seasonal Reports* and/or breeding information were submitted by 156 individuals, also a record high total. Contributors sent in 997 nest or brood cards, similar to the previous year; breeding data were collected for 170 species (above average). The top contributors of breeding information were Jon Little & Jacob Langeslag (202 nest/brood cards), Jean Segerstrom & Mark Newstrom (192), and Michael R. North (94). A very hearty thanks to all contributors for your outstanding time and effort!

It is important to note that the number of observers has increased significantly over the past five years. Obviously, this is something to keep in mind when comparing data to previous years. It is also a factor when determining the number of different counties in which an individual species is reported (usually referred to in the species accounts as the "number of reports"). Close to 18% of all species had a record high number of reports this summer! Many others were well above average. But complicating this issue is the fact that many of the additional observers in recent years are e-mail contributors only, who tend to report a few specific observations; the number of people who fill out and contribute *Seasonal Report* forms (the source of the vast majority of these data) has not really changed much at all. Another complication is the pattern of observations; for example, no warblers and very few waterbirds were reported in record numbers, while woodpecker and sparrow observations were extraordinary.

Summer started with several records of late **Red-throated Loons** at the western end of Lake Superior. Perhaps the term "late" should not be used; migration well into June seems to be the norm for this species, rather than the exception. Also on Lake Superior, the adult **Pacific Loon** discovered in late May lingered into early June. **Clark's Grebes** were reported from five different counties, by far the most ever; hybrid breeding (with **Western Grebe**) was suspected at two of these locations! Please note that it is still important to carefully document sightings of Clark's Grebes anywhere in the state, especially when breeding is suspected.

Noteworthy among the herons were reports of **Snowy Egrets** from Otter Tail and Dakota counties in June; a summer record of the **Tricolored Heron** near the Twin Cities (actually a holdover from late May); five separate occurrences of small groups of **Cattle Egrets**; and two well-described adult **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons**. The latter represents the typical summer tally for this marginal resident in recent years; breeding was last confirmed in 1986 (Pig's Eye Lake, Ramsey County). Also of note was the brief observation of two unidentified flying ibises (***Plegadis* sp?**) in western Minnesota.

Waterfowl were well represented this season, with unseasonal occurrences of **Greater White-fronted Goose** (only the fifth summer record in the past 20 years), **Snow Goose** (three separate reports), **Mute Swan** (Lake Superior), and **Cinnamon Teal** (an adult male unusually far east in St. Louis County). Of interest was the Minnesota DNR report that numbers

of **Canada Geese** now rival those of the ubiquitous Mallard! Meanwhile, reports of the **Trumpeter Swan** are increasing as the population becomes more established. Please be aware that careful identification of all swans is increasingly important. A brief note on your *Seasonal Report* form, explaining how the birds in question were identified, would be very much appreciated!

Bald Eagles continue to expand their range and numbers, and currently nest in most areas of the state. A nesting record for the **Merlin** in Hennepin County was remarkable because of the location (all previous nesting records were confined to northern Minnesota) and because one of the pair was confirmed as the Richardson's race. Richardson's were also observed in northwestern Minnesota, for the third consecutive year. The nesting population of **Peregrine Falcons** is also expanding, headlined by exciting news that pairs have re-established aeries on the cliffs along the Mississippi River Valley in southeastern Minnesota.

Due to recent mild winters, numbers of **Ring-necked Pheasants** were up, as were reports of **Wild Turkeys**. Also due to mild winters, **Ruffed Grouse** numbers declined much less than expected at this point of their ten-year cycle. **Northern Bobwhites** were reported for the second consecutive summer in Winona County. There is some evidence to suggest these may be wild birds, possibly representing an extension from a small population in nearby Wisconsin; more data are needed.

The spring migration of shorebirds did not extend into June to any great degree. For several species, there were relatively few, if any, early June reports. Southbound migration, on the other hand, was very impressive, with numbers gradually building to a peak at the end of July. No fewer than **2,372** shorebirds (20 species) were observed along a Big Stone County shorebird survey route on 31 July! Survey results, along with increasingly detailed records from various observers, continue to provide new insights concerning the timing of both spring and fall migration. Noteworthy records included **American Avocets** in St. Louis and Rice counties (both unusually far east), a record peak daily count of 27 **Solitary Sandpipers** at Carlos Avery WMA on 30 July, an unusual number of **Willets** (15–20) in western Minnesota on 8 July, and two reports of **Red-necked Phalaropes**.

Two larids provided the first summer records for the state: a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Crookston, Polk County, and a **Great Black-backed Gull** in St. Louis County. A record number of **Short-eared Owl** observations (reported in nine northern counties) was documented, including 18 individuals in 10 different locations within the northwest region on 18–19 June. **Three-toed Woodpeckers** were in Lake and Cook counties, and the state's southernmost nesting record for **Black-backed Woodpecker** was well-documented in Pine County.

Two **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were the most for a summer season since 1993. Observations of the **Loggerhead Shrike** were down; contributors are reminded to make a special effort to document the exact location and number of individuals for this species of Special Concern. Most unusual was the female **Carolina Wren** nesting (apparently, without a mate) on a propane tank in Otter Tail County! **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were found in record high numbers; an amazing nine nests were discovered in Cass County, an area representing the northern edge of this species' expanding range. Three **Northern Mockingbirds** was about average for summer.

Distribution and migration of warblers this summer was, overall, quite ordinary. The strong push of fall migrants observed in July of 1999 was not as evident this year. **Blue-winged Warblers** continue to slowly expand westward. Researchers at Cedar Creek Natural History Area, Anoka County, reported exceptional numbers of territorial **Chestnut-sided Warblers**; also of interest, record high numbers of Chestnut-sideds were subsequently banded at

Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in St. Louis County (please see the Fall 2000 report). Once again, a pair of **Yellow-throated Warblers** was found at Sibley State Park in Kandiyohi County; unexpected was an additional June report from Washington County. Single **Kentucky Warblers** were reported in Blue Earth and Scott counties, representing the first summer records in four years. A remarkable 16–21 territorial **Hooded Warblers** were documented at Murphy-Hanrehan Park in Scott/Dakota counties, with three nests (all parasitized by cowbirds) and one brood located; this species was also found in Anoka County. Six singing male **Wilson's Warblers** in northern Lake County are a reminder that breeding was first confirmed in June 1980 in extreme northeastern Minnesota (***The Loon*** 52:183–184). Two **Yellow-breasted Chats** were discovered; this species may still breed, albeit *extremely sparingly*, in southeastern Minnesota.

A second-year male **Summer Tanager** made a brief appearance in Scott County on 24 June. A well-documented **Spotted Towhee** in Meeker County continues the trend of about one record each summer since the towhees were split. A remarkable number of **Henslow's Sparrows** was reported. Documented observations occurred in four counties, with as many as **12** individuals believed to be present at one location in Winona County! There were unsubstantiated reports from six other counties. Observers are reminded that this species is of Special Concern in Minnesota, making it most important to carefully document every sighting.

Very surprising was the late summer **Harris's Sparrow** carefully documented and photographed in central Minnesota, where it remained into early fall. **Blue Grosbeaks** were unusually mobile this year, as evidenced by three reports away from the four counties in extreme southwest Minnesota (and don't forget the lost bird in Cook County this spring!). Even farther out of range was the stunning male **Painted Bunting** that reappeared (presumably the same bird that was seen here last August) at a feeder in western Hennepin County. In many southern and central regions, **Dickcissels** showed a dramatic increase in abundance, which is not unusual for this cyclic species... more reports were received than in any year since the huge irruption of 1988.

Lastly, there were two Casual/Accidental species which have been regularly seen at their respective locations during each of the past three years. The **Great-tailed Grackle** recently expanded into Jackson County along the southern border of the state; this summer, nesting was confirmed for the first time in Minnesota. In western Minnesota, an **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** returned (presumably the same bird) to a feeder in Clay County.

Format, Maps, and Acknowledgments

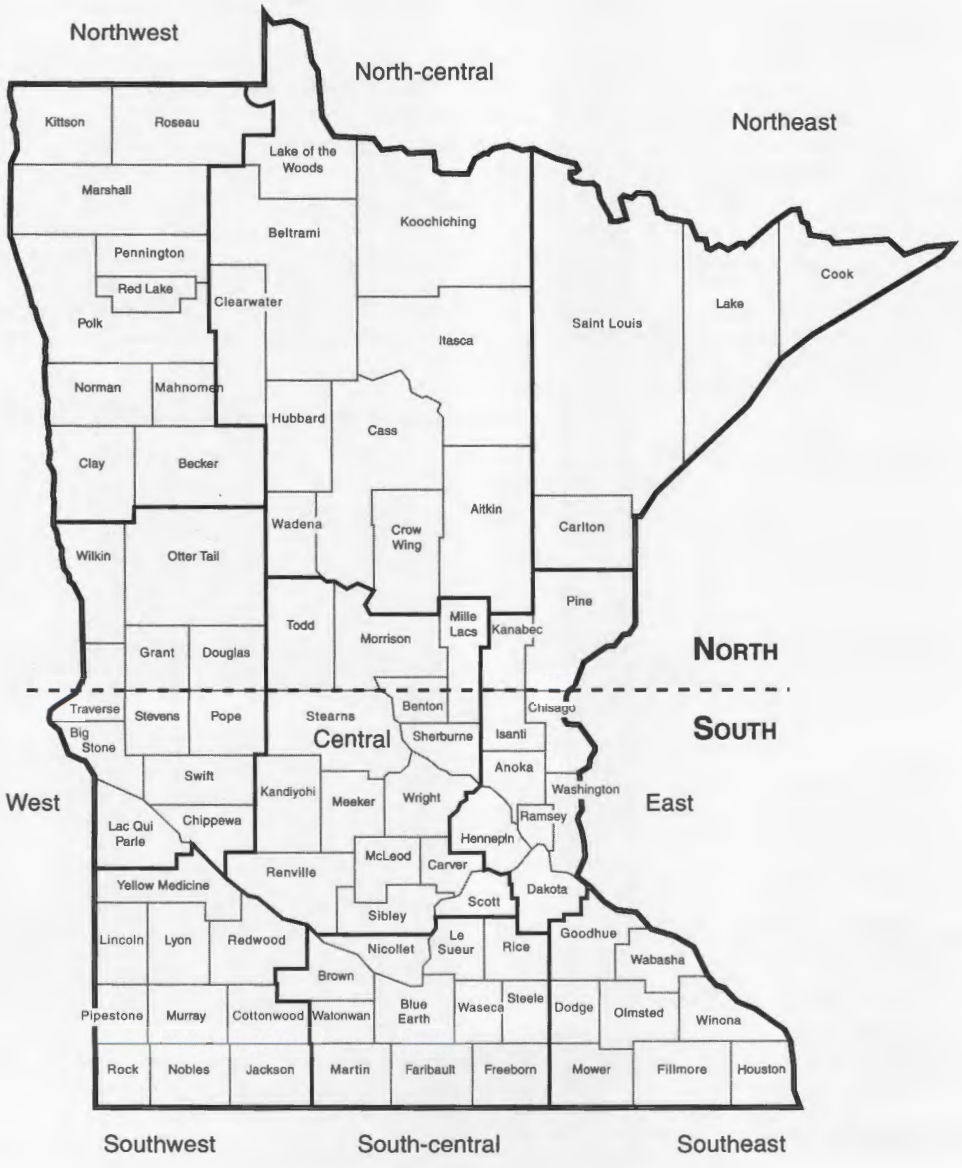
The format for the species accounts is similar to that of recent years. The key to the *Seasonal Report* is located on page 15.

Breeding records are classified based on criteria found in ***The Loon*** 58:22 or in *Minnesota Birds*, p. 7 (Green and Janssen 1975). Each species having at least one nesting record in 2000 has an accompanying map depicting counties in which the records occurred; **confirmed** nesting records are indicated by dark shading, **possible** nesting records are indicated by lighter shading. Counties for which confirmed breeding is documented for the first time since 1970 are in italics and identified as such according to updated versions of *County Nesting Records of Minnesota Birds* (Hertzel and Janssen 1998, M.O.U. Occasional Papers: Number 2). The division of Minnesota into regions (e.g., north-central, southeast) is based on those delineated in *Birds in Minnesota* (Janssen 1987) (see page 14).

A final thanks to all of the summer season reporters who document avian distribution and migration. Thanks also to Anthony Hertzel for preparing the breeding maps, and Karl Bardon, Kim Eckert, and Peder Svingen for their assistance in preparing this report.

3230 Strand Rd., Duluth, MN 55803.

Geographic Regions of Minnesota



This map indicates the nine geographic regions referenced in the *Seasonal Report* and also shows the boundry between north and south. After Janssen 1987 (*Birds in Minnesota*).

KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

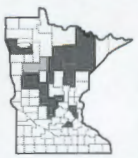
1. Upper case (**LEAST TERN**) indicates a Casual or Accidental species in the state.
2. Dates listed in bold (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold (**Aitkin**) indicate an unusual occurrence for that county.
4. Counties with an underline (**Aitkin**) indicate a first county record.
5. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.
6. Brackets [ ] indicate a species for which there is reasonable doubt as to its origin or wildness.
7. Counts listed in bold (**150**) indicate total within or exceeding the top three high counts for that species.
8. Dagger "†" preceding observer's initials denotes documentation was submitted.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.

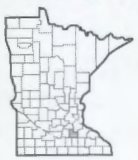
Red-throated Loon — Migrants reported for fourth consecutive summer. Unusually high numbers seen 6/2–8 on L. Superior, off Park Point in Duluth, St. Louis Co. KRE, †CRM *et al.*; peak counts 6/2 (**18**) KRE, 6/8 (**15**) MH and 6/5 (8) CRM. Note that record high numbers were reported in late May (***The Loon*** 72:205).

Pacific Loon — Sixth summer record for the state; one adult in alternate plumage, originally found in late May (***The Loon*** 72:205), seen 6/2–3 on L. Superior near Duluth, St. Louis Co. †TPW, †KRE *et al.*

Common Loon — Record high number of reports. Observed in 39 counties as far west and south as a line through Roseau, Polk, Becker, Pope, Kandiyohi, Le Sueur, Rice; plus 6/10 Fillmore JWH, 7/10 Lyon †CRM *et al.* New nesting records in *Polk* EEF, *Benton* HHD.

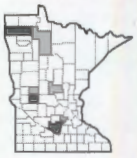


Pied-billed Grebe — Most reports since 1992; observed in 41 counties statewide.

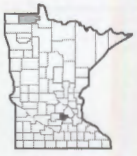


Horned Grebe — Three reports: 6/19 Roseau (5 adults at Roseau River WMA, no nesting evidence) PHS; 7/6 Becker (Tamarac NWR) BAB; plus late migrants **6/5–8** St. Louis (maximum 2 at Duluth) KJB, CRM, PHS.

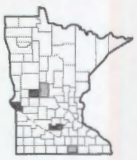
Red-necked Grebe — Most reports since 1996. Observed in 24 counties as far west as Marshall, Clay, 6/23 & 7/13 Big Stone KJB; as far south as Waseca, Steele; and as far east as 6/2 Cook DRB. New nesting record in *Sibley* RBJ.



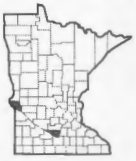
Eared Grebe — Most reports since 1993. Observed in seven western counties plus Hennepin, Carver, Nicollet, Faribault; also 6/3–7 St. Louis (pair in alternate plumage at Duluth) WCM, PHS, 6/12 Winona (2 at Lewiston sewage ponds) CRM.



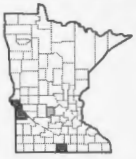
Western Grebe — Reported in 16 counties as far east as a line through Roseau, Todd, Hennepin, Freeborn.



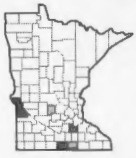
Clark's Grebe — Record high number of reports. Hybrid pairing involving Western Grebe suspected at two locations: Big Stone (Thielke L., also see spring report) †PCC, †KJB *et al.*, and 6/24–7/3 **Nicollet** (Swan L.) †CRM, MJF. Single adults also reported 6/19–28 **Sibley** (Swan L. — note that this is a different lake than the one in Nicollet) †CRM *et al.*, 7/10–30+ **Lyon** (Section L.) †CRM *et al.*, 7/23 Douglas (L. Osakis) †KRE.



American White Pelican — Reported in 39 counties as far east as St. Louis, Wabasha.



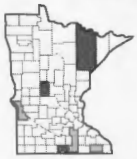
Double-crested Cormorant — Seen in 41 counties statewide.



American Bittern — Reported in 11 north counties plus Meeker, Freeborn.

Least Bittern — Reported in Marshall, Cass, Wright, Hennepin, Anoka, Nicollet, Steele, Wabasha.

Great Blue Heron — Reported in 66 counties statewide.



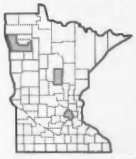
Great Egret — Most reports since 1989; observed in 34 south counties plus Otter Tail.

Snowy Egret — Holdover from spring (***The Loon*** 72:206) reported 6/14, 6/21 Otter Tail SDM *et al.*; one seen 6/7–13 Dakota (Farquhar L.) †RJS *et al.*

TRICOLORED HERON — Thirteenth state record and first summer occurrence since 1990. Single adult originally found in late May (***The Loon*** 72:242–243) seen 6/1–4 Dakota (near Hastings) †TAT *et al.*

Cattle Egret — All reports: 6/12 Houston (4 near Hokah) CRM; 6/14, 6/21 Otter Tail (maximum of 7 at L. Alice in Fergus Falls) SDM, RJF; 6/16 Ramsey (St. Paul) PHe; 7/9 Clay (6 at Felton Prairie) †PHS; and 7/10, 7/14 Dakota DBS *et al.*

Green Heron — Record high number of reports; observed in 51 counties as far north as Marshall, Beltrami, St. Louis.



Black-crowned Night-Heron — Fewest reports ever for this species; observed in Marshall, Otter Tail, Meeker, Chisago, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, Dakota, Nicollet, Jackson.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron — Two reports: 6/8–15 Hennepin (adult at Wood Lake Nature Center) BSe, †CRM *et al.*, and 6/17–18 **Otter Tail** (adult at L. Alice in Fergus Falls) †PHS, SDM *et al.*

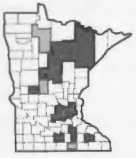
***PLEGADIS*, sp?** — Two flying birds seen **6/18** Becker †PHS.

Turkey Vulture — Record high number of reports, following trend of recent years; observed in 54 counties statewide.

Greater White-fronted Goose — Midsummer record: **7/2** Meeker (Boon L.) †DMF.

Snow Goose — All reports: 6/29–7/1 Marshall (single blue and white morphs, at Warren sewage lagoons) DPJ *et al.*, 7/1 Traverse (blue morph at Wheaton sewage ponds) KJB, 7/2 Meeker (Boon L.) DMF.

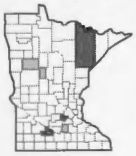
Canada Goose — MDNR estimates the



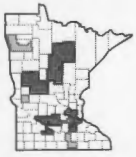
resident state population to be around **295,000** — now rivalling the Mallard total! Reported in 64 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Blue Earth* AXH.

Mute Swan — Only report: 7/4 Cook (on L. Superior near Schroeder) †DSp.

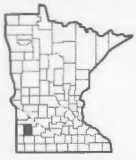
Trumpeter Swan — Record number of reports, almost double the previous high set last year. Observed in 20 counties within an area bounded by Becker, St. Louis in the north and Brown, Freeborn in the south; new nesting record in *Brown* BRB.



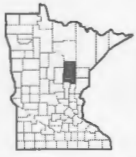
Wood Duck — Most reports since 1988; observed in 61 counties statewide.



Gadwall — Reported in 17 counties as far east as a line through Roseau, Dakota, Freeborn.



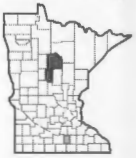
American Wigeon — Seen in Roseau, Marshall, St. Louis, Aitkin. Also observed 6/1–21 Hennepin (French L.) TAT *et al.*, 6/10 Meeker (pair) DMF, 7/9 Dakota SEL, SWe, 7/13 Lac Qui Parle (5) KJB, and oversummering in Big Stone KJB.



American Black Duck — Reported in Roseau, St. Louis, Cook; plus **6/20, 6/25** Nicollet (Middle L.) CRM, KRE *et al.*

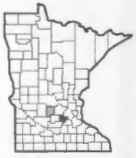
Mallard — MDNR survey indicates that numbers are 55% above the long-term average; seen in 66 counties statewide.

Blue-winged Teal — Reported in 43 counties throughout state.

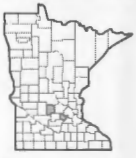


Cinnamon Teal — Third summer record since 1980. Probable late migrant; adult male observed **6/8 St. Louis** (Embarrass rice paddies) †MJF *et al.*

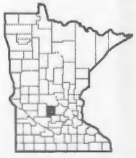
Northern Shoveler — Reported in 20 counties as far east as Cook, Winona; new nesting record in *Rice* FVS, KNS.



Northern Pintail — Reported in Roseau, Aitkin, Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, Murray, Meeker, Rice.



Green-winged Teal — Reported in 14 counties in all regions except southeast; new nesting record in *Meeker* DMF.



Canvasback — Reported in Roseau, Marshall, Clay, Big Stone, Lincoln, McLeod, Nicollet, Hennepin.

Redhead — Reported in 19 counties as far east as a line through St. Louis, Aitkin, Hennepin, Faribault.

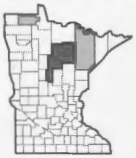
Ring-necked Duck — Reported in 19 counties as far south as a line through Big Stone, Le Sueur, Dakota.

Lesser Scaup — Reported in 12 counties

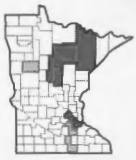
representing all regions except southwest and southeast.

Bufflehead — Five reports: 6/2 Marshall MJF, 6/3 Hennepin (French L.) SLC, 6/7 Big Stone (pair at Thielke L.) KJB, 7/22 Grant KRE, Roseau (no date) PHS.

Common Goldeneye — Reported north in Roseau, Pennington, Becker, Beltrami, Itasca, Cass, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late south migrant **6/3** Hennepin (male at French L.) SLC.



Hooded Merganser — Record high number of reports; observed in 37 counties statewide.

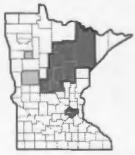


Common Merganser — Reported in Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant **6/6** Freeborn †AEB.

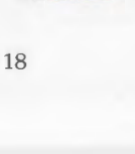
Red-breasted Merganser — Reported in St. Louis, Lake; plus **6/3–7/9** Hennepin (male present from late May; injured?) SLC, TAT.

Ruddy Duck — Record high number of reports (almost double that of the past two years). Observed in 30 counties in all regions except north central and northeast.

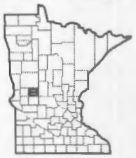
Osprey — Reported in 20 counties as far west as Mahnomen, Becker, Otter Tail; and as far south as Carver.



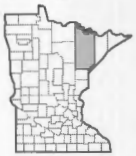
Bald Eagle — Record high number of reports. Observed in 44 counties in all regions except southwest; new nesting records in *Wadena* MRN, *Rice* JL, and *Fillmore* NBO. A statewide survey by the MDNR Nongame Wildlife Program located 681 nesting pairs, the fourth largest population in the United States (behind Alaska, Florida, and Wisconsin). In comparison, a 1973 survey revealed only 115 active nests!



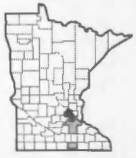
Northern Harrier — Most reports since 1988. Observed in 46 counties in all regions (but only Mower in southeast); new nesting record in *Douglas* SWa.



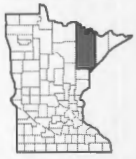
Sharp-shinned Hawk — Reported in a total of eight north central and northeast counties plus Becker in the northwest; late spring migrant 6/3 Meeker DMF.



Cooper's Hawk — Seen in 30 counties as far north as Otter Tail, Cass, Itasca, St. Louis.

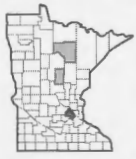


Northern Goshawk — Reported in Lake of the Woods, Aitkin, St. Louis.



Red-shouldered Hawk — Record high number of reports. Observed in 19 counties as far north as Clearwater and Aitkin, as far west as Becker, Otter Tail, and Kandiyohi, and as far south as Goodhue.

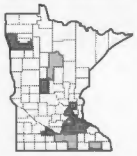
Broad-winged Hawk — Record high number of reports. Observed in 31 counties as far west as a line through Roseau, Otter Tail, Kandiyohi, Freeborn.



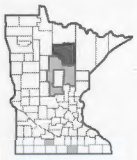
Swainson's Hawk — Reported in ten

western counties (as far north as Otter Tail) plus Kandiyohi, Dakota, Goodhue, Waseca, Steele, Mower.

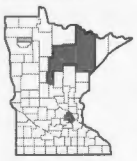
Red-tailed Hawk — Many reports, quite similar to 1996; observed in 65 counties statewide.



American Kestrel — Record high number of reports. Observed in 69 counties throughout the state; new nesting record in *Itasca* DRM.



Merlin — New nesting records in *Itasca* DRM, *Cass* MRN, ***Hennepin*** (documented by staff from The Raptor Center; see ***The Loon*** 72:72–75). Not only are these the first nesting records away from the northernmost tier of counties in the state — the latter occurred in the Twin Cities! One of the adults in Hennepin was confirmed as *F. c. richardsonii*. Additional records include Kittson, Roseau, Pennington, Beltrami, St. Louis; plus 7/27 Ramsey †JPS. Two adults (male and female) in Kittson Co. on 7/3 were both carefully identified as Richardson's Merlin (†PHS); this race has been recorded for three consecutive summers in northwestern Minnesota.



Peregrine Falcon — The breeding population continues to expand, producing a record high number of reports. In addition to the nesting records shown in the map, observed in Marshall, Otter Tail, Big Stone, Anoka, Scott.

Prairie Falcon — Reported **7/25** Big Stone (near Ortonville) †MT, †MD.

Gray Partridge — Seen in nine western counties plus Meeker, McLeod, Watonwan, Goodhue, Freeborn, Fillmore.

Ring-necked Pheasant — Record high number of reports. Seen in 52 counties as far north as a line through Clay, Wadena, Pine; plus 7/9 Roseau (wild?) PHS. MDNR reports spring breeding population up 20% over the spring of 1999 due to recent mild winters.

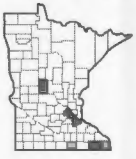
Ruffed Grouse — Seen in 21 counties as far west and south as a line through Roseau, Otter Tail, Stearns, Fillmore. MDNR statewide drumming counts about 8% below those in 1999. A greater drop was expected — a third straight mild winter may have delayed the species' natural decline during this part of the ten-year population cycle.

Spruce Grouse — Only reports from St. Louis, Lake.

Sharp-tailed Grouse — All reports: Roseau, Beltrami, St. Louis, Aitkin, Pine.

Greater Prairie-Chicken — Only seen in Clay, Wilkin.

Wild Turkey — Record high number of reports, following trend of recent population increase. Observed in 22 central, east central, south central, and southeast counties; plus Lac Qui Parle. New nesting



records in *Todd* JSK, *Hennepin* ABo.

Northern Bobwhite — Reported 7/2 Winona (Great River Bluffs S.P.) *fide* BSe, 7/18 Winona (along Winona Co. Rd. 104, near Great River Bluffs S.P.) *fide* AXH (wild?). Probable escaped/released birds in Scott (3 juveniles) RBJ.

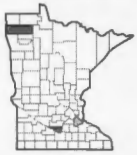
Yellow Rail — Only reported in Roseau, Polk, Aitkin.

Virginia Rail — Reported in 15 counties scattered statewide; new nesting record in *Otter Tail* DST.

Sora — Reported in 21 counties in all regions except southeast.

Common Moorhen — Two reports of lone birds: 6/23–24 Wabasha (Whitewater WMA) JLU, DBz, and 7/5 Dakota (140th St. marsh, same as spring report) SEL, mob.

American Coot — Seen in 32 counties statewide.

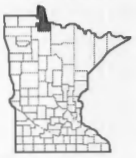


Sandhill Crane — Record high number of reports. Observed in 24 counties roughly along a line from the northwest corner of the state to the southeast corner; plus 6/17 Lake SS.

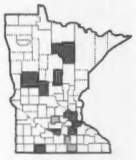
American Golden-Plover — All reports: **6/19** Big Stone (4 in basic plumage; probably second-year birds and also late spring migrants) †KJB, **7/1** Big Stone (4, different birds?) KJB, 7/28 Dakota DBS.

Semipalmated Plover — Late spring migrant 6/2 Becker; early fall migrants in five counties beginning **7/4** Lyon CRM, 7/13 Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle KJB. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (18) KJB.

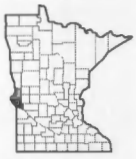
Piping Plover — Only report: five pairs at traditional nesting site in Lake of the Woods Co.



Killdeer — The most reports since 1988. Observed in 70 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Todd* JSK. Peak counts 7/1 Big Stone (270) KJB, 7/7 Lac Qui Parle (201) BEO.



American Avocet — All reports: 6/3–16 St. Louis (maximum of 3 at Duluth) mob, 6/18 Polk (Crookston sewage lagoons) PHS, Traverse (nesting pair; see ***The Loon*** 72:239–240) WCM, 6/23–7/31+ Big Stone (3 adults with 4 young) KJB, 7/26–31 Rice TFB *et al.*



Greater Yellowlegs — Autumn migrants seen in 13 counties; early migrants **6/26** Norman BAB and Big Stone KJB, 6/29 Marshall DPJ. Peak counts 7/25 Lac Qui Parle (60 at Big Stone NWR) BEO, 7/31 Big Stone (38) KJB.

Lesser Yellowlegs — Autumn migrants reported in 27 counties, primarily in the south and west; late spring migrant 6/11 St. Louis. Of interest are the following records: **6/18** Polk (10) JMJ, **6/18** Anoka TAT, 6/19 Big Stone KJB, 6/20 Meeker DMF, and 6/22 Lac Qui Parle KJB; these would have been considered late spring migrants in the past, but recent census work suggests that they are more likely early fall migrants. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (634) KJB.

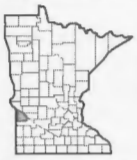
Solitary Sandpiper — Record high number of reports; July migrants seen in 24 counties, primarily in the south. Early migrant 7/1 Big Stone KJB; record high

count 7/30 Anoka (**27** at Carlos Avery WMA) KJB.

Willet — All reports: 6/2 St. Louis (at Park Point in Duluth) KRE, 7/8 Big Stone (15–20) DBz, 7/22 McLeod RBJ, 7/31 Big Stone (2) KJB.

Spotted Sandpiper — Reported in 38 counties statewide; peak count 7/25 Lac Qui Parle (25) BEO.

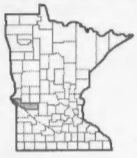
Upland Sandpiper — Most reports since 1988. Observed in 18 western counties plus St. Louis, Stearns, Meeker, Renville, McLeod, Le Sueur, Dakota.



Whimbrel — Only report: 6/2 St. Louis (7 at Park Point in Duluth) KRE.

Hudsonian Godwit — All observations: late migrants 6/2 St. Louis KRE, 6/7 Big Stone †KJB, 6/11 St. Louis PHS; plus mid-summer record **6/26** Big Stone †KJB.

Marbled Godwit — Reported in nine western counties from Roseau to Lac Qui Parle; plus **6/8** St. Louis (Duluth) DRB.



Ruddy Turnstone — Only reports: 6/2 Becker *fide* EAB, 6/3–5 St. Louis mob.

Red Knot — Only report: 6/5 St. Louis (2 at Duluth) KJB, CRM, PHS.

Sanderling — Only reports: 6/5, 6/12 St. Louis (20–30 at Duluth) mob.

Semipalmated Sandpiper — Reported in 14 counties. Shorebird surveys in west indicate spring migrants 6/7 Big Stone (14) KJB, 6/15 Big Stone (4) PCC, **6/22** Lac Qui Parle KJB; then early fall migrants beginning 7/7 Big Stone KJB. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (**592**) KJB.

Least Sandpiper — Late spring migrant **6/11** St. Louis CM. Fall migrants observed in 20 additional counties, primarily in the south and west; early migrant **6/23** Big Stone KJB. Peak count 7/25 Lac Qui Parle (408) BEO.

White-rumped Sandpiper — All reports: 6/7 Big Stone (42) KJB, 6/15 Big Stone (25) PCC, **6/22** Lac Qui Parle (1) KJB, **6/19–26** Big Stone (2) KJB; plus early June observations in Becker, St. Louis.

Baird's Sandpiper — Late migrant **6/14** St. Louis DPJ, early fall migrant 7/8 Big Stone DBz; also observed in Becker, Benton, Lac Qui Parle, Dakota, Winona. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (5) KJB.

Pectoral Sandpiper — Reported in 18 southern counties, primarily in July. Late migrant 6/7 Big Stone (15) KJB, early migrant 7/1 Big Stone (3) KJB; also reported **6/19–26** Big Stone (1–2 oversummering) KJB. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (414) KJB.

Dunlin — June migrants observed in Marshall, Becker; plus late migrants **6/12** St. Louis PHS, **6/19** Big Stone KJB (both records one adult in alternate plumage).

Stilt Sandpiper — Only spring migrant 6/8 St. Louis MH. Fall migrants reported in seven additional counties; early migrants **6/26** Big Stone KJB, **7/3** Polk (4 adults in alternate plumage) PHS. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (272) KJB.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper — All reports: 7/25 Wilkin *fide* AXH, 7/31 Big Stone (4 adults) KJB.

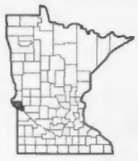
Short-billed Dowitcher — Fall migrants seen in ten counties. Early migrant **6/29** Marshall (8) DPJ; peak count 7/3 Polk (16 adults in alternate plumage) PHS.

Long-billed Dowitcher — Only report: 7/31 Big Stone (6) †KJB.

Common Snipe — Seen in total of 20 counties in all regions except southwest and southeast (and only Waseca in south central).

American Woodcock — Reported in 15 counties in all regions except southwest and southeast; new nesting record in *Crow Wing* BiM.

Wilson's Phalarope — Reported in nine western counties plus Stearns and Benton; also seen 6/8–9 St. Louis (Embarrass rice paddies) BT, PHS, 6/18 Lake (same spot for third consecutive summer) SGW, MSh. Peak count 7/31 Big Stone (95) KJB.

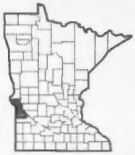


Red-necked Phalarope — All reports: **6/26** Norman BAB, 7/31 Big Stone KJB.

Franklin's Gull — Seen in 12 western counties plus Stearns, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Carver, Dakota, Freeborn; also peak count 6/29 Lake of the Woods (4000+ at Pine-Currys Island) *fide* BAB.

Bonaparte's Gull — All reports: 6/6 Le Sueur, **6/11** St. Louis (8) PHS, **6/18** Polk PHS, **7/19** St. Louis ALE, 7/23 Crow Wing and Douglas, 7/31 Beltrami (38) DPJ.

Ring-billed Gull — Reported in 45 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Lac Qui Parle* KJB.



Herring Gull — Few reports; observed in Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, Carver, Wabasha.

Lesser Black-backed Gull — Reported in western Minnesota and in summer for the first time; third-summer bird **6/2 Polk** (Crookston sewage lagoons) †PPr (***The Loon*** 73:59–60).

Great Black-backed Gull — Also a first summer record for Minnesota; immature documented **6/5** at Hearding Island in Duluth, St. Louis Co. †PHS.

Caspian Tern — Seen in nine counties, including 6/19 Big Stone (Marsh L.) KJB; early migrant 7/9 Otter Tail.

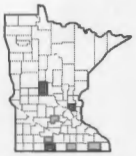
Common Tern — Just like last summer, the fewest number of reports ever; only observed in St. Louis and 7/23 Big Stone (presumably an early migrant) PCC.

Forster's Tern — Seen in 27 counties in all regions except north central and northeast (and only 6/8 Houston MHF in southeast).

Black Tern — Most reports since 1989. Observed in 51 counties in all regions, but only St. Louis in northeast; new nesting record in *Rice* JL, JLa.

Rock Dove — Record high number of reports; observed in 64 counties statewide.

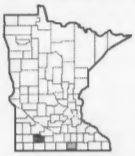
Mourning Dove — Seen in 72 counties statewide.



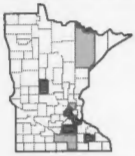
Black-billed Cuckoo — Reported in 34 counties statewide.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo — Many reports, like last year. Observed in 22 counties as far north as Kittson, Roseau in the west and Aitkin, Pine in the east.

Eastern Screech-Owl — Reported from only four south counties: Hennepin, Brown, Cottonwood, Freeborn.

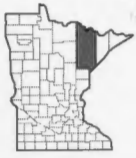


Great Horned Owl — Reported in 29 counties in all regions except northwest.

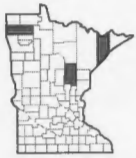


Barred Owl — Record high number of reports. Observed in 27 counties as far west as a line through Itasca, Otter Tail, Stearns, Brown.

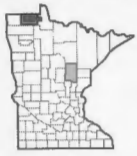
Great Gray Owl — Reported in Beltrami, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Cook.



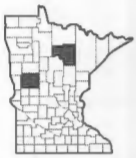
Long-eared Owl — More reports than usual; observed in Kittson, Marshall, Aitkin, Lake. Unusual ground-nesting documented in Aitkin (***The Loon*** 72:244–245).



Short-eared Owl — After an excellent spring migration (see ***The Loon*** 72:216), this record high number of summer reports is less surprising; seen in the counties of Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Beltrami, Polk, Norman, Clay, Wilkin, and Aitkin. New nesting record in *Roseau* (two locations) BJS. A remarkable total of **18** individuals was found 6/18–19 in ten different locations within the northwest region PHS!



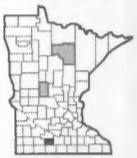
Northern Saw-whet Owl — Reported in the counties of Lake, Cook; plus new nesting records documented in *Itasca* DRM, *Otter Tail* DST.



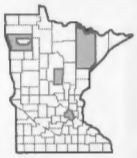
Common Nighthawk — Record high number of reports. Observed in 41 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Houston* KAK.

Whip-poor-will — Reported in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, St. Louis, Lake, Sherburne, Anoka, Washington, Dakota, Goodhue, Houston.

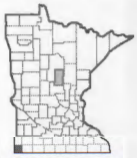
Chimney Swift — Most reports since 1988; seen in 52 counties statewide.



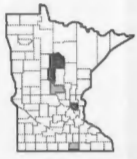
Ruby-throated Hummingbird — Also a record high number of reports; observed in 50 counties throughout state.



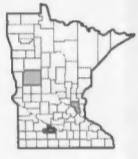
Belted Kingfisher — Reported in 53 counties statewide.



Red-headed Woodpecker — Reported in 40 counties in all regions except northeast.

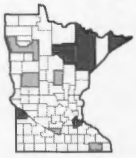


Red-bellied Woodpecker — Record high number of reports. Observed in 38 counties as far north as a line through Clay, Cass, Aitkin, Pine; plus 6/4 Pennington JMJ, and 6/18

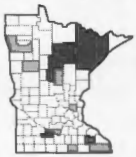


Marshall PHS.

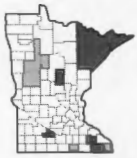
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — Record high number of reports. Observed in 41 counties in all regions (but only Cottonwood in southwest); new nesting record in *Dakota* TAT.



Downy Woodpecker — Record high number of reports. Observed in 63 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Cass* MRN.



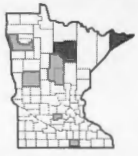
Hairy Woodpecker — Reported in 49 counties throughout state.



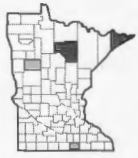
Three-toed Woodpecker — All reports: 6/4 Cook (Gunflint Trail; also reported in early July) MSS *et al.*, 6/24 Lake (Spruce Rd.) KRE.

Black-backed Woodpecker — Seen in Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Hubbard, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus new nesting record in ***Pine*** (St. Croix S.P.; southernmost nesting record for the state) †AXH, GS.

Northern Flicker — Most reports since 1988; observed in 63 counties statewide.

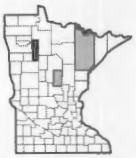


Pileated Woodpecker — Record high number of reports. Seen in 42 counties in all regions (but only 7/16 Lyon CRM in southwest).

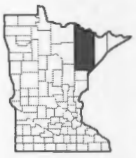


Olive-sided Flycatcher — Seen in seven north central and northeast counties, plus June migrants in nine additional counties as far south as Freeborn; late migrant 6/9 Anoka *fide* KJB.

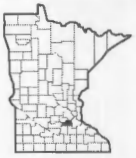
Eastern Wood-Pewee — Reported in 56 counties throughout state; new nesting record in *Clearwater* ABo.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher — New nesting record in *St. Louis* DG. Also reported in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Aitkin, Lake, and Cook; plus late migrants 6/2 Hennepin DCZ, 6/3 Brown JSp.



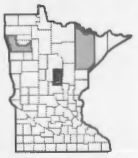
Acadian Flycatcher — First occurrence in the county 6/7 **Freeborn** (Big Island S.P.) RBJ; also reported in Hennepin (Elm Creek Park and Wolsfeld Woods), Nicollet (Seven Mile Creek County Park), Scott, Washington, Rice, Winona, Fillmore, and Houston.



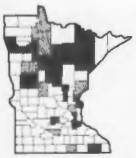
Alder Flycatcher — Seen in 13 northern counties; plus Stearns, Benton, Isanti, Anoka (18+ territories) KJB, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Dakota (calling on 7/4, 7/9 at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve) DBS. June migrants in five additional southern counties; record late south migrant **6/25** Waseca (Waseca WMA) JPS.

Willow Flycatcher — Reported in 25 counties as far north and east as a line through Marshall, Todd, Anoka, Houston.

Least Flycatcher — Reported in 43 counties in all regions except southwest.

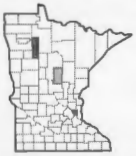


Eastern Phoebe — Record high number of reports for second consecutive year.



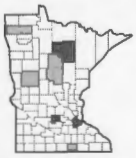
Observed in 55 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Polk* EEF.

Great Crested Flycatcher — Reported in 55 counties throughout state.



Western Kingbird — Reported in eight western counties plus Lake of the Woods, Wadena, Benton, Sherburne, Meeker, Hennepin, Anoka.

Eastern Kingbird — Most reports since 1989. Observed in 68 counties statewide; new nesting record in *McLeod* RWS.

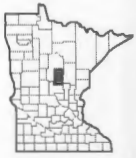


SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER — Seen 6/10–11 St. Louis (Park Point in Duluth) JAB, †PHS (***The Loon*** 72:180), and 7/8 Olmsted †DMA.

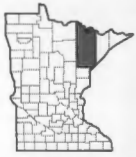
Loggerhead Shrike — Relatively scarce; observed only in Clay (2 at Felton Prairie) PHS, Otter Tail, Lyon (Island L. Twp.) RBJ, Le Sueur (Kasota Prairie) KRE, CRM, Dakota (Co. Rd. 85) mob, Rice (3 birds near Dennison) TFB, and Olmsted.

Bell's Vireo — None could be found at the WMA in Waseca Co. where recently reliable. One from spring still singing 6/3 **Steele** (Somerset Twp.) NFT *et al.*, †AEB. Also found 6/10–7/8 Dakota (Black Dog L.) TAT, DBS; 6/12 Blue Earth (Minneopa S.P.) †MJF; 6/25 Winona (Great River Bluffs S.P.) †PCC; 7/8–24 Washington (maximum of 2 at Kingston Park) MEn, †CRM *et al.*; and 7/10 Olmsted (Chester Woods County Park) JDu.

Yellow-throated Vireo — Record high number of reports for second consecutive year. Observed in 40 counties in all regions except northeast; reported as far southwest as Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, Murray.



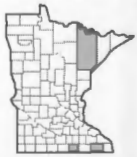
Blue-headed Vireo — Seen in Marshall, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, and Carlton; plus late migrant 6/3 Hennepin.



Warbling Vireo — Most reports since 1990. Observed in 46 counties as far northeast as St. Louis.

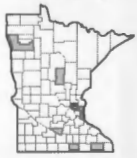
Philadelphia Vireo — Reported in St. Louis, Lake.

Red-eyed Vireo — Record high number of reports; observed in 59 counties statewide.

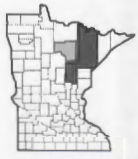


Gray Jay — Seen in Lake of the Woods, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

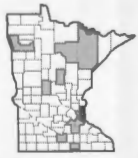
Blue Jay — Observed in 65 counties statewide.



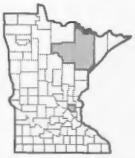
Black-billed Magpie — Seen in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Lake of the Woods, Itasca, St. Louis, Aitkin.



American Crow — Many reports, similar to 1998. Observed in 72 counties throughout state; new nesting record in *Washington* PHe.

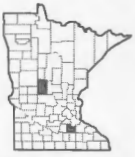


Common Raven — Reported in 15

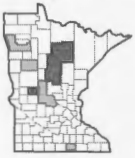


northern counties as far west as Marshall, Todd; plus Anoka.

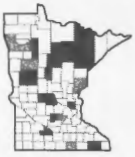
Horned Lark — Reported in 37 counties as far north and east as a line through Roseau, Crow Wing, Washington; new nesting records in *Todd* JSK, *Rice* JL.



Purple Martin — Seen in 47 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Douglas* REH.

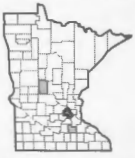


Tree Swallow — Most reports ever for this species. Observed in 66 counties throughout state; new nesting record in *Fillmore* NBO.

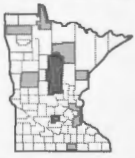


Northern Rough-winged Swallow — Most reports since 1988; observed in 42 counties statewide.

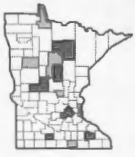
Bank Swallow — Most reports since 1990; observed in 39 counties throughout state.



Cliff Swallow — Most reports since 1988. Observed in 58 counties statewide; new nesting record in *McLeod* RWS.



Barn Swallow — Record high number of reports; observed in 73 counties throughout state.



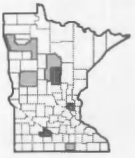
Black-capped Chickadee — Record high number of reports; observed in 65 counties statewide.

Boreal Chickadee — Reported in Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Tufted Titmouse — Seen in Fillmore, Houston.

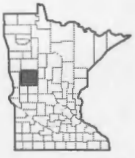
Red-breasted Nuthatch — Record high number of reports. Observed in 21 counties as far west and south as a line through Roseau, Pennington, Dakota; plus 6/29–30 Goodhue DST.

White-breasted Nuthatch — Record high number of reports; observed in 59 counties statewide.

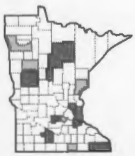


Brown Creeper — Seen in Clearwater, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, Pine, Isanti, Anoka, Hennepin, Renville.

Carolina Wren — Fourth consecutive summer record. Female overwintering in Otter Tail (***The Loon*** 72:243–244) stayed into early summer (EJE, mob). Nest built (under the valve cover of a propane tank!) and five eggs present on 5/11, but the nest was abandoned and the bird was not seen after early June; no mate documented.



House Wren — Reported in 62 counties



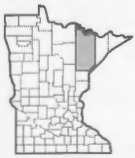
statewide.

Winter Wren — Only half the number of reports as last year and fewest since 1990. Observed in Beltrami, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, and Pine; plus Washington (Falls Creek SNA) KJB *et al.*

Sedge Wren — Record high number of reports; observed in 55 counties statewide.

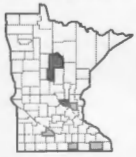
Marsh Wren — Most reports since 1982. Observed in 41 counties in all regions except southeast.

Golden-crowned Kinglet — Reported in Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus **7/23** (summer residents?) Stearns (3) KRE, fHHD *et al.*

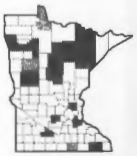


Ruby-crowned Kinglet — Reported in the counties of Becker, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, and Cook.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — A record high number of reports; the number of counties in which this species is currently found has roughly doubled in the past ten years. Observed in 26 southern counties as far west as Big Stone and Murray; plus Otter Tail, Wadena Cass (10–12 pairs building 9 nests) MRN, Aitkin, Mille Lacs, and Pine.



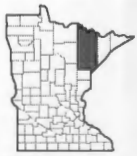
Eastern Bluebird — Reported in 59 counties statewide.



Veery — Record high number of reports. Observed in 40 counties as far west and south as a line through Clay, Swift, 6/1 Freeborn AEB, 6/28 **Redwood** RBJ; new nesting record in *Crow Wing* JS, MN.

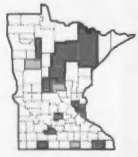
Swainson's Thrush — Seen in St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus early migrants on **7/18**, 7/30 Hennepin (Elm Creek Park) SLC.

Hermit Thrush — Reported in seven north central and northeast counties plus Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec.

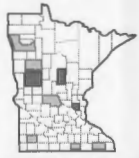


Wood Thrush — Record high number of reports. Observed in 26 southern counties as far west as Swift, Redwood; plus Todd, Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Pine, Aitkin, St. Louis, 6/2 Roseau MJF, and 6/14 Lake of the Woods GMe, JFo.

American Robin — Many reports, like 1998; observed in 70 counties statewide.



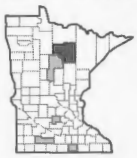
Gray Catbird — Record high number of reports; observed in 64 counties throughout state.



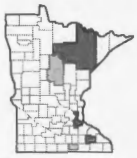
Northern Mockingbird — All reports: 6/5, 6/26 Dakota (Mendota Heights) SEL, TAT, 6/20 Watonwan (near Lewisville)

DBr, 6/28 St. Louis (near Embarrass) †SS.

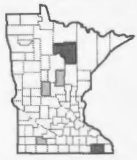
Brown Thrasher — Most reports since 1992. Observed in 52 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Itasca* DRM.



European Starling — Record high number of reports; observed in 65 counties throughout the state.



Cedar Waxwing — Many reports, similar to 1996; observed in 62 counties statewide.

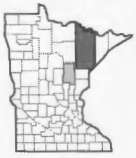


Blue-winged Warbler — Reported in ten counties within an area extending from Fillmore and Houston to Carver and Anoka; plus Nicollet, Brown, Blue Earth, 6/22 Renville KJB, 7/27 Kandiyohi †CRM. Lawrence's hybrid singing 6/4–22 Brown (Flandrau S.P.) JSp.

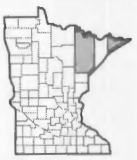
Golden-winged Warbler — Reported in 13 counties as far northeast as St. Louis, and as far west and south as a line through Clearwater, Todd, Anoka.

Tennessee Warbler — Reported in St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant 6/1 Brown JSp and early migrants **7/3** Washington DDM, BJM, **7/15** Clay *fide* BAB, 7/19 Hennepin SLC, 7/23 Cass MRN. Mid-summer observation **6/23** Otter Tail SDM.

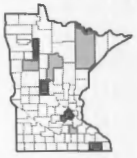
Nashville Warbler — Reported in seven north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Benton, Isanti, Anoka. Fall migrants observed in four additional counties including 7/15 Clay and Hennepin.



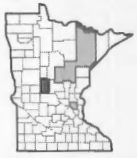
Northern Parula — Seen in Beltrami, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus early migrant **7/19** Hennepin SLC and mid-summer occurrence **6/25** Anoka WCM.



Yellow Warbler — Found in 57 counties statewide.



Chestnut-sided Warbler — Reported in 22 counties as far west and south as a line through Kittson, Stearns, Dakota. Noted to be perhaps the most abundant neotropical migrant at Cedar Creek Natural History Area in Anoka Co. JLH; new nesting record in *Todd* JSK.

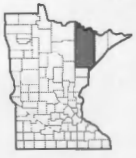


Magnolia Warbler — Reported in Aitkin, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant 6/2 Dakota.

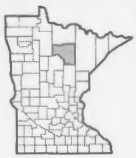
Cape May Warbler — Reported in St. Louis (21 territories near Cook) KJB, Aitkin.

Black-throated Blue Warbler — Seen in 35–40 locations adjacent to the Superior Hiking Trail in Lake and Cook counties MWS (see ***The Loon*** 71:11–13 for more information about this species' status in the aforementioned area).

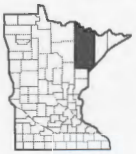
Yellow-rumped Warbler — Reported in eight north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Polk, Kanabec, Pine, 6/6 Anoka (same territory as last year) KJB, 6/25 Isanti KJB.



Black-throated Green Warbler — Seen in Roseau, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus 6/25 Isanti KJB, 6/16–7/3 Anoka JLH *et al.*



Blackburnian Warbler — Few reports, similar to 1997. Observed in Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant **6/5** Brown JSp and early migrant (or over-summering?) **7/23** Stearns HHD, KRE.



YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER — All reports: seen through 6/17 Kandiyohi (at least one pair at Sibley S.P. where this species has occurred almost every year since 1994) RJF; also 6/18, 6/24 Washington (William O'Brien S.P.) †DCZ, CF (***The Loon*** 73:61–62).

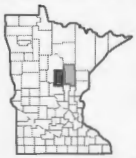
Pine Warbler — Fewest number of reports since 1993. Observed in Beltrami, St. Louis, Aitkin, Carlton, Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Anoka, and Washington.

Palm Warbler — Reported in Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake.

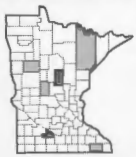
Bay-breasted Warbler — Reported in St. Louis; plus **6/18** Clay (singing male at Gooseberry Park in Moorhead) †RHO.

Cerulean Warbler — Seen in Brown, Nicollet, Washington, Fillmore, and Houston.

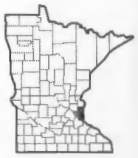
Black-and-white Warbler — Reported in 16 counties as far west and south as a line through Kittson, Morrison, Anoka; plus 6/28 Hennepin (singing male at Elm Creek Park) SLC, 6/24 Meeker (Darwin Twp.) DMF. New nesting record in *Crow Wing* JS, MN.



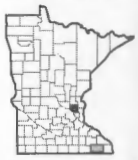
American Redstart — Observed in 46 counties in all regions (but only Jackson in southwest).



Prothonotary Warbler — New nesting record in *Washington* DDM, BJM; also observed in Ramsey, Hennepin, Dakota, Scott, Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Brown.



Ovenbird — Many reports, similar to previous two years. Observed in 41 counties as far west and south as a line through Kittson, Clay, Renville, Freeborn.

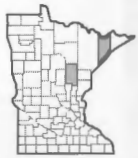


Northern Waterthrush — Reported in the counties of Roseau, St. Louis, Cook, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Isanti, and Anoka.

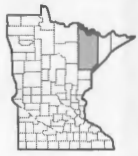
Louisiana Waterthrush — All reports: 6/10 Fillmore (Good Earth Village) JWH, 6/12 & 7/1 Houston (Beaver Creek Valley S.P.) CRM, DBz, 6/17–7/3 Washington (Falls Creek SNA) KJB *et al.*

Kentucky Warbler — The first summer reports in past four years. Singing male observed 6/12, 6/24 Blue Earth (this bird was originally found in late May at Minneopa S.P.; see ***The Loon*** 72:224) MJF, †CRM; territorial male 6/25–7/19 Scott (Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve) BAF *et al.*

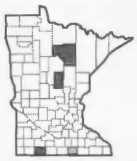
Connecticut Warbler — Seen in Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake; plus late migrant 6/2 Hennepin BBB.



Mourning Warbler — Seen in six north central and northeast counties plus Isanti, Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, Scott, and Dakota; also seen 6/1–7/5 Brown (singing male at Flandrau S.P.) JSp, 6/22 & 7/3 Winona (Great River Bluffs S.P.) FZL, CRM.



Common Yellowthroat — Most reports since 1986. Seen in 67 counties statewide; new nesting records in *Itasca* DRM, and



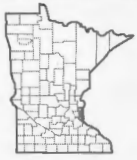
Jackson AXH.

Hooded Warbler — Seen 6/6–18 Anoka

(two singing males and one female near Linwood L.) †KJB, 6/10 Anoka (male at Pioneer Park in Blaine) KJB; also observed on many dates in Scott and Dakota (an amazing **16–21 territorial males** in Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, which straddles both counties; 3 nests and 1 brood found, all parasitized by cowbirds) BAF *et al.*

Wilson's Warbler — Reported 6/7–24 Lake (as many as 6 singing males along Whyte Rd.) SGW, MSh *et al.*

Canada Warbler — Reported in Aitkin,

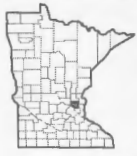


St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus 6/6 Anoka (5 singing males) KJB, 6/17 Washington (male carrying food) KJB.

Yellow-breasted Chat — Seen 6/17–7/3 Winona (Great River Bluffs S.P.) DMA, †PCC *et al.*, 6/22–7/6 Fillmore (Amherst Twp.) NBO, †PCC *et al.*, and 7/29 **Carver** (Carver Park) †RTD.

Summer Tanager — Second consecutive summer record; second-year male singing and calling on 6/24 at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve in Scott Co. BAF.

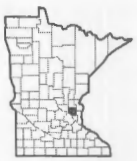
Scarlet Tanager — Many reports, similar



to 1998. Observed in 40 counties in all regions (but only Otter Tail in west central and Lyon in southwest).

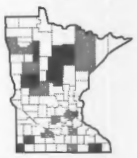
Spotted Towhee — Only report: **6/3 Meeker** (Litchfield Nature Center) †DMF.

Eastern Towhee — Seen in 17 counties



roughly along a line from Beltrami to Houston; plus Renville, Blue Earth, 6/18 Rock DFN.

Chipping Sparrow — Record high



number of reports. Observed in 69 counties statewide; new nesting records in *Murray* ND, *Rock* ND.

Clay-colored Sparrow — Record high number of reports; observed in 45 counties as far south as Rock, Jackson, Blue Earth, Goodhue.

Field Sparrow — Record high number

of reports; observed in 39 counties as far north as Polk in the west and Benton, Isanti in the south.

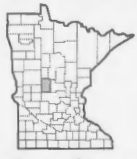
Vesper Sparrow — Reported in 45

counties in all regions except southeast, but only St. Louis in northeast.

Lark Sparrow — Most reports since

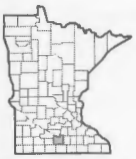
1993. Observed in Kittson, Norman, Otter Tail, Mille Lacs, Benton, Isanti, Sherburne, Anoka, Washington, Scott, Renville, Brown, Blue Earth; plus 7/27 St. Louis (singing male at Park Point, Duluth) *fide* KRE.

Savannah Sparrow — Most reports



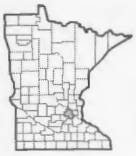
since 1989; observed in 51 counties statewide.

Grasshopper Sparrow — Most reports since 1989; observed in 33 counties as far north and east as a line through Roseau,

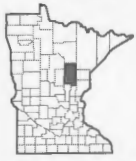


Beltrami, Aitkin, Washington.

Henslow's Sparrow — Record high number of reports. Those first discovered in spring (see ***The Loon*** 72:226) include 6/6–7/29 Winona (as many as **12** at Great River Bluffs S.P.) †CRM *et al.* Also reported 6/11–7/26 Hennepin (an adult seen carrying food at Elm Creek Park Reserve) †SLC, KJB *et al.*; 6/17 Scott (Louisville Swamp) †RTD; and 6/24–7/3 Aitkin (as many as 2 near Palisade; photographed) WN, †PHS *et al.* Several undocumented reports: 6/1–5 Rice (Faribault WMA), 6/9 Washington (William O'Brien S.P. and Afton S.P.), 6/12 Clay (Flickertail WPA), 6/24 Mower (Lake Louise S.P.), Carver (no date), and Goodhue (no date).

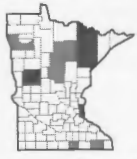


LeConte's Sparrow — Observations made in Kittson, Roseau, Clay, Otter Tail, Crow Wing, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake.



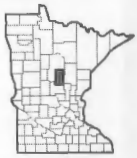
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow — Seen in Roseau, Marshall, Clay, Aitkin.

Song Sparrow — Record high number of reports. Observed in 69 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Washington* AXH.

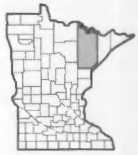


Lincoln's Sparrow — Seen in Roseau, Marshall, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Swamp Sparrow — Most reports since 1988; observed in a total of 51 counties statewide.



White-throated Sparrow — Reported in Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Itasca, Aitkin, Carlton, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant 6/2 Hennepin SLC, TAT.

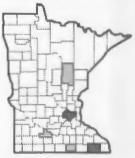


Harris's Sparrow — Fourth and fifth summer record in the past 20 years. Molting adult male observed **7/29–30** (and still present 8/19) at Big Deep L. in Cass Co. †MRN. Probable late migrant **6/20** Becker (near Waubun) †BK.

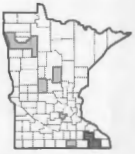
Dark-eyed Junco — Seen in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Chestnut-collared Longspur — Only reported from traditional Felton Prairie breeding site in Clay Co.

Northern Cardinal — Record high number of reports. Observed in 45 counties as far north as Clay, Crow Wing, Aitkin, St. Louis.

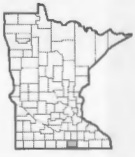


Rose-breasted Grosbeak — Reported in 54 counties statewide.



Blue Grosbeak — Reported in Murray, Rock; plus 6/12 Lac Qui Parle RBJ, 6/28 Lyon RJS, 6/28 Redwood RBJ.

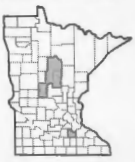
Indigo Bunting — Seen in 54 counties throughout state.



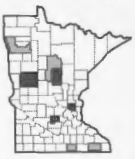
PAINTED BUNTING — Third summer record (the first was in 1998); a territorial male (presumably the same bird returning from August 1999) appeared in early May (MAN; see ***The Loon*** 72:228) and remained throughout the period at a Maple Grove feeder in Hennepin Co. †KRE, †PHS, mob.

Dickcissel — An irruptive year; twice the number of reports compared to the previous three years (the largest peak in recent years occurred in 1988, with a lesser peak in 1995). Observed in 54 counties as far north as a line through Polk, Red Lake, Crow Wing, Kanabec.

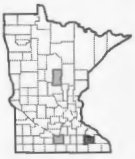
Bobolink — Reported in 55 counties statewide.



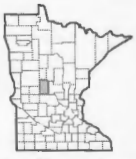
Red-winged Blackbird — Record high number of reports; observed in 74 counties statewide.



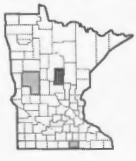
Eastern Meadowlark — Reported in 29 counties as far west as a line through Beltrami, Stearns, Blue Earth; plus 6/18 Clay (singing at the Bicentennial Prairie) PHS. New nesting record in *Olmsted* CH.



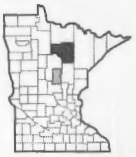
Western Meadowlark — Reported in 41 counties in all regions except southeast and northeast (see ***The Loon*** 72:127–132 for a recent update on the status of this species).



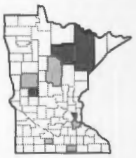
Yellow-headed Blackbird — Reported in 45 counties in all regions (but only St. Louis in northeast); new nesting record in *Crow Wing* JS, MN.



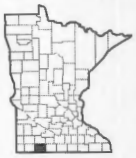
Brewer's Blackbird — Reported in 26 counties as far south as a line through Big Stone, Nicollet, Wabasha.



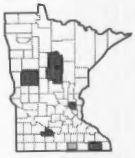
Common Grackle — Record high number of reports. Observed in 70 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Douglas* REH.



GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE — The first summer record and the first confirmed nesting record for the state. Two nests (each with 4 eggs) were found at a small pond three miles north of the Iowa border in *Jackson* †AXH, †PH. Identification of the adults is pending review of the documentation by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee.

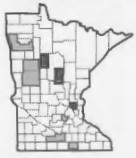


Brown-headed Cowbird — Reported in 62 counties statewide; new breeding record in *Otter Tail* DST. Parasitized species included Eastern Phoebe, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird.

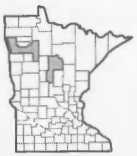


Orchard Oriole — Record high number of reports (twice that of the previous year!). Observed in 31 counties as far north as Roseau in the west and Sherburne in the east.

Baltimore Oriole — Most reports since 1996; observed in 64 counties statewide.

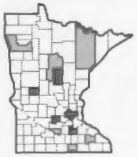


Purple Finch — Reported in 12 north central and northeast counties plus Polk,



Becker, Kanabec, Pine, Anoka.

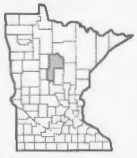
House Finch — Record high number of reports. Observed in 58 counties statewide; new nesting record in *Douglas* REH.



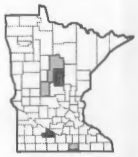
Red Crossbill — Reported in St. Louis, Cass; plus 6/28 Sherburne (10–15) HPe.

White-winged Crossbill — More reports than usual; observed in Lake of the Woods, Itasca, Aitkin, Carlton, St. Louis, Lake.

Pine Siskin — Seen in ten north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Becker, Otter Tail; also 6/3, 6/11 Hennepin DCZ.

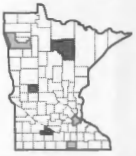


American Goldfinch — Record high number of reports; seen in 69 counties statewide.



Evening Grosbeak — Reported in eight north central and northeast counties plus Becker; new nesting record in *Lake* DRB. Fall migrants observed 6/24 and 7/7 along the North Shore of L. Superior in St. Louis Co. PHS.

House Sparrow — Record high number of reports. Observed in 67 counties statewide; new nesting records in *Itasca* DRM, *Douglas* REH.



EURASIAN TREE SPARROW — Presumably the same bird was seen for the third consecutive year at a feeder in Parke Twp., Clay Co. (6/11 through August; †PHS, mob). Of interest was the presence of a second bird, possibly a hybrid with the House Sparrow. Please see ***The Loon*** 72:133–134 and 135–138 for a review of this and other extralimital records.

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BJM	Barbara J. Martin
BJS	Beth & Jeff Siverhus
BP	Bruce Pannkuk
BRB	Brad R. Bolduan
BRK	Byron R. Kinkade
BRN	Bill R. Nelson
BSe	Blaine Seeliger
BT	Bill Tefft
CF	Cole Foster
CH	Clifford Hansen
CKa	Carl Karasti
CLB	Cindy L. Butler
CM	Craig Menze
CMG	Clare & Maurita Geerts
CRM	Craig R. Mandel
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DBS	Drew & Becky Smith
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DCZ	Dave C. Zumeta
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DFN	David F. Neitzel
DG	David Grossheusch
DJB	Dan J. Beran
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DMF	Dan M. Floren

DMP	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
DPB	D. Parker Backstrom
DPJ	Douglas P. Johnson
DRB	David R. Benson
DRM	Dennis R. Meyer
DSm	Dick Smaby
DSp	Dory Spence
DST	Dan & Sandy Thimgan
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EJE	Eddy & Judy Edwards
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GMe	Gretchen Mehmel
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GSk	George Skinner
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JAT	JoAnn Trom
JDu	Joel Dunnette
JEZ	James E. Zimmerman
JFo	June Foss
JL	Jon Little
JLa	Jacob Langeslag
JLH	James L. Howitz
JLU	Janice & Larry Uden
JMJ	Jeanie M. Joppru
JPS	Julian P. Sellers
JRN	Jeff R. Newman
JS	Jean Segerstrom
JSK	John & Susan Kroll
JSp	Jack Sprenger
JWH	John Hockema
KAK	Karla A. Kinstler
KAR	Kathryn A. Rivers
KJB	Karl J. Bardon
KM	Kim Metz
KMHd	Ken & Mary Hood
KNS	Kirsten N. Strnad
KRE	Kim R. Eckert
LWF	Lawrence W. Filter
MAN	Mary Ann Novak
MD	Merce Dostale
MEn	Mike Engh
MH	Mike Hendrickson
MHF	Marilynn H. Ford
MJF	Merrill J. Frydendall
MMe	Mark Medved
MME	Molly M. Evans
MN	Mark Newstrom
MRN	Michael R. North
MSh	Mary Shedd
MSS	Mark Sparky Stensaas
MT	Michael Tarachow
MWS	Mike W. Steffes
NBO	Nancy B. Overcott
ND	Nelvina DeKam
NFT	Nels F. Thompson
OLJ	Oscar L. Johnson
PBD	Pat & Bob Dewenter
PBo	Phyllis Bofferding
PCC	Philip C. Chu
PEB	Paul E. Budde
PG	Paul Gempler
PH	Paul Hertzel
PHe	Paul Hetland
PHS	Peder H. Svingen
PPr	Paul Prior
PSP	Pam S. Perry
RBJ	Robert B. Janssen
RCS	Rolf C. Smeby
REH	Robert E. Holtz
RHO	Robert H. O'Connor
RHy	Rick Hoyme
RJF	Randy & Jean Frederickson
RJS	Richard & Jeanne Specht
RJS	Roger J. Schroeder
RPK	Richard & Patricia Kulisheck
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
RRS	Rick & Robyn Schroeder
RTD	Robert & Tom Dunlap
RWS	Robert W. Schroeder
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
SEL	Sue E. Levy
SGW	Steve G. Wilson
SLC	Steve L. Carlson
SS	Steven Schon
SWa	Stuart Wagenius
SWe	Steve Weston
SWi	Sylvia Winkelman
SWS	Susan W. Seymour
TAT	Tom A. Tustison
TFB	Tom F. Boevers
TH	Timothy Hedeen
TPW	Terry P. Wiens
WCM	William C. Marengo
WLB	William L. Brown
WMS	William M. Stauffer
WN	Warren Nelson
MDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
mob	many observers

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, M.O.R.C. Chairman

The following records were voted on August-December 2000 and found to be Acceptable:

• White-tailed Kite, 10–19 May 2000, Afton State Park, Washington Co. (record #2000-36, vote 10–0, ***The Loon*** 72:193–194). Note that all ten members, seven regular members plus three alternates, vote on potential first state records.

• White-throated Swift, 10 May 2000, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (record #2000-37, vote 10–0, ***The Loon*** 72:191–193). Note that all ten members vote on potential first state records.

• Great-tailed Grackle, 14 May 2000, Little Swan L., Cottonwood Co. (record #2000-45, vote 7–0).

• Painted Bunting, 24 May – August 2000, Maple Grove, Hennepin Co. (record #2000-51, vote 7–0).

• Tricolored Heron, 29 May – 4 June 2000, Hastings, Dakota Co. (record #2000-52, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 72:242–243)

• Lesser Black-backed Gull, 2 June 2000, Crookston, Polk Co. (record #2000-53, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:59–60).

• Great Black-backed Gull, 5 June 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-55, vote 5–2).

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 10–11 June 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-56, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 72:180).

• Eurasian Tree Sparrow, 11 June – August 2000, Parke Twp., Clay Co. (record #2000-57, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 72:133–134).

• *Plegadis* ibis, 18 June 2000, Audubon Twp., Becker Co. (record #2000-58, vote 7–0).

• White-eyed Vireo, 20 May 2000, Glendalough State Park, Otter Tail Co. (record #2000-63, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 72:250).

• Harris's Sparrow, 29 July – August 2000, Big Deep L., Cass Co. (record #2000-65, vote 7–0).

• Yellow-throated Warbler, 18 June – August 2000, William O'Brien State Park, Washington Co. (record #2000-67, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:61–62).

• Harris's Sparrow, 20 June 2000, near Waubun, Becker Co. (record #2000-68, vote 5–2).

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 8 July 2000, Olmsted Co. (record #2000-70, vote 7–0).

• Prairie Falcon, 25 July 2000, near Ortonville, Big Stone Co. (record #2000-73, vote 5–2).

• Yellow-breasted Chat, 29 July 2000, Carver Park, Carver Co. (record #2000-74, vote 5–2).

• Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, 6 August 2000, Delaware Twp., Grant Co. (record #2000-75, vote 7–0 on identification, ***The Loon*** 73:64). After the identification was accepted, a discussion and vote on the origin of this individual was taken, and by majority vote (8–2; all ten members vote on questions of origin) it was accepted as Accidental (o) — i.e., the possibilities of captive vs. wild origin are about equal.

• White-faced Ibis, 19–20 August 2000, Carrigan L., Wright Co. (record #2000-76, vote 7–0).

• Sabine's Gull (26 individuals), 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-78, vote 7–0).

• Arctic Tern, 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-79, vote 7–0).

• Pomarine Jaeger, 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-

80, vote 6–1).

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 30 September – 9 October 2000, Odessa, Big Stone Co. (record #2000-81, vote 7–0).

• Black-headed Gull, 8 October 2000, Spirit L., Jackson Co. (record #2000-82, vote 7–0).

• Sabine's Gull, 9 October 2000, Breckenridge, Wilkin Co. (record #2000-83, vote 7–0).

• Mississippi Kite, 11 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-84, vote 7–0). Photographs were taken of this individual, and a vote (with all ten members eligible to vote) was taken on whether or not they are identifiable on their own. The majority opinion (7–3) was that they are not identifiable, which means this species remains classified as Casual (s) — i.e., there are no identifiable specimens or photos obtained in the state.

• King Eider, 14–16 October 2000, Good Harbor Bay, Cook Co. (record #2000-85, vote 7–0).

• Black-headed Grosbeak, 21–23 October 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-87, vote 5–2).

• *Plegadis* ibis, 29–30 October 2000, Carlos Avery WMA, Anoka Co. (record #2000-88, vote 7–0).

• Black-legged Kittiwake, 30 October – 2 November 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-89, vote 7–0).

• Ash-throated Flycatcher, 3–5 November 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-90, vote 7–0).

• *Plegadis* ibis, 10 November 2000, near Herman, Grant Co. (record #2000-91, vote 7–0).

The following records were voted on August–December 2000 and found to be Unacceptable:

• Glaucous-winged Gull, 15 November – 4 December 1999, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (record #99-66, vote 0–7).

The numerous photographs and written descriptions of this second-winter gull were sent for comment to three reviewers from other states with extensive experience with this species. One of them felt the identification was probably correct, but the other two had reservations about it, especially since the small bill size, the small and slight overall body size and structure, and some atypical pigmentation on the wing coverts and primaries seem inconsistent with this species. In addition, some of the observers documenting the record (including five MORC members) had reservations about the identification. While the gull may well have been a Glaucous-winged, the possibility of it being a hybrid or an atypically plumaged Herring Gull remains.

• Thayer's Gull, 5 April 1999, Bemidji, Beltrami Co. (record #2000-07, vote 2–5).

The description of this first-winter gull is not clear enough to indicate whether it was a worn or faded Herring Gull or a correctly identified Thayer's Gull. Those not accepting the record were bothered primarily by the apparent lack of darker secondaries and tail band, while the minority felt that the description was as good as — or better than — other Thayer's Gull records which have been accepted or published.

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 7 May 2000, Redwood Falls, Redwood Co. (record #2000-31, vote 3–4).

Although there is little doubt the identification was correct, the dove did not give any vocalizations, and the pattern on the undersides of the outer rectrices was not visible. Without either or both of these diagnostic features, the possibility of Ringed Turtle-Dove is not entirely precluded.

• Plumbeous Vireo, 13 May 2000, Cottonwood, Lyon Co. (record #2000-38, vote 0–10).

All ten MORC members vote on potential first state records. Despite the unanimous Unacceptable vote, the majority felt the identification by the experienced observer may well have been correct. However, the record is weakened by the top of the head and nape being described as "almost black" and darker than the back, which is inconsistent with this species (and with Blue-headed and Cassin's vireos). It is also unclear from the de-

scription as to the exact extent of yellowish color on the flanks and under tail coverts. As stated and shown by an article on these vireos in *Birding* (28:458–471), some Cassin's Vireos and one subspecies of Blue-headed Vireo can closely resemble Plumbeous Vireos, making any reported sight records of Plumbeous or Cassin's vireos here difficult to adequately document.

• Common Ground-Dove, 2 June 2000, Carlson Twp., Freeborn Co. (record #2000-54, vote 1–6).

The description does seem to be mostly consistent with this species and to preclude other dove species, but there are a few problems in the documentation which makes acceptance of this potential second state record of a species so far out of range difficult. For one thing, the back is described as "scaled with brown/black spots," which is more consistent with Inca Dove. Also the eyes are described as "black," while the irides should be reddish. It may be this really was a ground-dove and that the description is simply poorly worded, but again there should be no room for doubt in the documentation of such an unusual species.

• Sprague's Pipit, 18 June 2000, Felton Prairie, Clay Co. (record #2000-59, vote 3–4).

The description provided is entirely adequate and consistent with the identification, but the majority of the Committee felt the record was weakened by the observer's inexperience with this species, which was often involved with misidentifications. Some also felt the documentation is incomplete since the leg color was not noted, and no reason was given for why juvenile Horned Lark was eliminated from consideration.

• Mississippi Kite, 26 June 2000, Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2000-60, vote 0–7).

The out-of-state observers, who had experience with this species, provided a description which seems mostly consistent with Mississippi Kite. However, the bird was only seen for a few seconds, the distance and optics involved are not given, and the overall size of the bird is not described. In addition, the plumage description is open to doubt since the under side of the bird is described as "all light," which does not accurately fit the tail of this species at any age.

• Lark Bunting, 1 October 1998, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-61, vote 2–5).

The majority had too many uncertainties about the description to accept the record. The amount and position of the white on the tail is unclear and inconsistently described; also unclear is whether or not the underparts were streaked. Finally, the sketched position of the white on the wings is somewhat incorrect for this species.

• Thayer's Gull, 18 May 2000, L. Lillian, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2000-62, vote 1–6).

The identification may well have been correct, but there is still much misunderstanding among even experienced birders regarding the diagnostic field marks of this species, and many observers are unaware how faded and worn Herring Gulls can closely resemble Thayer's Gulls. In this case, the documentation leaves out too many details to be convincing, with uncertainties remaining about this gull's overall size, age, bill color, tail pattern, eye color, mantle color and pattern of the flight feathers.

• Brant, 9 July 2000, Forest L., Washington Co. (record #2000-64, vote 0–7).

The very brief documentation does not preclude the more likely possibility of this bird being some sort of exotic or barnyard waterfowl escaped or released from captivity; the bird also might have been an injured, summering blue-morph Snow Goose.

• Hooded Warbler, 9–14 June 2000, Chaska (?), Carver Co. (record #2000-66, vote 1–6).

No field notes were taken at the time of the observation, with the provided documentation apparently only written

from memory two months later. The majority of the Committee was also bothered by the atypical habitat for this species ("wet field with small trees and shrubs"), and some felt the description was too vague and did not adequately rule out other possibilities, such as Common Yellowthroat.

• Mountain Bluebird, 1 July 2000, Lake Louise State Park, Mower Co. (record #2000-69, vote 3–4).

This record involves a pair of bluebirds, but the female, which was only superficially described, was unanimously felt to be Unacceptable. A minority of the Committee, however, felt a male Mountain Bluebird is too distinctive to misidentify, but the majority was uncomfortable with accepting either individual. The descriptions seem to be at least partly copied from a field guide, and undue emphasis is given to the male's white belly, which Easterns also have. Finally, the observer's sole experience with this species is stated as coming from Mower County on two previous — and undocumented — occasions.

• Baird's Sparrow, 13 July 2000, Pembina Trail Scientific & Natural Area, Polk Co. (record #2000-71, vote 0–7).

The incomplete description of the bird's plumage only includes mention of a light eyebrow and some faint stripes on the sides of the breast, which is not enough to determine what kind of sparrow was seen. The song was heard and described, but the musical trill with "a lower note" at the end is more suggestive of Savannah Sparrow and would be inconsistent with a normal Baird's Sparrow's song.

• Baird's Sparrow, 25 July 2000, Felton Prairie, Clay Co. (record #2000-72, vote 0–7).

This bird was never actually seen, and many species have vocalizations which can easily be misidentified, especially when the observers have limited experience with them; atypical songs of other similar species do occur. The description of the song (as in the above record) also fits Savannah Sparrow well, since the introductory notes are described as lower pitched than the trill — in the Baird's Sparrow's song, these notes are higher pitched.

• Western Tanager, 17 August 2000, Lakeville, Dakota Co. (record #2000-77, vote 0–7).

The identification of this apparent tanager seems to be based primarily on the bird's wing bars; however, the Scarlet Tanager can sometimes show visible wing bars, and nothing else in the brief description clearly indicates why this was a Western Tanager.

The efforts of all those observers who document their reports of unusual species are appreciated, whether or not those records are accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided documentation for the records listed in this article: Diane Anderson, Karl Bardon, Brad Bolduan, Michael Bowen, Jim Braastad, Judd Brink, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander, Philip Chu (3 records), Merce Dostale (2 records), Bob Dunlap (2 records), Kim Eckert (7 records), Paul Egeland, Cheryl Fox, Bill George, Don Grussing, Tom Hartman, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertzel (8 records), Ben Hopland, Bob Janssen (2 records), Doug Johnson, Douglas Johnson, Ann Kessen, Byron Kinkade, Jim Lind (3 records), Craig Mandel (2 records), Craig Menze, Steve Millard, Frank Nicoletti, Terry Niedenfuer, Michael North, Tom Polasik, Paul Prior, Ed Quinn, Forest Strnad, Peder Svingen (18 records), Michael Tarachow (2 records), Tom Tustison (2 records), Marlene Weber, Bob Zink, and Dave Zumeta.

There were also other observers who documented records which were not submitted for a vote to the Committee; their documentations, though not mentioned here, are also appreciated.

Summary: 47 records voted on: 32 Acceptable (68%), 15 Unacceptable (32%).

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Status and Occurrence of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Minnesota

Peder H. Svingen

Since 1958 when its occurrence in the state was unequivocally confirmed by a specimen (Gullion and Brown 1959), dozens of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Tyrannus forficatus*) have been found in Minnesota. In seven of ten years during each of the past three decades (Figure 1), one or more reports has been accepted by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee. Its status will likely change from Casual to Regular in the near future. Here, I review 56 state records through the year 2000 for patterns of occurrence.

Historical Report

Roberts (1932) refers to a United States Biological Survey report of a specimen purportedly collected by Peter Skoglund near New London, Kandiyohi County, sometime before 1912 (the year in which Skoglund replied to a letter of inquiry). This undated specimen was "lost" during mounting, but Skoglund's letter may have influenced Roberts' acceptance of a 1930 sight record from Jackson County.

Early Records

Frank B. Kalash reported "a female of the species" associating with a kingbird in Minneota Township, Jackson County, 5 June 1930 (Roberts 1932). He described its behavior very well, though published details were otherwise scanty. Green and Janssen (1975) included this record.

The next documented sight record was at Long Point, Lake of the Woods County, 3–7 July 1957 (Kelly 1958). The next fall, a male was collected about three miles west of Cloquet, Carlton County, on 23 October 1958 (Gullion and Brown 1959). This provided the first physical evidence of this species' occurrence in the state. Since that time, 15 records have been documented by photographs, the first one on 24 May 1972 in Lakewood Township, St. Louis County (Carr 1972).

Spring Records

The earliest dates in Minnesota are all from the northeast region: 27 April 1983, Grand Portage, Cook County; 29 April 1979, Duluth, St. Louis County; and 30 April 1976, one found dead near Two Harbors, Lake County. There is a total of 16 records in May. The median spring arrival date for April/May is 16 May.

Some early June occurrences probably represent overshoots in spring migration, especially those seen for only one day along the North Shore of Lake Superior, but late spring migrants do not appear to be distinguishable from summer vagrants in Minnesota by either location or date. Elsewhere in North America, this species' spring migration continues well into May and vagrancy is more common in spring compared to fall (Regosin 1998).

Summer Records

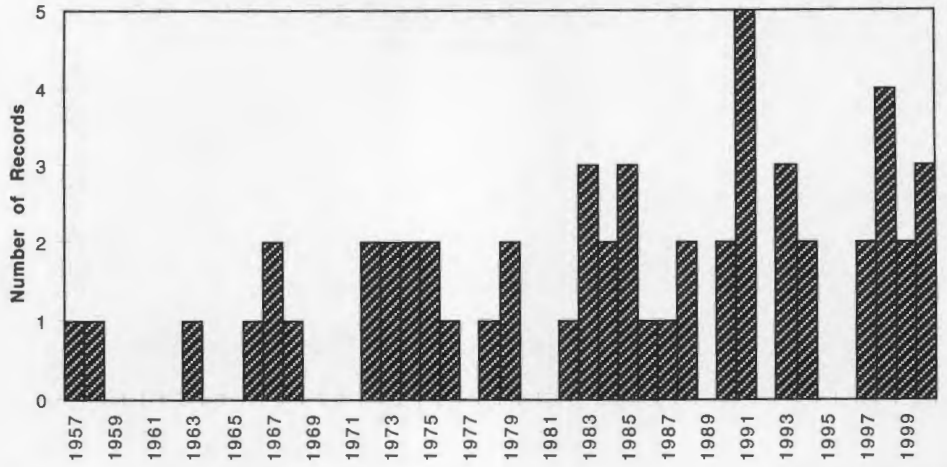
There are nine records in June and ten in July. Distinguishing between summer and fall records is difficult and arguably irrelevant. The latest of three records for August is 18 August 1984 in Lake County.

One early summer arrival (4 June 1997 near Elk River, Sherburne County) stayed through 17 July and constructed up to three nests while paired with a Western Kingbird (Fall 1997–98). Scissor-taileds normally breed as far north as southern Nebraska and central Missouri. Outliers include Daviess County, Indiana, in 1974 (Howell and Theroff 1976) and Ames, Iowa, in July 1979 (Zaletel *et al.* 1979).

Fall Records

About five weeks separate the latest August date from the only two September

Figure 1. Annual Occurrence of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Minnesota, 1957–2000



records — 26 September 1990 in Norman County and 29 September 1998 in Cook County. There are 13 records in October. The median date of discovery among the total of 15 September/October records is 16 October.

The latest dates for this species in the state are 24 October 1998, Grand Marais, Cook County; 23–28 October 1982, near Aitkin, Aitkin County; and 24–28 October 1975, Duluth Township, St. Louis County. Only 3 of the 13 records in October have been outside the northeast region! These are from Aitkin County (see above), 21 October 1994 at Rothsay W.M.A., Wilkin County, and 16 October 1987 at Prairie Island, Goodhue County.

Patterns of Occurrence

During the 1990s, significantly more Scissor-tailed Flycatchers occurred in the state when compared to the previous two decades. As shown in Figure 1, the total number of records during the 1990s (23) nearly equals the combined total for the 1970s (12) and 1980s (13). All Minnesota records are of single birds.

St. Louis County has records for each month, from April through October; these are fairly evenly distributed by season. Its total of 14 records is double that of the next highest county (7 records in Cook). Then comes Lake (4 records), Hennepin (3 records) and Hubbard (3 records).

Including two from Carlton County, the total of 27 records in the northeast region (Figure 2) is nearly half of all records for the state. Excluding the two from Carlton County and three from interior locations in the northeast, late April through mid-June (12 records) or October (8 records) along the North Shore of Lake Superior in Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties, is by far the best time and place to search for Scissor-taileds in Minnesota.

Summer vagrants can occur anywhere in the state. For many counties with only one record, such as Clay and Lake of the Woods in the north, and Anoka, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Rock, Sherburne, Sibley, and Wright in the south, Scissor-taileds have only been found in June or July.

The summer 1997 bird in Sherburne County stayed longer (44 days) than any other Scissor-tailed in Minnesota history. One lingered 19 days at Knife River, Lake County, 4–22 October 1991 (Eckert 1991). On 8 and 22 July 1979 in Clay County, presumably the same bird was relocated.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 11 June 2000, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

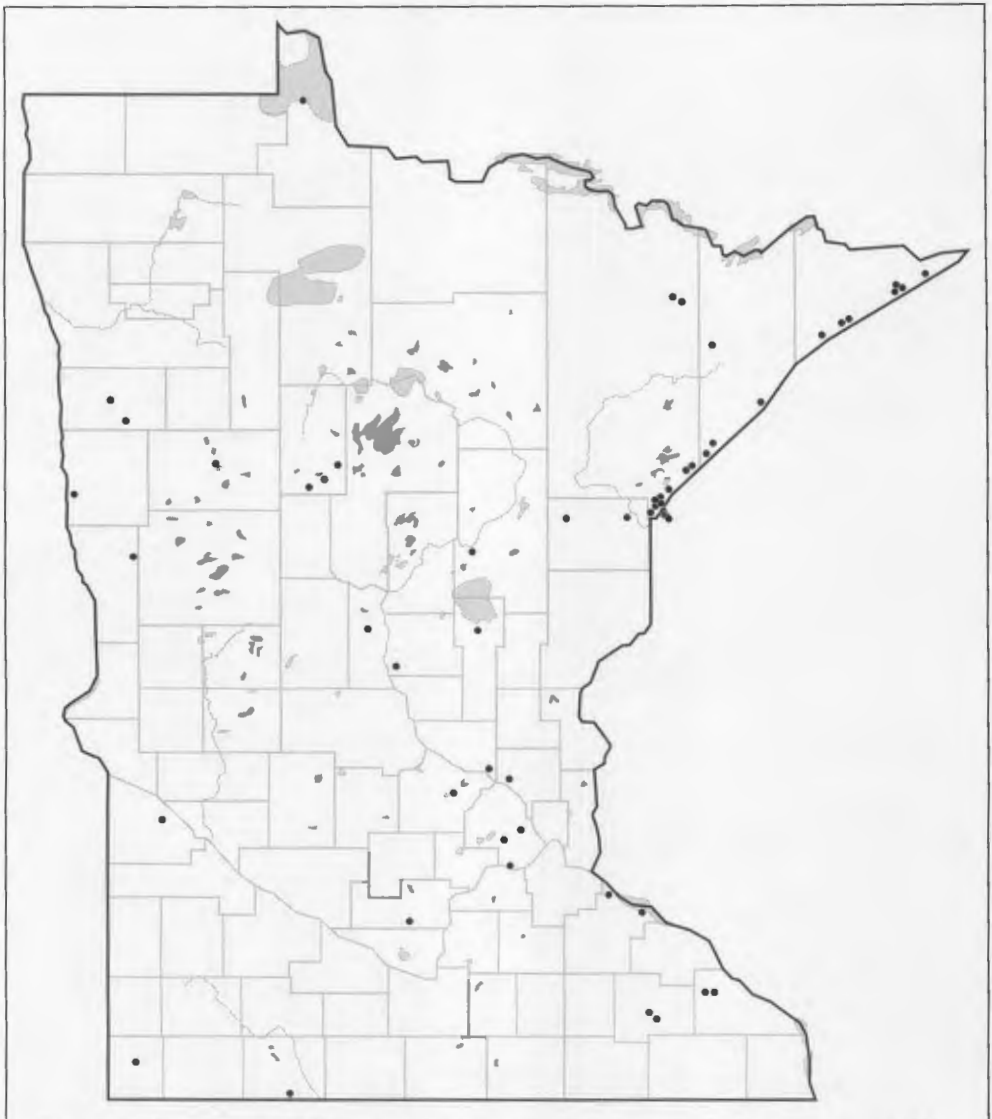


Figure 2. Locations of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher records in Minnesota, 1930–2000.

Most (42 of 56) Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the state have been one day wonders. The average length of stay for 56 records through 2000 is less than three days.

Other Reports

At least 20 additional Scissor-taileds have been reported in Minnesota. Some undocumented reports during the 1990s were probably valid. Five undocumented records have been published in *Seasonal Reports* and/or *Notes of Interest*: 5+ June 1959, Anoka County; 16 May 1964, Lake County; 28 June 1976, Rock County; 5 May 1987, Cook County; and 26 October 1991, Lake County. None was used in

this article. Records found Unacceptable by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee include 11 June 1983, Hennepin County; 19 August 1984, St. Louis County; 13 June 1997, Lake County; and 23 June 1999, Wadena County.

Summary

The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher remains rare, but is also increasing as a vagrant to Minnesota. Its status will likely change from Casual to Regular in the near future. Analysis of the 56 records through 2000 suggests that this species is most likely to be encountered along the North Shore of Lake Superior during the spring migration and again in October. Finding a vagrant elsewhere is simply serendipitous.

Acknowledgments

I thank Anthony Hertzel for creating the map and assisting with research. Kim Eckert and Bob Janssen provided helpful information about specific records.

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The Status of Boreal Owls in Northeast Minnesota

2000 Annual Report

William H. Lane

Nocturnal, listening surveys were conducted in 2000 to detect the presence and distribution of Boreal Owls in northeast Minnesota. Five survey routes were surveyed once during three time blocks: 15–31 March, 1–14 April, and 15 April – 30 April. Boreal Owls were detected on 16 occasions during 660.4 km of surveys, representing an overall detection rate of 0.024 owls/km and an abundance index of 0.048 owls per route length (km). Six of 16 (37.5%) detections occurred along the Crooked Lake route, seven (43.8%) along the Sawbill route, two (12.5%) along the Gunflint route, and one (6.3%) along the

Year	km Surveyed	Boreal Owl Detections	Detection Rate[1]
1987	524.9	16	0.030
1988	925.9	41	0.044
1989	993.7	88	0.089
1990	512.5	18	0.035
1991	1173.9	35	0.030
1992	867.3	36	0.042
1993			
1994	*Standardized surveys not conducted*		
1995			
1996	741.3	2	0.003
1997	662.8	44	0.066
1998	620.3	13	0.021
1999	653.5	27	0.041
2000	660.4	16	0.024

Table 1. Summary of Boreal Owl surveys conducted in northeast Minnesota from 1987–2000. Standardized owl surveys were not conducted from 1993–1995.

[1]The detection rate represents the number of owls detected per total km surveyed

Arrowhead route. No owls were detected along the Caribou route. Five male owls were observed in cavities and at each site; females visited the cavity during more than one nocturnal observation period. However, no nesting attempts were documented. Survey results represent the third lowest number of Boreal Owl detections documented in my study area since 1987.

The Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) is a regular breeding species that exists at low densities throughout northeast Minnesota (Lane 1997). The owl is found throughout extant portions of boreal forest and is associated with older trembling aspen for nesting and lowland black spruce for roosting and foraging activities (Lane and Andersen 1995). Habitat depletion is implicated in projected long-term population declines of the species throughout North America (Hayward 1994), and specifically, in portions of northern Minnesota (Jaako Pöyry 1992).

This study continues my long-term effort to assess the distribution, status, and ecology of Boreal Owls in northeast Minnesota. Herein, I report the results of 2000 survey efforts.

Study Area

This study was conducted in northeast Minnesota, within Cook County and along the eastern quarter of Lake County (*see:* Lane 1997 for a detailed study area description). Approximately 80% of the surface area is forested, while 18% is covered by water bodies. Urban or developed land is minimally represented (Spadaccini and Whiting 1985). Climate in the region is characterized by cold winters and short summers. The mean temperature ranges from -17° C in January to 17° C in July. Annual snowfall averages 152 cm, and rainfall averages 45 cm (Ahlgren 1969).

Vegetation in the study area is characterized by forest-types representative of three biotic communities: the southernmost portion of the boreal forest life zone (Rowe 1972), the broadleaf deciduous forest (Larsen 1980) and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest biome (Rowe 1972) (for more detailed descriptions, see Lane 1997). Pockets of boreal, hardwood, and softwood forests persist regionally, although fire, fire suppression, and timber harvests have had considerable impact in shaping the present-day forest

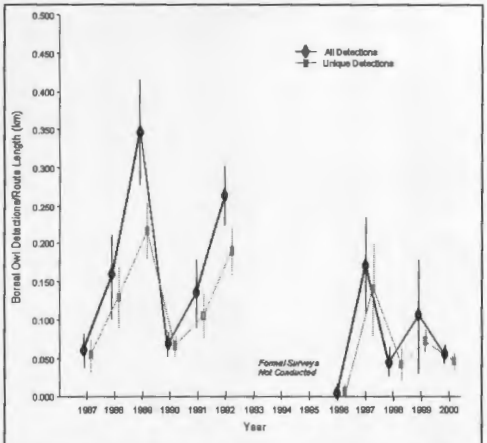

Figure 1. Annual abundance indices from 1987 through 2000 for territorial male Boreal Owls in northeast Minnesota. Individual owls detected per route length (km) is represented by a gray line and the total detections per route length by a black line. Error bars represent standard deviation of abundance index using survey routes as replicates.

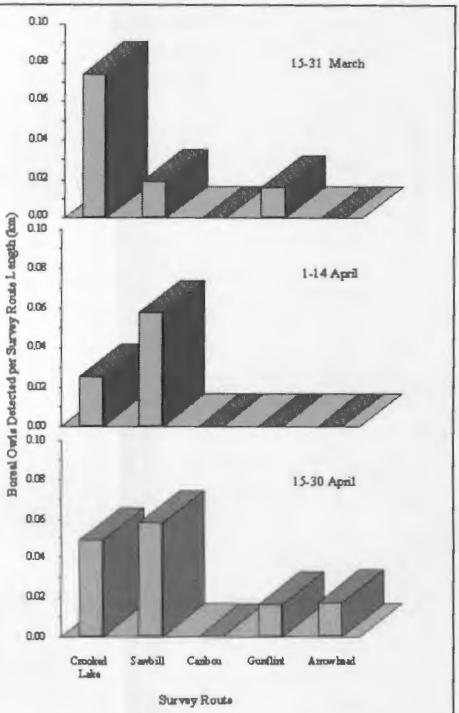

Figure 2. Detection rates of vocalizing male Boreal Owls in northeast Minnesota during 2000. Each of five routes was surveyed once during the depicted time blocks.

mosaic (Heinselman 1973).

Methods

Nocturnal listening surveys were conducted between 15 March and 30 April 2000, along five established survey routes. Each route was surveyed once during three time blocks: 15–31 March, 1–14 April, and 15–30 April. Three minute listening stations, separated by 0.8 km, were used to detect the broadcast staccato song of the male Boreal Owl (Bondrup-Nielsen 1984). Surveys were initiated at least 30 minutes after sunset and continued until the route was completed. Surveys were not conducted in winds exceeding 18 kph or during moderate to heavy precipitation. If a route was not completed due to deteriorating weather, it was completed when conditions allowed, ideally within the same survey time block.

During surveys conducted in the 15 – 30 April time-block, passive listening surveys were supplemented with recorded playback surveys. Playback efforts were concentrated in areas where owls were heard during initial surveys but not during subsequent surveys or site visits, and in areas that have historically supported Boreal Owls, but where I did not detect owls during the three previous listening surveys. Following the three minute listening period, a digital recording of the staccato song of the Boreal Owl was broadcast for one minute, followed by a three minute listening and observation period, with the process repeated if no response was detected.

Two encounter indices were derived for Boreal Owls. The *detection rate* is the number of owls detected per total km

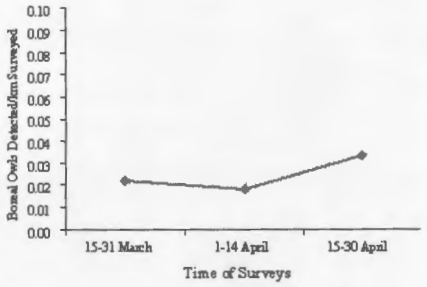

Figure 3. Detection rates of vocalizing male Boreal Owls in northeast Minnesota during 2000.

surveyed (owls/effort) and the *abundance index* is the number of individual owls detected per linear route length (km) and provides a rough density estimate.

Results

Surveys were initiated on 20 March and completed on 19 April. Boreal Owls were detected on 16 occasions during 660.4 km of surveys (Table 1). Of the 16 detections, four owls were heard on more than one survey replication, resulting in an *abundance index* (based on 12 individual owls) of 0.048 owls/km (Fig. 1). The Crooked Lake route accounted for 6 of 16 (37.5%), the Sawbill route 7 of 16 (43.8%), the Gunflint route 2 of 16 (12.5%), and the Arrowhead route 1 of 16 (6.3%) total owl detections. No Boreal Owls were detected along the Caribou route. (Fig. 2). The *detection rate* for vocalizing owls increased during the 15–30 April survey period (Fig. 3). No owls were detected or observed during supplemental playback surveys. Female owls were observed on five territories, but no nests were established by the end of the field season.

Supplemental Observations

A male Boreal Owl was recaptured on 9 April 2000, at the same cavity tree where it was originally banded on 18 April 1998.

Discussion

2000 survey results represent the third lowest number of individual owls and the third lowest detection rate documented in my study area since 1987. When viewed in the context of annual Boreal Owl indices (Fig. 1), my data suggests a decrease in the number of owls and there is growing evidence that the loss of nesting substrates may be contributing to that decrease.

I recognize that a full accounting of all potential cavity tree locations is an impossible task. However, since 1988, I have located 72 cavity trees used by the Boreal Owls for courtship or nesting activities. During the 1999 and 2000 field seasons, I revisited 58 of those cavity trees to fix their locations using a Global Positioning System (GPS). Of the 58 trees visited, only 16 remain standing. Although some trees have been removed by timber harvests, the majority had fallen as the result of pathological rotation or more recently, cataclysmic windstorms. The paradox of my observations is that the trees most likely to provide nesting substrates are the trees most likely to be cut and the most likely to fall to the forest floor.

Compounding the loss of cavity trees, and likely contributing to a reduced distribution of the species in northeast Minnesota, is the fact that the discovery of new cavity trees has decreased each year, despite intensified foot-searches for those trees. Instead, owls are typically found in previously located cavity trees. Replacement cavity trees (i.e., those susceptible to future cavity formation or excavations), and especially trees within stands adjacent to critical boreal forest lowlands (Wolter and Lane 2000), do not appear to be overly abundant in the landscape.

At the same time the distribution of known cavity trees has decreased, the overall distribution of owls encountered during surveys has become more concentrated. This suggestion is supported by my survey data. For example, during 1999, 18 individual owls were located during surveys. Six of the 18 were found

within a six sq. mi area along the Sawbill route. Similarly, of the 12 owls identified during 2000, four were located within that same landscape patch. Thus, during the last two years, in a study area comprising approximately 850 sq. miles, 33.3% of Boreal Owl detections have occurred in < 1% of my study area.

Given this interpretation of data and observations, a logical question would be: how does the six sq. mile portion along the Sawbill route differ from the rest of my study area? I suggest it is the presence of diverse, old forest tracts distributed in a landscape of unevenly-aged upland and lowland forests with an abundance of roosting and nesting resources and widespread prey availability. When combined, the local and landscape scale distribution of these resources enhances, rather than limits Boreal Owls in my study area.

Decreases in the number of Boreal Owls detected in other portions of my study area have become more evident in recent years. During 1988, 1989 (an irruption year), and 1990, 58 (39.5%) of 147 total Boreal Owl detections occurred along the Gunflint route. Conversely, during 1997 (an irruption year), 1998, and 1999, 21 (24.1%) of 87 total detections occurred along that same route. Similarly, between 1987 and 1991, Boreal Owls were detected on 24 occasions along the Arrowhead route. Since 1993, however, only one owl has been heard there. Thus, my survey methodology hasn't changed, but the number of owls has.

The 2000 field season was initiated in a landscape characterized by warm temperatures and an unprecedented lack of snow cover. These conditions likely contributed to an increase in both the number and variety of owls heard during early March observations. By 10 March, eight male Boreal Owls were located and females observed at two of those locations. Rather than serve as a harbinger for the upcoming surveys, however, the early season activity proved to be the storm before the calm. All eight Boreal Owls detected prior to the start of surveys were heard during subsequent surveys, meaning that only four additional individual Boreal Owls were detected between 15 March and 19 April.

Already during the fall and early winter of 2000, there are signs that a significant irruption of Boreal Owls is underway throughout eastern North America. During most irruption years (1989, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997), I have observed an appreciable increase in the number of Boreal Owl detections and that those observations include owls in forest stands peripheral to preferred habitat patches (Lane 1997). However, if in fact nesting substrate trees have become a limited resource in northeast Minnesota's landscape as my study and observations suggest, then it seems plausible that the future distribution of Boreal Owls will become more concentrated and that the pattern of fewer owls within fewer habitat patches will continue, with or without a winter irruption.

Acknowledgments

Funding or support for this project was provided by the Tofte Ranger District and the Superior National Forest (SNF), the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (MOU), participants in the 2000 Boreal Birding Festival, the Friends of the Boundary Waters, and John and Judy Bridell. Digital playback equipment was provided by Wildlife Technologies, Inc. My sincere thanks to Sue and Jack McDonnell, Boreal Access, the Gunflint Trail Association, Wayne Russ, Jackie Andrew, and Ed Lindquist (SNF), the Hansens from Sawbill Outfitters, Ann Kessen, Anthony Hertzel, and the members of MOU for their interest and support of my research, Bill Martz, Oksana and Nikolai, and Rich Jordan for persevering through the field season and contributing to the compilation of yet another year of research conducted on a coin purse budget.

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BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at MORC (Part 2)

Kim R. Eckert

All right, class, settle down and pass in your homework assignment. What homework?! You seem to forget last winter, when class was last in session (***The Loon*** 72:235–239), you were given the task of naming those 17 species whose reports have been most frequently found Unacceptable by our beloved and respected Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee. You remember MORC: rhymes with. . . never mind.

To refresh your memory, the point of the assignment was that the more often

reports of a species are turned down, the more likely it is birders have trouble with its identification. By studying these problem birds first and what might be lacking in the documentations provided with the records, the idea is you might then avoid in the future the most frequent difficulties others have had in the past.

Of course, it's not quite all that simple. MORC primarily reviews species classified as Casual and Accidental on the state list, with Regular species voted on only when far out of range or season. As a result, Regulars are underrepresented in this survey, with only four of the 17 species always on the Regular list since MORC began its proceedings. By definition, they occur in the state every year — and, when you stop and think about it, it then follows they are probably misidentified much more often than Casuals and Accidentals.

Anyway, now that all your papers have been turned in, here are the 17 species (the numbers in parentheses indicate the total number of records judged Unacceptable by MORC). All have been turned down a total of at least seven times over the years, with the bird at the top of the list voted down 12 times. There is, by the way, no significance in cutting off this list at 17 or choosing seven as the minimum number of rejections. (Continuing down the list, there are five species with six Unacceptable votes, five others with a total of five rejections, 14 turned down four times, etc.; some of these will be mentioned at the end of this discussion.)

Swainson's Hawk (12)

Well, we have a winner! (Or is it the loser?) It might be expected that Number One on our list is a hawk, but it is curious it's a Regular species and, thus, not normally voted on. The problem has been the large number of reports of it over the years from November into March, even though the species primarily winters in South America. Minnesota observers, however, at least seem to be getting better at learning this hawk's ID and its seasonal status. As pointed out at our earlier class (***The Loon*** 72:239), this is one of those birds with fewer Unacceptable MORC votes in recent years.

So, just what is it observers might be confusing with the Swainson's Hawk? Immature Bald Eagles, for one thing. Many 2nd- and 3rd-year eagles show both dark bibs and white under wing linings and could be mistaken for Swainson's when relative size is unclear or not considered. More often, perhaps, Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks are the culprits. Many Red-taileds have a solid Swainson's-like brown area across the throat/upper chest, while typical adult male light-morph Rough-leggeds have a dark and definite band across the breast. And be aware that even some adult Broad-winged Hawks show a solid dark brown, and quite Swainson's-like, bib.

Mississippi Kite (11)

It should, perhaps, come as no surprise to find the first two species on this list are raptors, a group with a long history of misidentifications. And this near-Regular species is now almost annual in Minnesota (or allegedly so), resulting in frequent reports of it to MORC. Here, I think, the number of Unacceptable votes mostly resulted from the difficulties observers have had in their documentations, and not as much from any ID difficulties. I suspect a majority of the rejected Mississippi Kite reports involve inadequate descriptions of correctly identified birds.

Once you've seen this species in flight, you quickly notice how its flight style and profile are unique and not easily confused with anything else. By their nature, however, such characteristics are unfortunately hard to describe in words, no matter how distinctive they are. And, unless you have a close view of an adult, a Mississippi Kite's plumage is not all that distinctive and relatively nondescript.

A postscript: The Mississippi Kite has the dubious distinction of being the only Casual or Regular species on the state list yet to be documented by a specimen or recognizable photograph.

House Finch (11)

It's been years since MORC has voted on this now-ubiquitous Regular species.

But when the House Finch began showing up here as an Accidental around 1980, it was usually at someone's feeder, and that someone was typically a casual birder not used to documenting bird records. As a result, MORC used to receive numerous House Finch reports — most of them probably accurate — with insufficient descriptions.

The problem was primarily with males and their potential for confusion with Purple Finches, but take a second look in your field guide at the females and — except for bill shape — note their similarity to Pine Siskins. Certainly, both male and female House Finches are still involved at times in misidentifications, but these are negligible within the context of how common the species is now in Minnesota.

Black-headed Grosbeak (10)

While adult male Black-headed Grosbeaks are certainly hard to confuse with anything else, the records MORC has evaluated and had to reject have mostly involved young male Rose-breasteds. Especially in late summer, such Rose-breasteds have buffy and mostly unstreaked underparts — just like female Black-headeds, except for their hard-to-see pink under wing linings. Fortunately, Minnesota birders seem to have become more aware of this ID problem, since only two of all the Unacceptable records have come in the last ten years.

Hybrid grosbeaks are also a potential and most difficult problem on the Great Plains, and such hybrids have probably been seen in Minnesota. And females of both species — of any age and at any season — can occasionally show a confusing and potentially overlapping variation in the intensity of the streaking and of the buff coloration on their underparts.

Ferruginous Hawk (9)

Well, that didn't take long for another raptor to appear on this list! That makes three out of the top five species, with four more raptors still on their way below. And the Ferruginous Hawk, like all but one of the other raptors on the list, is currently a Regular species and not subject to an automatic MORC vote. Interestingly, none of MORC's Unacceptable votes has come in the past ten years; however, despite this encouraging trend, I suspect too many observers are still mistaking other buteos for the Ferruginous.

Certainly, paler Red-tailed Hawks represent the biggest source of confusion for novice hawk watchers, who are simply unaware how white some Red-taileds can appear overall. Many birders are also typically unaware that a Red-tailed of any age, unless a dark-morph bird, normally shows white at the base of its tail, with white often extending as well towards the tail tip. And even a "normal" Red-tailed as an immature shows pale or even whitish panels or "windows" on the wings. (Indeed, immature Broad-wingeds and Rough-leggeds — and Red-shouldereds of all ages — also have pale wing panels.) It's easy to see how a generally pale buteo with white on its tail and on its wings can be mistaken for a Ferruginous.

Western Tanager (9)

As a formerly Casual species, the now-Regular Western Tanager used to be documented with some frequency, and its ID is not necessarily as easy as you might think. Molting male Summer Tanagers in spring show an odd mix of colors which can include a Western Tanager-like red head. More than once a Western Tanager report has come in to the hotline, been checked out, and resulted in the ID amended to Summer Tanager. And probably-correct reports to MORC of male Western Tanagers have had to be turned down when the written descriptions said little more than that it was a red-headed tanager.

It is also important to note an immature Scarlet Tanager of either sex can occasionally show narrow but quite visible wing bars. An Acceptable description of a female-plumaged Western Tanager, therefore, needs to include the width and color of its wing bars and the color and amount of contrast of its back — consult your *National Geographic* or Sibley field guide for more tanager information.

Ross's Goose (8)

Now that the status of Ross's Goose has changed from Accidental to Casual to presently Regular, MORC votes on it — both positive and negative — have become less frequent in the past ten years. However, the main reason for those frequent Unacceptable votes, the occurrence of intermediate or hybrids, is still out there. Scrutinize flocks of Snow Geese long enough looking for something else among them, and you'll eventually turn up both plenty of Ross's and some "in-between" geese as well.

My advice is to ignore overall body size when identifying a Ross's. If you study published measurements of specimens, you'll see there is overlap between the largest and heaviest male Ross's and the smallest female Lesser Snow Geese. Concentrate instead on the Ross's shorter-necked/rounder-headed profile and, more importantly, on its bill: straight and vertical base, lack of an oval "grinning patch," shorter bill length, and bluish-gray basal half. And be prepared to see some bills with intermediate features — and to leave these as unidentified geese.

Osprey (8)

Broad-winged Hawk (8)

Like the Swainson's Hawk, these two raptors (we're now up to five on this survey) have always been treated as Regular — i.e., both correct and incorrect reports of them tend to escape evaluation by MORC. But they also attract MORC's attention often enough since they share something else with the Swainson's: the failure of many birders to realize how unlikely they are here in winter. Sadly, though, these two do not share the Swainson's Hawk's trend of fewer Unacceptable votes in recent years: they show no trend one way or the other. And, since each species has the same history of rejection, they can be covered simultaneously in this paragraph.

But not the same with these two, of course, are the other raptors which are the potential sources of ID confusion. I suspect that most winter claims of Osprey in reality most often refer to Rough-legged Hawk or Bald Eagle. Both Ospreys and light-morph Rough-leggeds may have similar carpal patches, although otherwise their under wing patterns are quite different. And sub-adult Bald Eagles can show a mostly whitish head with an Osprey-like stripe through the eyes.

As for winter reports of Broad-wingeds, consider that the very similar immature Red-shouldered Hawk is far more likely here in winter. Note as well that the pale tail bands on a Red-shouldered of any age can appear to be about the same width as the dark bands, just like a Broad-winged. Also consider the three accipiters, all of which can winter in Minnesota: when these raptors soar they can look quite buteo-like while fanning their banded tails.

Gyrfalcon (8)

This raptor may be currently considered as Regular, but it is just barely so with only a single reliable sighting or two most years; in some previous years the Gyr found itself demoted to the Casual list. Part of the uncertainty of its status lies with the number of questionable sightings over the years, and unfortunately all but two of those Unacceptable MORC votes have come in the most recent ten-year period.

So what's the ID problem, other than the obvious fact that it's a raptor, which alone is enough to strike terror into any MORC-fearing birder? The primary difficulty is that Gyrs, sort of like Mississippi Kites, are difficult to describe with no obvious field marks to hang your documentation on. (Perhaps a white-morph Gyrfalcon isn't so tough to tell, but this form seldom occurs here.) Be aware that a soaring Gyr can look more like a buteo than a falcon; more importantly, be aware that a Northern Goshawk in direct flight looks quite falcon-like and is about the same size as a Gyrfalcon.

Whooping Crane (8)

Everyone's heard of the endangered Whooping Crane, and, besides, it's human nature for wishful thinking to sometimes cloud objectivity. (Objective, accu-

rate observation may be more scientific, but it's not as much fun!) So, it's easy to see how this species appears on this list. No, a Whooping Crane doesn't closely resemble anything else, but a large black-and-white bird like a pelican or Snow Goose is close enough. Not to mention Wood Stork, which is overdue on the Minnesota list.

Keep in mind as well that a flying Sandhill Crane at some angles in harsh light can appear whitish with somewhat contrasting darker primaries. Leucistic, or abnormally pale, Sandhill Cranes are also a reality and could easily be mistaken for Whoopers. At least the trend with this species is positive, with fewer Unacceptable votes in recent years.

California Gull (8)

Finally, a gull, and it's about time! For if anything can confound birders more than a raptor, it has to be a gull — and all the worse if it's an immature. As far as this species goes, juveniles and first-winter Californias look a lot like Herrings or Lesser Black-backeds of the same age, while second-winter birds are hard to tell from first-winter Ring-billeds. Even reports of adult California Gulls can cause ID and documentation problems: both fourth-winter Herring and Thayer's gulls can also show both red and black spots on their lower mandibles, and Thayer's Gulls normally have brown eyes like Californias.

Since this gull regularly occurs in the Dakotas less than 100 miles from the Minnesota border, reports of it will continue to be evaluated by MORC with some frequency. But let's hope its voting trend continues, since none of the Unacceptable votes has come in the past ten years.

Iceland Gull (8)

It's time already for another gull, but the less said about this one the better. About the nicest thing about this nightmare of an ID is that the Iceland Gull was recently promoted to the Regular list. Consequently, and fortunately, MORC is no longer required to evaluate all reports of this alleged species. As veteran gull watchers learned years ago, you'll go blind or at least dizzy trying to distinguish darker Icelands from paler Thayer's of any age. Besides, everyone knows these two are the same species anyway, and what was the question again?

Ah, yes, how to avoid Unacceptable Iceland Gull reports. While you might be tempted just to call them all Thayer's Gulls, birders already have enough problems trying to make valid Thayer's IDs (see below). And this won't work with Iceland-like Gulls which are too white to be a Thayer's. Then you have to consider why they aren't Glaucous Gulls, since a large male Iceland can closely approach a small female Glaucous in overall size. Worse, there is also the problem of albinistic gulls to consider in your documentations.

Clark's Grebe (7)

This species is similar to the Ross's Goose in many ways. Both are most likely to occur in western Minnesota wetlands, both quickly advanced through the ranks from Accidental to Casual to Regular status. As a result both species then found themselves voted on and turned down less often in recent years. In the meantime birders are still faced with the daunting possibility of encountering intermediate/hybrid grebes as well as geese.

And there have indeed been several documented records of grebes in Minnesota with characteristics intermediate between Clark's and Western. Among the most disconcerting bird observations I've ever made here were the two occasions when a grebe viewed from one side had every indication of being a Clark's: orange bill, eye surrounded by white, pale flanks. Every indication, that is, until it turned around to reveal a bird with a split personality: now it showed a Western-like greenish-yellow bill, dark feathering around the eye, and darker flanks!

Prairie Falcon (7)

Now that the end of this list is within sight, we come to the seventh and last raptor of dubious merit. And it's about time. One-third of Minnesota's 18 Regular

raptor species are included here, with raptors comprising more than 40% of this list of 17 species. To find raptors involved with so many Unacceptable IDs is simply, well, unacceptable.

At least with the Prairie Falcon we have an ID apparently giving birders and MORC fewer difficulties in the past ten years, although why this species so frequently causes problems in the first place isn't so clear. I suppose some potential for confusion comes from *richardsonii* Merlins and immature *tundrius* Peregrines, both of which look relatively pale overall, especially in their Prairie Falcon-like head patterns. And it's uncanny how a Northern Harrier can resemble a Prairie Falcon: yet females and immatures have similar dusky under wing linings, and when they glide into a headwind their wings take on a falcon-like aspect.

Laughing Gull (7)

And we arrive here at our last serious gull ID problem, and one which isn't getting any better: all but one of MORC's Unacceptable votes have come in the last 10 years. Unlike the previous species on the list, however, it's pretty clear where the ID problem primarily lies with the Laughing Gull. Even experienced birders are unaware that first- and second-summer Franklin's Gulls can show a combination of a near-complete black hood and a solid upper wing pattern lacking that white area between the outer primaries and the rest of the wing. These end up being miscalled adult Laughing Gulls a lot.

Yellow-throated Warbler (7)

Probably the only reason this Casual species makes the list is due to its near-Regular status. Reports of it to MORC are nearly annual, and a fair number have been turned down over the years. This warbler's field marks are pretty distinctive, though, and probably most of the Unacceptable records were simply correct IDs with inadequate descriptions. Lacking thorough documentation, a Yellow-throated Warbler report most often leaves the reviewers wondering why it wasn't a female Blackburnian.

To be sure, there are many other species missing from this survey which give birders lots of difficulties. They may not always be the hardest birds to ID — in fact, most of these have seldom, if ever, been evaluated and rejected by MORC. But I suspect all-too-frequent misidentifications involve those listed below. Some of these species have been discussed in previous *Hindsight* articles, others may become topics in the future, and all of them are ripe subjects for some extra-credit research:

Trumpeter / Tundra Swans — any female duck — Greater / Lesser Scaup — any raptor not mentioned above — especially the accipiters, Golden Eagle (confused with immature Balds), and Peregrine Falcon (it's the "Whooping Crane Syndrome") — Spruce Grouse (Ruffed Grouse are often just as tame) — Greater / Lesser Yellowlegs — all the "peeps" (especially Western Sandpiper!) — Short-billed / Long-billed Dowitchers — "ring-billed" gulls (many third-winter gulls have ringed bills) — Thayer's Gull (molting, worn or faded Herrings are an underappreciated problem!) — just about every other immature gull — Common / Forster's Terns (Forster's are really the common tern here) — Downy / Hairy Woodpeckers (even experienced birders can struggle with them) — Olive-sided Flycatcher / Eastern Wood-Pewee / Eastern Phoebe — any Empidonax flycatcher — Loggerhead / Northern Shrike — American Crow / Common Raven (especially in southern Minnesota) — any juvenile swallow — all *Catharus* thrushes - Pine Warbler (confused with goldfinches as well as other warblers) — Chipping Sparrow (especially in winter) — any sparrow with streaked underparts and central breast spot (they're not all Song Sparrows!) — Eastern / Western Meadowlarks — Brewer's Blackbird (especially in winter) — Hoary Redpoll.

Class dismissed!

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BOOK REVIEWS

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER, AND A VISIT TO THE SANDWICH ISLANDS, CHILE, &c, AND A SCIENTIFIC APPENDIX. John Kirk Townsend. Introduction and annotation by George A. Jobanek. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon, November 1999, 320 pp. $16.95 (paper). Reviewed by Doug Jenness.

Many experienced birders have seen Townsend's Solitaire in Minnesota and a few lucky ones have seen Townsend's Warbler. More of us may have seen these two species in the western part of the country. Wherever they've been observed, it's likely that many birders have wondered who "Townsend" was.

We're fortunate that a recently reprinted edition of John Kirk Townsend's 1839 *Narrative of A Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River* is available to give us a glimpse of this naturalist and his scientific contributions. At age 24, Townsend, already a promising ornithologist from Philadelphia, teamed up with Thomas Nuttall, a prominent naturalist from Harvard University, to join a trading expedition from St. Louis to the Pacific Northwest. The journey began in March 1834 and was led by Captain Nathaniel Wyeth, who hoped to establish a fishing and trading company in the Oregon territory. Townsend was gone more than three and one-half years — six months trekking across the Great Plains and the Rockies, over two years in the Northwest, and a year-long return voyage via Hawaii (then called the Sandwich Islands), Tahiti, and Chile.

The pair started out hiking alone, ahead of the main body of the expedition, 300 miles across Missouri. The young scientist relates seeing "great numbers of the brown, or sandhill crane," "large flocks of wild pigeons [Passenger Pigeons] passing over, and "on the bare prairies were thousands of golden plovers; the ground was often literally covered with them for acres." Near Boonville, he describes seeing, "vast numbers of the beautiful parrot of this country [the now extinct Carolina Parakeet]."

Along the North Fork of the Platte River, before reaching the Black Hills, Townsend recounts strolling through a Cottonwood grove. "I think I never before saw so great a variety of birds within the same place. All were beautiful, and many of them quite new to me; and after we had spent an hour amongst them, and my game bag was teeming with its precious freight, I was still loathe to leave the place, lest I should not have procured specimens of the whole.

"None but a naturalist," he added, "can appreciate a naturalist's feelings — his delight amounting to ecstasy — when a specimen such as he has never before seen, meets his eye, and the sorrow and grief which he feels when he is compelled to tear himself from a spot abounding with all that he has anxiously and unremittingly sought for."

During this trip Townsend discovered numerous bird and mammal species new to the scientific world. The eminent naturalists John James Audubon, John Bachman, and John Cassin waited with great anticipation for the first batch of Townsend's specimens which Nuttall, who returned a year before Townsend, brought back. Of the 508 species in the octavo edition of Audubon's *Birds of*

America published in the 1840s, no fewer than 74 were from Townsend's collection. Among the new birds that he found were: Sage Thrasher; Hermit, Townsend's, and Black-throated Gray warblers; Bushtit; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Vaux's Swift; Mountain Plover; Black Oystercatcher; Green-tailed Towhee; Lark Bunting; Chestnut-collared Longspur; and Townsend's Solitaire. He also discovered Audubon's Warbler and Oregon Junco. He observed many new birds in Hawaii too and was the last person to collect a specimen of the now extinct Oahu Oo.

When Townsend returned to Philadelphia, he published a number of articles on his findings in scientific journals and hoped to prepare a multivolume Ornithology of the United States. He published an initial installment but gave it up in the face of the popularity of Audubon's work.

The original edition of his *Narrative*, which sold out in three weeks, included an appendix describing many of the birds and mammals that he observed on his journey. The book was reprinted in 1840 in London with small alterations. Since then sections of Townsend's work have been reprinted, but none until the Oregon State University edition, published last year, has been complete or included this appendix.

For birders, inclusion of the appendix makes the book particularly appealing. Much of the *Narrative* focuses on describing the countryside, the culture of the native peoples, and the challenge of procuring food for the expedition. While this is fascinating, without the appendix, the scientific side of Townsend's activity isn't as clear.

This edition is also ably introduced and annotated by George Jobanek, the author of *An Annotated Bibliography of Oregon Bird Literature Published before 1935*.

The republication of this book in its entirety will contribute to a greater appreciation of Townsend's place in avian science. **912 Galtier St., St. Paul, MN 55117.**

A PASSION FOR BIRDS: AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY AFTER AUDUBON. Mark V. Barrow, Jr., 2000 (paperback), Princeton University Press, Princeton, $19.95, 336 pp. with 33 black-and-white illustrations. Cloth edition $77.50 (1997). Reviewed by Peder H. Svingen.

The objective of this "social history of American ornithology" is to "reconstruct the layered interactions between expert ornithologists seeking to forge a discipline and profession and the collectors, taxidermists, natural history dealers, birdwatchers, conservationists, and others with whom they were affiliated." The era involved is from the middle of the Nineteenth Century through the eve of World War II. The author's well-researched and carefully written prose accomplishes these aims, but at the same time, Barrow provides fascinating insights into the lives of these individuals — some famous, but others quite obscure.

The Introduction is followed by eight chapters with interrelated themes such as collecting, systematics, nomenclature, the bird protection movement, conservation initiatives, and the final maturation of ornithology as a respected profession. Nearly one-third of the text is devoted to painstaking documentation of source material. Each individual chapter is annotated separately within 56 pages of "Notes" that precede the bibliography.

Brief biographical sketches are sometimes given for early ornithologists, but they "come alive" as characters through interactions with individuals and through their activities in organizations. There are glimpses into mentoring relationships, such as those between Smithsonian Assistant Secretary Spencer F. Baird and young Robert Ridgway, and Louis Agassiz at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) at Harvard and J. A. Allen, who went on to become one of the founding members of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). We are told that when the AOU was launched in 1883, only five of the original members made a living from science and only two (Allen and Ridgway) were employed as ornithologists!

A Passion for Birds is simply packed with interesting vignettes. Early American ornithologists developed alliances with collectors or themselves collected birds. William Brewster, one of the founders of the Nuttall Ornithological Club in 1873 and the AOU, bequeathed his collection of over forty thousand specimens to the MCZ when he died. Some ornithologists were physicians, including Thomas M. Brewer, C. Hart Merriam, Alexander Wilson, and Army surgeon Elliott Coues. Two of the most profligate collectors were also physicians — Louis B. Bishop sold his collection of fifty-three thousand specimens to the Field Museum in 1939 and Jonathan Dwight's collection of sixty-five thousand skins went to the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The first ornithological society in the United States, the Nuttall Ornithological Club, became embroiled in controversy over the importation and release of the "English" Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). At about the same time this organization was foundering, two contradictory lists of North American birds were published, by Ridgway in 1880 and Coues in 1882. A series of exchanges and meetings among Allen, Brewster, and Coues ultimately led to the inaugural meeting of the AOU in 1883. The invitations were restricted to 48 persons but only 23 were able to attend. Barrow writes that women were mostly excluded from the ornithological community during the late 1800s, although they soon played critical roles in the conservation movement.

A Passion for Birds is certainly more than an annotated sociocultural history of American ornithology and ornithologists. It provides historical context for some of the most important issues facing ornithology today — from the biological vs. phylogenetic species concept to the *Partners in Flight* conservation initiative. This book is recommended for anyone interested in the evolution of American ornithology, and in the men and women who played key roles in bird conservation and study. **2602 East 4th Street, Duluth, MN 55812-1533.**

RESTORING NORTH AMERICA'S BIRDS: LESSONS FROM LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY. Robert A. Askins. Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000, 336 pp. Hardcover with Dust Jacket, $30.00. Yale University Press. Reviewed by John P. Levell.

This well-written and very reasonably priced hardcover book provides the first comprehensive examination of the preservation of North American avian diversity by means of the sound ecological management of regional landscapes and habitats. It is important to note, however, that the volume is not some exhaustive, highly technical monographic review of this admittedly complex and potentially confusing topic. Instead, author Askins supplies an informative but still surprisingly readable synthesis of historical information and recent research findings pertinent to the conservation of birds throughout the continental United States and Canada.

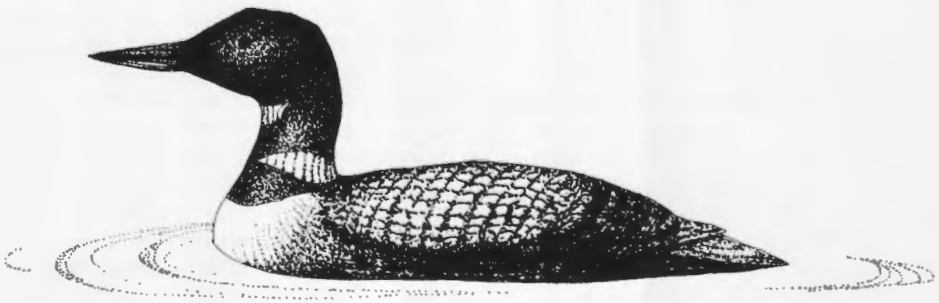
Individual chapters covering east coast grasslands, eastern woodlands, the Great Plains, and northern boreal forests for example, all include concise overviews of the primordial pre-settlement topography, habitats, and environmental conditions of each of these biotic zones. At the same time, these chapters also provide thorough examinations of how both naturally occurring and human induced habitat modifications have historically influenced and continue to affect the overall diversity, abundance and distribution of the resident birds of northeastern and north-central North America. This is accomplished largely through a diverse assortment of more personalized "first-hand" accounts of the ecology and habitat preferences of selected "indicator" species such as Kirtland's Warbler, Dickcissel, Red Crossbill, and Bachman's Sparrow. These help to illuminate clearly the particularly relevant aspects of each discussion by focusing our attention on ways that populations of these and similar bird species respond to various environmental changes.

Similar reviews of selected birds, land-

scapes, and environmental change in the western mountains and southwestern floodplains, as well as on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and its longleaf pine woodland habitat of the southeastern United States, likewise insures coverage on a continent-wide basis. Also included is a much-needed overview of the principles of landscape ecology and the application of these basic ecological concepts in the design and implementation of sound management programs for restoring avian habitats and enhancing both regional avifaunal diversity and the abundance of individual species.

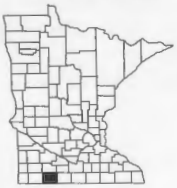
Although written in an engaging, conversational style that can be enjoyed and readily understood by even the most casual of readers, *Restoring North America's Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology* will also undoubtedly prove invaluable to professional ornithologists, conservationists, and landscape managers. Each and every chapter has been meticulously researched; a fact that is most readily apparent when one reviews the book's extensive list of additional published resources. Further complementing the volume are ten exceptional black-and-white bird illustrations by Julie Zickefoose and 84 additional black-and-white text figures in the form of photographs, drawings, maps and diagrams, which graphically highlight important components of the manuscript.

All things considered, this exceptional title would make a worthy and inexpensive acquisition for the bookshelves of anyone with an interest in North American birds. While lacking color pictures and certainly not a field guide, birders and other amateur naturalists will definitely learn much about bird habitats and conservation by skimming its pages. At the same time, Askins' superlative distillation of pertinent field research ensures that this volume will remain a standard reference work on the preservation of America's birds for quite some time to come. **Living Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 389, Lanesboro, MN 55949-0389.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

ADDITIONAL HIGH COUNTS OF ROSS'S GEESE IN JACKSON COUNTY — On 2 March 2000, I encountered two large concentrations of Snow Geese in Jackson County. The first flock was at the Sioux Valley WMA, where I estimated 7,500 Snow Geese, but because my view of this large assemblage was directly into the sun, I was only able to pick out about five Ross's Geese. The other flock of Snow Geese was at Round Lake, where I estimated 3,500 birds. This flock was closer to shore than normal for Snow Geese at this location — although the



birds drifted off upon my arrival at the boat access on the south side of the lake, they eventually returned. Many birds climbed out onto the remaining narrow fringe of ice, bringing them even closer to my position.

Unlike at Sioux Valley WMA, I had perfect viewing conditions at Round Lake and was able to clearly see all the features needed to identify each Ross's compared to the Snow Geese: smaller size by about 20%, pure white plumage, proportionately thicker and shorter necks, considerably smaller bills, very straight (vertical) separation between the base of the bill and the lores, lack of an obvious blackish grinning patch, and bluish discoloration at the base of the bill. I repeatedly scanned through the flock looking for Ross's; my best count was taken when the flock had moved closest — a remarkable total of at least 93 Ross's Geese! I consider this count to be a fairly accurate proportion of the number of Ross's among the Snow Geese (2.7%), although I may have missed a few individuals in the back of the dense flock.

I returned to Sioux Valley WMA later in the day when the light conditions were considerably better, hoping to obtain another large count of Ross's Geese, but all the Snow Geese were gone! While watching a concentration of some 250,000 Snow Geese in central Nebraska on 3 March 2000, I estimated the proportion of Ross's Geese to be about 3–5% which compares favorably with my results at Round Lake in Minnesota.

This count of 93 Ross's Geese follows the well-documented observations of flocks of up to 50–70 individuals in Minnesota in the of Spring 1999 (***The Loon*** 71:223–228), and occurred near the same time as the record high count of 198 Ross's Geese observed by Janstcher and Neitzel at Bear Lake, Freeborn County on 11 March 2000 (***The Loon*** 72:248–249). How many large flocks of Snow Geese in western Minnesota contain a similar proportion of Ross's Geese, but remain undetected due to the wary and ephemeral nature of these flocks? **Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**

BREEDING MOURNING WARBLERS IN ANOKA COUNTY — Because I was planning to do a bird species count in Anoka County on 1 July 1999, I did a quick two and one-half hour scouting trip on 29 June. After going through Carlos Avery WMA, I drove west on county road 22 looking for interesting sites. At Humber Street the wooded area seemed to invite me in even though (or maybe because) a sign announced it was a dead end. I therefore turned south onto Humber.

After going a little over 100 yards, I realized I might be missing some songs because the car windows were closed. Therefore I opened the right front window and almost immediately heard a rather emphatic song of a warbler. After stopping and exiting the car, I began pishing, whereupon the warbler switched from song to call notes which sounded like an emphatic "chit" as described in *Warblers* by Dunn and Garret. After a few more pishes a male Mourning Warbler appeared and kept calling.

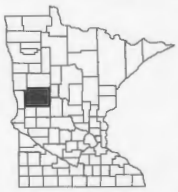
During the July survey with Susan Anderson, we played her CD of the Mourning Warbler, but got no response. After hiking a nearby trail, we decided as we were driving out to play the CD once more. This time, after about three songs, we got a response. Rather than sing, it started right off with its "chit" calls. It also appeared quite agitated. After we watched the male for one to two minutes, the agitated female also appeared. She was paler in color than the male.

Because the pair was so agitated, we suspected a nest or young nearby, so we approached some shrubs beneath the tree branches from which the adults were calling. As soon as we got near the shrubs the adults dropped into the shrubbery, "chitted" excitedly while they bounced from branch to branch and from branches to the ground and back up. At that point some young Mourning Warblers made alarm

note calls. We saw only one briefly, but could tell from their calls there were at least two and maybe three or even four.

We retreated from the shrubbery after three to four minutes in order to reduce the birds' agitation. And we did not we wish to separate the young from each other and their parents. **Robert Holtz, 668 Overlook Dr., Roseville, MN 55113.**

ADULT YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY — On 17 June 2000 while birding in western Minnesota, I decided to spend the last hour of the evening at the Lake Alice rookery in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County, where several Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) and Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) had been recently reported. The four Cattle Egrets were easy to relocate on one of the two islands in this urban lake. While searching for one of the Snowy Egrets, I flushed an adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) that had been feeding along the sorth shore!



As soon as it landed in a tree on the other side of the lake, I rushed over to Steve & Diane Millard's house. The three of us returned and relocated the heron just before dusk. We had superb looks through a Leica spotting scope at 20–60x from about 50 yards. In addition to obvious differences from Black-crowned Night-Heron (e.g., black head with golden forecrown and white ovals on its cheeks, darker gray wings, darker under-parts) we were able to study differences in bill size and shape. Its blackish bill was shorter than Black-crowned's and thicker, especially at the base. Steve pointed out that the bill was also symmetric, i.e., the upper and lower mandibles were similar to one another in size and shape. Its irides were burnt orange in color. We could see two thin, bluish-gray head plumes. The bird's scapular and back feathers were silvery gray with darker gray centers. In flight, it showed uniform gray upper-parts instead of black on its back like an adult Black-crowned. This heron was seen again the following day by Betsy Beneke, and Dan & Sandy Thimgan.

Surprisingly, this is not the first record for Otter Tail County, since one was found at Orwell WMA on 24 April 1977 (Savaloja 1977). Subsequent reports from this same area on 25 July 1977, 8 August 1978, 22 May and 8 June 1980, and 19 April 1981, may have referred to the same individual. Like vagrants of other species, Yellow-crowneds may exhibit extralimital site fidelity. Although not individually marked in any way, presumably the same adult Yellow-crowned has been found at the San Elijo Lagoon in La Jolla, California, since its initial discovery in October 1981 (McCaskie 1999).

The North American summer range of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron barely extends into southeastern Minnesota and this species has recently become scarce throughout the state, making this record especially noteworthy. There are two summer records from Marshall County: 6–24 June 1980 at Agassiz NWR (Mattson 1981) and 24 July 1982 at Thief Lake WMA (Steva 1982). Other records from northwestern Minnesota include Tamarac NWR, Becker County, on 21 June 1979 (Green 1980), and an unpublished record from Clay County on 9 May 1986 (G. Nielsen, in lit.).

Seasonal Reports in ***The Loon*** show that the late 1970s and early 1980s were the halcyon days for this species in the state with extralimital occurrences to Otter Tail, Becker, Marshall, Koochiching (Big Falls), Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and St. Louis (Duluth) counties, plus many locations in southwestern Minnesota — but especially at Big Stone NWR. The number of reports dropped off sharply in the mid-1980s and except for one or two records from Aitkin and Cass, recent occurrences have been confined to southern Minnesota. Yellow-crowneds have been especially scarce throughout the 1990s.

Steve & Diane Millard found an adult Little Blue Heron (*E. caerula*) at this dynamic rookery on 21 May 1998. Including the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, no fewer than

eight species of *Ardeidae* have occurred at Lake Alice! According to Steve & Diane, colonial breeding at this rookery was initially dominated by Black-crowned Night-Herons (*N. nycticorax*) but these have been supplanted by the many dozens of nesting Great Egrets. On any given day during the summer, Great Blue and Green Herons can also be found.

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Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th Street, Duluth, MN 55812-1533.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL IN POLK COUNTY — With a little spare time on our hands my colleague, Pete Jones, and I decided to check out the Crookston sewage lagoons in Polk County on 2 June 2000. We arrived at about 3:45 P.M. and were disappointed to see that the sign at the entrance allowed us just 15 minutes until "closing time." Nevertheless, we pressed on and were rewarded with a lagoon full of birds. We managed to pick out a small group of godwits at the far end of the lagoon and drove towards them for better views. While Pete concentrated on the shorebirds I scanned the nearby shoreline and was a little surprised to find myself staring straight at a Lesser Black-backed Gull!

The bird was standing with a small group of Ring-billed Gulls and was obviously considerably larger, but without the brutish appearance of either Herring or Great Black-backed Gull. I drew Pete's attention to the bird, he being somewhat more familiar with the region from previous years. I hoped that he'd confirm that I'd found a "goodie!" We seemed a little far west for the species, so I took care to consider any of the dark-backed western species that might be equally likely (I was admittedly rather unsure of just how far west we were). The combination of slate-grey back, unimpressive bulk, and yellow feet and legs pretty well ruled out other possibilities. It was only later when I referred to the *National Geographic Field Guide* that I realized that the western species were highly unlikely.

As for the general appearance of the bird — it was somewhat larger than the neighboring Ring-billeds, standing head and shoulders above them. Obviously it was one of the larger *Larus* but lacking the bulk of either Herring or Great Black-backed Gulls. The mantle, back and closed wings were entirely slate-gray. I made no note at the time as to whether there were any white windows at the primary tips and also did not check for the tertial crescents. Both Pete and I noted the typical attenuated profile of the standing bird, caused by the length of the primary projection of the folded wing. The rest of the bird's plumage (at rest) was clean white. Its legs and feet were a dull pastel yellow. The bill was yellow with a darker tip (red? — on the anterior fifth) separated by a partial black ring. I was somewhat surprised to note the black mark on the bill, since my initial aging of the bird was an adult in summer. However, this all made sense when it flew, showing fairly extensive brown on the coverts (principally in the carpal area), which revealed that it was in fact a third-summer individual.

All this while Pete, an east coaster with plenty of experience with this species, had

given the bird but scant attention. He agreed that the bird was a Lesser Black-backed Gull, but was more inclined to continue ogling the magnificent seven Hudsonian Godwits, a much more impressive sight for both of us! On our return to Rydell National Wildlife Refuge, I checked the distribution maps in the *National Geographic Field Guide*. Sure enough, the bird seemed a little out of range, but I noted that they seemed regular on Lake Superior, a little to the east of us.

I frequented the Dorset coast in the United Kingdom for the first twenty years of my birding career, but since moving to southern Ontario, I barely see more than about half a dozen Lesser Black-backed Gulls each year. As warden at Long Point Bird Observatory throughout the 1990s, I encountered them on a regular basis alongside Ring-billed, Great Black-backed, and Herring Gulls. Ironically, in 1998, while indulging in a completely uncharacteristic non-birding vacation to Cuba, I managed to find the island's first-ever Lesser Black-backed Gull! More recently, while co-leading a trip to Point Pelee, I found a first-winter individual. As for experience of similar species, I have rather scant but adequate experience of California, Western, Yellow-footed and (in Europe) Yellow-legged gulls. For the record, I assume this bird was the *graellsii* subspecies, although not as typically pale backed. **Paul N. Prior, 51 Bastedo Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4C 3M8, Canada.**

SUCCESSFUL NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL NESTING IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY —

While birding at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) located west of Spicer, Minnesota in Kandiyohi County on Sunday, 9 April 2000, I decided to check several side-opening Wood Duck nesting boxes located around Kettle Lake just east of the PWELC buildings. To my surprise one of them contained a Northern Saw-whet Owl! My first thought was that the bird was just spending the day in the box prior to continuing its migration north that evening. The owl was prostrate on the wood shavings in the center of the box and not upright as one would expect. My assumption was that the bird was frightened by my opening the box and as such was crouched down.

I shared the finding later that day with my birding partner Randy Frederickson. That night and during the following days it occurred to us that the owl may be nesting! Having recently read Anthony Hertzel's article on the nesting Saw-whets in Washington County in the Winter 1999–2000 issue of the ***The Loon***, we knew it was rare for the species to nest this far south in Minnesota. Five days later on 14 April we checked the box again and noted the owl was still present. Three dead mice were also observed on the wood shavings near the front of the box.

Having checked several references and learning that gently lifting the owl from the nest would not cause the bird to abandon the nest, it was time to verify if eggs and/or young owls were present. On 21 April at 4:20 in the afternoon we opened the nest box. After lightly stroking the back of the owl's head several times I gently lifted the tiny owl off the nest. The lifting and checking process was completed quite quickly with five young owls of varying sizes counted. No eggs were observed, (we later determined that there was either a sixth owl present or an egg present when we checked the first time since six young owls were found during the check on 7 May). This time four dead mice were observed in the front of the box. We had a nesting Northern Saw-whet Owl in Kandiyohi County and at PWELC where the two of us spend many hours as volunteers!

On Sunday afternoon, 7 May with Bob Janssen and Doug Buri, we checked the nesting box again. The adult owl was not present but six young owls varying in size from ready-to-fledge to very small were found. The photograph which accompanies this article was taken by Randy Frederickson during this check of the nesting box.

Young Northern Saw-whet Owl, 7 May 2000, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Kandiyohi County. Photo by Randy Frederickson.

Approximately a week later on 15 May a check of the box revealed that two of the young owls had fledged with four remaining. When the nesting box was last checked two weeks later on 29 May, all of the young owls had fledged. **Ronald A. Erpelding, 701 SW 4th Street, Willmar, MN 56201.**

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER IN WASHINGTON COUNTY — On 18 June 2000, while camping at the River Side Group Campground at William O'Brien State Park in Washington County, I heard a Yellow-throated Warbler sing about five times around 5:00 A.M. I heard it sing again for five minutes at 8:45 A.M. and saw the bird briefly. It had a bright yellow throat with black lines on either side, a white chest and belly, and was clearly a warbler. It was high in the trees, so I could not see its back or wings.

At 9:45 A.M. I had an excellent view of the warbler, high in a white pine about a quarter mile south of the campground. The bird was gray on the back, wings, and top of the head, with two white wingbars. It had a bright yellow throat, with black lines on either side of the yellow, and black lines down each side of a pure white breast. Its belly was white.

Its song was a loud, descending series of notes, reminiscent of a Louisiana Waterthrush song, but not quite as loud and ringing, and did not rise at the end. It made a distinctive "chip" a couple of times when flying from one location to another. The observation was made from 50–70 feet in excellent light with 7x50 binoculars. I heard the bird singing again at the original location for five minutes at 11:25 A.M. but could not see it. I have seen this species many times in the southern and eastern United

States. No bird book was consulted before notes were written. **Dave Zumeta, 4720 E. 34th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406-2921.**

NESTING NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS IN KANABEC COUNTY — On 24 May 2000 we received a report of a young Northern Saw-whet Owl that was found in a residence yard. Deb and I immediately went to the home owners to have a look. As I asked where the owl was found, the owner showed us that it was underneath a large elm tree. I looked into the tree for a possible nesting cavity and saw a couple of large holes that I thought could contain a nest. I was able to check out the lower hole of the two and it turned out to be nothing, so I assumed that the second hole, which was about 30 ft. high, was probably the nest. Six days later I received a phone call that another young Saw-whet was found in the exact same spot as the first one. We went back to have another look and even though there was no way for me to have a look into the hole, I did notice a lot of white wash below the hole entrance and on the ground under the tree. As far as I know this would be the first breeding record in Kanabec County for Saw-whet Owls. **Craig Menze & Deb Undem, Mora, MN 55051.**

A TUFTED TITMOUSE VISITS DULUTH — On the morning of 25 September 2000, I was astonished to find a Tufted Titmouse visiting my feeder in Duluth, St. Louis County. It was first seen at approximately 8:30 A.M. The bird was overall dark gray and white, with large eyes, and a crested or "tufted" head. My field notes state that it had a large beady black eye, with darker feathers around the forehead and near the base of its black bill. The bird had a buffy wash on its sides. The titmouse was larger than the chickadees that it was loosely associating with, and about the same size as a Purple Finch when seen side-by-side for comparison.

The titmouse was seen eating black oil sunflower seeds. It was coming to feeders and birdbaths, on and off, for two to three hours. Other birders were contacted; however, only Molly Evans was able to see this southeastern Minnesota specialty at my feeders before it disappeared at about 12:00 noon on the 25th. Others came to search for this rare county bird but did not find it later that afternoon or subsequently. Janssen's *Birds in Minnesota* (1987) indicates very few previous northeastern Minnesota records for this species — two were found dead in Duluth and Virginia, St. Louis County, on 28 September 1972. This September date is within three calendar days of the sighting at my feeder. **Don Kienholz, 4574 Martin Rd., Duluth, MN 55803.**

PROBABLE FIRST BREEDING RECORD FOR COMMON MERGANSER IN CROW WING COUNTY — On the afternoon of 25 July 2000, my wife Ethelle said she saw some unusual ducks in the swimming area of the Eagle Lake Lodge on the south side of Eagle Lake in Crow Wing County, while I was out fishing. The location of the site is SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 24, Township 138 North, Range 27 West. I did not see the birds later that day, but encountered a family of Common Mergansers on the lake near the lodge on the following day: a hen and a brood of 23 young! The owners of the lodge did not recall ever seeing them on the lake before.

DNR wildlife manager Bob Meyer of Marshall, was vacationing with his family at the lake also, and he has been on that lake for vacation every summer since the early 1950s. He had never seen Common Mergansers, or broods of Common Mergansers on

Common Mergansers, 25 July 2000, Eagle Lake, Crow Wing County. Photo by Carrol Henderson.

the lake before. I did not observe the male. The brood was nearly grown and considering the lack of any nesting tradition there by this species, I believe this huge family represented just one brood.

On the following day, 27 July at about 5:00 P.M., I encountered the family resting on a dock about 80 yards west of the Eagle Lake Lodge swimming area. The hen and young subsequently dived into the water and began swimming along the lakeshore. They speeded up as they rushed past my boat, creating a rather chaotic synchronized stampede. I captured 22 of the mergansers on film as they passed. As far as I can tell, this is the first inferred breeding record from Crow Wing County. It will be interesting to see if they are back on the lake again next year. **Carrol L. Henderson, 640 – 119th Lane NE, Blaine, MN 55434.**

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK IN GRANT COUNTY — On 6 August 2000 at approximately 4:15 P.M., I flushed a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck from the near shore at Prescott Lake in section 20, Delaware Township, Grant County. When first seen it was only 30–40 yards away, but it was never more than 150 yards east of me during the entire ten minute observation.

In flight, its long, broad, white wing stripes bordered by a black trailing edge and a warm, rufous-brown leading edge were striking and unmistakable. It was about the size of a Gadwall but longer-necked. The bird flew 50 yards or less and landed in the water near some Franklin's and Ring-billed gulls.

The most obvious feature was a bright red bill. Its face was set off by a striking white eye-ring. The face and neck were brownish-gray. The crown and back of the neck were set off by a prominent dark brown stripe. There was a slight tuft, or crest, at the rear of the crown, giving the head a square look. The lower neck and breast were a warm rufous — its back was browner but still had rufous overtones. The

flanks and belly were black. Its legs and feet were never seen.

The Fulvous Whistling-Duck is more extensively rufous with darker wings and a gray bill — but there is really no other duck that looks like a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. I have seen both of these species in Texas and also saw the two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Meeker County in 1987 (***The Loon*** 59:217–218). **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

LONG-EARED OWL NESTING IN LAKE COUNTY — On 17 July 2000 between 7:30 and 8:00 P.M., my wife, Susan Saari-Karasti, went for a walk starting along the old, overgrown railroad grade behind our home, just east of Winton in Lake County. It borders an alder and willow swamp adjacent to the mouth of the Shagawa River where it enters Fall Lake. She heard an unfamiliar bird-like sound and spotted two baby owls in a box elder tree.

The next morning, Susan took me to see the owls. One of them was sitting on a red pine branch right over the trail, only about twelve feet off the ground. It was facing the sun and was very well lit, so I was able to get quite a few close-up photos. The other young owl was perched in a large box elder, partly hidden by branches. About 4:00 P.M. I brought one of our local birding experts, Bill Tefft, to see the owls. He quickly identified them as Long-eareds and was very interested since he had never seen this species in our area, let alone young ones. They were still mostly covered with down, and their flight feathers were only just starting to develop.

On Wednesday the 19th Bill came back with a couple of other local birders. This time we found the young owls sitting side by side on a red pine branch, about 30 feet off the ground. That evening, Bill and the others returned with hopes of hearing some of their sounds and perhaps seeing an adult. There were heavy clouds and it was raining lightly, so the lighting was rather poor. We had trouble locating the owls, but I finally found one of the young in a large aspen on the other side of a small ravine.

I started hearing some soft, airy-sounding hoots and found an adult Long-eared in an aspen about 60 feet farther north. Then I heard a higher pitched, rattling, squeaky sound, quickly searched the nearby trees, and located the second young in an aspen, about 50 feet south of its sibling. There was a nest — probably an old crow's nest — about 25 feet up in one of the red pines and Bill found an owl pellet below it. The owls kept hanging around this nest, so there's a good chance it was their home.

My next chance to check on the owls was Friday evening (21 July). I found the young sitting side-by-side about twenty feet up in the same large box elder where Susan had first found them. Much to my surprise, there were three! I suppose we'd seen all three over the time we'd been checking on them, but never knew that the "two" weren't always the same pair.

I soon became aware of a red squirrel making its way toward the young owls. The squirrel ran up the branch the owls were sitting on and almost ran right into them. It backed off noisily, quieted down, and headed up the branch again, but much more cautiously. It advanced and retreated a couple more times, each time getting to within a foot and a half of the owls. At one point it continued along the underside of the branch until it was directly under two of the owls. Then it quickly disappeared in another direction. During this entire time, the owls watched with great interest but didn't move other than to turn and cock their heads. A few minutes later, when a loon flew overhead, calling loudly, the owls watched it intently until it disappeared.

Susan and a friend joined me and, as we watched, the adult and all three young became quite vocal. The young ones started fidgeting and moving along the branches. One by one, they each made a short, awkward flight of perhaps 40 feet to the clump

of box elder on the other side of the trail, moving in the direction of the adult and becoming even more vocal. Two remained pretty much where they had landed while the third kept moving — not toward the adult — but toward the red pine with the old crow's nest. The last leg of its journey was another short flight which went fine until its wings began hitting some small, dead pine branches. It slowly somersaulted in a crash landing onto a lower branch, where it took it a minute to untangle itself and get properly situated. Just as we were leaving, we spotted a three inch long downy feather hanging from a branch right above the trail! **Carl Karasti, 404 N. Main St., Winton, MN 55796.**

POSSIBLE CINNAMON TEAL X BLUE-WINGED TEAL HYBRID — On 6 May 2000, in a small wetland in Section 20 of Mehurin Township, Lac Qui Parle County, I saw a duck that I think was a Cinnamon Teal X Blue-winged Teal hybrid.

I watched it for 80 minutes at distances ranging from 100 to 150 yards, and so was able to thoroughly inventory its appearance. Throughout the observation period, the possible hybrid associated with seven Blue-winged Teal, six males and a female; relative to the male Blue-wingeds, it was very slightly larger, with a bill that was proportionally a bit longer and deeper.

In many respects, the plumage of the possible hybrid was similar to that of a Cinnamon Teal. Its head and neck were chestnut-red, with the midcrown and hindcrown being indistinctly darker and duskier. Its breast and flanks were also chestnut-red, whereas its under tail-coverts were black.

The feathers of its upper back had dark centers and warm brown margins; its long, acuminate scapulars were black, each with one or two broad, sharply defined buff stripes that ran the length of the feather. Its upper tail-coverts were (like the under tail-coverts) black. The tail was paler than the tail-coverts and was, I thought, dusky brownish. As for the wings, the folded primaries were blackish; during brief in-flight views of the upperwing I noted a pale gray-blue patch on the upper secondary-coverts and a metallic greenish speculum; and twice when the floating bird reared up to flap I caught a glimpse of white under secondary-coverts.

The possible hybrid resembled a Cinnamon Teal not only in plumage, but also in bare-part coloration. Its bill was black, its irises were red, and its legs — glimpsed briefly as it paddled about — appeared orange-yellow. Although the bird was superficially like a Cinnamon Teal, several of its plumage features were inappropriate for that species.

(1) There was an ill-defined darker area that began above and behind the eye and curved down across the side of the head to the hindneck. In a few views this darker area was hard to see, but usually it was evident; at certain angles it appeared to have a dull, dusky greenish sheen.

(2) The flanks, though chestnut-red, were slightly paler than the breast, and were finely spotted with black; the black spots gave way to short black bars in the distal-flank region. This pattern of flank markings was like that of a male Blue-winged Teal, except that the markings were less obvious; they were less obvious in part because they were finer, and in part because the background color of the flanks was darker.

(3) Just anterior to the black of the under tail-coverts, where the male Blue-winged Teal has a conspicuous white patch, there was a poorly defined paler area, pinkish-buff in color. Though poorly defined, this area was clearly paler than the rest of the sides of the body; it was proportionally smaller than the corresponding white patch of the Blue-winged.

Because the possible hybrid was rather similar to a pure Cinnamon Teal, I initially mistook it for a Cinnamon; indeed, if it had flown off after the first 15 seconds, or if it had been floating 400 yards away on the far side of a wetland, then my first, mistaken impression might never have been corrected.

This is not the first time that a presumed Cinnamon Teal X Blue-winged Teal hybrid has been recorded in Minnesota. Other published records include one in Goodhue County on 9 April 1967 (Brackney 1967), one in Aitkin County on 8 May 1991 (Svingen and Nelson 1991), and one in Lac Qui Parle County on 22 April 1995 (Risen 1995).

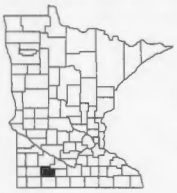
Literature Cited

Brackney, E. M. 1967. Cinnamon Teal X Blue-winged Teal hybrid. ***The Loon*** 39:59–60.

Risen, K. W. 1995. Hybrid Cinnamon X Blue-winged Teal observation from Lac Qui Parle County. ***The Loon*** 67:179.

Svingen, P., and W. Nelson. 1991. Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal in Aitkin County. ***The Loon*** 63:197–198.

Philip C. Chu, Department of Biology, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN 56321.

LARGE CONCENTRATION OF AMERICAN PIPITS IN COTTONWOOD COUNTY — 

On 21 October 2000, while driving on Cottonwood County Road 3 north of Bingham Lake I encountered a large flock of American Pipits. I quickly estimated flock size to be 150–200 birds and I continued on. I did not consider a flock of 100+ pipits unusual.

During three of the past nine years I have encountered flocks of more than a hundred pipits in Martin, Watonwan, and Cottonwood counties. The first of these flocks was on 4 November 1992 when I observed a large flock of pipits active around wet openings in the snow cover at Perch Creek WMA on the Martin-Watonwan county line. A similar flock was observed at the same location a year or two later during October.

By chance, the same day I saw the Cottonwood County flock, I read Steve Millard's note about the rarity of large pipit flocks in Minnesota. The next day I encountered the same large pipit flock on County Road 3. From the west end of the flock I counted fifty birds perched on the powerline. There were approximately thirty birds on the road and fifty birds in the air at the same time. When I drove through the flock it was apparent that there were about three birds on the shoulder for every bird counted on the pavement. This results in an estimate of approximately 190 visible birds. A large number of birds, probably a majority, appeared to be hidden in the fields on either side of the road. Fifty birds at a time would often flush from a small (thirty meter) area of the mowed Alfalfa field. The other side of the road was a weedy field dominated by foxtail. Birds would be seen landing in and leaving the field of foxtail, but in smaller groups than the alfalfa.

Estimating numbers was impossible because the flock was stretched over a half mile. I do not know if the fields were filled with a few nervous flocks or several hundred birds. The flock appeared to be entirely pipets except for approximately six European Starlings.

Large flocks of pipits in southern Minnesota may be more common than believed, particularly in late October. I assume I am not the only observer who notes dates, but rarely documents peak numbers. I believe significant contributions could be made if observers like myself would make more efforts to document peak numbers and daily counts rather than simply the presence of a species. In the future, one of my goals will be to put more effort into estimating numbers of birds in all seasons. **Brad Bolduan, RR 4 Box 339, Windom, MN 56101.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds. We aim to create and increase public interest in birds, and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

To carry out these aims, we publish a journal, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* we conduct field trips; we encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; we hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. Any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, Notes of Interest, color slides, and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission in any standard format on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. See inside front cover. Bird sighting reports for each season should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See key to the "Seasonal Report."

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Obituary
Frank McKinney
1928–2001

Harrison B. Tordoff

Frank McKinney, student of animal behavior and evolution, died suddenly on 12 June 2001. Born 23 October 1928 in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, McKinney completed a B.A. in zoology at Oxford in 1949 and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Bristol in 1953. He came to North America in 1953 to study waterfowl at the Delta Waterfowl Research Station in Manitoba.

He was a University of Minnesota professor in ecology, evolution, and behavior for 33 years and curator of animal behavior in the Bell Museum for 29 years until he retired in 1999. He was a member of the MOU and regularly attended the annual meetings. Quiet and self-effacing, he was not conspicuous among the colorful MOU membership, so it may surprise some to learn that McKinney was known world-wide for his creative and careful research. He studied the evolution and ecology of social displays and mating systems of a single subfamily of ducks, the dabblers or puddle ducks.

McKinney's research brilliantly demonstrates the emergence of important general principles from highly focused intensive studies. The detailed studies by McKinney and his students of the behavior of dabbling ducks led the way to greatly increased understanding, first of evolutionary sources of social displays, then the behavioral ecology of waterfowl, and, most recently, the evolutionary significance of male secondary mating strategies. He and his students were among the first to measure the effectiveness of forced copulations as a male reproductive strategy and to examine male and female reproductive behavior in terms of sperm competition.

Those of us fortunate enough to have known Frank McKinney as a teacher or colleague will always remember his kindness. He was a gentle man whom we all loved for his warm friendship, stimulating intellect, and generously shared wisdom. Frank was an outstanding teacher, particularly effective with his many graduate students, who carry on with careers strongly influenced by his warm and thoughtful guidance.

Bell Museum of Natural History and Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior, University of Minnesota, 1987 Upper Buford Circle, St. Paul MN 55108.

A Minnesota Smew

Karl Bardon

While birding in southwestern Minnesota on 17 March 1999, I observed a female Smew associating with a small flock of Common Mergansers in an open water area at Anderson County Park along Jackson County Road 4. I initially spotted the Smew approximately one-half mile away when I stopped along county road 4 to check an area of open water, but I did not recognize this bird from that distance, and it was necessary to drive into Anderson County Park to obtain a closer view. From here, I recognized it as a Smew, even though I had never seen one before. I was able to watch the bird foraging and swimming with Common Mergansers for approximately half an hour.

The small group eventually moved closer to my position on shore, but then swam out of sight behind a point of land. When I stood up and walked toward the lake to relocate the birds, I inadvertently flushed the entire flock, which headed south and disappeared from sight. I searched neighboring open water areas in both Minnesota and Iowa, but was unable to relocate the Smew.

Description

The Smew was photographed and field notes were taken while observing the bird. Copies of the photos and field notes are on file with the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee. In overall size, the Smew was nearly half the size of the Common Mergansers, similar in size to a Hooded Merganser. The bill was entirely blackish, and although its shape was more reminiscent of a merganser than any other species of duck, the bill appeared noticeably thicker than the bill of a Hooded Merganser (or any other species of merganser); in many ways, the bill was the most striking feature about this bird.

There was a distinct, blackish patch through the lores and encompassing the eye. This patch was clear-cut along the bottom edge, where it contrasted sharply with the white throat, but the upperside of this patch, posterior to the eye, blended in with the brownish-gray plumage of the crown. The blackish color on the lores extended down onto the throat just below the bill. The color of the forehead and top of the crown was paler than the lore patch, appearing mottled grayish-white and reddish-brown, but determining any pattern more precisely than that was difficult because the bird was in constant motion while diving and swimming, and because the extremely windy conditions were often blowing the feathers of the head. The back of the crown and the entire hindneck were reddish-brown. Overall, the dark hindneck, crown, and eye patch all contrasted sharply with and were sharply demarcated from a white lower face patch and a white foreneck.

At the breast, there was an indistinct grayish mottled band, but this band was not visible at a distance, and was only obvious when the bird reared up out of the water. The back and folded wings were grayish with whitish mottling on the flanks, and part of a whitish wing patch was visible on the coverts. When diving, the long, merganser-like gray tail was easily seen. The bird was seen briefly in flight with the flock of Common Mergansers, but only with binoculars, and most of this view was into the sun. It appeared mostly whitish ventrally, and had the elongated (including long tail) shape of a merganser, quite different from most other ducks.

Although initial research suggested this individual may have been an immature male molting into first-spring plumage, based mostly on blackish color in the

Smew, 17 March 1999, Anderson County Park, Jackson County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

lores, additional research led me to believe that this bird was, in fact, a female. Available photographs of female Smews show brown rather than blackish lores (Farrand 1983, Armstrong 1990), but female Smews apparently have brownish lores only during summer, and do indeed show blackish lores during the nonbreeding season (Cramp and Simmons 1977, Madge and Burn 1988). The mottled grayish-white and reddish-brown appearance of the crown also suggested young male plumage, but the extremely windy conditions may have been exposing grayish-white bases to the reddish-brown feathers. It is likely that an immature male Smew, molting into first-alternate plumage, would show more recognizable male features by late March (Madge and Burn 1988, Bhushan *et al.* 1993, National Geographic Society 1999).

A female-type Smew is distinctive, and other species of ducks were easily eliminated. Other species of mergansers were eliminated by the thicker bill shape and the overall plumage, especially the distinct white cheek/throat patch. Ruddy Duck (which also has a white cheek patch) was eliminated by the more merganser-like bill shape, the elongated merganser-like proportions, the white wing patches, and the extension of black lores to just below the bill base. Other families of birds such as grebes and alcids were eliminated based on bill shape, overall shape, and the reddish-brown color on the crown and hindneck.

Common Goldeneye is reportedly closely related to Smew, with which it occasionally hybridizes (Madge and Burn 1988, Cramp and Simmons 1977). There was nothing about this bird which indicated it was a hybrid of any kind, whether between Smew and Common Goldeneye or between Smew and some other species of duck. There was also no reason to suspect a hybrid between two other species of duck such as Common Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser, two of which I documented the previous spring (Bardon 1998).

Summary of records in North America outside Alaska

The Smew is a regular migrant and casual winter visitant through the western and central Aleutian Islands, occurring casually to the Pribilof Islands and east to Kodiak Island, Alaska (AOU), and accidentally as far south as Prince of Wales Island (Tobish 1996). Roberson (1986) summarized 55 records from Alaska,

1) 17 January – 30 March 1960, female/immature male, Niagara River, New York/Ontario (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965, Speirs 1985, James 1991).
2) 14–23 November 1970, (?) adult male, Lost Lagoon, Vancouver, British Columbia (Crowell and Nehls 1971, Weber and Campell 1978). Crowell and Nehls (1971) state "immature male."
3) 9–10 December 1973, female/immature male, Normandale fish hatchery ponds, Haldimand-Norfolk Regional Municipality, Ontario (Goodwin and Rosche 1974, Speirs 1985, James 1991).
4) 28 February – 21 March 1974 (Crowell and Nehls 1974) and 14 January – 30 March 1975 (wrong date in Crowell and Nehls 1975), adult male, Reifel refuge, Vancouver, British Columbia (Weber and Campell 1978).
5) 3 January–2 April 1976, Middletown and Newport, Rhode Island (Finch 1976) and 16–29 January 1978, adult male, Quonochontaug Pond, Westerly, Rhode Island (Vickery 1978). This adult male presumably returned three consecutive winters but was undetected in 1977; these locations are less than 30 miles apart.
6) 11 December 1976, one "female-plumaged" bird, Cote Ste.-Catherine, Province of Quebec (David and Gosselin 1977).
7) 22 February 1981, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island, Washington, two adult males (Mattocks and Hunn 1981). First Washington record.
8) 19 December 1981 – 18 February 1982, 1 December 1982 – 13 February 1983, and 19 December 1983 – 22 January 1984, adult male, Foster City, San Mateo County, California (Binford 1985, Roberson 1986). Also see the California Bird Records Committee master list on-line at <http://members.tripod.com/joemorlan/master.txt>.
9) 28 December 1989 (Tweit and Johnson 1991, other dates?), 26 January–1 April 1991 (Tweit and Johnson 1991, Tweit and Gilligan 1991), and 2 January–16 February 1992 (Tweit and Johnson 1992), adult male, Columbia River Gorge, Washington/Oregon. The 1989 sighting was documented but not reported until more than one year later, when an adult male was found 26 January 1991 on the Columbia River in Stevenson County, Washington. After a few days, it moved to the Oregon side of the river, usually at Governor's Cove, Hood River County. Presumably the same bird returned for its third consecutive winter in early January 1992; it was observed seriously injured on 11 February and probably died on or near the 16th.
10) 30 December 1989 – 1 February 1990, age/sex not mentioned, Surrey (also seen at Latimer L. Park in Langley), British Columbia (Siddle 1990).
11) 14–20 March 1993, adult male, McKenna, Pierce County, Washington (Tweit and Gilligan 1993). Third Washington record (not the second as cited by Tweit and Gilligan).
12) 28 October 1993, one pair (presumably male/female), Dungeness Bay, Clallan County, Washington (Tweit and Gilligan 1994). Fourth Washington record.
13) 17 March 1999, female, Anderson County Park, Jackson County, Minnesota (K. Bardon *in lit.*). Photographed and found Acceptable as a first state record.
14) 20 Januar y– 29 February 2000, adult male, Tracy, San Joaquin County, California (Terrill and Rottenborn 2000).
15) 24–25 March 2000, adult male, Allouez Bay, Douglas County, Wisconsin (found acceptable by the Wisconsin records committee).
16) 13 January – 5 March 2001, adult male, Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, Mississippi River, near St. Louis, Missouri.
17) 26 February 2001, adult male, Malheur NWR, Oregeon.

Other reports: The following reports are considered unacceptable due to questions of origin or insufficient documentation. This list is undoubtedly incomplete.

A) Questionable Origin: 12 February 1967, subadult male, Montreal, Province of Quebec (*Audubon Field Notes* 21:400). This published record is cited by Terres (1980) even though David and Gosselin (1977) had clearly stated "H. Ouellet later learned that a captive bird had escaped locally shortly before this sighting."
B) Insufficient Documentation: 7 November 1983, adult male, Churchill, Manitoba. This published record (Harris 1984) has never been documented and thus is considered to be hypothetical (R. Koes *personal communication*).
C) Questionable Origin: 6 October 1984, female-type, Mahnomen County, Minnesota (Eckert 1985). This report by an out-of-state birder was found Unacceptable by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee, due to questions of origin and because the early date seemed improbable when compared to other known occurrences.
D) Questionable Origin: 13 January 1992 (male in Chatham) and mid-January 1992 (female in Provincetown), Cape Cod, Massachusetts. A waterfowl breeder in Kingston, Rhode Island, reported that several of this species had escaped shortly before these sightings (Nikula 1992).
E) Questionable Origin: 16–23 February 1992, adult male, Sunrise L., Langley, British Columbia. This is the same general location as record #10 (see above). One of the eight to ten local waterfowl breeders keeping Smew in captivity reported that one of his drakes was missing (Siddle 1992). This breeder denied knowledge of escaped or released Smews in 1989–90.
F) Questionable Origin: 5–6 May 1996, one pair, L. des Jones (near Rimouski), Province of Quebec (Aubrey and Bannon 1996). This occurrence is suspicious for captive origin, since it falls outside the range of dates for accepted records outside of Alaska.

Table 1. North American records of the Smew outside of Alaska.

where flocks of up to six birds have been recorded; most have been female-plumaged birds (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

Outside of Alaska, there are only about 17 acceptable records (birds believed to be the same individuals returning to overwinter at the same location in successive years are treated as one record), with six additional records outlined that are known or suspected of being escapes (Table 1). As expected, most of the acceptable reports have been from the West Coast in British Columbia (3), Washington (4), Oregon (2), and California (2), with additional reports on the Great Lakes (Lake Superior, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River), the St. Lawrence seaway (Quebec), and on the East Coast (Rhode Island). The Minnesota record set a precedent for sightings away from coastal or Great Lakes influence, and represents the first sighting in the Midwest.

Subsequently, there have been two more reports from the Midwest: an adult male seen on Allouez Bay along Wisconsin Point, Superior, Wisconsin, just across the border from Duluth, Minnesota, and an adult male that spent the winter at Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area along the Mississippi River near St. Louis, Missouri. Since I initially had felt the Minnesota bird might be an immature male, and the Wisconsin sighting was of an adult male almost exactly one year later, there had been speculation that these two sightings may represent the same individual, but my final designation of the Minnesota bird as a female precludes this possibility.

All of the acceptable extralimital occurrences have been during the period of 28 October – 2 April. These dates, plus the propensity for individuals to return to the same location in successive winters, indicates this species is a winter visitant to North America, arriving in late fall and departing in early spring. As a potential wild bird and an apparent spring migrant, one has to wonder where the Minnesota bird had been wintering. My guess is that it spent the winter with the large concentrations of Common Mergansers which winter on reservoirs and other locations in the Southern Great Plains area of the Central Flyway (Bellrose 1976), such as the 32,000 Common Mergansers recorded in Harlan County, Nebraska on 22 January 2000 (Grzybowski 2000).

Interestingly, the majority of the extralimital reports have been adult males, which is probably due to the greater ease that this age and gender is identified in the field. Of the 17 records outside Alaska, there have been only four previous reports of female-type birds, including one of the pair reported in Washington in 1993. The other female-type birds from Quebec in 1976, Ontario in 1973, and the Niagara River in 1960, were all reported as either females or immature males. Thus, the sighting of a female in spring migration in Minnesota remains somewhat unique.

Comments on Wildness

During research done to determine the origin of the Minnesota Smew, it was discovered that there are at least five breeders in possession of at least ten pairs of Smew in Minnesota (in Willmar, Avon, Darwin, Buffalo, and Lakeville), plus at least two breeders in Wisconsin (in Green Bay and Pewaukeee), but none in Iowa. None of the breeders I talked to directly had lost any Smews. An advertisement was published in a national magazine published by the American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society detailing the three sightings in the Midwest, and asking for information concerning the origin of these birds. No response was received. At least some of the captive pairs of Smew possessed by breeders produce young each year which are sold to private parties and to public institutions such as zoos, so it is not possible to trace every captive Smew.

Compared to many other species of waterfowl, Smew are still relatively rare in captivity and expensive to obtain (Hebb 1991), costing around 250–500 dollars per pair. According to DeWayne Carter (webmaster@rarebird.com), "there are a few breeders of Smew in the US

but they are few and far between. Smew are very difficult to breed in captivity and it is difficult to brood the young." Smew was classified as a category 1 species by Ryan (1972), "very probably genuinely wild birds when seen in the wild state in North America," but this designation is now almost 30 years old. When discussing the Rhode Island record, Ryan (1976) stated that it was possible to trace every captive Smew in the country, a situation which is obviously no longer possible! Weber and Campbell (1978) presented compelling reasons to believe most Smew records in North America are wild birds.

Since this species is so unusual outside of Alaska, and since small numbers of Smews are kept in captivity, the origin of this bird will probably always be uncertain. Nonetheless, this bird could possibly represent a wild vagrant. The Minnesota Smew was seen when only a few of the local lakes had started breaking-up, suggesting that the waterfowl present had just recently moved into the area, and indicating that these birds were probably migratory. As far as I know, the closest place where overwintering waterfowl can be seen is Fox Lake, Martin County. Also, the Smew was seen with a small flock of Common Mergansers, and associated with them during the entire observation, including when the flock flushed. Since Smews are closely related to Common Mergansers, and the Smew behaved as wild and wary as the Common Mergansers, this association may be an indication of wildness. Conversely, wildness or tameness are not necessarily good indicators of captive origin, and it is possible that an escaped bird could adopt migratory behavior and associate with wild birds (Knapton 1994).

Based on this information, the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) voted to accept this sighting as an A_O species, which means the possibilities of wild versus captive origin are about equal. Now that the precedent has been set for Smew records in the Midwest, with three records in just the last three years, can we expect additional records from this region in the near future? Also, now that Smews are being kept in captivity more commonly than in previous years, can we determine with any certainty that these are genuinely wild birds? In my opinion, there should always be an element of doubt when assessing records of vagrants which have even a small population of individuals kept in captivity. My suggestion is that birders continue documenting extralimital Smews, and investigating each bird's origin, and then perhaps additional records and cumulative knowledge will allow us to make more educated conclusions about these birds.

Acknowledgments

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The Fall Season
(1 August to 30 November 2000)

Paul E. Budde

Within just a three-week period, the Superior Entry in Duluth produced the state's twelfth ***Red Phalarope****, first fall record of the* ***Arctic Tern****, and most amazing of all — an unprecedented* ***26 Sabine's Gulls****! Two Harbors in Lake County, not to be outdone, hosted a* ***King Eider****,* ***Black-headed Grosbeak****, and Minnesota's second* ***Ash-throated Flycatcher****. Elsewhere on the North Shore were six* ***Pacific Loons****, the only* ***Red-throated Loon****, a juvenile* ***Pomarine Jaeger*** *and several* ***Parasitics****.*

Birding highlights were not restricted to the North Shore of Lake Superior. Two Accidental species summering in the state, ***Painted Bunting*** *and* ***Eurasian Tree Sparrow****, lingered into early autumn. Three* ***Plegadis ibises*** *were found though only one could be identified as to species. A sixth state record* ***Black-bellied Whistling-Duck*** *was discovered in Grant County, while* ***Eurasian Collared-Doves*** *continued to appear along the Minnesota River Valley. And another major influx of northern* ***owls*** *was well underway by late October.*

Birders could only muster one **Red-throated Loon** this season, but found up to nine **Pacific Loons**. Besides those on Lake Superior where most expected, they were seen in Cass, Aitkin, and Beltrami, the latter a county first. Even **Common Loons** made news when the record high count of 1688 was smashed — more than **2500** were tallied on Mille Lacs Lake!

Eared Grebes were scarce, as in 1999, but **Western Grebes** turned up in two counties for the first time ever. A **Clark's Grebe** from summer continued into fall while another made a cameo appearance at Agassiz N.W.R.

Snowy and **Cattle Egrets** showed up in typical numbers. A carefully identified **White-faced Ibis** in Wright was a first county record. Two other *Plegadis* were photographed but remained unidentified; both were most likely this same species. One of them was a full month later than any other ibis ever recorded in the state!

The early August occurrence of a sixth state record (the third since 1995) **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** in Grant County fit this species' pattern of post-breeding dispersal but its origin was still uncertain. Goose migration was rather typical. Both **Greater White-fronted** and **Snow Geese** were scarce, and there was only one report of **Ross's Goose**. Once again, a **Mute Swan** (same bird?) showed up in Wright County while **Trumpeter Swans** continued to expand — they were found in 25 counties this season!

A fourteenth state record **King Eider** was found in Good Harbor Bay on Lake Superior; ten of the fourteen have been along the North Shore. As many as seven **Harlequin Ducks** were present during the period. Sea ducks away from Lake Superior included first county records for **Surf Scoter** in Olmsted and Houston, two **White-winged Scoters** in Rice, and a third White-winged on Lake Pepin in Wabasha. **Long-tailed Ducks** were also found in southeastern Minnesota.

An adult **Mississippi Kite** showed up at Hawk Ridge during early September, in what is becoming a biennial event. Its identification was never in doubt but the photographs alone were not convincing,

so it remains the only Casual species on the Minnesota list for which there are no identifiable specimens or photographs.

Other reports of interest from Hawk Ridge included a record-tying 23 **Golden Eagles** on 16 November and a seasonal total of 1,236 **Northern Goshawks**. This was only two short of the combined total for 1997–99! Next year could very well be outstanding as we approach another ten-year peak in the goshawk's population cycle. Raptor numbers at Hawk Ridge were down from 128,639 in 1999, though the composite total of 87,024 was still quite respectable. During the 1999 and 2000 fall seasons, **Broad-winged Hawks** represented two-thirds of the composite total. Table 2 in the species accounts depicts more data for each of these species.

Away from Hawk Ridge, a **Northern Goshawk** was a first-ever for Kandiyohi. Other first county records among raptors included **Red-shouldered Hawk** in Lake and **Merlin** in Lincoln. Two gray-morph **Gyrfalcons** were found along the North Shore, at Bayside Park near Silver Bay and at Hawk Ridge; they may have been the same bird. A complete absence of the **Prairie Falcon** was unusual for fall.

No fewer than **217 Greater Prairie-Chickens** were counted at Rothsay WMA in Wilkin County. As a result of the fall harvest in Houston County, a few coveys of **Northern Bobwhite** were uncovered. This may be encouraging but accurate data are needed about this species' status in Minnesota. **Common Moorhens** were found in both Blue Earth and Meeker counties in early September, matching the two reports from the previous fall.

Record or near-record high counts of several shorebird species were reported, primarily due to concentrated surveys by KJB and BEO in the west-central region. These included **Solitary**, **Semipalmated**, **Least**, and **Pectoral Sandpipers**. **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were scarce in the extreme south, but otherwise occurred in good numbers with a statewide total of 293+ individuals in 16 counties. The most unusual shorebird was a **Red Phalarope** found at the Superior Entry in Duluth.

A juvenile **Pomarine Jaeger** found in Duluth during late September provided the 13th state record. This was the second consecutive September for a juvenile of this species in Duluth. No fewer than three **Parasitics** were on Lake Superior. A subadult on Mille Lacs Lake and five other jaegers in Duluth were unidentified, even though they were seen by some of the best jaeger-meisters in the state.

Two **Little Gulls** in juvenal plumage were found in August, one seen briefly at Hearding Island in Duluth, and the other ten days later on French Lake, Hennepin County. This interesting plumage is rarely seen in the state, leading to speculation that both might have been the same bird. The north shore of Spirit Lake is adjacent to Jackson County and continues to be the best place to search for **Black-headed Gull** in Minnesota. An adult was found here in October, just like Fall 1998 and 1999. One or more adults, as well as a few juveniles, have been found in the vicinity of Spirit Lake (mostly in Iowa) on a regular basis since 1994.

Adult **Thayer's Gulls** appeared record early in Duluth and Minneapolis, while a juvenile gave Crow Wing its first county record. A single **Iceland Gull** was found at Grand Marais in late November, and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continued the tradition of roosting on Lake Calhoun in Hennepin County into the winter season. Single **Great Black-backed Gulls** were found in Duluth and at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County. Arguably most amazing was an unprecedented **26 Sabine's Gulls** at the Superior Entry in Duluth! Two more stayed at the Breckenridge lagoons, Wilkin County, for almost a week. Two to three **Black-legged Kittiwakes** were on Lake Superior — at Grand Marais and Two Harbors. Minnesota's first fall record of the **Arctic Tern** added icing to the cake when found near the Sabine's Gulls at the Superior Entry in Duluth.

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to pop up near the Minnesota River Valley. This season's report was from Odessa in Big Stone County, near the western end of the valley.

A major influx of **Snowy**, **Northern Hawk**, **Great Gray**, and **Boreal Owls** was well underway by the end of the fall season. **Snowy Owls** showed up in very poor condition as early as mid-October. At least 35 **Northern Hawk Owls** and 83 **Great Gray Owls** were located, though neither species expanded much beyond the north-central and northeast regions of Minnesota.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued their expansion into the north-central and northwest regions. Both **Three-toed** and **Black-backed Woodpeckers** were found in higher than normal numbers, primarily in northeastern Minnesota but especially in Cook County.

The last flycatcher found this season proved to be Minnesota's second **Ash-throated Flycatcher**. It was discovered at Two Harbors in Lake County, precisely on the tenth anniversary of the first state record! This "southwestern" species also appeared in Wisconsin (that state's first) this fall, four days earlier than the one in Two Harbors. Less unexpected were the **Western Kingbirds** found in September along the North Shore of Lake Superior.

Late **Loggerhead Shrikes** at the end of October and in mid-November were carefully documented to distinguish them from Northerns — the expected species at that time of year. For their part, **Northern Shrikes** arrived throughout the state in good numbers during mid-October.

A **Tufted Titmouse** was a one-day surprise at a feeder in Duluth. There have been very few reports of this species away from the southeast corner of the state in the last decade. Several **Carolina Wrens** were seen in the Twin Cities and one was in Houston County. Three **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were exceptionally late; surprisingly, these were not from the North Shore, where most of the recent late fall gnatcatchers have occurred.

At least six **Townsend's Solitaires** were found on the North Shore. A total of three others were in Norman County and the Twin Cities metro area. Only two **Varied Thrushes** appeared this season. Two **Northern Mockingbirds** were seen; one in Olmsted County and one in Cook. **American Pipits** tied a record for the earliest south arrival and smashed the high count record, when 600 were found feeding in soybean fields in Rock County.

Over the last few years, most autumn reports of **Black-throated Blue Warbler** have come from Hennepin County; thus, one in Beltrami this year was surprising. A **Yellow-throated Warbler**, first found at William O'Brien S.P. in June, barely made the list for the fall season. No other unexpected *Parulidae* were found but an unusual number of record or near record-late dates for several species kept warbler migration interesting.

More **Spotted Towhees** were found in the state this season than in any other since the Rufous-sided Towhee was split in the mid-1990s. Descriptions of two of these birds, however, were puzzling and left open the possibility of hybridization. Considering how few of the others were described, it is impossible to assess how often hybrid towhees might occur during migration.

Following so many summer reports of **Henslow's Sparrows**, this species was typically absent in fall. Good numbers of **Le Conte's** and **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were found, however. Small flocks of the latter species were seen in Dakota, Hennepin, and Rice counties for almost two weeks.

Lapland Longspurs were a model of timeliness. They arrived north and south within one day of their recent median arrival dates. **Smith's Longspurs** were relatively ill-behaved, with four reports from unexpected North Shore locations, in addition to more typical reports from west-central and southwest regions. Also more expected in western Minnesota, a **Black-headed Grosbeak** made a brief appearance — where else? — along the North Shore, in Two Harbors. The male **Painted Bunting** that spent the last two summers in western Hennepin County lingered into August.

Winter finches were few in number and essentially confined to the northern regions. **Pine Grosbeaks** could be found

in traditional areas. There were scattered reports of both species of **crossbills** throughout the period, from the northern part of the state. **Common Redpolls** were scarce, so no **Hoary Redpolls** were reported. **Evening Grosbeaks** were also restricted to the north, except for one in Meeker County. Last but not least, the **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** which had been summering in Clay County stayed until the first of September.

Undocumented Reports: **Marbled Godwit** 9/11 Becker; juvenile **Sabine's Gull** 10/13 St. Louis (Duluth); **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** 10/14 Lake (near Silver Bay); **Carolina Wren** 10/2 St. Louis (Duluth); **Bohemian Waxwing** 11/5 Dakota; and **Black-headed Grosbeak** 8/8 Swift.

Weather Summary: Autumn started out with average temperatures one to three degrees (F) above normal statewide. It was also drier than normal, with less than half the expected amount of precipitation in southwest and west-central regions. In September average temperatures returned to the norm, but most of the state stayed very dry. Rainfall was only one-third to one-half the expected amount, except in the northwest and north-central regions. October was unusually warm across the state. All regions reported temperatures above normal and in the southeast, it was almost four degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation levels continued at only half its expected levels until the end of the season in November. At that time, all nine regions received one and a half to three inches above normal precipitation. Temperatures then fell below the norms, especially in the southwest.

Acknowledgments: I thank Karl Bardon and Peder Svingen for a careful review and their suggested impovements to this report. Peder compiled data for loons to woodpeckers. Besty Beneke, Kim Eckert, and Anthony Hertzel summarized reports called in to the "hotlines" in northwestern Minnesota, Duluth, and the Twin Cities, respectively. I thank Frank Nicoletti and the Duluth Audubon Society for data from Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. Earliest and latest dates were compiled by Robert Janssen. Medians of recent arrival and departure dates were calculated from published and unpublished data used to compile these seasonal reports between 1985 and 1999. Finally, I thank the many observers who submit data and documentation each season that makes this report possible.

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KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Upper case (**LEAST TERN**) indicates a Casual or Accidental species in the state.
2. Dates listed in bold (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold (**Aitkin**) indicate an unusual occurrence for that county.
4. Counties with an underline (**Aitkin**) indicate a first county record.
5. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.
6. Brackets [ ] indicate a species for which there is reasonable doubt as to its origin or wildness.
7. Counts listed in bold (**150**) indicate total within or exceeding the top three high counts for that species.
8. Dagger "†" preceding observer's initials denotes documentation was submitted.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.

Red-throated Loon — Juvenile reported 10/10–13 St. Louis (on L. Superior, Duluth Twp.) MH, †KRE *et al.*

Pacific Loon — Record high number of reports, exceeding the seven in Fall 1998. All reports: 9/30 Cass (L. Winnibigoshish) †PHS; 10/18 St. Louis (2, near French R. and Stoney Point) †KRE; 10/20–28 Lake (10/20 Flood Bay, presumably the same bird relocated 10/28 Agate Bay) †KRE, JWL *et al.*; 10/26 – 11/4 St. Louis (Canal Park in Duluth) †PHS; 10/29 Aitkin (Farm Island L.) †WEN, WMS; 11/5 St. Louis (2, side-by-side in Duluth) DRB; and 11/5–6 **Beltrami** (L. Bemidji) †DPJ, mob (***The Loon*** 73:127–128).

Common Loon — Record high count **2,511** on Mille Lacs L. 10/18 (AXH, RBJ, PHS; prior record 1,688 in October 1998, also from Mille Lacs L.). Also notable was 11/13 Rice (130) JGL. Late north 11/11 Otter Tail DPS and Todd RBJ. Late south 11/18 Hennepin PEB (median 12/2).

Pied-billed Grebe — Concentrations peaked in mid-September, including 228 on 9/14 in Anoka (3 locations) KJB and 75 on 9/16–17 in Becker BAB. Late north 11/23–28 St. Louis PHS, 11/29 Otter Tail SDM. Also see winter report.

Horned Grebe — Reported from nine north and seven south counties. Early north 8/16 St. Louis JWL, followed by two northeast reports in early September, then none until October. Early south 9/23 Renville DFJ, CRM. Late north 11/18 Otter Tail CMN. Late south 11/19 Freeborn AEB, 11/22 Hennepin PEB.

Red-necked Grebe — Late north 10/28 Lake WCM, 11/5 Cook DRB, DBz. Only reported from five south counties, with only one of these later than August: 11/3 Hennepin PEB.

Eared Grebe — Scarce, as in fall 1999. Only north report: 9/11 Polk EEF (earliest north departure since 1987). In the south, reported from Big Stone, 9/2–4 Hennepin (French L.) OLJ, SLC, 10/3 Waseca JPS, 11/4 Yellow Medicine BRL, and 11/19 Hennepin CRM, †PEB (median 11/4).

Western Grebe — North observations included 9/16 St. Louis (2) *fide* KRE, 11/2 **Itasca** †BRN, 11/22 Otter Tail *fide* MRN, 11/26+ Lake †JWL *et al.* Late south 11/10 Waseca JPS, 11/18 **Houston** (Pool 8) PEJ.

Clark's Grebe — At least one adult was still present 8/6 (†RBJ), 8/8 (†KJB, †SLC), and 8/19 (CRM) at Thielke Lake in Big Stone County, where interbreeding with a Western Grebe suspected (see summer report). Also seen 9/12 Marshall (Agassiz NWR) †RBJ.

American White Pelican — Largest concentrations 8/21 Lac Qui Parle (2200 at Marsh L.) KJB, 9/10 Jackson (800) MJC, and 10/6 Houston (500) FZL. Reported north from Cook, Norman, and St. Louis counties in October, then 11/2 Todd JSK, SDu, 11/9 Polk EEF. Late south 11/13 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 11/30+ Dakota mob.

Double-crested Cormorant — Seen throughout the state, including 17 north and 36 south counties. Peak count 10/2 Dakota (500+ at Gun Club L.) SWe. See winter report for late migrants.

American Bittern — Ten reports total, compared to eight last fall. Six September observations preceded 10/3 Becker *fide* BAB, 10/22 Aitkin (2) WEN and Rice JGL, 10/28 Chippewa ABo.

Least Bittern — Observed 8/7 Hennepin (Wood L.) PEB, 9/11 Freeborn AEB.

Great Blue Heron — Reported from 23 north and 44 south counties. Late north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM. See winter report for late south migrants.

Great Egret — The largest flock was 93 found 8/8 Carver (New Germany) CMM. North reports past mid-September: 10/1

White-faced Ibis, 20 August 2000, Carrigan Lake, Wright County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.

Wadena PBi, 10/4 Otter Tail DST, **10/28** Becker (5 at HSNWR) *fide* BAB. Late south 11/15 Hennepin (5) SLC, 11/25 Hennepin TAT, ADS. Also watch for the winter summary!

Snowy Egret — All reports: 9/24 Jackson (Heron L.) RHy, 10/1 Lac Qui Parle (Walter Twp.) WCM, **10/3** Lyon (Amiret Twp.) RJS.

Little Blue Heron — No reports.

Cattle Egret — Four reports, as in fall 1999: 8/19 Watonwan JJS, 10/27 Jackson (Heron L.) BRB, 10/31 Otter Tail †DST, 11/4 Rice mob.

Green Heron — Late north 9/20 Wadena PBi, 9/23 Cass DCZ, 9/29 Beltrami DPJ. Late south 10/10 Hennepin SLC, 10/14 Lac Qui Parle BEO.

Black-crowned Night-Heron — Only north report was 8/7 Clay RHO. Late south 11/8 Freeborn RBJ, 11/18 Dakota ADS, 11/19 Hennepin CRM.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron — No fall reports since 1993.

WHITE-FACED IBIS — Adult or subadult bird with red irides carefully identified at Carrigan L. (west of Montrose) 8/19–21 **Wright** DDM, BJM, †AXH, †PHS *et al.*

PLEGADIS*, sp?** — Singles photographed 10/29–30 Anoka (Carlos Avery WMA) JAn, †BSe, †AXH, and **11/10** Grant (L. Johnson near Herman) †DGr (The Loon*** 73:130).

Turkey Vulture — Reported throughout the state in all regions. Late north 11/4 St. Louis JRN, **11/26** (ties second latest north) Otter Tail SDM. Late south 10/28 Hennepin PEB, 11/2 Houston KAK.

Waterfowl

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK — Sixth state record 8/6 **Grant** (Prescott L.) †SDM (***The Loon*** 73:64–65).

Greater White-fronted Goose — Very scarce. Only north report: 10/15 Norman CMN. Five south reports: **9/23** (second earliest south) Dakota (1) TAT, 10/1 Hennepin (1) PEJ, 10/6 Lac Qui Parle (5) BEO, 10/13 Freeborn AEB, and 10/24 Lac Qui Parle (6) BEO.

Snow Goose — Scarce statewide. High count only 28 on 10/25 at BSNWR (BEO). None reported from southeast or southwest. Most reports were in October. Early north **8/12** (second earliest north) Clay (3 at Sabin) RHO, 9/19 Pine DDM, BJM. Early south 8/15 Big Stone KJB (but see summer report). Late north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM. See winter report for addtional late migrants.

Ross's Goose — Only one report: **10/14** Otter Tail (1) RBJ.

Canada Goose — Reported throughout the state and the season.

Mute Swan — One seen 9/24–25 Wright

(near Cokato) DDM, BJM, †PCC. This species had been reported at or near this location in November 1998 and 1999. Another was in Rice 11/4 (wild?) TFB, JGL.

Trumpeter Swan — Reported from 12 north and 13 south counties, including no fewer than 7 locations in Wright. Most reports lacked specific locations and/or numbers of individuals, but 9–11 were at Kettleson L., Polk County in September (EEF). Trumpeters in Mahnomen, Pine, and Olmsted were apparently the first for those counties since January 1999, when this species' status became Regular.

Tundra Swan — Found in all regions of the state. Early north 9/21 St. Louis JRN, 10/5 Polk EEF. Early south 10/18 Dakota ADS, 10/22 Scott PEJ. Peak counts 11/18 Houston (6000) PEJ, 11/11 Scott (1500) PEJ, Meeker (1300 on L. Evenson) DMF. Late north 11/25 Aitkin WEN. See winter summary for late south birds.

Wood Duck — Reported from 16 north and 33 south counties. Peak count 180+ in Aitkin on 9/25–27 (CLB).

Gadwall — Reported from only four north counties, where last seen 11/9 Polk EEF. Found in 27 south counties. High count 10/13 Lac Qui Parle (492) BEO.

American Wigeon — All north reports prior to November except 11/3 Aitkin PEJ and 11/13 St. Louis (4) JRN. High count 10/3 Lac Qui Parle (682) BEO. See winter report for late south migrants.

American Black Duck — Though not reported there the previous season, one seen 8/26 Becker (KRE *et al.*) may have oversummered. Also reported north in Aitkin, Cook, Lake, Polk, Todd. Early south 8/27 Hennepin (2) SLC, then none until 10/8 Houston DFN, 10/16 Dakota TAT. Most south reports were from the east-central and southeast regions.

Mallard — Reported throughout the state. Peak counts 10/29 Aitkin (15,000) WEN, 11/1 Lac Qui Parle (10,820) BEO.

Blue-winged Teal — Reported from 16 north and 30 south counties. High counts 9/8 Lac Qui Parle (209) BEO, 8/6 Anoka (128) DFJ. Seen in seven north counties during October, including latest on 10/18 in Polk EEF. Late south 10/28 Chippewa ABo, 11/5 Meeker DMF.

Cinnamon Teal — No reports.

Northern Shoveler — Reported from 10 north and 27 south counties. Late north 11/9–13 from Polk, St. Louis and Todd. High count 11/26 Hennepin (407) TAT. See winter report for late south migrants.

Northern Pintail — Reported from 6 north and 13 south counties. High count 4514 in Lac Qui Parle on 11/1 (BEO). Only November report north: 11/10 St. Louis JRN. Migrants arrived south by mid-September. Late south 11/30 Chisago REH; also see winter report.

Green-winged Teal — Reported from 6 north and 21 south counties. High count 5324 in Lac Qui Parle on 10/25 (BEO). Several north reports during late October in Aitkin and Lake, then 11/13 St. Louis (47) JRN. A report 8/6 Hennepin SLC may have been an early migrant. Also see winter summary for late migrants.

Canvasback — Reported from 9 north and 21 south counties. High count 85,000 on 11/18, though most of these were in Wisconsin waters of Pool #8, Houston (PEJ). August reports from western counties and Ramsey may have been oversummering birds. Late north 11/11 Todd JSK, 11/29 Otter Tail SDM. See winter report for late south migrants.

Redhead — Reported from 7 north and 18 south counties. High count 11/9 Polk (800) EEF. Late north 11/13 St. Louis JRN, 11/22 Otter Tail SDM. Late south 11/13 Goodhue CRM, 11/24 Houston DFN.

Ring-necked Duck — Reported from 12

north and 22 south counties. Peak 10/25 Becker (29,000) TNWR. Late north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM; also see winter report.

Greater Scaup — Reported from four north and four south counties. Early north 10/13 St. Louis CRM, 10/14 Cook PHS. High count 10/27 St. Louis (175) PEJ. Late north 11/22 Aitkin (only north report away from L. Superior) CLB. All south reports: 10/21 Lincoln KRE *et al.* and Meeker DMF, 11/24 Houston DFN, 11/26 Hennepin CRM.

Lesser Scaup — Reported from 12 north and 19 south counties in all regions. See winter summary for late migrants.

KING EIDER — Fourteenth state record 10/14–16 Cook (probable first-year male, Good Harbor Bay) †JWL *et al.*, †PHS (***The Loon*** 73:130–131). This was the tenth report for the North Shore of Lake Superior, and except for the 9 May 1971 occurrence of two pair on Lower Red Lake in Beltrami County (***The Loon*** 43:90–91), all records in the state have been immature/females between mid-October and mid-January.

Harlequin Duck — All reports were along the North Shore: 10/15 St. Louis (2 in Duluth) MH, PHS, mid-October Lake (2 on Flood Bay) mob, 11/4 one shot in Lake *fide* KRE, 11/6 Cook (location?) JJS, 11/20–27 Cook (Grand Marais) PHS *et al.*

Surf Scoter — Low numbers reported on L. Superior (Table 1). Two south reports: 10/25 **Olmsted** (Rochester) †CAK, JJS, and 11/18 **Houston** (Pool #8) PEJ.

White-winged Scoter — Numbers very low on L. Superior (Table 1). All south reports: 11/13 Rice (2 on L. Mazaska) JGL, 11/25 Wabasha (L. Pepin) mob.

Black Scoter — Numbers down on L. Superior (Table 1). No reports elsewhere!

Long-tailed Duck — Early north 10/13 St. Louis KRE, 10/22 Cook DRB. High count only 40+ in Cook on 11/7 (CRM).

	First	Last	Peak
Surf Scoter			
Cook	10/1	11/24	5
Lake	10/15	10/15	1
St. Louis	10/13	10/15	6
White-w. Scoter			
Cook	10/7	11/27	2
Lake	10/18	10/18	1
St. Louis	10/15	10/27	1
Black Scoter			
Cook	10/7	11/7	2
Lake	10/21	10/21	1
St. Louis	10/5	11/4	9

Table 1. Scoters on Lake Superior, Fall 2000, arranged by county.

All south reports: 11/18 Rice (Shields L.) DDM, BJM, 11/22 Ramsey DPS, 11/24–29 Houston (2 at Pool #8, one in Minnesota) PEJ, FZL, 11/25 Wabasha mob.

Bufflehead — Unusual report 8/26 Becker MBW. Early south 10/6 Stearns TAT, then in five more counties 10/7–8. Also see winter report.

Common Goldeneye — Reported from a total of 11 north and 12 south counties. Early south 9/23 Scott WCM, then none until 10/20 Ramsey REH (median 10/21). Largest concentration was 11/18 Houston (**4500** on Pool #8, but most of these were in Wisconsin waters) PEJ.

Hooded Merganser — Reported from 14 north and 18 south counties. Late north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM; see winter report for additional migrants.

Common Merganser — Reported from 10 north and 9 south counties. Away from L. Superior, November reports north in Polk, Otter Tail, and Hubbard (11/23, HJF). South reports began 10/21 Meeker DMF and continued through the end of the period. An estimated 30,000 observed 11/24 Wabasha PEJ.

Red-breasted Merganser — Early north (away from L. Superior) 10/14 Wadena

Table 2. Fall 2000 Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve composite totals

Species	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Total	Peak	Peak#
Turkey Vulture	17	845	691	1	1554	9/23	208
Osprey	78	246	3		327	8/25	38
Bald Eagle	17	497	457	948	1919	11/11	149
Northern Harrier	30	141	79	13	263	10/20	16
Sharp-shinned Hawk	590	9068	5386	19	15063	10/1	1494
Cooper's Hawk	9	186	63		258	9/14	42
Northern Goshawk	6	91	624	515	1236	10/20	116
Red-shouldered Hawk			1		1	10/20	1
Broad-winged Hawk	97	57620	13		57730	9/14	22765
Swainson's Hawk		14			14	9/12,14	4
Red-tailed Hawk	66	809	3242	816	4933	10/20	653
Rough-legged Hawk		5	433	63	501	10/16	69
Golden Eagle		3	36	77	116	11/16	23
American Kestrel	102	2014	628		2744	9/14	249
Merlin	14	142	115	2	273	10/1	25
Peregrine Falcon	3	77	12		92	9/29	20

PJB, 11/9 Polk (8) EEF. Early south 10/29 Hennepin CRM, 11/4 Meeker DMF. Late north (except L. Superior) 11/12 Beltrami (3) DPJ, 11/20 Aitkin WEN. Also see winter report.

Ruddy Duck — An estimated 3000 were seen 11/3 Kandiyohi RBJ. Late north 11/9 Polk EEF, 11/18 Otter Tail CMN. Late south 11/25–28 Hennepin PEB, SLC.

Raptors

Osprey — Reported from all regions but the southwest. Late north 10/20 St. Louis (HRNR) FN, 10/24 Carlton KEO and Pine CRM. Three observations south in early October, but then none until 11/1 Meeker DMF, 11/18 Carver RTD.

MISSISSIPPI KITE — One adult 9/11 St. Louis (HRNR, Duluth) †FN *et al.* was the fifth fall occurrence at Hawk Ridge since 1990, all of these between 8/30 and 9/15.

Bald Eagle — Reported from 25 north and 33 south counties in all regions.

Northern Harrier — Reported from 18 north and 31 south counties. November reports north from six counties, including the latest on 11/15 St. Louis (HRNR) FN. Reported from nine south counties during November; also see winter report.

Sharp-shinned Hawk — Reported from 16 north and 28 south counties. Early south 8/20 Ramsey DFJ, 8/28 Renville CRM. Late north 11/25 St. Louis FN, 11/29 Clay SDM; also see winter report.

Cooper's Hawk — Reported from 13 north and 21 south counties. Late north reports through early October, followed only by late migrants at HRNR on 10/20 (3) and 10/21.

Northern Goshawk — Reported from 11 north and 5 south counties. Record early south **9/1** Hennepin (adult) †ABo. First county record 10/7 **Kandiyohi** RBJ. All other south reports were in November from Freeborn, Hennepin, Houston, Rice.

Red-shouldered Hawk — Observed in 7 north and 10 south counties, including 9/2 **Swift** RBJ. Late north 10/20 St. Louis (HRNR) FN, 10/24 **Lake** †RBJ.

Broad-winged Hawk — Reported from 11 north and 17 south counties. Late north 10/4 St. Louis (HRNR) FN, 10/7–8 Aitkin WEN, CLB. Late south 10/3–5 in Houston, Scott, Waseca.

Swainson's Hawk — Only north reports: 8/29 Clay DPJ, 9/12–23 St. Louis (14 at HRNR) FN *et al.* Reported from nine south counties, mostly from west-central, southwest and south-central regions. Late south 9/21 Steele NFT, 9/23 Lac Qui Parle (2) FAE.

Red-tailed Hawk — Reported from 24 north and 44 south counties. Dark-morph "Harlan's" documented 11/11 Sherburne †TAT.

Ferruginous Hawk — No reports.

Rough-legged Hawk — Reported from 20 north and 9 south counties. Early north 9/8 Marshall ANWR, 9/10 Todd JSK, SDu. Seen at HRNR 9/24 – 11/29; in 1999 the first Hawk Ridge report was not until 10/25. Early south 10/21 Rice JGL, 10/28 Chippewa ABo (median 9/22!).

Golden Eagle — Reported from Aitkin, Cook, Itasca, and St. Louis in north. Early north **9/15** (ties second earliest north date) St. Louis (HRNR) FN. First reported away from HRNR on 10/27 Aitkin (DDM, BJM). High count for season was a record tying **23** at HRNR on 11/16 (FN *et al.*) All south reports: 10/22 Hennepin TAT, 11/9 Dakota SEL, 11/18 Goodhue BRL.

American Kestrel — Reported from 21 north and 40 south counties. Late north 11/22 Otter Tail SDM, 11/26 Todd EEF. See winter report for late south migrants and overwintering birds.

Merlin — Reported from 12 north and 17 south counties, and in all regions but southeast (as in 1999). Most reports were September through mid-October, yet still five south reports during November. Late north 11/11 Todd RBJ. First county record 10/21 **Lincoln** JJS. "Richardson's" (*F. c. richardsonii*) reported 8/26 Becker KRE, 10/1 Clay PHS, 11/1 Wilkin SDM.

Ruffed Grouse, 14 October 2000, Gunflint Trail, Cook County. Photo by Vija Kelly.

Gyrfalcon — Two observations: 11/6 Lake (Bayside Park near Silver Bay) CRM *et al.*, 11/16 St. Louis (HRNR) FN. Both were gray-morph adults — same bird?

Peregrine Falcon — Observed in 7 north and 10 south counties. Early north migrants 8/26 St. Louis HRNR, 8/28 Clay GEN. Early south 9/8 Lac Qui Parle BEO. Late north 10/5 Cook KMH, 10/14 Cook PHS. Late south 10/29 Kandiyohi ABo, 11/8 Rice JGL. See winter report for overwintering birds.

Prairie Falcon — No reports.

Partridges to Cranes

Gray Partridge — Reported only from Kittson (*fide* BAB) in the north, plus 11 south counties.

Ring-necked Pheasant — North reports from Cass, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Todd,

Partial albino American Coot, October 2000, White Bear Lake near Dellwood, Washington County. Photo by James H. Rupert.

and Wadena, plus 38 south counties.

Ruffed Grouse — Reported from 14 north and 6 south counties.

Spruce Grouse — Reported from Cook, Lake, and Lake of the Woods (Norris Camp GM, JFo, and Gustafson SNA MK). All reports noted few numbers of birds.

Sharp-tailed Grouse — Reported only in Aitkin (CLB), Kittson (*fide* BAB), Lake of the Woods (18, MK), and St. Louis (7 at Sax-Zim bog, CM).

Greater Prairie-Chicken — Twenty were found 10/16 Norman (near Borup) *fide* BAB, and SDM tallied **217** in Wilkin (Rothsay WMA) on 11/29.

Wild Turkey — Reported from Becker, Douglas, and Todd in the north, plus 14 south counties.

Northern Bobwhite — Three coveys were uncovered during the fall harvest in Houston (Wilmington Twp.) *fide* KAK.

Yellow Rail — Only report was a second county record 9/28 **Jackson** †BRB (***The Loon*** 73:127).

Virginia Rail — All observations: 8/12 Cottonwood JJS, 8/14 Freeborn AEB, 8/26 Becker MBW, 10/5 St. Louis (Duluth) JnH. It was the earliest "late south" date since before 1985.

Sora — All north reports later than August: 9/16 Douglas REH, 9/18 Lake JWL, 10/4 Aitkin PEJ. Late south 10/11 Wright DFJ, 10/31 – 11/1 Hennepin SLC.

Common Moorhen — Seen 8/26 – 9/3 Meeker (Minnesota L.) DMF *et al.*, 9/4–9 Blue Earth (Beauford) DMA, RLE, MJF.

American Coot — High count 12,000 on 9/15 in Pope County (L. Minnewiska) KJB. Reported from five north counties during November, including latest north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM. See winter report

for late south migrants.

Sandhill Crane — Seen in all regions except the southwest. Numerous north reports through 10/20, then only 11/3 Wilkin SDM, 11/4 Pine DPS. Reported from 12 south counties, compared to only 6 during fall 1999. Only south report during November: 11/19 Steele NFT.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover — Early north 8/31 St. Louis KJB, 9/1 Lake JWL. Aside from additional September reports in St. Louis, all other north observations were during October. Early south 8/8 Big Stone KJB, SLC, 8/20 Freeborn AEB. Late north 10/26 Cook RBJ, 10/30–31 Aitkin CRM, WEN. Late south 10/28 Wright (20) DFJ, 11/3 Meeker RBJ. Also seen 10/18 **Isanti** AXH.

American Golden-Plover — Early north 8/31 Polk *fide* BAB, 9/2 Becker (7) BAB. One south report in July (see summer season), then 8/8 Lac Qui Parle CRM and 8/20 Freeborn AEB. Highest counts 10/1 Polk (148) and 10/9 Big Stone (112), both PHS. Latest north 10/30–31 Aitkin CRM, WEN, **11/9** Cook JJS. Late south 11/1 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 11/5 Meeker DMF.

Semipalmated Plover — See summer season for first fall migrants. High counts 8/21 Polk (68) EEF, 8/15 Big Stone (39) and Lac Qui Parle (30) KJB, 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (56 at BSNWR) BEO. Reported north through 9/11, but then only 10/1 Polk (2) PHS. Reported south in Meeker and Dakota 9/24–25, then last found in Lac Qui Parle on 9/30 (DFJ, JJS).

Piping Plover — No reports.

Killdeer — High count 173 at BSNWR in Lac Qui Parle County on 8/3 (BEO). Seen in five north counties on 10/1, then 10/14 Aitkin WEN, 11/11 Aitkin and Mille Lacs TAT. Found in five south counties during November, last seen 11/27 Houston CRM.

American Avocet — Reported 8/4 and 9/1 Big Stone (different locations) KJB, **11/11** (record late by ten days!) Wabasha (Weaver) BAF.

Greater Yellowlegs — See the summer report for early fall migrants. High counts 8/4 Big Stone (47) KJB, 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (39) BEO. Late north 11/2 Aitkin PEJ and 11/10 St. Louis JRN. Late south 11/1 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 11/3 Anoka DPS.

Lesser Yellowlegs — See summer report for first fall migrants. Peaks 8/4 Big Stone (336) KJB, 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (119) BEO. Late north 10/11 Douglas REH, 10/21 St. Louis SWe. Late south 10/21 Cottonwood BRB, 10/23 Watonwan CRM.

Solitary Sandpiper — Reported from all regions. See summer report for early fall migrants. High counts 8/3 Anoka (**17**) KJB, 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (**16**) BEO. Late north 9/17 Cook DDM, BJM, then 10/9 Carlton LAW. Late south 10/3 Isanti CRM.

Willet — Only report: 8/19 Meeker (Lake Evenson) DMF.

Spotted Sandpiper — High count **41** on 8/3 in Lac Qui Parle BEO. Late north 9/27 Cook KMH, 10/2 Becker DFN. Late south 9/30 Lac Qui Parle DFJ, 10/3 Waseca JPS.

Upland Sandpiper — Only north report: 9/13 St. Louis KJB, SLC. South reports all from the west, where last found 9/8 in Big Stone (2) BEO. These are all several weeks later than recent median departure dates north (8/20) and south (8/17).

Whimbrel — All reports: 8/10 St. Louis (Park Point) PHS, 9/3 Lake (Burlington Bay) *fide* KRE.

Hudsonian Godwit — Only reported from Big Stone, where found by †KJB on 8/15 (4) and 8/21.

Marbled Godwit — All reports: 8/4 Lac Qui Parle (10) KJB, 8/8 Lac Qui Parle CRM, 8/15 Big Stone KJB, 8/21 Polk EEF, 8/26 Becker KRE.

Ruddy Turnstone — North reports from St. Louis on 8/22 PHS, 10/19 DFJ, 10/22 BrM; also seen 9/3 Lake JWL. Reported south 8/3 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 8/5 Dakota (L. Byllesby) ADS, TAT.

Red Knot — No reports.

Sanderling — Early north 8/6 Polk PCC, 8/10 Lake JWL. Early south 8/12 Carver PEB, 8/15 Lac Qui Parle KJB. Peak counts 8/26 St. Louis (53) PHS, 9/8 Lac Qui Parle (38) BEO, 9/13 St. Louis (38) SLC, KJB. First county record on 9/8 **Benton** (Little Rock L.) HHD. All October reports: 10/1 Polk PHS, 10/3 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 10/22 Yellow Medicine KRE *et al.*

Semipalmated Sandpiper — Please see summer report for earliest fall migrants. Highest counts 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (**986** at BSNWR) BEO, and 8/4 Big Stone (**1017**, record high count) KJB. Mostly undated reports in nine north counties; last seen 10/9 Polk PHS. Reported from five south counties during October, including latest on 10/9 in Big Stone PHS.

Least Sandpiper — See summer report for early fall migrants. Record high count of **885** on 8/3 in Lac Qui Parle (BSNWR) BEO. Most north reports were in August, but later seen 10/9 Polk PHS. Found in eight south counties during October, last observed 10/29 Meeker DMF.

White-rumped Sandpiper — All north reports: 10/8 Cook DPB, 10/16 St. Louis DOK. Early south 8/12 Lac Qui Parle PCC. Late south 10/7 Wright DMF, 10/29 Meeker DMF. Also reported from Dakota, Freeborn.

Baird's Sandpiper — Please refer to the summer report for earliest fall migrants. High count 9/7 Big Stone (33) KJB. Only two north reports after mid-September: 10/14 Lake mob and 10/18 Polk EEF. Late south 10/14 Winona JJS, 11/1 Lac Qui Parle BEO.

Pectoral Sandpiper — See the summer report for first fall migrants. On 8/15 KJB found a record high count of **1164** in Big Stone, plus 521 in Lac Qui Parle. Other noteworthy counts: 8/21 Polk (460) EEF, 8/6 Polk (445, Crookston sewage ponds) PCC. Late north 10/28 Lake JWL, WCM, 10/30–31 Aitkin CRM, WEN. Late south 11/2 Steele RBJ, 11/8 Jackson BRB. These dates comparable to recent median departures both north (11/1) and south (11/6).

Dunlin — Only north reports: 10/1 Polk PHS, 10/30–31 Aitkin CRM, WEN. Found in eight south counties. High count only 14 on 10/13 in Lac Qui Parle BEO. Early south 8/11 Anoka KJB. Late south 11/1 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 11/3 Meeker RBJ.

Stilt Sandpiper — See summer report for early fall migrants. Peaks 9/1 Lac Qui Parle (285) KJB, 8/4 Big Stone (268) KJB. Late north 9/14 Lake JWL, 10/1 Polk PHS. Late south 10/9 Big Stone (7) PHS, **10/28** Lac Qui Parle (1) BRL, and (record late date) **11/1** Lac Qui Parle (15) BEO.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper — Statewide total 293+ birds for the season. Seen in 5 north and 11 south counties. Double-digit flocks seen in Big Stone, Dakota, Lac Qui Parle, Lake, Meeker, Scott. One north and one south report of fall migrants during summer season. Otherwise, earliest north 8/24 – 9/8 Lake (max. 14) TH, JWL, 8/25 in Norman and St. Louis. Early south 8/3 Lac Qui Parle (7) BEO, 8/4 **Big Stone** KJB. Peaks 8/28 Dakota (**49+** at Empire Sod Farms) SWe, KJB, 8/25 Scott (37 at Lydia) DDM, BJM, and 8/13 Meeker (30) DMF. Late north 9/13–18 Lake (Beaver Bay) JWL, 10/1 Polk (2) PHS. Late south 9/30 Big Stone KJB, and Lac Qui Parle JJS.

Short-billed Dowitcher — Only north report 8/20 Grant SDM, but see summer report. Earliest south 8/3 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 8/8 Chippewa CRM. Late south 9/1 Anoka REH and Big Stone KJB.

Long-billed Dowitcher — Three reports in north: 9/15 Lake KRE, 10/1 Polk PHS, 10/13 Grant RBJ. Early south 8/8 Big

Stone (27) SLC, KJB, 8/20 Freeborn AEB, but see summer season. Aside from one late September report, all others south were in October. Late south 10/27 Dakota ADS, 10/28 Kandiyohi ABo. High count 71 on 10/13 in Lac Qui Parle (BEO).

Common Snipe — Reported from 12 north and 26 south counties, including 5 north reports during November. Highest count 71 in Anoka at Carlos Avery WMA on 8/23 (KJB). Late north 11/27 St. Louis JRN. Also see winter report.

American Woodcock — Observed in 10 north and 7 south counties. Latest north 11/4 Pine CM, 11/5 Itasca ABo. Latest south 11/9 Brown JSS, Hennepin ABo.

Wilson's Phalarope — Only two reports north: 8/20 Grant SDM, 8/21 Polk EEF (recent median 9/13). South observations included high counts of 118 on 8/4 (KJB) and 102 on 8/8 (SLC, KJB) in Big Stone County. Only reports after August: 9/8 Lac Qui Parle BEO, 9/15 Big Stone KJB.

Red-necked Phalarope — Seen 9/11–12 in Pennington, Red Lake, and Roseau (all RBJ). Late north 10/1 Polk †PHS; also seen in Pine, Wilkin. Reported from 11 south counties beginning 8/4 Big Stone KJB, but see summer report. Peak counts 47 on 8/29 and 53 on 9/7, both Big Stone KJB. Late south 10/1 Rice JGL

RED PHALAROPE — One seen on both sides of the Superior Entry provided the twelfth Minnesota record 10/14 St. Louis †JWH, †CMJ.

Jaegers to Terns

POMARINE JAEGER — Juvenile found in Duluth for the second consecutive fall; thirteenth Minnesota record 9/23 St. Louis (Park Point) †PHS, †KRE, SLa.

Parasitic Jaeger — All were on L. Superior in St. Louis County as expected: 8/31, 9/3 (adult light morph) †KJB, KRE; 9/3–4 (dark juvenile off Brighton Beach) †KRE, PME, possibly relocated 9/9 (Park Point) †AXH, AMH; and 9/23 (adult light morph) mob.

Black-headed Gull, 8 October 2000, Spirit Lake, Jackson County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.

jaeger sp? — Four reports from L. Superior in St. Louis County: 9/13 (immature) KJB, SLC, 9/22 (2) PHS, 10/15 *fide* KRE, and 10/21 DRB. Also 10/14 **Aitkin** (immature; exceptional location on Mille Lacs L.) †WEN, WMS. All were probable Parasitics, but note the date for this fall's Pomarine.

Franklin's Gull — High count 9/15 in Douglas/Todd (19,300 on L. Osakis) KJB; additional concentrations of 2000–5000 in Big Stone, Freeborn, Meeker, and Waseca 9/8 – 10/9 (mob). Several north reports through mid-October, then 11/1 Otter Tail SDM. Also reported south in Dodge, Rice Steele, Waseca, and Yellow Medicine during November; latest 11/12 Rice JGL.

Little Gull — Reported **8/21** St. Louis (Hearding Island, Duluth) †PHS, SCB, and **8/31 – 9/2 Hennepin** (French L.) †SLC *et al.* Both were in juvenal plumage.

BLACK-HEADED GULL — Adult in basic plumage 10/8 Jackson (along north shore

of Spirit L.) †AXH, †PHS. Initially reported 10/7 on the Iowa side of the border. Two adults were seen here last fall.

Bonaparte's Gull — Early south 8/17 Freeborn AEB. Highest count from Mille Lacs L. on 10/18, when AXH, PHS, and RBJ counted 1953. Subsequent counts by these observers were over 1000 on 10/29 and 11/13. Late north 11/25 Aitkin WEN and Crow Wing PSP. Late south 11/24 Wabasha PEJ, DFN, and 11/24–25 Dakota mob (but also see winter report).

Ring-billed Gull — Reported from 19 north and 34 south counties in all regions of the state. Late north 11/29 Otter Tail SDM and into December in St. Louis.

Herring Gull — Reported from 8 north and 13 south counties, principally in east and central regions. High count 10/20 St. Louis (1750) PHS.

Thayer's Gull — Single adults arrived record early **9/23** Hennepin (L. Calhoun) †PEB and **9/24** St. Louis (Duluth) †PHS. Two adults **9/26+** Hennepin †PEB, mob; peak count 10/15–16 Hennepin (3) PEB. Arrival dates for immatures uncertain. Many reports of unaged birds in Dakota County beginning 10/23. Reported without details in Rice. All north reports were from the northeast region except for two on Mille Lacs L., including a first county record 10/18 – 11/1+ **Crow Wing** (one juvenile at Garrison) †AXH, RBJ, †PHS *et al.* Same bird also seen near Malmo in Aitkin County; another was found near Wealthwood (WEN). **Note**: Please specify age for all Thayer's Gulls and provide details for reports away from the North Shore and Twin Cities area.

Iceland Gull — A juvenile or first-winter bird observed 11/27 Cook (Grand Marais) †PHS proved to be the only report.

Lesser Black-backed Gull — The usual adult for the Twin Cities area was found 10/15 Hennepin (L. Calhoun) †PEB, with numerous sightings through the end of the period at L. Calhoun, and also from Dakota (Black Dog L.) beginning 11/26.

Glaucous Gull — Only reported from L. Superior and the Twin Cities. Early north 10/15 Lake JWL, followed by three more reports 10/23–24. First south report was a first-winter individual on L. Calhoun in Hennepin on 11/11, which was joined by an adult 11/18 (both PEB). These arrivals were two weeks ahead of recent medians north (10/30) and south (11/24).

Great Black-backed Gull — Both were juvenile/first-winter birds: 11/24+ Dakota (Black Dog L.) †ADS *et al.*, 11/26 St. Louis (Superior Entry in Duluth) †PHS.

SABINE'S GULL — Unprecedented total of **26** birds (3 adults, 23 juveniles) in two separate flocks 9/23 on Minnesota side of the Superior Entry in Duluth, St. Louis County, with one still present next day †PHS. These were probably the same as 19+ Sabine's off Wisconsin Point 9/21–22 (CLW, TRS *et al.*). Two more juveniles **10/9–15 Wilkin** (Breckenridge lagoons) †PHS, mob, were record late north (***The Loon*** 73:128–129).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE — Single first-winter birds discovered 10/21 Cook (Grand Marais) †DBz, †CRG *et al.* (***The Loon*** 73:124–125); 10/30 and 11/2 Lake (Agate Bay, Two Harbors) †PHS, †AXH, †JWL (***The Loon*** 73:129). All reports may refer to the same individual, but good numbers were noted elsewhere on the Great Lakes this fall, e.g., a total of 11 during the fall season at Whitefish Point on eastern L. Superior.

Caspian Tern — Three north reports, between 9/9 (Aitkin WEN) and 9/16 (St. Louis, TPW). Early south 8/12 Hennepin CRM. Peak number 9/11 Anoka (18) KJB. Late south 9/24 Isanti CRM. Only reported from Chippewa in the west.

Common Tern — Reported from Aitkin, McLeod, and Mille Lacs in late August, then only 9/23 St. Louis (9) PHS.

ARCTIC TERN — An adult **9/23** St. Louis CLW, TRS, †PHS *et al.*, appeared on both sides of the Superior Entry and provided not only the first Minnesota fall record, but also the latest Wisconsin date.

Forster's Tern — Reported north from Becker, Beltrami, Clay, and St. Louis counties in late August and first week of September, then only 10/13 Douglas RBJ. All south reports before mid-September, except for 9/24 Isanti CRM, 10/14 Stearns (3) WCM.

Black Tern — Reported from all regions of the state except the northeast and southwest. Late north 9/11 Red Lake RBJ. Late south 9/15 Big Stone KJB.

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove — Reported statewide.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE — One was well-documented 9/30 and 10/9 Big Stone (Odessa) †KRE *et al.*, †PHS. Two similar-looking doves in the area may have been this species, but unsatisfactory views precluded positive identification. About the eighth state record, all since Spring 1998 and all either adjacent to or south of the Minnesota River Valley.

Mourning Dove — Reported throughout the state. Record high count of **281** in Swift on 8/21 (KJB).

Black-billed Cuckoo — Three reports north, the latest of which was 9/10 Todd JSK, SDu. Observed in 10 south counties; last reported from four of them 9/8–10, but then only 10/5 Scott RBJ.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo — Only report north: 8/18 Becker ASM. Reported south in nine counties. Only September reports were 9/9 (SLC) and 9/13 (CMM), both in Hennepin.

Eastern Screech-Owl — Reported north 10/22 Clay (Moorhead) RHO. Observed in nine south counties, especially in Twin Cities area, but also in Brown, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Murray.

Great Horned Owl — Reported from 16 north and 27 south counties statewide.

Snowy Owl — Major invasion beginning 10/15 Lake of the Woods *fide* BAB, 10/16 Pine *fide* AXH. At least 15 were picked up starving, injured, or dead between late October and early November, including the earliest south (11/2 Wright). Total of 53 Snowys reported from 13 north and 6 south counties by end of period.

Northern Hawk Owl — Record invasion beginning 10/14 Lake, 10/15 Lake of the Woods and Cook. A total of 36 reported through end of period, all either in north-central or northeast regions. An article documenting this invasion will appear in a future issue of ***The Loon***.

Barred Owl — Reported from 12 north and 13 south counties in all regions of the state, except the southwest.

Great Gray Owl — Approximate total of 82 reported from nine counties within the coniferous forest zone, plus 11/5 Polk (CR 44 at U.S. Hwy 2) EEF. Final totals appear likely to exceed the record of 342 during the 1995–96 irruption. Please see article in future issue of ***The Loon***.

Long-eared Owl — Reported only from Marshall and St. Louis in the north. Total of 14 banded at HRNR during the season (DLE *et al.*). Six south reports beginning 11/4 Lyon mob and Meeker DMF. Others were in Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey, Rice.

Short-eared Owl — All north reports: Aitkin (11–14 between 8/27 and 10/26), Polk (2 on 9/10, EEF), St. Louis (from 4 locations 9/26 – 10/20), Wilkin (11/21, SDM), 10/1 **Cass** (Meadowbrook Twp.) WLB. All south reports: 10/13 Hennepin (Crow-Hassan Park) SLC, then four birds found 11/3–4 in Carver, Martin, Scott.

Boreal Owl — Major irruption beginning

Pileated Woodpecker, 5 November 2000, Aitkin County. Photo by Mark Junghans.

9/29 (found dead) and 10/6 (injured by hitting window) St. Louis *fide* KRE. Seven banded at HRNR (DLE *et al.*) and two dozen banded near Hartley Field (FN) in Duluth during November!

Northern Saw-whet Owl — Seasonal total of 980 banded at HRNR in St. Louis County (DLE *et al.*) — compare with 879 last year. Also reported north from Aitkin, Becker, Clay, Lake of the Woods, and Polk. All south reports: 10/26 Brown JSS, 11/22 Hennepin SLC, 11/24 Rice TFB.

Common Nighthawk — Peak migration during late August as usual, when 15,173 counted 8/23 St. Louis JRN. Others found 3000+ on both 8/22 and 8/23 along North Shore of L. Superior. MRN reported peak migration at about this same time (8/24) in Cass. Late north 9/25 Clay RHO. Late south 10/13 Steele NFT.

Whip-poor-will — All reports: (no date) Lake of the Woods MK, and 9/9 Houston MHF.

Chimney Swift — Only north report after August: 9/15 Traverse KJB. Late south 9/11 Hennepin ABo, 9/18 Dakota TAT.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird — The vast majority of reports north and south were from September. Record high count **20** on 8/30 in Steele RBJ. Late north 9/26 Mille Lacs CM. Late south 10/1 Mower RRK. An unidentified hummingbird was very late 10/20 Carver RMD, TJD.

Belted Kingfisher — Reported from 22 north and 28 south counties. Late north 11/11 Hubbard RCS, 11/18 Otter Tail CMN. Also see winter report.

Woodpeckers to Kingbirds

Red-headed Woodpecker — Reported from 10 north and 24 south counties in

all regions. Late north 11/1 Todd JSK, SDu, 11/3 Morrison WLB.

Red-bellied Woodpecker — Numbers continue to increase in northern regions. Reported from Becker, Clay, and Polk in northwest; Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Crow Wing, and Wadena in north-central; and Cook in the northeast (beginning in early November). Nearly all north reports were in November. In all, reported from 15 north and 33 south counties.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — Reported from 10 north and 13 south counties. Late north 10/16 Cook PHS, 10/19 Cook BRL. Only south reports after early October (but see winter report!) 10/27 Hennepin TAT, 11/21 Rice FVS.

Downy Woodpecker — Reported from all regions. Numbers were up along the North Shore in late October (KRE).

Hairy Woodpecker — Seen statewide.

Three-toed Woodpecker — Numerous reports from Cook: 10/1 (Gunflint Trail) DBz, 10/23 (FR 315) PHS, 10/30 (Grand Portage) KRE, 11/24 (five miles north of Grand Marais) *fide* KRE.

Black-backed Woodpecker — Reported within usual range from five counties. All reports: 9/10 – 11/27 Cook (10 sightings) KMH; 9/11 St. Louis (CR 52 west of 207) CRM; 9/18 St. Louis (BWCA) DMF; early October St. Louis (HRNR and Stoney Point) *fide* KRE; 10/2 Cass (near L. Winnibigoshish) JWL; mid-October St. Louis (4, HRNR) *fide* KRE; 10/23 Cook (4 along FR 315) PHS; 10/24 St. Louis (2 at CR 7 and 319) *fide* KRE; 10/30 Lake (Isabella) JWL; early November Cook (3 along Gunflint Trail) DBz; 11/5 Beltrami (Lake Bemidji S.P.) DPJ.

Northern Flicker — Reported from 19 north and 25 south counties. Peak 9/23 Lac Qui Parle (36) FAE. See winter report.

Pileated Woodpecker — Reported in 19 north and 20 south counties, and from all regions except the southwest.

Olive-sided Flycatcher — Reported from 7 north and 15 south counties, and from all regions except the southeast and southwest. Early south 8/2 Dakota ADS, and regular thereafter through the recent median late south date (9/21). Late north 9/7 Todd JSK, SDu, 9/9 Clay GEN. One outlier 10/3 Washington SEL.

Eastern Wood-Pewee — Reported from Lake, Otter Tail, and Polk on 9/10; latest north 9/14 Carlton LAW. Seen in four south counties 9/23–24, followed by 10/8 Blue Earth MJF.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher — One north report: 8/23 St. Louis TPW. Twenty-one south reports beginning 8/4 in Fillmore NBO, with almost daily reports from 8/15 through the end of the month. Only four September records; latest 9/23 and 9/28 Fillmore NBO.

Acadian Flycatcher — No documented reports.

Alder Flycatcher — Last reported north 8/14 Lake PHS, 8/24 Cass MRN. All south reports with details: 8/7 Anoka KJB, 8/17 Hennepin TAT, 8/22 Brown JSS, 9/8 Ramsey TAT, 9/10 Hennepin SLC.

Willow Flycatcher — Only documented reports: 8/3 Anoka KJB, 8/4 Dakota ADS, 9/10 Hennepin SLC. **Note**: During spring and fall migration undocumented records of silent *Empidonax* flycatchers are not published in this report. Please be sure to indicate singing or calling birds on the Seasonal Report form.

Least Flycatcher — Latest north 9/11 Cook KMH, 9/13 St. Louis KJB. Twenty-seven south reports, though identification notes accompanied only eight of these. Reported south through 9/23, then one on 10/7 in Hennepin SLC.

Eastern Phoebe — Reported from 19

north and 33 south counties, and from all regions. All north reports were prior to the median departure date (10/11) except for 10/21 Wadena PJB. Four south reports 10/16–17, followed only by 10/25 Brown JSS.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER — One found 11/3–5 **Lake** (Two Harbors) †MH, †KRE, photographed †PHS, provided the second state record (***The Loon*** 73:125–127). Birders in Wisconsin found that state's first at about the same time, 10/30 – 11/2 (*North American Birds* 55:56). The first Minnesota record was exactly ten years earlier in Morrison County on 11/3–6!

Great Crested Flycatcher — Most north reports in August, but four in September prior to the recent median departure date (9/19). One found over a month later in Cook on 10/21 (BRL). Most south reports through 9/11, and then 9/16 Dakota ADS, 9/18 Brown JSS, which was still five days earlier than the median late south date.

Western Kingbird — Reported west and east, but not from the central regions of the state. Three on the North Shore, 9/10 Cook KRE and Lake (2) JWL, were almost expected. Latest north 9/21 St. Louis (HRNR) FN. Latest south reports were all earlier: 8/21 Big Stone KJB, 8/25 Yellow Medicine CRM. Compare these to median late dates north (9/10) and south (9/8).

Eastern Kingbird — Widely reported from 48 counties. Major movement along the North Shore noted 8/29 Lake (50) DRB. Late north reports from Aitkin, Lake and Wadena on 9/10, then 9/11 St. Louis CRM. Latest report one week prior to median north departure. Peak movement south noted 8/21 in Big Stone (95) KJB. Reported from five south counties 9/8–9, then 9/10 Dakota ADS, over two weeks earlier than median south departure date.

Shrikes to Swallows

Loggerhead Shrike — All north reports: 8/3 Clay CRM, 8/6 Clay (2) BRB, 10/29 **Cook** (Grand Marais) †KRE. South reports from Dakota through 8/6, and then 11/13 ADS. Only other south report: 8/13 Scott (MVNWR, Wilkie Unit) RMD, TJD. **Note**: Please give exact locations and numbers of this threatened species for all seasons.

Northern Shrike — Found in all regions except southeast. Migration was slightly later than typical. First north report 10/8 St. Louis FN, and then widely reported beginning 10/14. First south reports 10/18 Hennepin SLC, 10/19 Benton HHD.

Bell's Vireo — Only reported by TAT at Black Dog L., Dakota County: four birds on 8/12 and one on 9/4.

Yellow-throated Vireo — Found in all regions but the northeast and southwest. Late north 9/10 Beltrami DPJ, 9/11 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/23 Hennepin SLC, 9/25 Fillmore NBO.

Blue-headed Vireo — Reported from all nine regions. Early south 8/20 Freeborn AEB (ties recent median), then numerous reports beginning 8/26 Dakota SWe. Peak movement noted 8/29 in Lake (10) DRB. Three October reports north — the latest of these 10/7 St. Louis ALE. Four October reports south, including two later than the recent median departure date (10/13): 10/18 Hennepin CMM, and 10/25 Murray ND.

Warbling Vireo — Departure dates were comparable to recent medians. Late north in Aitkin and Clay on 9/3, then 9/12 St. Louis SLC. Only two south observations past mid-September: 9/19 Meeker CRM, 9/27 Ramsey SEL.

Philadelphia Vireo — Only reported from Aitkin, Cook, Kanabec, Lake, and St. Louis in the north; latest of these, 9/21 St. Louis ALE and 9/26 Aitkin CLB. Peak movement through St. Louis during mid-September: 9/13 (5) KJB, 9/15 (6) JWL. Seen only in eastern and central counties south. Peak migration 9/8–14 Anoka (12) KJB. Seen in three other south counties

9/26–27. Clearly, mid-September was the time to be looking for this species in the state! Last reported 10/5 Nicollet MJF.

Red-eyed Vireo — Reported from every region except southwest. Highest count 25 on 9/4 in Chisago (most of these in one flock at Wild River S.P.) DFJ. Three early October reports later than recent median north departure date (9/26). One exceptionally late migrant was record late north and also second latest for the state: **11/4** Lake JJS, KRE. Two south reports were both later than the median departure date (10/2): 10/3 Ramsey TAT, 10/21 Hennepin CMM.

Gray Jay — Reported from nine north-central and northeast counties.

Blue Jay — Reported throughout state.

Black-billed Magpie — Reported within usual range from Aitkin, Beltrami, Itasca, Lake of the Woods, Norman, Red Lake, St. Louis. Peak 8/19 Red Lake (30) EEF.

American Crow — Reported throughout the state, with two observations of partial albinos. High count of 1000 in Mower on both 11/11 and 11/30 (RRK).

Common Raven — Seen throughout the period in northeast and north-central counties, plus 10/15 Norman CMN.

Horned Lark — Reported throughout the state in all regions except southeast. Peak counts from southwest, including 11/8 Nobles (1500) and Rock (500) LWF.

Purple Martin — Observed in 10 north counties in August, then only 9/9 Aitkin WEN. Late south 9/9 Blue Earth LWF, Houston FZL, and Washington DFN.

Tree Swallow — High count only 750 on 9/15 in Big Stone KJB. Late north 9/23 Aitkin WEN, 9/24 Wadena PJB. Widespread in south 10/7–11, but then only 10/14 Winona JJS. One albino noted 8/15 Big Stone KJB.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow — Very scarce! Only four reports north, the latest of these 8/5 St. Louis TPW (recent median north departure date 9/19). More numerous south, where reported from 10 counties, but still noted as scarce. Only two reports after mid-September: 9/18 Dakota (15) TAT and 10/1 Meeker DMF. High count 9/9 Blue Earth (30) LWF.

Bank Swallow — Found in every region. Only September report north: 9/9 Aitkin WEN. Peak count 8/21 Big Stone (400) KJB. Only four September reports south, including the latest on 9/16 Dakota SEL.

Cliff Swallow — All September reports north: 9/4 Wadena PJB, 9/9 Aitkin WEN, about one week earlier than the recent median departure date (9/15). Numerous south reports through 9/11, but then only 10/6 Chippewa ABo.

Barn Swallow — Record high count of **400** on 9/15 in Traverse and another 225 on the same day in Wilkin (both KJB). Many reports north through September, but then only 10/5 Polk EEF, 11/2 Todd JSK, SDu. Numerous south reports up to the recent median departure date (10/16), but then none until 10/30 Washington (1) RBJ.

Chickadees to Gnatcatchers

Black-capped Chickadee — Reported throughout the state.

Boreal Chickadee — Reported within range from Aitkin, Cook, Itasca, Lake, St. Louis.

Tufted Titmouse — One was a surprise visitor at Kienholz's feeder in **St. Louis** on 9/25 (†DOK, MME). Also observed throughout the period in Fillmore and Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch — Reported statewide, but apparently scarce during August in south, where only three reports prior to mid-September.

White-breasted Nuthatch — Also seen throughout the state.

Brown Creeper — Reported throughout the state, but none in south before 9/17 Dakota TAT. Many subsequent reports south through the end of the period.

Carolina Wren — Three to five birds reported! Two from Hennepin: 8/13–16 (Old Cedar Ave.) BBB, SLC and 10/22 Riverside Park CF. Also seen during early October in Ramsey (near Mississippi R.) BAF and presumably the same bird 10/23 *fide* AXH. Lastly, one seen 10/13 Houston (Beaver Creek S.P.) FZL.

House Wren — Many north reports through 9/26, then only 10/12 Douglas REH, 10/15 Norman CMN. South reports were all prior to the median departure date (10/18), except 10/29 Dakota SEL.

Winter Wren — Early south 9/7 Stearns MAJ, DCT, 9/14 Anoka (Carlos Avery WMA — probable migrant) KJB. Late north 10/16 Cook PHS, 10/31 Clay RHO. Late south 11/1 Brown JSS, 11/15 Houston FZL, 11/30 Rice TFB.

Sedge Wren — One found in downtown Minneapolis 8/3 suggested that migration underway by early August. However, a peak count of 13 in Hennepin on 9/10 (TAT) indicated that the major movement occurred in September. Late north reports from Lake and Kanabec during mid-September, but then only 10/26 Aitkin PEJ. Many south reports until 10/3, then 10/11 Hennepin SLC, 10/15 Stearns WCM.

Marsh Wren — Two north reports in mid-September, then none reported until 10/15 Norman CMN, 10/16 Aitkin CLB. In the south, reported frequently into mid-October, but the latest were observed by SLC in Hennepin during November: 11/1 Wood Lake and 11/7 (2) Bass Ponds.

Golden-crowned Kinglet — First south reports within one day of median arrival (9/17): 9/18 Brown JSS, 9/20 Swift JJS. Late north 11/21–22 in Cass, St. Louis and Otter Tail, then 11/25 Aitkin WEN. Many November reports south, including 11/26 Hennepin DCZ; also see winter report.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet — Early south **8/16** (ties second earliest south) Meeker DMF, then typical arrivals in late August. Many north reports through mid-October, then 10/29 Cook KMH, 11/10 St. Louis JRN. South reports into early November, followed by 11/15 Hennepin SLC and Houston FZL, 11/23 Hennepin CMM.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — First county record 8/13 **Polk** (Maple Lake) †EEF. Also observed in Cass, Wadena, Kanabec, and two St. Louis locations: 9/12 (HRNR) FN, 9/17 (Park Point in Duluth) TPW. Seen in 19 south counties, including exceptional reports **10/28** (ties previous latest south date) Anoka †AWJ, **11/3** Brown JSS, and **11/15** Houston (near Reno) †FZL. Only other November record is 6 November 1994 in Cook!

Bluebirds to Waxwings

Eastern Bluebird — Reported statewide. Highest count 23 birds in one flock, 10/7 Carver PEB. Only two November reports north: 11/1 St. Louis NAJ, 11/17 St. Louis LAW. Late south 11/16 Fillmore NBO and Freeborn AEB, 11/28 Dakota ADS.

Townsend's Solitaire — Seven reports north: 10/8 St. Louis (at HRNR) BT, 10/15 Norman CMN, 10/20–22 Lake (Two Harbors) DBz *et al.*, 10/21 Cook (near Grand Marais) NAJ, 10/29 – 11/25+ Cook (Grand Marais) KMH, mob, 11/16 St. Louis (Greysolon Rd, Duluth) MME, 11/25 Lake (Two Harbors) JWL. Two south reports: 10/28 Hennepin (Wood L.) †TAT, 11/23 Ramsey (Hidden Falls Park) KSc.

Veery — Two north reports after early September: 9/19 Cook KMH, 9/26 Carlton LAW. Latest south report 9/6 Anoka KJB, 11 days prior to median departure date.

Gray-cheeked Thrush — Extremely

scarce — only five reports: **8/13** (second earliest north) Polk EEF, 8/22 St. Louis RJS, 9/10 Hennepin CRM, 10/11 St. Louis JRN, 10/14 Lake CRM.

Swainson's Thrush — See the summer report for early south migrants. One seen mid-month (8/19 Ramsey KJB), but no more until the end of August. High count 9/6 Anoka (5) KJB. Scattered reports north through September, then only 10/7 Cook KMH, 10/22 St. Louis SS. Late south in Anoka and Dakota on 10/4, then only 10/22 Rice JGL.

Hermit Thrush — Late migration into southern regions, where first seen 9/26 Hennepin SLC; compare to recent median arrival date (9/9). It was the second latest south arrival in 15 years. The bulk of migration occurred during October. North reports widespread until 10/15, then only 10/31 Kanabec CM, 11/22 St. Louis KRE. Four south reports in November, latest of these 11/24 Rice TFB, 11/26 Carver WCM.

Wood Thrush — No north reports. Seven south reports through 9/17, then several October migrants: 10/2 Hennepin TAT, 10/4 Anoka REH, 10/10 **Rock** ND.

American Robin — Reported statewide. Between 10/7–15, JWL noted about 1000 in Two Harbors, Lake County.

Varied Thrush — One early bird **10/7** Carver (Victoria) *fide* AXH and one north of Skime 11/25+ Roseau *fide* BAB.

Gray Catbird — Late north 10/1 Aitkin WEN and St. Louis TPW. Late north date same as in 1999, yet the recent median about three weeks later (10/21). Reported south 10/2–4 from Fillmore, Murray, Lac Qui Parle, and Brown, then none until 11/1 Hennepin TAT, close to the median south departure date (11/2).

Northern Mockingbird — Only reports: 9/23 Olmsted *fide* AXH and 10/21 Cook (northeast of Hovland) NAJ. This species has been reported from Cook in three of the last four fall seasons.

Brown Thrasher — Numerous reports north through 9/17, then none until two or three found at the end of November: 11/20 Otter Tail GEW, 11/29 Otter Tail DST, 11/30 Kanabec CM. South reports showed a similar pattern with many seen through 10/4, then only 10/31 Hennepin ABo. Also see winter report.

European Starling — Seen statewide.

American Pipit — Reported from 33 counties in all regions of the state. Early north reports from northeast, beginning 9/22 St. Louis PHS, almost two weeks later than median arrival (9/10). This was the latest north arrival since prior to 1985. Several south reports preceded the north arrivals, including a record-tying **9/3** Rice JGL, and 9/15 Benton HHD. Record high count **600+** on 11/1 in Rock (Battleplain Twp.) ND, in harvested soy bean fields along a 2.5 mile stretch of road. Notable count on 10/21 in Cottonwood (200) BRB (***The Loon*** 73:67). Late north 11/5 Aitkin WEN, 11/9 Cook JJS. Late south 11/9 Jackson BRB, 11/15 Murray ND.

Bohemian Waxwing — Reported from Aitkin, Cook, Lake, Otter Tail, St. Louis. Early north 10/14 Cook PHS, 10/22 Lake CRM. Peak counts 11/20 Cook (300) PHS, 11/22 Otter Tail (125) SDM, and 11/28 St. Louis (100) JRN. This sought-after species became increasingly difficult to find later in the season (please see winter report).

Cedar Waxwing — Reported statewide.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler — All reports were south and east of a line from Anoka through Brown. Last reported 9/9 Dakota ADS, 9/25 Fillmore NBO.

Golden-winged Warbler — Early south away from breeding areas 8/16 Hennepin SLC. Peak 8/20 Anoka (total of 7 including a "Lawrence's" Warbler) KJB. Late

north 9/10 Carlton LAW, 9/11 Clearwater RBJ. Late south from three counties 9/10–11, then only 10/9 Anoka *fide* SLC.

Tennessee Warbler — Observed on 8/2 Hennepin SLC, 8/3 Anoka KJB, but see summer report. Late north 10/15 Carlton LAW. Late south 10/23 Carver RMD, TJD.

Orange-crowned Warbler — Seen in all nine regions. All north reports between mid-September and mid-October, except for 9/9 Beltrami RJS and **11/4** Otter Tail SDM. Early south 8/31 Hennepin CMM, 9/1 Anoka REH. Late south 11/10 Rice TFB, **11/15** Hennepin SLC. **Note**: This species is normally a late migrant through Minnesota. Please provide details for any reports before early September.

Nashville Warbler — Early south 8/13 Hennepin, 8/15–16 in four counties, but also see summer report. CMM found 21 in Hennepin on 9/22; SLC had 3 in same county as late as 10/12. Late dates were typical. October reports from 6 north and 14 south counties, last seen 10/20 Brown JSS, 10/22 Kanabec BLA.

Northern Parula — Aside from a 7/19 migrant (see summer report), early south 8/19 Brown JSS, 8/23 Anoka KJB. Other south reports all between 8/27 and 9/22, except 9/27 Ramsey SEL. Only two north reports after 9/11: 9/23 Lake RBJ, **11/4** (record late north) Lake JJS, KRE.

Yellow Warbler — Migration apparently in progress by 8/3 when TAT found one in downtown Minneapolis. Two October records in north were exceptional, since only one previous post-September north report. Those found **10/18** Kanabec BLA and **10/31** Pine KM, BP, were third latest and record late north, respectively. Only three reports after early September in the south, latest of these 9/21 Hennepin SLC.

Chestnut-sided Warbler — Early south 8/6 Anoka DFJ. Peak migration from 8/13 through 9/14. Late north 9/24 Clay RHO, **10/10** (second latest north) Carlton LAW. Last reported south 9/27 Blue Earth LWF, 10/1 Hennepin CMM.

Magnolia Warbler — Migration through south primarily between mid-August and end of September. Late north 9/25 Aitkin CLB, 9/28 St. Louis ALE. Late south 10/3 Mower (4) RRK, 10/4 Carver RMD, TJD. Both extremes were near recent median departure dates (north 10/1, south 10/5).

Cape May Warbler — Only 11 reports. Late north 9/23 Lake RBJ, 9/28 St. Louis ALE. All for south: 9/3 Meeker DMF, 9/5 Goodhue KJB, 9/6 Hennepin SLC, 9/30 Watonwan DLB, 10/1 Anoka JLH.

Black-throated Blue Warbler — Only reports in north: 8/29 Lake (4) DRB, 9/9 **Beltrami** RJS. Most south reports were in Hennepin: 9/7 male in Minnetonka *fide* MKE, 9/10 female CMM, 9/28 male CMM, 9/30 male at Cedar Lake (same as 9/28?) SLC, 10/1 male (same as 9/28–30?) CMM, 10/3 found dead downtown Minneapolis TAT, and 10/9 male CMM. The only other south report was 9/23 Scott (female at Murphy-Hanrehan) TPB.

Yellow-rumped Warbler — Early south 8/18 Scott SEL (recent median 8/21), then none until 9/1 Anoka REH. Most migrated through south between mid-September and mid-October. Four November reports north: 11/5 Aitkin WEN, 11/9 Cook KMH, 11/15 St. Louis JRN, 11/24 St. Louis GCK. November reports south: 11/1 Brown JSS, 11/1 Houston FZL, 11/10 Carver RMD, TJD, 11/26 Fillmore JWH. Also watch for winter report!

Black-throated Green Warbler — Last seen north earlier than usual, 9/11 Cook KMH and St. Louis CRM, 9/15 St. Louis ALE (median 9/30). First seen south 8/16 Hennepin SLC; many reported beginning 8/26. A few lingered until early October in south; last seen 10/7 Dodge JJS.

Blackburnian Warbler — Earliest south 8/13 Brown JSS, followed by reports from four other counties over next four days.

Departed the state earlier than usual. Late north 9/10 Aitkin CLB, 9/13 St. Louis SLC (median 9/19). Late south 9/9 Hennepin DCZ, 9/10 Dakota SWe (median 9/27). No reports from western counties.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER — One discovered in summer at William O'Brien S.P. in Washington County (***The Loon*** 73:62–63) was refound 8/2 by †AXH, RBJ.

Pine Warbler — Early south 8/20 Pope CRM, then none until September. Many north reports through mid-September, then only 9/27 Becker (2) *fide* BAB, 9/30 Cass MRN. The only south reports after mid-September were 9/21 Benton CRM, 9/25 Dakota TAT.

Palm Warbler — Seen in all regions of the state. Early south 9/10 Hennepin SLC, 9/11 Anoka KJB, 9/12 Washington DPS. Many north reports through mid-October, followed by 10/28 Cook JWL, 11/5 Cook JJS, KRE. Late south 10/22 Hennepin SLC, 10/26 Murray ND.

Bay-breasted Warbler — Reported only from the east and central regions. Most south reports were between 8/27 and 9/10, but earlier birds on 8/18 Freeborn AEB, 8/19 Hennepin TAT, 8/22 Anoka KJB, and later birds 9/25 Fillmore NBO, 10/1 Hennepin SLC, **10/29** (the second latest date south) Hennepin †TAT. Earliest north away from breeding range 8/25 Aitkin CLB. Others north through 9/17, then 10/15 Lake JWL.

Blackpoll Warbler — Only 17 reports. All north reports 9/9–21, except for 8/27 Aitkin WEN and 9/24 Wadena PJB. Early south 8/26 Brown JSS, 8/27 Dakota SWe. Late south 9/23 Nicollet LWF. All other south reports were 9/2–10.

Cerulean Warbler — No reports.

Black-and-white Warbler — Seen in all regions. Consistent north reports through 9/17, but then only 9/24 St. Louis ALE (median 10/1). Late south 9/30 Meeker DMF, 10/4 Hennepin SLC (median 10/5).

American Redstart — Reported from all regions. High count 9/6 Anoka (37) KJB. Commonly reported north through 9/23, then 10/15 Lake JWL, 10/18 Cook KMH (median 10/6). Late south 10/2 Fillmore NBO (median 10/11).

Prothonotary Warbler — All reports were in south: 8/10 Dakota (2) ADS, 8/12 Dakota SWe, 8/25 Freeborn RBJ, and 9/2 Dakota ADS.

Worm-eating Warbler — No reports (accidental in fall).

Ovenbird — Of 46 reports, only 3 from the west. Late north 9/21 Todd JSK, SDu, 10/1 Carlton LAW (median 9/23). Late south 10/13 McLeod RWS, 10/15 Dakota ADS (median 10/11).

Northern Waterthrush — Only north report after mid-September: 10/1 Cook KMH. Peak 9/6 Anoka (7) KJB. Reported in summer as far south as Anoka; first migrants 8/5 Houston DPS, 8/10 Dakota ADS. Late south 10/3 Hennepin TAT and Ramsey REH.

Louisiana Waterthrush — No reports were documented.

Kentucky Warbler — No reports.

Connecticut Warbler — Only reports: 8/26 Aitkin WEN, 8/29 Washington RBJ, 9/3 Aitkin CLB, 9/12 St. Louis (downtown Duluth) DRB.

Mourning Warbler — Reported from six north and eight south counties. Earliest migrants 8/13 Hennepin CMM, SLC, 8/15 Dakota ADS. Latest north 9/13 St. Louis (2) SLC, KJB. Late south 9/13 Brown JSS, 9/22 Hennepin TAT.

Common Yellowthroat — Reported from four north counties on 9/23–24, but then only **11/22** St. Louis (latest north date; recently deceased bird in downtown

Duluth) JoH. Latest south 10/24 Mower RRK, 11/17 Rice TFB (median 10/26).

Hooded Warbler — No fall reports since 1995.

Wilson's Warbler — Twenty-four north reports concentrated between 8/24 Clearwater ABo, and 9/11 Clearwater RBJ and St. Louis CRM, TPW. Compare to median north arrival (8/12) and departure (9/25). South reports began 8/15 Freeborn AEB and Lac Qui Parle FAE. Three lingered past the median late south date (9/26): 10/1 Meeker DMF, 10/2 Brown JSS, 10/5 Lac Qui Parle FAE.

Canada Warbler — Only reported from Aitkin, Clay, and St. Louis in north; latest 9/2 St. Louis ALE, 9/4 St. Louis JWL. More widespread in south, where found in 17 counties. Early south 8/11 Rice TFB, 8/13 Hennepin CMM. Last reported south 9/12 Washington DPS, 9/19 Hennepin WCM.

Yellow-breasted Chat — No reports.

Tanagers to Snow Bunting

Summer Tanager — Seen at feeder near Faribault in Rice County **11/15–25+** †TFB.

Scarlet Tanager — Thirty reports from eastern and central counties. Latest north 9/9 Aitkin WEN, 9/14 Kanabec CM (median 9/20). Late south 9/27 Houston FZL, 10/13 Hennepin TAT (median 10/1).

Western Tanager — No acceptable reports.

Spotted Towhee — Record number of individuals since the split of Rufous-sided Towhee! Two north reports: mid-October in Otter Tail (TJa) and early November in Becker (*fide* BAB). Seven or eight birds reported south: 9/27 Rock (Vienna Twp.) ND, 10/7–8 Carver (Lowery N.C.) BJM, DDM, †PEB, mob, 10/16–28 **Freeborn** (1–2 at Myre-Big Island S.P.) AEB, RBJ, 10/17 Murray (Moulton Twp.) ND, 10/23 Brown (two at Flandran S.P.; description of white at base of its primaries suggests the possibility of a hybrid) †JSS, 10/25+ **Scott** (photographed at a feeder in Shakopee; overwintered but hit window and died on 4/3/01) *fide* RBJ. Finally, what was initially presumed to be a hybrid Eastern x Spotted Towhee, on 11/23+ Lake †JWL, †KRE, †PHS, remains unidentified even though studied and photographed from close range. Note that two reports this season were potential hybrids, and most of the others lacked documentation. We request detailed plumage descriptions for all future reports as we try to distinguish presumably pure towhees from hybrids.

Eastern Towhee — Only north report: 9/23 Clay RHO. Many late south reports, including these in November: 11/19–30+ Anoka (Coon Rapids) RLR, 11/25 Nicollet MJF, 11/23–30+ Winona (Whitewater S.P.) DBz, 11/27 Houston CRM. Stay tuned for the winter season!

American Tree Sparrow — Early north 10/2 St. Louis JRN, followed by reports from Lake, Polk and Aitkin 10/6–7, and multiple counties beginning 10/14. Early south 9/23 Nicollet LWF, 10/7 Hennepin SWe, but most reports began 10/15. High counts: 11/24 Houston **(300)** DFN, 11/9 Cass (50) MRN, 11/5 Ramsey (48) DFJ.

Chipping Sparrow — One north report after October: 11/17 St. Louis †KRE. Latest south 11/13 McLeod RWS, 11/14 Steele NFT, 11/15 Hennepin SLC.

Clay-colored Sparrow — Only October report north: 10/15 Norman CMN (same as recent median departure). Numerous south reports through 10/8, then record late on **11/16** in Hennepin CRM (but also see winter report!).

Field Sparrow — Unexpected locations 10/19 St. Louis KRE, 11/23–27 Lake JWL, KRE, †PHS; no other north reports. Late south 10/29 Hennepin TAT and Wabasha JJS, 11/4 Isanti DPS.

Vesper Sparrow — Highest counts: 9/15 Wilkin (**32**) KJB, 9/23 Renville (10) DFJ. All north reports preceded recent median departure date (10/18) except 11/25 Clay RHO. Reports from the North Shore were unexpected: 10/1 St. Louis TPW, 10/4 Lake (Silver Bay) KWR, 10/9 Lake DPB (same bird?). Only south report after mid-October: 10/28 Washington RBJ.

Lark Sparrow — All: 8/26 Norman KRE, 9/1 Anoka REH, 9/30 Lac Qui Parle JJS.

Savannah Sparrow — Record high count of **183** on 9/15 in Wilkin KJB. Also notable considering the date were 40 on 11/2 in Steele RBJ. Late north **11/9** Cook JJS, **11/11** (second latest north) Crow Wing BRL, TAT. Last reported south 11/12 Hennepin TAT, **11/25** Dakota SWe.

Grasshopper Sparrow — Only reports after early August: 8/26 Carver DFJ, 9/2 Swift RBJ, and 9/18 **Cook** (Spruce Creek) BJM, DDM.

Henslow's Sparrow — None reported despite record high number this summer.

Le Conte's Sparrow — Reported from all regions in the state except northwest and southeast. Three north reports after mid-September, including 10/7 Lake KRE, JWL, and 10/14 Carlton LAW. Twenty-four observations in ten south counties. Early south 9/18 Steele (2) RBJ, 9/25 Dakota (2) TAT. Up to eight birds 10/1–15 in Hennepin (Crow-Hassan Park) SLC. Latest 10/23 Rice TFB, Watonwan (4 locations) and Cottonwood CRM.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow — Only north reports were from Two Harbors in **Lake**: 9/15 (Burlington Bay) JWL, 9/19 (Agate Bay) JWL. More south reports than usual, but usually overlooked? Observed 9/17 Olmsted (East Landfill Reservoir near Rochester) CBe, 9/18 **Steele** (2) RBJ, 9/25 Dakota (2) TAT, 10/1–11 Hennepin (3–4 at Crow-Hassan Park) SLC, 10/2–3 Dakota (Resurrection Cemetery, Mendota Heights) ADS, 10/3 Dakota (record high count of **7** in Lakeville) ADS, 10/3–14 **Rice** (**6+** at River Bend N.C.) TBF, †JGL, 10/7 Dakota TAT. Most had no details.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 10 October 2000, River Bend Nature Center, Faribault, Rice County. Photo by Jon Little.

Fox Sparrow — Relatively early north on 9/2 Aitkin WEN, then no reports until 9/22 Lake RBJ (median 9/20). Early south 9/20 Swift JJS, then observed in Hennepin and Dakota next two days. Late north 11/30 Pine KM, BP. Also see winter report.

Song Sparrow — Observed in five north counties 11/10–11, but then only 11/19 St. Louis SS. Also see winter report.

Lincoln's Sparrow — Early south 9/6 Anoka KJB and Hennepin SLC, one week later than the median south arrival (8/31). Record high counts 10/9 Cottonwood (**30** in one yard) BRB, 10/10 Jackson (**30+**) BRB. Departed north by early October, except for 10/13 Douglas REH and 10/14 Aitkin CLB. South reports in November: 11/11 Rice TFB, 11/25 Hennepin TAT and Winona (Whitewater S.P.) DBz.

Swamp Sparrow — DPJ reported 20 in Beltrami along Lake Bemidji shoreline on 10/15, but no other north reports after

10/16 except for 11/4 Lake TAT. Reported south through end of the season.

White-throated Sparrow — Appeared throughout south 9/11–13, preceded only by 9/8 Murray ND. High counts 10/23 Mower (100) RRK, 9/28 St. Louis (50) TPW.

Harris's Sparrow — Reported from 14 north and 27 south counties. One at Big Deep L., Cass County, from **7/29** through 9/3 was photographed (MRN). Migrants arrived in north 9/16 Lake DPS, 9/23 Polk EEF. First reported south 9/20 Swift JJS, 9/23 Dakota TAT. Late north 11/28 Cass WLB, 11/29 Cook KMH. Also see winter report.

White-crowned Sparrow — Early north 9/15 Lake JWL, 9/16 St. Louis NAJ. Early south 9/17 Anoka KJB, 9/20 Rice TFB. Many north reports 10/17–22 followed by only two birds in Lake on 11/25+ (JWL, PHS). Similarly, one was found 11/21 in Dakota (KEO), even though no others were reported south after October.

Dark-eyed Junco — Reported throughout the period in northern regions. Early south 9/12 Anoka SLC, 9/17 Hennepin SLC. Notable high count 10/16 St. Louis (500) TPW. Possible "pink-sided" form found 10/15 Ramsey (Pig's Eye Lake) SWe, and another 11/8 Becker *fide* BAB. Possible "Oregon" reported 11/14–12/25 Kanabec CM and 11/23 Winona DBz.

Lapland Longspur — Reported from 11 north and 17 south counties. Arrived on time north and south. Early north 9/14 St. Louis SS, 9/15 Wilkin KJB (median 9/13). Early south 9/24 Hennepin TAT, 9/25 Steele NFT (median 9/23). Notable counts 11/4 Cottonwood (1000) BRB, 11/4 Rock (550) ND. Late north 11/29 Wilkin SDM, but also see winter report.

Smith's Longspur — Four North Shore reports! Observed 10/4 Lake (Silver Bay) KWR, 10/6 Cook MH, 10/15 Lake (Beaver Bay) CRM, 10/20 St. Louis (4 at Stoney Point) †PHS. Also reported from expected locales 10/9 Wilkin (Rothsay WMA) PHS, 10/9 Big Stone (Otrey Twp.) †PHS, 10/15 Cottonwood (11) JWH, 10/21–22 Cottonwood (20 at Red Rock Prairie) BRB.

Chestnut-collared Longspur — Only reported from Clay (Felton Prairie) where last seen 8/7 RHO.

Snow Bunting — Early north 10/14 Cook JWL, 10/15 Aitkin WEN. Early south 10/20 Isanti RBJ, 10/29 Hennepin TAT. High count 11/30 Todd (100) SDu, JSK.

Cardinals to Orioles

Northern Cardinal — Reported from all regions except in extreme northwest and north-central counties. Numbers continue to increase in the northeast. Reported throughout the south. TEB had 28 at their feeders on 11/19 in Washington!

Rose-breasted Grosbeak — Late north 9/17 St. Louis TPW, 9/23 Otter Tail DST. Only south reports after 10/1 were from Hennepin, where last reported 10/31 SLC and 11/2 ABo (same bird?). Median south departure date 10/15.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK — Female seen 10/21–23 Lake (Two Harbors) †JWL, †PHS.

Blue Grosbeak — No reports.

Indigo Bunting — Most departed the north by the first week of September, but several lingered later, including 10/1 Cass MRN, 10/16 St. Louis FN. Late south 10/9 Hennepin TAT, 10/14 Winona JJS.

PAINTED BUNTING — A male present in Maple Grove, Hennepin County, since early May was last seen 8/8 (*fide* AXH).

Dickcissel — After numerous summer reports of this irruptive species, only fall report: 8/12 Hennepin SLC.

Bobolink — Highest count 9/15 Wilkin

(**179**) KJB; only subsequent north report was 10/4 Lake KRE. Most departed from the south by mid-September, but one was seen 9/30 Dakota SWe, ADS.

Red-winged Blackbird — Reported throughout the season.

Eastern Meadowlark — Last observed north on 11/11 Aitkin WEN and Lake (4) JWL, 11/19 St. Louis SS. Reported south through mid-October, but then only 11/8 Dodge RBJ, 11/27 Houston CRM. Most were presumably identified by location, since very few reports indicated how this species was distinguished from Western Meadowlark. Unidentified meadowlarks were seen 11/23 St. Louis KRE and Steele (2) NFT, 11/24 Houston PEJ, DFN.

Western Meadowlark — Only reports north after mid-October: 11/4 Lake (2) TAT, 11/9 Cook JJS, 11/13 Cook (3 birds identified by call note) KMH. Late south 11/26 Rock (5) ND, 11/30 Cottonwood (8) BRB, 11/30 Jackson BRB.

Yellow-headed Blackbird — All north reports after early August: 8/21 Wadena PJB, 8/26 Aitkin WEN and Becker CRM. South reports after August: 9/9 Blue Earth MJF, 9/28 Lac Qui Parle BEO.

Rusty Blackbird — First reported north 9/24 Itasca ABo, 9/25 Mille Lacs PHS. Only two pre-October reports south: 9/16 Dakota SEL, 9/23 Lac Qui Parle FAE. Late north 11/12 Lake SS, 11/14 St. Louis JRN, but also see winter report.

Brewer's Blackbird — High count 9/24 Polk (200) EEF. Late north 10/13 Todd JSK, SDu, 10/15 Norman CMN, 11/10–12 Clay *fide* BAB. Late south 11/10 Waseca JPS, 11/15 Lac Qui Parle FAE.

Common Grackle — Seen statewide and throughout the season. High counts 9/24 Polk (4500) EEF, 10/23 Hennepin (2000) RBJ.

Brown-headed Cowbird — Few north reports, where last seen 8/26 Becker JJS, CRM. Numerous south reports through end of season, including 11/23 Ramsey DFJ, 11/24 Dakota (5) TAT, 11/24 Houston PEJ, DFN. Also see winter report.

Orchard Oriole — All reports: 8/2 Clay RHO, 8/8 Big Stone SLC, 8/24 Blue Earth MJF.

Baltimore Oriole — Reported regularly through 9/8 in north and mid-September in south. The only subsequent reports were orioles at feeders much later in the season, when Bullock's (Accidental in the state, one record from Duluth) should be considered. Reported 11/4–22 Todd JSK, SDu, RBJ; 11/8–24 Cook KMH, 11/11–21 Hennepin (Minnetonka) *fide* AXH, and 11/27 Hennepin (Minneapolis) *fide* AXH. Compare with median departure dates north (9/14) and south (10/4).

Finches to Weaver Finches

Pine Grosbeak — Arrivals progressed from Cook, Lake, and St. Louis to Aitkin, Pine, and Itasca, suggesting a movement into the state from northeast, as in 1999. Early north 10/22 Cook KRE, 10/24 Lake CRM, KRE and St. Louis KEO. No south reports.

Purple Finch — Reported from 19 north and 20 south counties. First south reports began 9/10 in Dakota (TAT), with reports from four more counties over the next three days. High count 10/22 Rice (30, all females or first-year males) JGL.

House Finch — Observed statewide.

Red Crossbill — Reported from Cass, Cook, Itasca, Lake, and St. Louis counties with all but one report from late October through November. High count only four birds!

White-winged Crossbill — Reported from August through October in Aitkin and St. Louis counties, plus late October in Lake.

Common Redpoll — First found 10/28 Cook DRB, 11/4 Pine CM, then several reports beginning 11/9. Peak count 11/9 Cass (50–100) MRN. No reports from the south.

Hoary Redpoll — No reports.

Pine Siskin — Reported throughout the season in the north, except in the northwest. One early report from Stearns (8/13 MAJ, DCT) may not have been a migrant. The next south report was in mid-September (9/17 Hennepin SLC).

American Goldfinch — Seen statewide.

Evening Grosbeak — Reported from Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Itasca, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pine, and St. Louis. An article on the apparent decline of this species will appear in a future issue of ***The Loon***.

House Sparrow — Reported statewide.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW — This summering bird was last seen northeast of Rollag, Clay County on 9/1 *fide* AXH.

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TRS	Thomas R. Schultz
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WEN	Warren E. Nelson
WLB	William L. Brown
WMS	William M. Stauffer

ANWR	Agassiz N.W.R.
BSNWR	Big Stone N.W.R.
HRNR	Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve
HSNWR	Hamden Slough N.W.R.
MBW	Minnesota Birding Weekends
MVNWR	Minnesota Valley N.W.R.
TNWR	Tamarac N.W.R.
USFWS	U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
mob	many observers

Great-tailed Grackles Nesting in Minnesota
With Notes on the Species' Range Expansion in the Midwest

Anthony X. Hertzel and Paul Hertzel

The North American range of the Great-tailed Grackle has been steadily expanding northward for about as long as records have been kept. In the 20th Century, its range expanded from colonies in Texas north through the interior of the U.S. and west to the Pacific coast. In recent years in the central part of the United States, Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan, Tennessee, and Wisconsin have had first records of the Great-tailed/Boat-tailed complex, and Minnesota and South Dakota have had their first Great-tailed Grackle nestings. In this paper we document the first nesting record of this species in Minnesota and summarize recent occurrences in the Midwest.

On 19 June 1982, the first Minnesota record of a Great-tailed/Boat-tailed Grackle was documented by Paul Egeland near Black Dog Lake in Dakota County (Egeland 1983). The Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) accepted this sighting as a *Quiscalus mexicanus/major* because there were insufficient details in the documentation to eliminate the remote possibility of Boat-tailed Grackle (*Q. major*) (Eckert 1983).

The first confirmed record of the Great-tailed Grackle (*Q. mexicanus*) in Minnesota occurred eleven years later when on 5 April 1993, Kevin Smith found a male at a farm pond near Faribault in Rice County (Smith 1993). The bird remained in the area five days.

Five years passed before the species was reported again in Minnesota. On 18 April 1998, on the Iowa/Minnesota border, Great-tailed Grackles were observed at Grover's Lake Wildlife Management Area in Jackson County (Eckert 1998). The northern third of this small lake lies in Minnesota, while the southern two-thirds are in Dickinson County, Iowa. Male birds were seen displaying and females were observed carrying nesting material on the Iowa side of the lake, though no nests were found. Up to six individuals continued to be seen on the Minnesota side throughout the spring season (Benson *et al.* 1998).

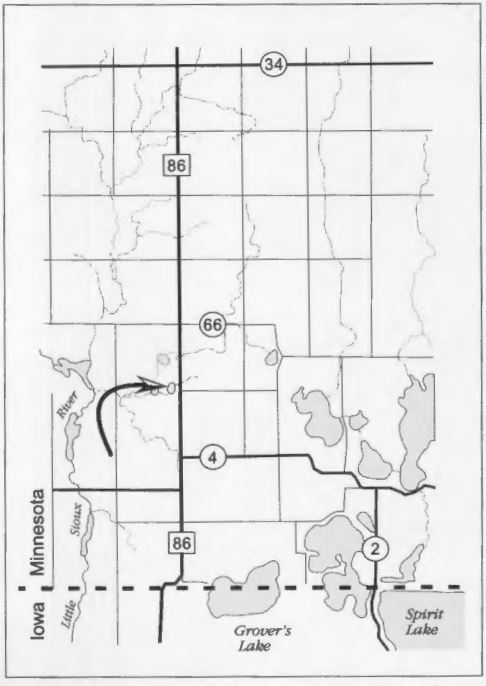

Figure 1. Jackson County location where the two Great-tailed Grackle nests were found.

The following spring, Great-tailed Grackles were again encountered by

Figure 2. Pond where the first Great-tailed Grackle nests were found. Several Great-taileds are visible in the cattails on the far shore. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.

many observers at and near Grover's Lake (Svingen 1999). Though no summer observations were reported, by the fall of 1999, roving flocks of Great-tailed Grackles were easy to find in extreme southern Jackson County. We found as many as 30 individuals on 9 October 1999 as they foraged along the east side of state highway 86.

The First Minnesota Nest

Anticipating the grackle's eventual breeding in the state, on 20 May 2000, we walked the Minnesota edge of Grover's Lake looking for Great-taileds. We observed several birds, especially on the Iowa side of the lake, but found no nest-building activity. We then expanded our search to the numerous small wetlands to the north.

About 4.8 km north of the Iowa border we investigated an isolated, reedy pond on the west side of Minnesota highway 86 in Section 17 (Figure 1). At this location, a slough is created by a small tributary running west to the Little Sioux River through a low depression (Figure 2). Two male Great-tailed Grackles and three females split their time between these reeds and a nearby cow pasture, and a third male and two female Great-taileds were in the adjacent fields. Figure 3 depicts one of the male Great-tailed Grackles found at this location. The combination of birds, marsh, and pastures made the location seem especially promising (Jaramillo and Burke 1999) and we searched the cattails along the pond's edges for nests but without success. In marsh vegetation, Great-tailed Grackles utilize both old growth and new vegetation as a foundation on which to build their nests, but on this date the year's new growth had not yet emerged.

When we returned to the slough on 2 June 2000, we were drawn by Great-tailed Grackle activity to a particular location in the reeds. As we approached, a female Great-tailed Grackle was seen leaving one of two nests. Though observed each spring since 1998, Great-tailed Grackles had yet to be reported in Minnesota during the summer season (June – July), making this the state's first summer record.

The two nests were about one meter

Figure 3. Male Great-tailed Grackle, 2 June 2000, Jackson County. Photo by Paul Hertzel.

apart and woven to the reeds about 0.4 m over the water's surface. The depth of the water directly beneath the nests was about 0.5 m.

In each nest we found four sub-elliptical eggs which we described as having a light greenish-gray ground color underneath brown scribbles and blurry, Greek-like letters, as though painted while wet, together with firm black spots, some with short stems (see front cover). The suffuse markings were slightly more dense away from the broad end of the egg. At one nest the shell hue of two of the eggs was pearly gray with a pinkish cast rather than the light greenish-gray of the other six. This may indicate eggs more recently laid (Baicich and Harrison 1997). A sample egg measured 34 mm x 23 mm. This constitutes the first nesting record for this species in Minnesota.

Also present and apparently nesting in the immediate area and surrounding fields were several species of blackbirds, including Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) and Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) in the same marsh. For comparison, we list in Table 1 typical egg measurements of four species of blackbirds found at the Jackson County location.

Great-tailed Grackle	33x22 mm
Common Grackle	28x21 mm
Yellow-headed Blackbird	26x18 mm
Red-winged Blackbird	25x18 mm

Table 1. Typical egg measurements of four species of blackbirds (from Baicich and Harrison 1997).

It is interesting that Minnesota's first nest occurred at a small, prairie pothole. This corroborates the profile for pioneering Great-tailed Grackles noted by Dinsmore and Dinsmore (1993a). They wrote, "Despite the apparent influence of humans on their [Great-tailed Grackles] range expansion, the first birds to nest in an area often are found in natural wetlands."

It is a curiosity that the locations of the first Missouri nest (longitude 95° 24' 00" W), the first Iowa nest (longitude 95° 35' 00" W), and the first Minnesota nest (longitude 95° 11' 00" W) lie within 24 minutes of arc of due north of each other (range). This is only about 32 km (20 mi) at the latitude of the Minnesota nest (43° 32' 00" N).

Spring 2001

In the spring of 2001, Great-tailed Grackles were briefly observed once again in southern Jackson County (Jon Peterson, pers. comm.), but heavy rains flooded both Grover's Lake and the small slough where we had found the nests the previous spring. No grackles were observed at either of these locations later in the spring or into the summer. However, on 27 May, in an effort to tape record the voices of the birds involved in the range expansion, Rebecca Irwin and Tammy Hertzel found Great-tailed Grackles at a second slough also along state highway 86 a few miles farther north (pers. comm.).

In addition, Great-tailed Grackles were reported at two new Minnesota locations. A pair was found on 8 May 2001 by Dave Squillace (pers. comm.) just east of Roch-

ester, Olmsted County at a wetland known locally as the County 9 Marsh. Nesting was a possibility but there was no evidence of this. Then on 12 May 2001, a single male Great-tailed Grackle was found by Cindy and Vern Krienke near the public access on the south side of Swan Lake in Nicollet County (pers. comm.). If found acceptable by MORC, these last two observations represent first county records.

Great-tailed Grackles have occurred in the state each year since 1998. Though still technically classified by MORC as "Accidental," the status of this species undoubtedly will be considered "Regular" in the near future. Breeding evidence of this species should continue to be sought in Minnesota and elsewhere so a complete record of the expansion, particularly the rate of expansion, can be documented.

Expansion into the Midwest

The Great-tailed Grackle was already expanding its range north from Mexico through the range of the exclusively coastal Boat-tailed Grackle when the species complex was first studied and classified by early researchers in the latter part of the 19th Century. During this range collision there were mixed opinions about the status of the two species. Some lumped them into one species (Baird *et al.* 1874; Ridgway 1902) with subspecific status for each, while others continued to treat them as two species (Cook 1888).

Initially, the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) adopted Ridgway's classification (1902) of one species, eventually classifying it in the genus *Cassidix*, but as *mexicanus* extended its range north and west, it became increasingly clear the coastal form (*major*) was not involved in the expansion. After several influential papers (Townsend 1927, Brooks 1928, Selander and Giller 1961) which documented physiological and behavioral differences in addition to range differences, the AOU separated the two in 1973 (AOU 1973). In 1976, the genus *Cassidix* was merged into *Quiscalus* (the genus which includes Common Grackle) where it has remained (AOU 1976).

1953	first Oklahoma record
1958	first Oklahoma nest
1963	first Kansas record
1969	first Arkansas record
1969	first Kansas nest
1972	first Missouri record
1974	first Illinois record
1976	first Arkansas nest
1976	first Nebraska record
1977	first Nebraska nest
1979	first Missouri nest
1982	first Minnesota record for *mexicanus/major*
1983	first Iowa record
1983	first Iowa nest
1987	first Ontario record
1988	first South Dakota record
1991	first Indiana record

Table 2. First mid-continent records for the Great-tailed Grackle (from Dinsmore and Dinsmore 1993a).

The expansion from Texas northward has been steady at least since about the middle of the 20th Century through the present. Dinsmore and Dinsmore (1993a) published a thorough summary of this range expansion across North America through 1992. From this paper we can extract a list of all first state occurrences and first nests in the central part of the range expansion up through that year (Table 2).

Since the publication of the Dinsmores' paper, the Great-tailed Grackle has continued to pioneer into new areas and extend its breeding range, primarily north and west of existing colonies. What follows is a brief account of these additional Midwestern records through spring 2001, and which are summarized in Table 3.

North Dakota: On 3 June 1995, a male Great-tailed Grackle was discovered at Lake Bertha, Cass County, by Gary Nielsen, providing North Dakota with its first state record (Berkey 1995). There were no subsequent observations of this species until the discovery of a female

1993 first Minnesota record
1995 first North Dakota record
1997 first Michigan record for *mexicanus/major*
1999 first South Dakota breeding record
1999 first Wisconsin record for *mexicanus/major*
2000 first Tennessee record
2000 first Minnesota breeding record

Table 3. Additional Midwestern records of the Great-tailed Grackle through 2000 since Dinsmore and Dinsmore (1993a).

Great-tailed on 21 June 2000 in eastern Ransom County. At this new location, a pair was seen 26 June 2000, and a male and three females/immatures were seen on 8 July 2000. On 27 June 2000 three Great-taileds were found elsewhere in Ransom County, and five were in Richland County on 15 July 2000 (Martin 2000b). Nesting was suspected at the Ransom location but not confirmed.

South Dakota: After the first South Dakota occurrence in 1988, additional reports were irregular until the late 1990s. There were several summer records including both males and females in 1996 and 1997, and nesting was suspected in the summer of 1996 (Swanson 1997, Cantu 1998). In 1998, Great-tailed Grackles were removed from the review list of the South Dakota Rare Bird Records Committee (Swanson 1999).

In 1999, the first confirmed nesting for South Dakota was recorded when Eric Liknes and Dave Swanson located three Great-tailed Grackle nests in a marsh in Clay County, South Dakota. Two of the nests fledged young, while the third was abandoned before its five eggs hatched. In the same season two additional nests were found by Nathan Pieplow in Minnehaha County (Swanson 1999).

Michigan: A female *mexicanus/major* was documented at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory in Chippewa County on 15, 17, and 18 April 1997 for Michigan's first record (Granlund 1997). The Michigan Bird Records Committee accepted it as a Great-tailed/Boat-tailed Grackle. On 29 May 2000 another bird of the same complex was documented again at this location (Granlund 2000).

Wisconsin: On 17 April 1999, M. Gibson found a *mexicanus/major* bird in the southeastern area of Antigo, Langlade County. The bird was noticed in a mixed flock containing Brewer's Blackbirds (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) and European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and was reported to be associating primarily with the Brewer's. The bird was not documented sufficiently for identification to the species level. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) Records Committee accepted it as a Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle (Frank 1999).

Tennessee: On 30 June 2000, Jeff Wilson and Larry Peavler found and documented two Great-tailed Grackles, a male and a female, about 0.5 km south of the Dyer/Lake County line along the Great River Road, Highway 181 (J. Wilson pers. comm.). This constituted the first record for the state of Tennessee.

Nebraska: Since its first nesting in 1977 (Cortelyou 1977), the Great-tailed Grackle has moved into several new locations across the state. Most of the wetlands in the southeastern parts of the state now host colonies of Great-tailed Grackles (Grzybowski 1998).

Iowa: From the first state occurrence of the species in Fremont County in the extreme southwestern corner of the state (Silcock 1983), it took only six years for birds to be reported in Dickinson County along the northern border with Minnesota. The expansion through Iowa is well-chronicled in the state journal *Iowa Bird Life*, including a 1993 summary (Dinsmore and Dinsmore, 1993b), and then is updated in *Birds In Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). As of spring 2001, birds had been reported in 39 Iowa counties, with nesting confirmed in 16 west and central counties (Dinsmore 1996–2000). In the 1990s, the Dickinson County grackles spread to Grover's Lake

WMA. Although nesting has not been confirmed at Grover's Lake (despite reports in Granlund 1998, 2000), the presence of birds at this location led to the discovery of the first Minnesota nest three miles directly north of the lake.

Expansion Elsewhere

The Great-tailed Grackle continues to expand its breeding range in the mid-continent. In addition to the Minnesota and South Dakota nestings, there are also recent first breeding records for Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Nesting was documented in 1996 in Montana (Wright 1996), farther north than the Minnesota nests. The first state record for Idaho was 5 May 1985 near Downey (Stephens and Sturts 1997) while the first confirmed nesting for the state was in April 1998 (Trochlell and Svingen 1998). Wyoming's first nesting was documented during the summer of 1998 (Truan and Percival 1998).

In Colorado, the Great-tailed Grackle has increased its numbers and range (Truan and Percival 1998). Likewise, the species continues to expand into new territories in Montana (Martin 2000a), Idaho (Trochlell 2000), Wyoming (Truan and Percival 2000), Nevada (Truan and Percival 2000), Oregon (Mlodinow *et al.* 2000), and also on the West Coast.

Additionally, there are three recent records from British Columbia (Charlesworth 2001): a female at Cape St. James, Queen Charlotte Island, 6–9 May 1979, a female at Vernon, Okanagan Valley, 5 December 1993 – 10 April 1994, and a male at Kelowna, Okanagan Valley, 2 June 2000 through at least April 2001. The first Ontario record was a female photographed in 1987 (Weir 1988).

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Avian Species Diversity in Urban and Suburban Areas: A Third Survey

Robert E. Holtz

Previous studies related to this one were published in ***The Loon*** in Volume 67 (Holtz 1995) and 70 (Holtz 1998). To summarize briefly, the first study was done only on a 12-square block urban area and the second study covered both urban and suburban areas. Both studies were done by Concordia University ornithology students. The three objectives of each study were to: A) document the number of species found in the study plots; B) record the relative abundance of each species; and C) determine which species appeared to be breeding within the study plots.

In the spring of 1999, 16 of my ornithology students worked on projects related to the two previous studies. Three students surveyed the same urban 12-square block area which was surveyed in 1995 and 1997. Three students surveyed a small wooded suburban area and park behind Arlington High School in St. Paul which had been surveyed in 1997. The report of one of these three students was too incomplete to use. The same was true for one urban report. In addition, two students surveying an urban area worked together during each survey, so their work produced only one set of data. Finally, the data of one urban survey was not available for analysis. Therefore, there were only 12 reports, seven suburban and five urban, used for this article.

One major difference between this study and the first two relates to the end date of the studies. The first two studies were done on the quarter system where classes ended the third week in May. This last study was done on the semester system where classes ended after the first week in May. Therefore, species totals were reduced because several May migrants had not yet arrived in the metropolitan area.

Methods

The 1999 surveys were conducted from early April through the first week of May. Most students did five or six counts, with one doing eight and another nine. All students had experience with bird identification and most had previously taken my Field Biology course which includes bird identification.

Two students had their own binoculars. The rest used Concordia's 8x36 Bushnells. For birds they did not immediately recognize, students used Peterson (1980), Stokes (1996) or the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (2nd edition) (1987). In addition to species and total individuals, the students were asked to note any courtship behavior and/or evidence of breeding.

Results

The 12-square block urban area where 35 species were found in 1995 and 40 species were found in 1997 yielded only 16 species in 1999 with the semester system shutting down the project two weeks earlier than the quarter system. The Brown Thrasher was a new species for this area, bringing the total species count for this one urban area to 48 over a three-year period.

Surveys in three other urban areas yielded species counts of 12, 16, and 21 with total individual bird counts being 462, 546, and 409 respectively. Seven new urban species were found in 1999 (See Table 1). Five of those, all but the Hairy Woodpecker and the Killdeer, were found by the student with the total spe-

Red-tailed Hawk
Killdeer
Red-headed Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Eastern Towhee
Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Table 1. New 1999 urban species.

Area	Species	Individuals
1	10	256
2	12	546
3	16	301
4	16	462
5	21	409

Table 2. Urban area counts.

cies count of 21. She also found a Wood Thrush, seen in a previous survey. Her area was near her home and was bounded by Dale, Selby, Carroll and Avon streets in St. Paul. This can be considered an inner city area. The seven new urban species brings the urban species total for the three surveys to 69. In 1999 only 32 urban species were recorded.

The seven suburban surveys produced a total of 49 species. One survey was done in a suburban area beyond the first ring of suburbs. This survey yielded a total of 42 species, many also found in other suburban surveys. However, unique for this area were Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Purple Martin, Hermit Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Ovenbird, and Field Sparrow.

Seven species which one would expect to be more suburban than urban were found only in the urban areas. They were Killdeer, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wood Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Table 2 lists the species and individual bird totals for the urban areas and Table 3 lists those for the suburban areas. The suburban area with a species count of 42 was larger than the other areas.

Area	Species	Individuals
1	10	136
2	12	12,200
3	14	327
4	14	14,365
5	16	16,402
6	17	17,198
7	42	629

Table 3. Suburban area counts.

Table 4 lists urban and suburban species for which breeding activity and/or nesting was observed.

Discussion

A key factor to consider when comparing the 1999 data with that of 1995 and 1997 is that the 1999 surveys ended two weeks earlier than those surveys (the first week in May as opposed to the third week). This is most obviously reflected in the survey of the 12-square block area near Concordia University. However, student diligence may also have been a factor in that particular survey.

The 11% increase, seven plus the original 62, in total urban species seen during the three studies would seem to indicate that a number of other urban species could be found if future studies could be made. However, I have retired and may not teach ornithology again thereby ending these studies. Also when one looks at the seven new species (see Table 1), it is obvious that species not typically utilizing urban areas do so at least sometimes on a short-term basis.

In addition to the 49 suburban species seen during the 1999 survey, 16 other species were seen during the 1997 survey (no suburban survey was done in 1995), bringing the suburban total to 65 species. Obviously many more could be found if future surveys were conducted. From 1967–1996 I lived in a first tier suburb and my yard list, including species such as Common Loon and American White Pelican only seen above the yard, totaled 157 species.

Urban	Suburban
Rock Dove	Mallard
Mourning Dove	Cooper's Hawk
American Crow	Rock Dove
Black-capped Chickadee	Mourning Dove
American Robin	Black-capped Chickadee
European Starling	American Robin
Northern Cardinal	European Starling
Common Grackle	Northern Cardinal
House Finch	Common Grackle
House Sparrow	House Finch
	House Sparrow

Table 4. Breeding/nesting species.

The breeding/nesting species shown in Table 4 are remarkably similar for the urban and suburban areas. Undoubtedly many others could be found. Two factors contributed to keeping these counts low. First, the students placed most of their efforts on identifying species and second, many species breed/nest after the first week in May.

The most common species observed in both the urban and suburban areas was the House Sparrow. European Starlings were second and Common Grackles third in the urban area. The second and third most common species in the suburban areas were the Common Grackle and the European Starling, respectively. The House Sparrow was the most common species observed during the 1995 and 1997 urban area surveys and second most common during the 1997 suburban areas.

In 1995 the House Finch was the sixth most common urban species reported. By 1997 the House Finch was the third most common species reported in the urban areas and sixth most common in the suburban areas. During the 1999 surveys, the House Finch dropped to sixth most common in the urban areas and eighth most common in the suburban areas. One must wonder if this decrease in abundance is related to the disease which has been affecting the eyes of House Finches the last several years.

The percentage of Passeriformes species found in each survey in both the urban and suburban areas has remained firmly constant. For the 1995, 1997, and 1999 urban surveys, the percentages were 77%, 79%, and 72% respectively. For the 1997 and 1999 suburban surveys, the percentages of Passeriformes species were 80% and 73% respectively.

Further Study

Documentation of avian utilization of various habitats is becoming increasingly vital. When development proposals are made for an area considered important bird habitat, at least by some, it is extremely helpful to have data to illustrate that point.

I urge M.O.U. members to select an area to survey regularly. Keep records of all species seen, total number of each species, and all evidence of breeding/nesting activity. One day this may prove useful in an attempt by such data collectors or the M.O.U. Conservation Committee in efforts to preserve vital bird habitats.

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BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Field Notes (Part 2)

Kim R. Eckert

Time once again to take down the old ID notebook from the shelf, dust off the cobwebs, scrape off the remains of a mosquito crushed between the pages, and revisit some of my bird identification problems and discoveries of years past.

It seems the last entry on page 104 is from months ago: "October 2000. American Pipit at Beaver Bay sewage ponds seen in good light: legs were pale, not dark!" While I am somewhat surprised to see my most recent field identification discovery worth writing down is not all that recent, it's nice to see that exclamation point. It is indeed exciting to observe something new on an old familiar species.

This observation was mentioned in passing the last time the contents of my ID notebook were discussed in a *Hindsight* article (see ***The Loon*** 72:170–176). Included in this article were some various and unrelated identification entries in my notebook — i.e., things learned about in the field, not in the field guide. In this case, I had read that American Pipits can have pale legs but had never actually observed it before last October. Accordingly, here was something worth passing on to readers: that a pale-legged pipit in Minnesota is not necessarily a Sprague's.

Part One of last year's *Hindsight* article basically covered those notebook entries from 1984 through 1988; this part will bring you up to the present with a some of my entries during the past dozen years. Again, it excludes ID points mentioned in other *Hindsight* articles, but it probably includes information which may be discussed in greater depth in future *Hindsight* installments.

"Churchill tour, June 1989. Heard unusual Palm Warbler song at Thompson — sounded like a Prothonotary or a loud Cape May."

Since the Palm Warbler normally gives a buzzy, rolling trill similar to a Chipping Sparrow or junco, this was definitely worth writing down. Here was a totally atypical Palm Warbler uttering clear, measured whistled notes which made it seem for a moment I was in Prothonotary-in-

fested Mississippi River backwaters rather than in the taiga of northern Manitoba.

Actually, atypical warbler songs are encountered with some frequency, and they are often strange enough to confound even experienced listeners. Some other examples from my notebook:

"Newfoundland tour, July 1989. Unusual Blackburnian song: like first half of Golden-crowned Kinglet song — one-syllabled notes rising slightly in pitch."

"Newfoundland tour, July 1992. Male Magnolia Warbler singing a perfect Common Yellowthroat song."

"May 2000. A Cerulean Warbler giving a buzzy song which resembled an atypical Blue-winged or Golden-winged hybrid — I never guessed it was a Cerulean until seen."

In the first case, I thought I was aware of the many variations in Blackburnian Warbler songs, but here was one sounding like a kinglet, something I have never noted before or since. Then, three years later on the same tour, there was something even more disconcerting: a Magnolia going "witchity, witchity, witchity." And it was embarrassing to encounter last year's Cerulean song at Beaver Creek Valley State Park which defied my attempts to identify until the warbler finally came into view.

"9/21/89. Double-crested Cormorants seen perched at 80 yards; all clearly showed a white border along the lower half of the orange pouch."

So what? Well, in the 1980s I was becoming familiar with Neotropic Cormorants in Texas, noticing how adults have a crisp white edge on their throat pouch. While this mark is distinctive, it alone is not diagnostic, as evidenced by the above notation. The difference is the Neotropic's white edge is more clean-cut and V-shaped, and it borders a smaller and duller throat pouch. (Also, many immature/winter Neotropics lack this white edge.) By comparison, the Double-crested's throat pouch is larger, rounded, and brighter orange, with this color also visible on its lores.

Again, you may ask, so what? Isn't the Double-crested the only cormorant ever seen in Minnesota? Well, almost but not quite. There is one Minnesota Neotropic Cormorant record, and the species may well show up here again. So, before reporting that second state record, take a second look to make sure it's not just a Double-crested with a white edge to its pouch.

"June 1991. Red-eyed Vireo with song regularly including both an Acadian Flycatcher 'peet seet' phrase and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 'chuwee'; so close to the real things, I thought both flycatchers were there."

At the time I was in the southwestern Manitoba prairies, where neither of those Empidonax should be — at least not together at the same time. After searching in vain for any flycatchers, I gradually became aware that a nearby Red-eyed Vireo was the source of both these sounds.

And years later I was fooled by yet another Red-eyed Vireo. This one led me to think there was an invisible Eastern Phoebe nearby: "May 2000, Houston Co. Red-eyed Vireo with soft, burry phoebe-like phrases; only one phrase given at a time at 10–20 second intervals."

"Texas, April 1993. Immature Swainson's Hawk has face pattern like immature Gray Hawk; underparts streaking random, not clean-cut spotting with dark malar area."

This was just one of many juvenile or sub-adult Swainson's Hawks that have given me pause over the years. Its pale head marked only with brown lines through the eye and malar area (reminiscent of an immature Gray Hawk) was something quite new to me. Also atypical were the relatively indistinct streaks on the underparts. I was used to younger Swainson's showing solid dark area on the sides of the neck along with rounder and cleaner spots or smudges on the underparts.

While this bird may have been in Texas, the species is present in much of

Minnesota, and I submit a non-adult Swainson's Hawk can be more confounding than almost any other Minnesota raptor. And that's saying a lot.

"Texas, February 1995. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gull seen at Mustang Island standing next to adult Herring Gull — it was at least as large or perhaps slightly larger in overall size! Was this an abnormally small female Herring and/or a very large male Lesser Black-backed?"

Other than its size, the most interesting thing about this individual was its age. According to local birders, it was at least 12 years old, returning to this same beach since the early 1980s. It is tempting to suggest the old age of this gull contributed to its unusually large size (a Lesser Black-backed should look smaller than a Herring Gull), but this observation still demonstrates why gull identification can be so convoluted.

Despite the measurements given in the field guides, to separate one species of gull from another on the basis of overall size is tricky, since a male gull is often noticeably larger than a female of the same species. If you must rely on size in gull ID, it's best to concentrate on the size/shape of the bird's bill, head and neck — not just its overall height or length, as my notes did.

"11/29/96. Unidentified duck (juv. Black Scoter?) in Grand Marais. Diving duck — never spread wings like a scoter/eider/Oldsquaw. Overall size same as adjacent goldeneyes. Bill and feet dark gray. Eye dark. Tip of bill darker/blacker like a scaup/Redhead. Inside of mouth pink/orange. Nostril half way out on bill. Base of bill at face straight, vertical — unlike an eider. Overall color solid dark brown, about like American Black Duck; a bit paler along sides with some dark smudges; no barring/spotting as on eider/Mallard. Wings plain, unmarked when seen from below as duck flapped; when preening, no white visible on primaries. Too dark overall for scaup/Redhead with no paler area at base of bill. Crown slightly darker than face (median crown stripe paler?), suggesting Black Scoter."

Here, for a change, is an entry which offers no insights about bird identification. Instead, it describes a duck whose identity remains uncertain in my mind, despite the close range and favorable viewing conditions. I still suspect it was a Black Scoter, but I'd like to think my efforts to see and describe the bird's mouth color will prove to be the diagnostic feature clinching the ID!

"Newfoundland tour, July 1997. Juvenile Common Grackle with adult at Liscombe River: standing on rock, short tail, and whitish legs/feet — suggests American Dipper!"

For years there have been claims of American Dippers appearing with some regularity along fast-flowing Minnesota streams, especially on the North Shore of Lake Superior. And, indeed, there was one unequivocal record of a dipper seen and photographed here 30 years ago. I have long been skeptical of all the other reports, but at the same time I puzzled over what else could be confused with a bird as distinctive as a dipper. Then, four years ago I saw it, exclamation point and all!

"12/15/97. Second-winter Ring-billed Gull with both eyes dark brown."

"12/13/99. Two 2nd-winter Ring-billed Gulls seen at Canal Park: both had dark irides (both eyes) and pale pink legs."

Yep, the experts all agree. Grant's gull identification book, the *Geographic* field guide, and *The Sibley Guide to Birds* all concur that second-winter immature Ring-billed Gulls have pale eyes and greenish legs. Hmm. (Oh, in case you're wondering, those three gulls were indeed Ring-billeds, and they were definitely in second-winter plumage.) So, is it any wonder so many gulls present so many ID problems for so many birders?

"May/June 1998. Migrant Gray-cheeked Thrush in Redwood Falls and Gray-cheeked on territory in Churchill

both showed rustier tails and clear yellow/orange at bases of their bills!"

It's unfortunate the Bicknell's Thrush is not thought to migrate through Minnesota, or anywhere near it. Otherwise, based on the criteria advanced in some identification articles, I could have added one more bird to my Minnesota list. After all, a warmer brown or rustier tail plus obvious color at the base of the bill are supposedly indicative of Bicknell's. But in this case, the *Geographic* and *Sibley* guides do the right thing and discourage field identification of these two thrushes except when singing or on the breeding grounds. (That is, when the birds are singing and breeding, not you.)

"8/15/98. Twice heard Eastern Wood-Pewees (probably fledged juveniles begging for food?) give a 1-syllabled hoarse or burry call note which could easily be mistaken for a Western Wood-Pewee; it is different, though: not as loud and not as downslurred."

The implications of this entry should be obvious enough: take a second look and listen before reporting an out-of-range Western Wood-Pewee. This would be especially true in late summer when a juvenile Eastern might be around begging for food — which is probably what I saw and heard. And note that a true Western song is indeed relatively loud and downslurred, which is similar to, but not the same as, what I heard.

"Grand Texas tour, April 1999. Juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes seen with relatively narrow masks which did not extend over bill."

This was along the Gulf Coast near Houston, hardly the time or place one would suspect a Northern Shrike to occur. But this did make me aware how a juvenile Loggerhead Shrike in Minnesota in late summer might conceivably be mistaken for an out-of-season Northern. It was interesting how the shape and extent of their masks looked like a Northern's — and it was especially disarming to see how cute a young shrike can look!

"April 2000. Several Black-capped Chickadees in Worthington and one in Fairmont with alternate songs: they preceded 'fee bee' notes with 3–4 extra rapid whistles (softer, thinner than 'fee bee' notes)."

Now, how could anyone possibly learn anything new about a bird as familiar as a chickadee after watching them for decades? That's exactly what I wondered about a year ago April as I listened to those strange songs in southwestern Minnesota. This was probably just a local dialect, but why hadn't I heard it before on previous trips here? Did chickadees anywhere else have such an atypical song? And, though it didn't really resemble the Carolina Chickadee's multi-syllabled song, could such a song ever be mistaken for it?

"9/12/2000. Immature male Common Yellowthroat with partial black mask looks like a Kentucky Warbler — both spring and fall. Female's combination of eye ring, brownish upperparts and yellow below, plus secretive behavior suggests Connecticut or Mourning warblers."

While I have never actually seen anyone mistake one of those immature males for a Kentucky Warbler, there is enough of a resemblance in the face pattern that I'm sure it has happened on more than one occasion. And I know the second scenario has occurred, since I was once with a group of birders who were puzzling over a female yellowthroat, trying valiantly to turn it into a Connecticut Warbler.

At the time of this writing, I'm all packed and ready to head back to do the Newfoundland tour again tomorrow. My trusty ID notebook will be along, and there is still room on Page 104 to make some notes in case I hear some more odd Blackburnian or Magnolia songs. Or if there are any more dark short-tailed birds standing on the rocks in a fast-flowing stream.

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804

BOOK REVIEWS

BIRDING THE FARGO-MOORHEAD AREA, by Bob O'Connor. 2000, Regional Science Center, Minnesota State University, Moorhead, and Audubon Society of Fargo Moorhead. 127 pages, soft cover, spiral bound. Illustrated by Heidi Allen. $14.95 (paper).

Birding the Fargo-Moorhead Area is designed specifically for birders visiting not only the Fargo-Moorhead area of Clay County Minnesota and Cass County North Dakota but also the counties themselves. It lists 76 birding places in the two counties, complemented with 82 maps by Kevin Hauge and Allen's 10 illustrations. Each selected birding area receives about a page of text and at least one map, though important areas usually receive a more thorough treatment. The Felton Prairie, for example, gets three pages and two maps (no area has more than two maps). The text describes the habitat of a selected birding locality and the more interesting birds to be found there. The book was written and published as a fund-raiser for the Fargo-Moorhead Audubon Society and the Minnesota State University Moorhead Regional Science Center.

Birding the Fargo-Moorhead Area is a complete, well conceived book. Besides the more than 70 birding locations, an annotated checklist and a summary of the Fargo-Moorhead Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data apparently dating back to 1909 are included in the back. In the introduction you'll find discussions on such related topics as the birding seasons, regional weather and road conditions, and even responsible birding behavior. Add to that a list of local birders, regional birding activities, rare bird alerts, web sites, organizations, birding supply vendors, publications, educational courses, and camping information, and you have just about everything you would need for taking a birding excursion to this interesting area.

I found *Birding the Fargo-Moorhead Area* to be accurate, complete, and useful. The maps, all drawn specifically for this book, are for the most part clear and simple. Roads and other landmarks which are not important to the area being discussed are not included. The information is well researched and fairly complete, offering the reader a lot of information on the birds found in each area, including those Casuals and Accidentals that have occurred only a few times. Credit is given when information was supplied by other authors or birders. Joe Gartner wrote the section on the Bluestem Prairie of Clay County, and Cole Foster is acknowledged for contributing information on an area north of the town of Downer. Detailed descriptions of roads and routes are also included, giving the reader as much information on where to stop as what to expect when he stops. The directions are complete and augment the maps well. There is no unnecessary information or chatter, but the book is not unfriendly. Ending the page of text for the Lake Fifteen area of southeastern Clay County, for example, are the words "Embellish with side routes as the whim strikes you."

I have a few minor complaints. Though the "Longspur Road" is men-

tioned several times in the Felton Prairie text, the road is not labeled on the map. The maps are inconsistent in their construction, some being very fine and clear, others rough with jagged lines. Initial, pre-publication layout apparently did not consider the book's final assembly and several pages have the text placed so close to the inside margins that it is actually perforated by the wire spiral binding. No index is included, so searching for a location that may hold a specific species is difficult. The proper use of upper case letters and hyphens in bird names is inconsistent. Sometimes it appears simply to be a typo, as with the occasional "Great-tailed grackle" or "mourning dove." In a few cases these occur consistently throughout the book: Eastern Screech-owl, Greater Prairie Chicken, Eastern Wood-pewee, and Great-crested Flycatcher are some examples. Occasionally the species' name is simply wrong. Northern Parula Warbler is not the true name of this species, and there is a reference to the "Red-breasted Grosbeak." There are a few dubious Fargo–Moorhead CBC records. For example, Swainson's Hawk was apparently found on the 1964 count and Northern Bobwhite was recorded in 1987.

The annotated checklist in the back of the book holds a few more serious errors. It lists Mountain Plover as having occurred in Clay County. Currently there are no acceptable records for this species in Minnesota. Though two Mountain Plover were documented in Clay County in June of 1986 (***The Loon*** 58:154–158), the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee eventually found this record Unacceptable (***The Loon*** 60:146–148). Also, Clay County is listed as having one late fall record of Cassin's Finch. The only state record for this species is from Duluth, St. Louis County. And, in my opinion, the Clay County status of several other species is questionable. Sprague's Pipit is regarded as a "rare summer resident of the Felton Prairie." Black-headed Grosbeak is called a "rare spring migrant." Baird's Sparrow a "rare summer resident of the Felton Prairie." Lark Bunting, "rare to very rare summer resident." And Blue Grosbeak is considered a "very rare summer vagrant." The terms "rare," "vagrant," and "resident" are not defined in the book, so some interpretation and latitude is necessary. As if expecting that the checklist may not be completely accurate, a disclaimer stating that it should not be considered an official checklist for either county appears prior to it.

These criticisms aside, this is a very useful book with a wealth of information. It is easy to use, generally accurate, and anyone interested in the prairie birds of the region should improve his chances of finding them by using this book. I suspect that all birders visiting these two counties would find this book useful, regardless of their familiarity with the region.

Anthony X. Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View, MN 55112.

A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO HOUSTON COUNTY by Karla A. Kinstler and Frederick Z. Lesher. July 2001. Printworks of Houston, Houston, Minnesota. 46 pages with checklist and map. $6.50 (paper).

This book was compiled and written by two MOU members, Karla A. Kinstler, naturalist at Houston Nature Center, and Frederick Z. Lesher, former president of the MOU who lives in LaCrosse and has spent many year0s birding on our side of the Mississippi River in Houston County.

It is possible in Minnesota to create a significant birding life list without leaving the four counties that form the corners of the state: Cook in the northeast, Kittson in the northwest, Rock in the southwest, and Houston in the southeast. The latter would more than hold its own with the other three.

Houston County is where I found my life Minnesota White-eyed Vireo, Common Moorhen, and Northern Bobwhite. I might owe Tufted Titmouse to the shaded side of one of its many hills, too. There is good birding there.

And that birding is more accessible

now, thanks to this new guide. It is smartly and concisely done, 46 pages of pertinent information, with a county map and check list tucked into a pocket on the back cover.

Twenty-two sites and drives are discussed. The authors are good journalists. They give you the who, what, where, when, and why. You get clear directions to the chosen sites, habitat and history comments, a short list of what the authors term best birds, and information on facilities, when such exist. Maps are included when they add information.

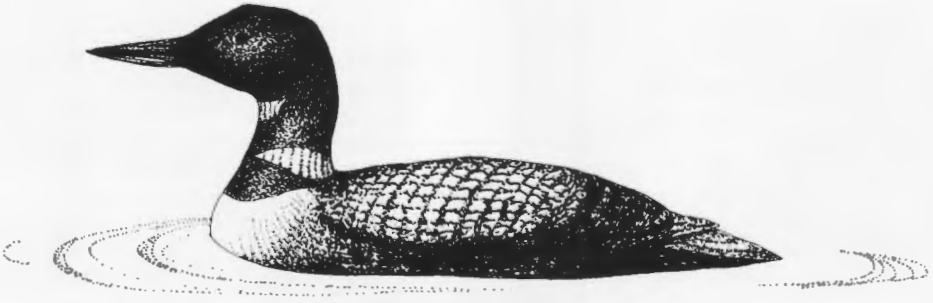
A species list by site, indicating "many of the birds known to occur at/on each site/drive" adds to the book's usefulness. It also offers honesty and a sense of fun. For Short-eared Owl, the site notation says, "Has occurred in Houston County, but we don't have the location."

There is a section giving names, addresses, and telephone number for places to eat and stay in ten communities along the birding routes.

Price of the guide is $6.50 plus tax. Add $1.72 for postage if you wish to order by mail. Total price for a mailed copy is $8.64. The book can be purchased at the Houston Nature Center in Houston, Beaver Creek Valley State Park, Dun Romin' Park, and AmericInn in Caledonia. The address for purchase by mail is Houston Nature Center, P.O. Box 667, Houston, MN 55943.

The book was published by the Houston Nature Center with grant assistance from the Minnesota Office of Tourism. Proceeds benefit the Houston Nature Center.

Jim Williams, 5239 Cranberry Lane, Webster, WI 54893.



NOTES OF INTEREST

IMMATURE BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN GRAND MARAIS — Observers: Chad Aakre, Chris Benson, Dedrick Benz, Colin Gjervold, Mike Hendrickson, John Hockema, Chuck Juhnke. Date: 21 October 2000.

The pavilion on the west side of the Grand Marais, Cook County, harbor was to be our post-lunch meeting spot, and a few of us decided to scan the lake from the west breakwater while waiting for others of our party.

A gracefully flapping gull caught our attention. It landed on the water just a few yards from the end of the breakwater near some Herring Gulls. Our vantage point was particularly good, situated several meters above

the water's surface. Before it landed we noted a black "M" pattern on its back, a black tail band, and narrow wings. Some observers noted a slightly notched tail. After it landed, we discerned a black ear spot, and a thick, dark black nuchal bar. After fighting over who was going to get the others (what a neat bird!), Dedrick, who was fortunate to have seen one spotted by Howard Towle 11 months previous to the day (*deja vu*), ran back and yelled "kittiwake" and managed to overcome the din of the sports broadcast coming from the other cars. Mike, John, and Chuck came running, and soon Chris and Chad returned from lunch and got to see the bird. A young birder and his father came, too. The kittiwake flew around several times in the harbor, sometimes getting harrassed by Herring Gulls. It was never seen on land. We were unable to relocate the bird 30–45 minutes later.

It is not surprising that most of Minnesota's records are of first-year birds. What is perhaps surprising is that the same exact location yielded a young kittiwake in three of the last four years. Kittiwake records have increased through the decades. There was one record from the 1960s (Minnesota's first), three from the 1970s, ten from the 1980s, and fourteen from the 1990s. This record represents the 15th in the last ten years, and the seventh consecutive year that a kittiwake has been found in Minnesota. **Dedrick Benz, 422 W 11th St., Winona, MN; Colin Gjervold, 6904 Centerville Rd., Centerville, MN.**

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER IN OLMSTED COUNTY — While driving on Olmsted County Road 4 at approximately 4:00 P.M. on 8 July 2000, I spotted a light, robin-sized bird with an even lighter (almost white) head perched on a telephone wire, about one quarter mile east of County Road 103.

I stopped and put a scope on it, and noted its light head, upper back, chest, and underside. I did not see any salmon color on its underwings but my view of that area was very brief. I did note a black bill and stripe extending to the dark eye. The tail seemed extremely long and the wings were dark. When the bird flew, hawking insects, its forked tail was obvious. It settled back onto the wire again for a moment or two, caught a few more bugs, and then flew off to the north. Unfortunately, it disappeared just as other observers that I had called started arriving. This represents the second record for Olmsted County, following one on 7 May 1985 (***The Loon*** 57:109). A very lovely bird — I have previously seen them in Minnesota and Texas. **Diane Anderson, 5737 Sherri Drive NW, Byron, MN 55920-4107.**

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER IN TWO HARBORS — On 3 November 2000, I was driving in the upper neighborhood of Two Harbors with my son, Benjamin. Along 1st Avenue near the city's water treatment plant, I noticed a medium-sized bird in a small tree that had a posture similiar to a Townsend's Solitaire. I stopped my van and looked at the bird through my 8x30 Swarovski binoculars. I noticed immediately that the bird was not a solitaire, but was instead either a Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) or an Ash-throated Flycatcher (*M. cinerascens*).

I noticed that the upper breast was a soft muted gray color and there was little contrast with the soft creamy/yellow lower breast and belly. I knew I had a very good chance this bird was a Ash-throated Flycatcher, so I called Kim Eckert who sounded interested in seeing it and was soon on the way.

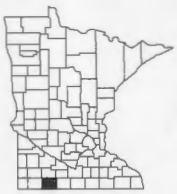
While waiting for Kim, I continued to observe the bird and made the following notes. Upper breast: muted gray not very dark; lower breast: creamy/yellow that

Ash-throated Flycatcher, 4 November 2000, Two Harbors, Lake County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

showed no striking contrast where the upper breast and lower breast met; bill: about the length of the base of the bill to the eye, and also I noticed that a small area at the base of the bill was light in color. The upper tail pattern showed rufous coloration on the outer tail feathers and a dark rufous/brown color on the central feathers. The under tail pattern showed rufous coloration in the middle tail feathers, and the outside extreme tail feathers showed the rufous/brown coloration that extended all the way down to the tip and formed a lower band on the tail tip. The upper parts of the bird were olive/grayish-brown and the head showed the same color as the upper parts except the muted gray color on the throat leading to the upper breast. When the perched, you could see rufous on the folded primaries that got dark at the tip.

The flycatcher was very busy hawking insects on this partly cloudy day. The winds were from the NW about 5–10 mph. The temperatures were in the upper 50s. The flycatcher was easily approached while it fed. When the bird flew across the street the flycatcher gave a soft "prrret" call. Eventually I saw Kim Eckert who also saw the bird and was fairly certain from what he saw it was indeed an Ash-throated Flycatcher! The bird cooperated and spent 2–3 days in the general neighborhood of 2nd Avenue and 1st Street. This sighting represents the second state record for this species. **Mike Hendrickson, 9005 Lenroot St., Duluth, Mn 55808.**

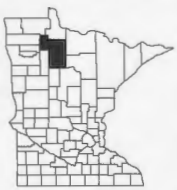
ANOTHER FALL RECORD OF THE YELLOW RAIL IN JACKSON COUNTY — Last September, I found a first Jackson County record of the Yellow Rail at the Cotton-Jack WMA (***The Loon*** 72:85). On 28 September 2000, I found another one at The Nature Conservancy parcel on the west side of South Heron Lake. The bird flushed in front of me and I recognized it as a rail right away. When it turned to drop back into the grass, it showed obvious, bright white secondaries on both wings. The pattern looked similar to that of a Lesser Scaup. These patches were visible from about 20 yards away.



Appearing lighter than a Sora, (although this was a quick impression), it seemed almost to match the dry, yellow color of the grass. The white secondaries were very obvious and clean. I believe that I could even make out the individual feathers.

The bird flushed from and into Big Bluestem, with some Reed Canary and other grasses. I would consider this upland habitat — some of the drier ground in a large area near the lake. I was therefore surprised to see any species of rail in this location. **Brad Bolduan, 43271 480th Ave., Windom, MN 56101-3320.**

PACIFIC LOON IN BELTRAMI COUNTY — On 5 November 2000, after hiking through Lake Bemidji State Park, I decided to scan Lake Bemidji and immediately saw a loon only 50 yards or so offshore. I recognized it as a Pacific Loon as soon as I got my binoculars on it. Since I had parked only a short distance away, I got my scope and though I was looking directly south at 11:30 A.M., the sky was heavily overcast so I was able to get good views.



Its head was rounded and sleek-looking, instead of the square-headed or bumpy look of a Common Loon. The neck appeared long with light gray on the hindneck except on the lowest part, which was quite dark. The foreneck was white and a dark, vertical line separated the front and back of the neck. The top half of its head was a fairly light, solid gray, except along the lores which were darker. There was no white surrounding the eye. A gray chinstrap completely encircled the underside of the neck just below its head. The bill appeared silvery. Its back was check-marked in a cross-hatched pattern.

The loon would actively feed for 15–20 minutes and then sit on the water for 5–10

minutes. It ranged up and down the swimming beach area, between the rock jetty at the Big Bass Creek boat inlet and Rocky Point to the west. I called several birders including Steve and Carol Mortenson and Noel Benson, who arrived between 1:30 and 2:30 P.M. Though it started to rain intermittently during that time, they got to see the bird and in the afternoon, there was a Common Loon in the area for comparison. John Fylpaa, the park naturalist, reported seeing it again the following morning but by noon it had disappeared.

This represents the first Pacific Loon record for Beltrami County and the most northwesterly for the state. One in breeding plumage was seen at Upper Rice Lake near Itasca State Park, Clearwater County, on 5 June 1982 (***The Loon*** 54:178–179). There are also fall records for Cass County at Leech Lake and Lake Winnibigoshish. **Doug Johnson, 7203 Tall Pines Rd. NE, Bemidji, MN 56601-2020.**

WINTER SAVANNAH SPARROW — On 9 February 2001, a Savannah Sparrow was trapped and banded at Carpenter Nature Center, located along the St. Croix River, 12805 Saint Croix Trail, Washington County. The sparrow had been observed for several days prior to being caught in a Potter trap. Several staff members at the nature center had seen the sparrow at feeders, which were just outside the headquarters building, but they were not sure of its identity. The bird banding crew did not deliberately try to trap the bird; it was just one of the birds that entered one of our traps during our regular banding day.

Minnesota's first wintering Savannah Sparrow was reported in ***The Loon*** 65:95–96. The article, written by Orwin Rustad of Faribault, Rice County, states that bird was first observed on 18 January 1993 at a feeder in the town of Faribault and returned to that feeder until 14 February 1993.

To the best of my knowledge, the Savannah Sparrow has not been seen since it was banded and released. If accepted by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee, it will be one of the few winter records for this species in Minnesota. **Tom Bell, 5868 Pioneer Road South, Saint Paul Park MN 55071.**

TWO JUVENILE SABINE'S GULLS IN WILKIN COUNTY — On the afternoon of 9 October 2000, I discovered two juvenile Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabini*) at the Breckenridge lagoons in Wilkin County. They were flying into brisk southwesterly winds while feeding with a flock of about 20 Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*). The Sabine's were easily identified by their dramatic pattern of brownish-gray, black, and white on their upper wing surface — especially since I had recently seen no fewer than 26 Sabine's at the Superior Entry in Duluth on 23 September 2000!

During most of this 12 minute observation, the two Sabine's were seen in flight, dipping to the surface from time to time. They looked only slightly larger than the Bonaparte's while sitting side-by-side on the water, but in flight their wingspan and wing width were clearly greater. Each Sabine's showed brown on its hindcrown and nape, with a brownish wash extending from the nape onto the sides of the upper breast. While on the water, their upperparts appeared mostly brown, with scalloping visible on their back and scapular feathers.

In flight, their upperwing surfaces showed a broad triangle of brownish-gray on the inner wing, a black triangle on the leading edge of the outer wing, and a white triangle on the trailing edge. The underwings appeared whitish except for dusky wingtips and a grayish-brown wash on the tips of the greater underwing coverts. The rump, tail coverts and tail were white, except for a terminal black band on each bird's

slightly forked tail. Their bills looked black. At this distance (approximately 150 yards) I was unable to detect eye color. Their legs were not visible at any time.

Jerry Bonkoski and Robert Janssen relocated both of these gulls later in the week. They were last reported by Colin Gjervold on 15 October. This not only represents a first county record for Wilkin, but also the latest departure date for the northern half of the state (one was seen 12 October 1980 in Duluth). In addition to unprecedented numbers of Sabine's at the Superior Entry in Duluth in September, there have been many more reports than usual this fall throughout the Midwest and the Great Basin. **Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

ANOTHER BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN LAKE COUNTY — Although mentioned for Minnesota by George G. Cantwell (1890) in "A List of the Birds of Minnesota" (*Ornithologist and Oologist* 15(9):129–137), the first acceptable record of the Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) in the state was from Lake County — at Knife River — on 15 December 1964 (***The Loon*** 37:59–60). The next occurrence in this county was not until 33 years later, when Michael Tarachow and Merce Dostale documented a first-winter individual as it flew past the lighthouse in Two Harbors on 27 November 1997 (***The Loon*** 70:43–46).

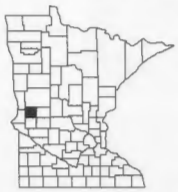
Reminiscent of their experience, on 30 October 2000 we saw a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake flying over the Agate Bay breakwater just before it turned east and continued past the Two Harbors lighthouse and out of sight. Peder was the first to spot this gull at 11:05 A.M. and exclaimed, "kittiwake... kittiwake!" as it approached the breakwater. Although it was gone within 20 seconds, we both had excellent looks and immediately recognized it as this species.

We judged it as medium-sized, though there were no other gulls nearby for direct comparison. Its flight was graceful but still like that of a gull, rather than the tern-like flight of Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*). The kittiwake's bill was all black but its legs could not be seen. The head appeared white except for an obvious, black auricular spot. Its diagnostic black nuchal bar was very distinct and easily seen. The rump and tail were white, except for a narrow, black, terminal tail band which could be seen on both the upper and lower surfaces of its forked tail. The under-tail coverts, belly and breast were white.

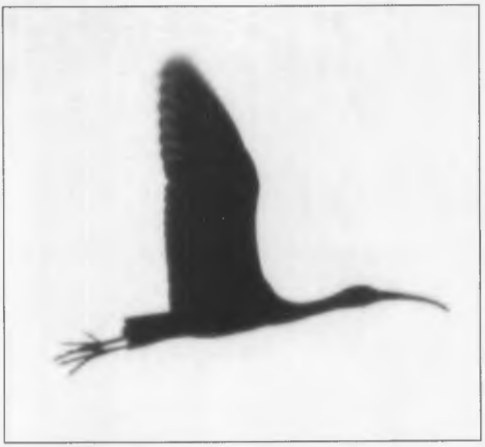
This gull's underwings appeared entirely white except for the outermost one or two primaries. Its characteristic black "M" pattern on the upperwing, formed by black outer primaries and a black carpal bar, contrasted strongly against its grayish inner forewing, and against the whitish inner primaries and secondaries along the trailing edge. This upperwing pattern eliminates juvenile Bonaparte's Gull, which shows a black trailing edge. Although Bonaparte's is much smaller in size, it can be misidentified as a kittiwake, especially in juvenal plumage when it has a brownish nape. Another potential confusion species, juvenile Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*), is also smaller than kittiwake. Sabine's lacks a black auricular spot and shows brownish-gray on its hindcrown, nape, back, and inner forewing.

Black-legged Kittiwake is recently increasing as a vagrant to Minnesota and may prove to be one of our rarest Regular species. There is a total of 29 records but over half of these (16) are from the past ten years (including this record and a 23 October 2000 report from Grand Marais). It has now been recorded during seven consecutive fall migrations, all between mid-September and early December, except for a record late occurrence on 26 December 1994 in Duluth (***The Loon*** 67:110). The North Shore is clearly the place to look for a kittiwake — 11 of the 16 most recent records are from Lake Superior! **Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812 and Anthony X. Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View, MN 55112.**

LATE, OUT OF PLACE *PLEGADIS* IBIS — On Friday the 10th of November 2000, I



was hunting waterfowl with friends Jerry Harincar, Maple Grove, Darryl Johnson, Minnetonka, Terry Niedenfuer of Alexandria, and Jim Wester from Minneapolis. It was an overcast day with a cold northwest wind, and a day with considerable evidence that a major waterfowl migration was underway. We were hunting on a leased shallow lake (Johnson Lake) approximately three miles east and a quarter mile north of the town of Herman, Grant County.



***Plegadis* ibis, 10 November 2000, Johnson Lake, Grant County. Photo by Terry Niedenfuer**

About 8:30 in the morning a medium-sized, slate grey bird, with no distinguishable colors or markings, flew by our blinds, apparently attracted by the motorized wing flapping of a motorized decoy called a "Robo-Duck." The bird flew with neck extended, feet trailing behind, and very obvious toes. It also had a long, decurved bill. Darryl, Terry and I recognized it as an ibis, which we had all observed on vacations in the southern coastal U.S.

The bird flew by us several times over the next couple of hours, seemingly spending some time along the shoreline on either side of our blind, flying to observe the simulated wing flapping of the Robo-Duck, and then landing along the shoreline to feed on the other side of the blinds, usually 80 to 100 yards away. Its approaches to our position were quite close — within ten yards a couple of times. We also observed the bird with binoculars. At no time could we distinguish any color or markings, other than the slate grey overall plumage of the bird. After referring to field guides, we initially concluded that it was a Glossy Ibis because of the absence of any white markings on the face. However, after communications with several birders it became evident that this bird could not be identified beyond the genus level. Without sunlight it was not possible to detect any iridescence in the plumage. **Don Grussing, 15404 Lake St., Minnetonka, MN 55345.**

KING EIDER ON GOOD HARBOR BAY IN COOK COUNTY — On 14 October 2000 while leading an October Hawk Ridge Weekend field trip, I observed a female or first-winter male King Eider from the overlook at Good Harbor Bay in Cook County. While looking for scoters and other waterfowl at about 1:00 P.M., the group noticed a dark diving duck making its way towards shore. The first thing I noted about this bird was its overall brownish plumage, a lighter brown chest, and no white facial or wing markings.

It had a relatively small, pale-based bill, with feathering that extended down the sides of the bill and ended at least an inch or two from the nostrils. I'm not sure whether the pale base was the actual bill or the feathers at the base of the bill. The slope of the bill had a slight downward curve to it, rather than a straight slope like a Common Eider would show. There was a pale line that went from the bill through the eye, and down the side of its head. This line seemed to separate the

Sketch of King Eider, 16 October 2000, Good Harbor Bay, Cook County by Peder Svingen.

darker brown crown from the lighter brown face. The feathers on the sides of the bird had dark arrow-shaped markings, not vertical barring. It stretched its wing out to the side once; the wing looked uniformly brown with no white markings. There were no other waterfowl nearby for size comparison.

This bird was actively diving during most of the 20 minute observation, although it did loaf with its bill tucked into its wings for 3–4 minutes. At its closest distance, the bird was 75–100 yards away from our group of about 12 observers. We checked the area again at approximately 4:00 P.M., but were unable to relocate the bird. I understand that it was seen again two days later. **Jim Lind, 320 2nd Avenue, Two Harbors, MN 55616.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

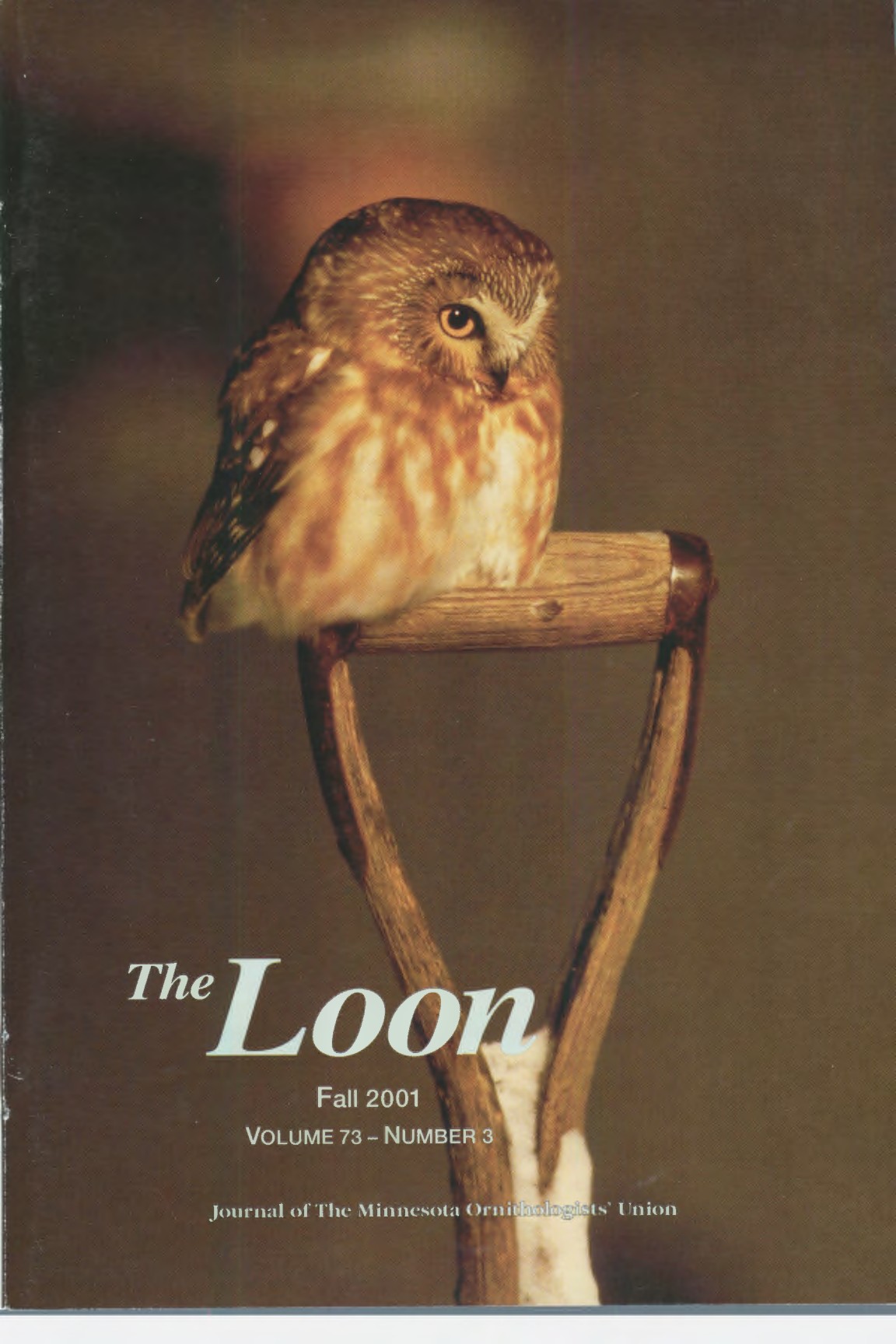
The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds. We aim to create and increase public interest in birds, and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

To carry out these aims, we publish a journal, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* we conduct field trips; we encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; we hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. Any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, Notes of Interest, color slides, and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission in any standard format on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. See inside front cover. Bird sighting reports for each season should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See key to the "Seasonal Report."



The Loon

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The 2000–2001 Influx of Northern Owls

Record High Numbers of Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owls in Minnesota

Peder H. Svingen[1], Katherine V. Haws[2], and Bruce A. Lenning[2]

For the fourth time within the past ten years, extraordinary numbers of Snowy (*Nyctea scandiaca*), Northern Hawk (*Surnia ulula*), Great Gray (*Strix nebulosa*), and Boreal (*Aegolius funereus*) Owls were discovered during late fall and winter in Minnesota. Similar to 1996–97, when an all-time record high 263 Boreal Owls was reported (Wilson 1997), unusually high numbers of Northern Saw-whet Owls (*A. acadicus*) were found near feeders or turned up dead.

Compared to other winter incursions of northern owls there were differences in mortality, morbidity, and distribution — but, is another article really necessary? The answer is clearly yes! Aside from the inherent value of documenting this event, the final totals for Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owls are the highest ever.

Except for the Snowy Owls scattered across all nine regions, and a few Boreal Owls which reached the Twin Cities area, the 2000–01 influx of owls was largely confined to the coniferous forest zone in northeastern and north-central Minnesota. Multiple Northern Hawk and Great Gray Owls were found as far west as Roseau and Beltrami counties. Few strayed farther west, and unlike the incursions of 1995–96 and 1996–97, almost none were found south of Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, and Carlton counties.

Northern Hawk Owls congregated in the "Big Bog" (Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Beltrami counties) and the "Sax-Zim Bog" area in southern St. Louis County. Though observed in 20 counties, Great Gray Owls converged in the Red Lake WMA, Beltrami Island State Forest, Superior National Forest, Sax-Zim Bog, and Aitkin County.

From early February through mid-March, Boreal Owls were relatively easy to find as they roosted or hunted along the North Shore, especially in Knife River, Two Harbors, or along Scenic Highway 61 between Two Harbors and Duluth. Birders flocked to the North Shore in search of these birds, reminiscent of the famous Boreal Owl irruption of 1977–78 (Eckert 1978). Steve Wilson chronicles this winter's Boreal Owl irruption elsewhere in this issue.

Recent accounts of these phenomena in Minnesota distinguished an "irruption" of resident species, such as Great Gray and Boreal Owls, from an "invasion" of birds from Canada. The term "influx" has been used for northern owls as a group, plus other species such as Gyrfalcon and Northern Shrike which may appear in greater than usual numbers at about the same time.

Methods

The method used for determining total numbers was similar to that for previous articles. Birds known to be nesting were excluded. Repeated reports of what may have been the same individual owl were counted as one bird. Decisions regarding potential duplicate sightings considered a variety of factors, including distance and days between observations. A few birds may have been counted more than once, but there were probably many more that remained unreported by local residents or undetected in remote areas.

The record number of Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls reported during this influx primarily reflected the abun-

dance of owls in the state, but more accurate data were available for the North-central and Northwest regions when compared to previous incursions. In December, Beth Siverhus in Warroad was asked to serve as a central clearinghouse for owl reports from the North-central region. The Northwest Minnesota Birding Report, compiled by Betsy Beneke, did not even exist at the time of the 1996–97 influx. This weekly summary preserved data that might have been otherwise lost and may have encouraged observers to search for owls in that part of the state. Requests for information on northern owls were also sent to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources field offices.

Despite more accurate data from some areas, the totals presented here probably still underestimate the true magnitude of the 2000–2001 influx for several reasons. There were very few systematic searches outside of the northern regions. During back-to-back owl irruptions in 1995–96 and 1996–97, all four species of northern owls occurred in southern Minnesota, so the likelihood of finding a Great Gray or Northern Hawk Owl far outside its usual range encouraged statewide searching. During winter 2000–2001, extensive areas of appropriate habitat were surveyed only once or twice, or in some cases, not at all. Most observers went to the same three places: Aitkin County, the Sax-Zim Bog, or the Superior National Forest.

This lack of exploration was not due to a lack of observers. A plethora of rare birds between Duluth and Two Harbors, including Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider, overwintering Gyrfalcon, and the first "chaseable" Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch in 20 years, attracted many resident and out-of-state birders, plus organized birding tours. But most of them searched for owls in known areas of occurrence close to Duluth or Two Harbors.

A final factor supporting these totals as representing the minimum number of owls in the state, was the many reports that had to be excluded as representing possible duplicates. This was especially true for owls turned in dead or injured, since most had no specific location or if known, might have been a bird reported earlier in the season. Several reports from Beltrami Island State Forest and Red Lake WMA were reluctantly excluded because locations and dates were vague, and the observers were either unknown or could not be contacted.

Snowy Owl

From 15 October 2000 through 6 April 2001, a total of 111 Snowy Owls was found in Minnesota (Figure 1). It became the fourth largest documented invasion of this species into the state, since it fell between the 92 in 1966–67 and 121 in 1991–92 (Table 1 *in* Svingen 1997). As mentioned in several previous articles, an undocumented invasion of Snowy Owls during winter 1926–27 (Roberts 1932) may have exceeded not only the second highest total of 153 in 1996–97, but also the modern record of 351 set in 1993–94 (Schladweiler 1994–95).

The 2000–2001 invasion started when Snowy Owls arrived early and in very poor condition. Almost half of the final total were found before December. By the end of November, 11 had been turned in at the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center and more than 40% (22 of 54) of all Snowys up until that time had been found injured, starving, or already dead. The invasion slowed in December and those found later in the winter appeared relatively healthy. However, David Evans banded one in Duluth on 17 December that had lead poisoning, and two more birds were turned in at the Raptor Center later in the season.

Discovery dates were uncertain for 10 Snowy Owls but the rest were distributed among October (19), November (35), December (21), January (13), February (9), March (3), and April (1). Unlike previous invasions when a few lingered into May (and once into early June), there were no reports later than 6 April, except for one lingering at Agassiz NWR into late April.

St. Louis County led the way with 25 Snowy Owls (about half of these found by David Evans as a result of his owl

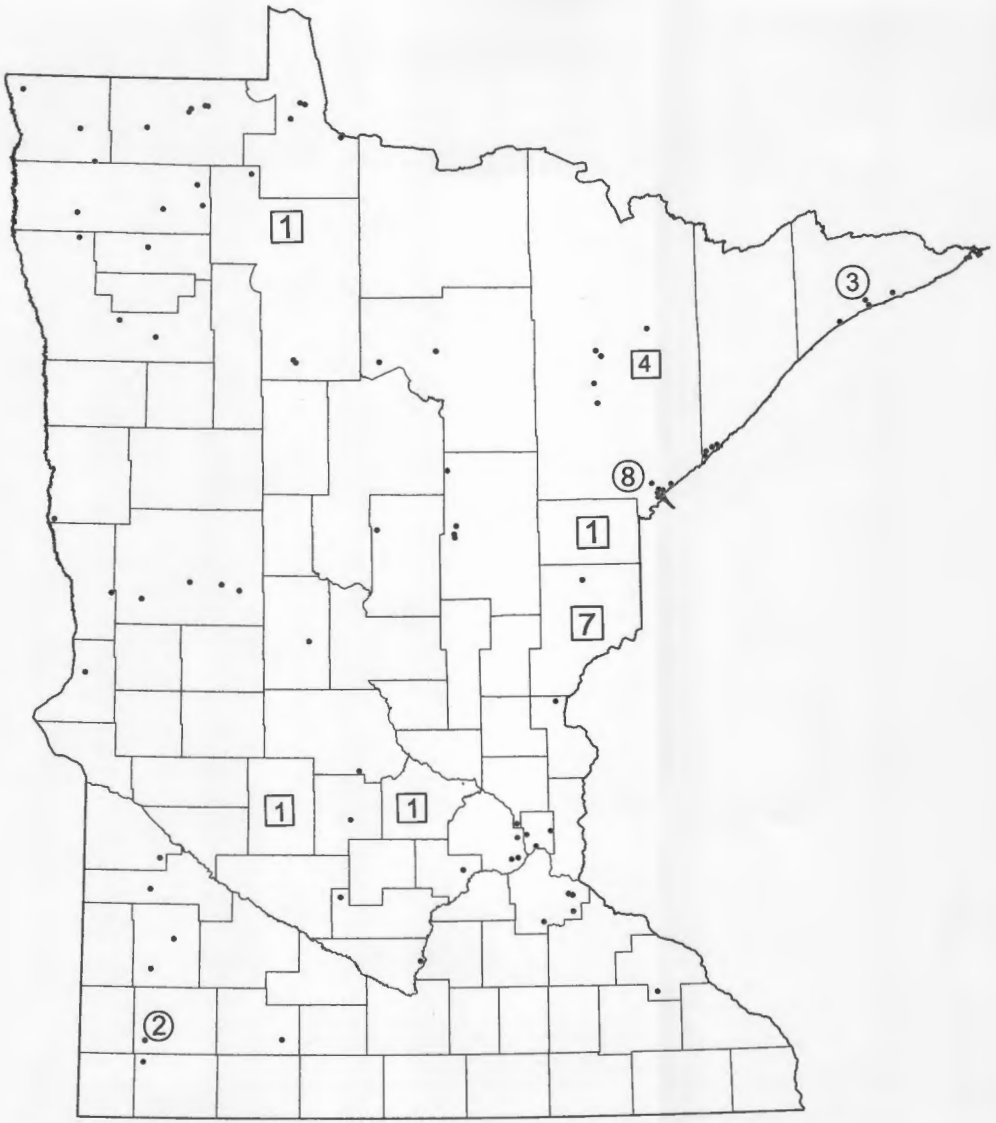

Figure 1. Locations of Snowy Owls in Minnesota, 15 October 2000 through 6 April 2001 (n=111). Solid circle (●) depicts one individual, open circle (○) with number depicts two or more individuals. Boxes depict records lacking a specific location within that county.

research in the Duluth-Superior harbor). Almost one-fourth of the total (27 of 111) reached southern Minnesota (Figure 1). In each of the two most recent invasions, three counties (Aitkin, Hennepin, and St. Louis) had the most Snowy Owls, but this time Aitkin had only four and Hennepin three.

Northern Hawk Owl

Between mid-October 2000 and early April 2001, a record high total of 190

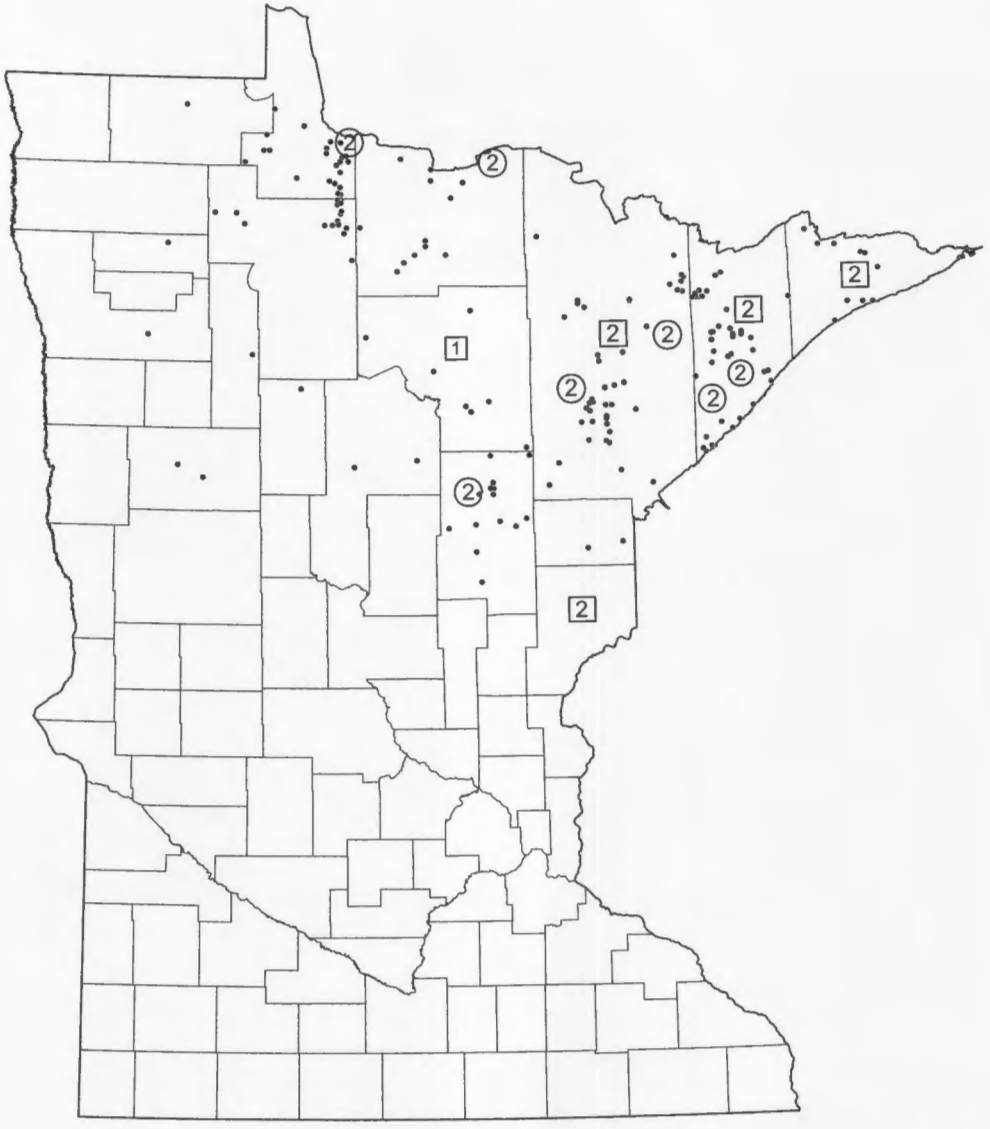

Figure 2. Locations of Northern Hawk Owls in Minnesota, mid-October 2000 through early April 2001 (n=190). Solid circle (●) depicts one individual, open circle (○) with number depicts two or more individuals. Boxes depict records lacking a specific location within that county.

Northern Hawk Owls was reported in Minnesota (Figure 2). This surpassed the previous record of 159 in 1991–92 (Eckert 1992) by more than 30 individuals and was only the third documented invasion of 100 or more Northern Hawk Owls in state history (Table 1 *in* Svingen 1997).

The first Hawk Owl was relatively early on 14 October and was followed by at least a dozen more later that month,

including three along county road 319 in the Sax-Zim Bog. Two were undated but the rest when sorted by month of discovery were: October (13), November (23), December (47), January (43), February (46), and March (16). Dates of discovery by observers obviously did not represent the birds' actual arrival dates, but this pattern did suggest an ongoing influx throughout the winter. In 1991–92 about half of the final total of 159 had arrived by the end of November (Eckert 1992).

While scouring the vast peat lands of Koochiching, Beltrami, and Lake of the Woods counties during the last few hours of daylight on 28 February, Karl Bardon counted no fewer than 16 Hawk Owls, many of these previously undiscovered. Most were along side roads east and west of Minnesota highway 72 in Lake of the Woods County. Since only part of the day was spent looking for owls, Karl felt that a concerted day-long search could have produced even more birds (pers. com.).

Four counties each had 10–20 Hawk Owls and Lake of the Woods County had 23, but these totals paled in comparison to Lake (38) and St. Louis (46) counties. One in Pennington on 10 February was a surprising first for that county. Despite the magnitude of this invasion, but just like 1995–96 (Eckert 1996–97), there were no documented occurrences farther south than northern Pine County. In contrast, Hawk Owl invasions in winter 1962–63 (Green 1963), 1991–92 (Eckert 1992), and 1996–97 (Svingen 1997) resulted in four, one, and five Hawk Owls respectively, in southern Minnesota.

Though apparently healthy and finding adequate food throughout the season, several Hawk Owls were found dead or injured, presumably from collisions with motor vehicles. Two were turned in at the Raptor Center, one from Pine County in early February and one picked up near Tower, St. Louis County in mid-January. At least three were found dead along well-traveled highways, including a fresh specimen 4 March along U.S. highway 72 in Lake of the Woods County.

Following winter invasions in the past, a few Northern Hawk Owls have lingered through spring and occasionally nested. A pair nested near Biwabik in St. Louis County following the 1991–92 invasion (Wilson 1993). Since 1970, breeding has also been documented in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Aitkin, and Lake counties (Hertzel and Janssen 1998). The first sign of potential breeding during spring 2001 was on 29 March, when Ben Yokel saw a pair of Hawk Owls engaged in courtship and copulation in the Sax-Zim Bog area. There was no further evidence of nesting at this exact location but on 10 July, Betsy Beneke watched an adult feeding a fledgling about five miles away. On 20 June, Jim Lind observed an adult with three recently fledged young near Whitefish Lake in eastern Lake County.

Complementing these observations, an unprecedented four Northern Hawk Owl nests were found in Minnesota! The first was found by Jim Lind near Greenwood Lake, Lake County on 22 April. Periodic observations were made until the three young fledged in July; more details will be published. Frank Nicoletti confirmed breeding in Koochiching County on 2 June when hatchlings were discovered in a nest near Little Fork. Two active nests were found along the Gunflint Trail in Cook County, one by Dave Grosshuesch and Sparky Stensaas near the Seagull Guard Station in early June, and the other by Molly and Ken Hoffman near Gunflint Lake on 7 June; two fledged from the latter by 19 July (J. Lind, pers. com.).

Great Gray Owl

The 2000–2001 irruption of Great Gray Owls was perhaps the most spectacular in Minnesota to date. As shown in Figure 3, a minimum total of 394 was reported between early October 2000 and early April 2001. This represents the highest number of Great Gray Owls in Minnesota during any irruption (Table 1 *in* Svingen 1997). The second highest total on record was in 1995–96, when 342 were observed in the state (Eckert 1996–97).

The earliest report this year was from St. Louis County, where Jan Green saw

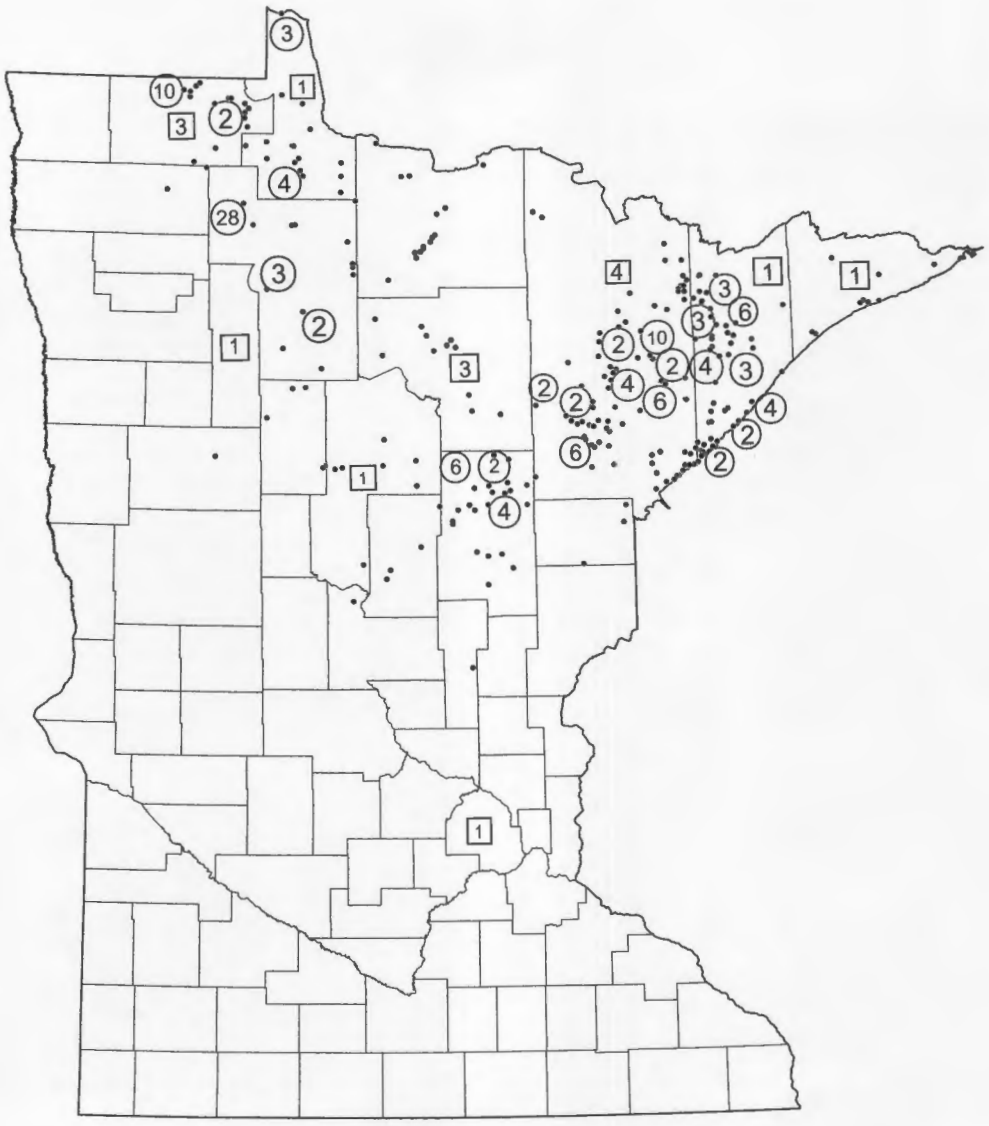

Figure 3. Locations of Great Gray Owls in Minnesota, October 2000 through early April 2001 (n=394). Solid circle (●) depicts one individual, open circle (○) with number depicts two or more individuals. Boxes depict records lacking a specific location within that county.

one in Duluth Township on 9 October. The bulk of the observations were from November through March, with one late bird found dead in Koochiching County in early April. Great Grays were seen consistently throughout this time period, and many apparently stayed in the same general area for extended lengths of time.

Great Gray Owls were reported from a total of 20 counties (Figure 3). By far the

greatest number of sightings was in St. Louis County, where no fewer than 123 birds were tallied. Approximately 30 of these were in the Sax-Zim Bog area — roughly defined as a rectangle bounded by county road (CR) 5 on the west, five miles east of CR 7 on the east, CR 133 on the south, and one mile south of CR 16 on the north. Sightings elsewhere in this county were fairly evenly distributed, though good numbers were also spotted along the North Shore of Lake Superior and in the vicinity of Ely.

Lake County had an impressive total of 74 Great Gray Owls. Several were seen along the North Shore here as well, but most were found "inland" along county and forest roads in the Superior National Forest. One of the most frequently visited counties was Aitkin, where no fewer than 33 Great Grays were observed over the course of the winter. Other counties with good concentrations of Great Gray Owls included Beltrami with 45, Roseau with at least 30, Lake of the Woods with 24, and Koochiching with 15.

Great Grays were found consistently along state highway 89 in northwestern Beltrami County, U.S. highway 71 in Beltrami and Koochiching counties, and state highway 72 in Beltrami and Lake of the Woods counties. Brad Dokken (pers. com.) and others counted 28 Great Grays in one day during a tour of the Beltrami Island State Forest in late December. About a dozen were seen along state highway 310 north of Roseau during late December. Unfortunately, several Great Grays were hit by motorized vehicles or deliberately shot in Roseau County during the winter. One of those found dead along highway 310 had been banded by Robert Nero as a nestling about seven years earlier (*fide* B. Siverhus).

The linear representation of the 15 Koochiching County observations points to possible under counting in that county due to its fairly roadless nature (Figure 3). Cass and Itasca counties were also under represented and each probably had more Great Grays than depicted on the map. Despite extensive areas of suitable habitat, only ten birds were reported from Cook County, possibly because few observers ventured off the Gunflint Trail.

Even though a record high number of Great Grays was reported, this irruption was noteworthy in that most appeared to be in good condition. We know of 26 that were found dead. This translates to a mortality rate of about 6.6%, mostly from illegal shooting or collisions with fences or motorized vehicles. An additional eight Great Grays were reported as injured.

This was well below the 18% mortality rate during the 1995–96 irruption (Eckert 1996–97), and virtually identical to 6.5% in 1996–97 (Svingen 1997). Mortality rates have been as high as 19% in 1968–69 (Green 1969) and 24% in 1977–78 (Eckert 1978). During other recent irruptions in the state, Great Gray Owl mortality rate has generally fallen in the 1–6% range.

Visual observations found Great Gray Owls apparently healthy, and most of the specimens examined were not emaciated (K. Haws, pers. obs.). This was consistent with reports from southeast Manitoba, where more than 100 Great Grays had been banded by researchers as of mid-January, with all but one reportedly well-fed (*fide* B. Siverhus).

Another significant difference between this irruption and those in 1995–96 and 1996–97 was that very few Great Grays were seen outside of northern counties (Figure 3). Although one was confirmed in Hennepin County and one was found as far south as Mille Lacs County, most sightings were confined to the Laurentian mixed forest province. There were many reports from Roseau County but only three others elsewhere in the Northwest, and none in the West-central region.

Other Species

An unknown number of unidentified small owls was reported at or near feeders in northeastern Minnesota beginning in about mid-January. Though some were undoubtedly Borealis, dozens of Northern Saw-whet Owls were found. Please see Steve Wilson's article for further insights.

Only four of the ten Gyrfalcons (*Falco*

6 Nov 2000	adult gray	Bayside Park	Lake	Craig Mandel *et al.*
16 Nov 2000	adult gray	Hawk Ridge	St. Louis	Frank Nicoletti
18 Dec 2000	imm gray	Duluth	St. Louis	†Peder Svingen
23 Dec 2000[1]	subadult gray	Duluth	St. Louis	†Dave Evans *et al.*
11–13 Jan 2001	adult gray	Virginia	St. Louis	Ben Yokel
12 Jan 2001	adult gray	Ross Twp.	Roseau	Mark Otnes
19 Jan 2001	imm gray	Donaldson	Kittson	†Christian Artuso
18 Feb 2001	no details	Spruce Twp.	Roseau	Mark Gonzales
9 Mar 2001	adult gray	Sax-Zim Bog	St. Louis	†*fide* F. Nicoletti
14 Mar 2001	imm gray	Duluth	St. Louis	Frank Nicoletti

Figure 4. Gyrfalcon reports in Minnesota, November 2000 through March 2001. Four were documented (†) by photographs. [1]Overwintered into early March.

rusticolus) seen between early November 2000 and 14 March 2001 (Figure 4) were documented by photographs, but all were seen by experienced birders within this species' usual winter range. Three other reports were excluded for various reasons. Record high numbers of this species (14 and 15, respectively) were documented during winter incursions of northern owls in 1990–91 (Eckert 1991) and 1991–92 (Eckert 1992).

Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) and Barred Owl (*S. varia*) numbers were average to below-average. High numbers of these two species have been reported during some irruptions (see Eckert 1992).

Summary

Although the number of Snowy Owls was far from record high, this invasion was unusual in two ways. It began early but petered out by January; three-fourths of all Snowys were discovered between late October and the end of December. Secondly, significant numbers of Snowys were found injured, dead, or emaciated during late October and early November.

In contrast, nearly all of the 394 Great Gray and 190 Northern Hawk Owls were healthy and apparently found adequate food throughout the winter. The primary causes of death or injury to these species was collision with motor vehicles and, in the case of Great Grays, illegal shooting. Unlike recent incursions and despite their record high numbers, Great Gray and Northern Hawk Owls essentially remained within the coniferous forest zone. Similar to the 1996–97 influx, Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls irrupted at the same time and suffered significant mortality.

Acknowledgments

Kudos to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for assisting with owls turned in to their field offices and the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center for accepting owls into rehabilitation. We thank Jane Goggin and the Raptor Center for sharing information from that facility. Beth Siverhus compiled reports for the North-central region and helped make arrangements for rehabilitation of injured owls. David and Molly Evans in Duluth accepted numerous injured or starving birds and worked closely with the Raptor Center throughout the irruption.

We thank all observers who reported owls during this influx. We are especially grateful to Karl Bardon, Betsy Beneke, Jo and Steve Blanich, Cindy Butler, Molly and David Evans, Maya Hamady, Peter Harris, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertzel, Molly and Ken Hoffman, Martin Kehoe, Sharon and Jim Lind, Craig Mandel, Gretchen Mehmel, Warren Nelson, Pam Perry, Tom Rusch, Steve Schon, Karen Sussman, Steve Wilson, Kevin Woizeschke, and Ben Yokel, all of whom provided lists of multiple records. Roger Schroeder and Karl Bardon provided CBC records. Many thanks to Kim Eckert for keeping track of reports called in to the Duluth hotline. Figures 1–3 were produced from reports compiled by the au-

thors and painstakingly entered into an Arc-View version 3.1 mapping program by Bruce Lenning. We thank Anthony Hertzel for assistance with graphics and layout.

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Boreal Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl Irruptions, Winter 2000–2001

Steve Wilson

The winter of 2000–01 brought Minnesota's fourth coincidental irruption of Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls since 1988. Above-average numbers were reported for both species, though there were differences in timing, extent, and magnitude, which are presented in this report. "Irruption" is used to describe both events because of the likelihood birds in both cases were a mix of Minnesota residents and visitors from Canada.

Methods

Compilers gathered and tallied reports as described by Peder Svingen *et al.* in this issue of ***The Loon***, and by Wilson (1997). Breeding birds (e.g., singing males) were not counted. Captured and banded Boreal Owls were included in this tally, but similar reports for Northern Saw-whet Owls were not.

Any reports within 0.4 km of each other were assumed to be the same individual, unless circumstances indicated

Table 1. Comparison of Minnesota Boreal Owl irruptions.

Year	Total Number	#Dead (%)	#Of Counties	Primary ocation (# of birds found < 10 km from Lake Superior)
2000–01	259	171 (66)	21	North Shore (172), NE, NC, EC + few NW, Central
1996–97	263	202 (77)	26	North Shore (108), NE, NC, NW, EC + few Central
1995–96	214	178 (83)	22	North Shore (115), NE, NC, EC + few NW, Central
1988–89	194	165 (85)	18	North Shore (87), NE, NC, NW, EC, + one Central
1981–82	39	25 (64)	5	North Shore (36)
1977–78	66	3 (5)	5	North Shore (61)
1968–69	11	5 (45)	9	Eastern MN
1965–66	15	7 (47)	3	North Shore (14)
1962–63	9	2 (22)	2	North Shore (9)
1922–23	*Unknown*	*Unknown*	1?	Roseau County

otherwise. Any double-counting of itinerant individuals caused by this rule was probably more than offset by the undercounting this rule caused where Boreal Owls concentrated in small areas. This "clustering" behavior was known in the past through instances of several owls found dead at the same location (Wilson 1997). Two additional reports last winter confirmed this tendency. Frank Nicoletti banded six Boreal Owls at Hartley Field in Duluth on two occasions in November. And a Peter Weber birding group, using walkie-talkies in Two Harbors at dusk on 11 February, confirmed four different individuals in a several-block area as Jim Lind (pers. com.) listened on his radio while observing a fifth bird approximately 0.8 km away.

Boreal Owl

During the winter of 2000–01, 259 Boreal Owls (*Aegolius funereus*) were reported in Minnesota. By the numbers, this was Minnesota's second-largest recorded irruption of Boreal Owls, just four birds fewer than in the record winter of 1996–97. A majority (83%) of the reports came from northeastern Minnesota's Arrowhead Region, but birds were also reported west to Roseau County and south to the Twin Cities. As in most past Minnesota irruptions, many of the birds (171) were found dead or dying, most near buildings. Based on evidence of low weight, peak of sightings in late winter, and behavior, a high percentage of the owls apparently starved.

Results

Numbers

A total of 259 birds was reported in the state between September 2000 and April 2001, a number that was exceeded only by the 263 birds recorded during the 1996–97 event. See Table 1 for a comparison with records from past irruptions.

Compared to earlier irruptions the 259 total may be considered somewhat inflated because it includes 24 Boreal Owls captured and banded by Frank Nicoletti in November (see Nicoletti's article in this issue of ***The Loon***) at Hartley Field in Duluth. While Boreal Owls have been banded at Hawk Ridge in prior years, an effort like Nicoletti's, specifically targeting Boreal Owls by using playbacks of their vocalizations, has not been conducted in prior years. However, even without these "extra" birds, this year's total would still rank as the second highest.

Geographic Extent

As with seven of nine previous Minnesota Boreal Owl irruptions, the majority of last winter's 259 reports came from the Arrowhead Region of Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties (83%), especially along the North Shore of Lake Superior and the Duluth area (Figure 1). Four previous irruptions were largely confined to the North Shore of Lake Superior (Table 1).

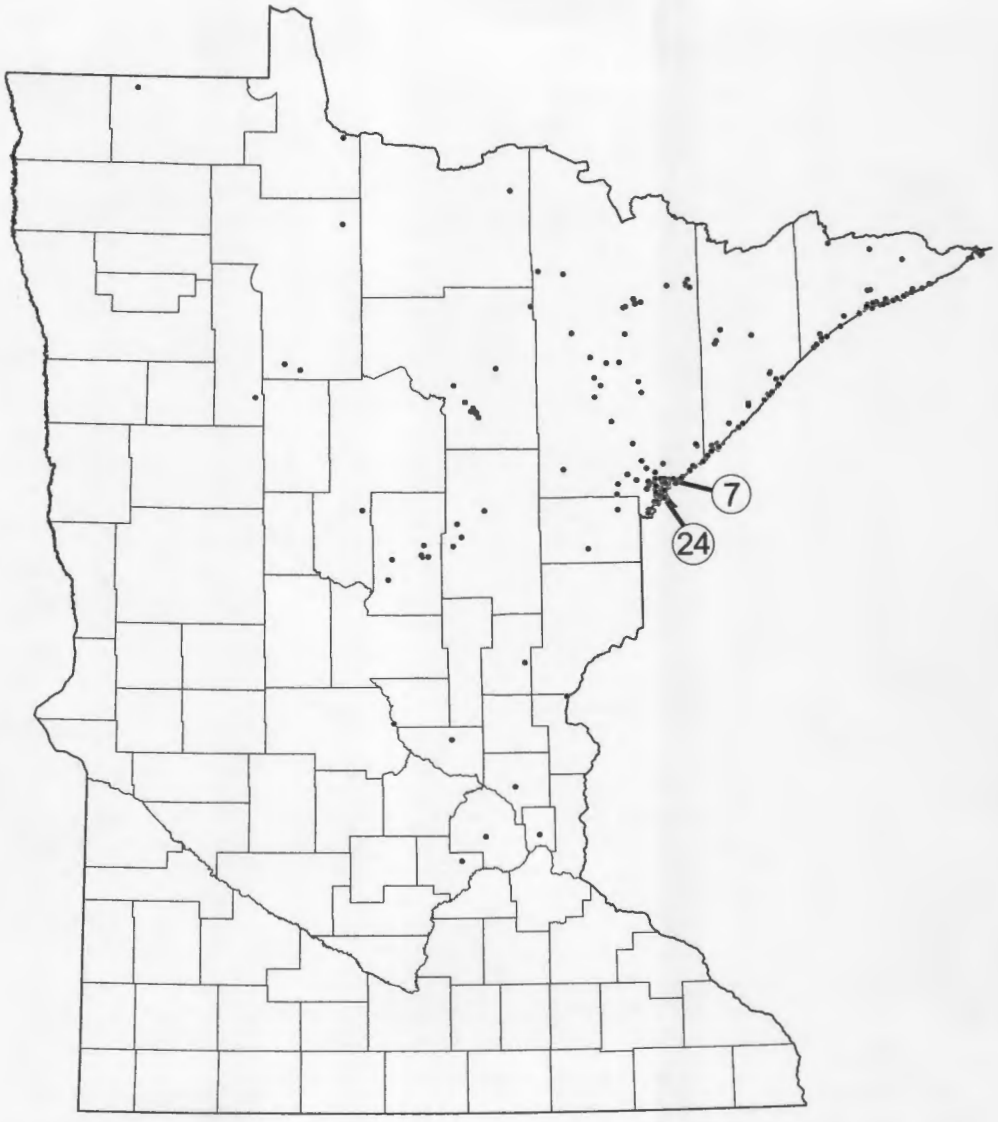

Figure 1. Locations of Boreal Owl records, winter 2000–01. Solid circle (●) denotes individual record (n = 228), open circle (○) with number denotes birds captured and banded at Hawk Ridge and Hartley Field in Duluth, St. Louis County.

Only the 1922–23 Roseau County event (Roberts 1932), and the 1968–69 irruption in eastern Minnesota (Green 1969) did not follow this pattern. The majority of records in all ten irruptions came from outside the known breeding range in the state or — in the case of the Roseau County irruption — an area with few breeding season records. This is somewhat confusing when viewing the records by county since Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties do include the usual

Table 2. Peak months (≥67% of dateable reports) for Boreal Owl reports in last six irruptions. The month listed first for each year has the higher # of reports.

Year	Peak Months for Reports (% of reports).
2000–01	March/February (78)
1996–97	January/February (72)
1995–96	March/February (67)
1988–89	March/February (74)
1981–82	March/April (85)
1977–78	February/March (85)

breeding range of the Boreal Owl. However, the breeding range does not extend to the North Shore or Duluth areas of these counties.

The overall extent of last winter's irruption was nearly identical to the three previous events, extending from Cook County in the northeast to Roseau County in the northwest, and from there roughly east of a line extending down to the western suburbs of the Twin Cities. The number of counties with reports (21) was also similar (Table 1). Differences exist between years in overall distribution within this area, however. Notably, in 2000–01 reports were more concentrated in the Arrowhead Region and along the North Shore of Lake Superior, especially Lake and Cook counties. A higher proportion (41%) of all reports came from these two counties, as compared to 31% in 1988–89, 29% in 1995–1996, and only 14% in 1996–97 when unusual numbers of birds traveled farther south and west (Wilson 1997).

Timing and Mortality

Birds were reported in each month between September 2000 and April 2001. The first report came on 9 September — one bird found dead in Duluth. During October and November, 36 birds were reported, including 31 banded in Duluth: 7 at Hawk Ridge (D. Evans, pers. com.) and 24 at Hartley Field. The other four birds reported during October were all injured, dead, or dying. The one non-banding report from November was a live bird, as were six discovered in December. During the first three weeks of January only two birds were reported: one dead, one injured.

During the fourth week of January, the trickle of sightings turned into a steady stream, and then a torrent of sightings in February and especially March. During this period, 200 birds (152 dead/dying) were reported, representing 90% of all non-banding reports. Only three reports came in April; the last being a bird found dead the second week of the month.

Three previous irruptions also peaked in February and March, though they differed in some respects from last winter. The 1977–78 event (Eckert 1978) clearly peaked in February (64% of reports). In the 1988–89, 1995–96, and 2000–01 irruptions, most reports came in March, followed closely by February. In the latter two events, though, the peaks were not quite as intense, with more reports coming in December, January, and April than during last winter's irruption (Wilson 1997). The last six Boreal Owl irruptions with large numbers of reports peaked sometime between January and April (Table 2).

Of 259 reported birds during the 2000–01 irruption, 171 (66%) were reported dead or dying. Almost all of the 171 birds starved, judging by their weights (n=141) and behavior. The 66% mortality rate for 2000–01 is lower than the three previous irruptions (Table 1), but of a similar magnitude, especially when adjusted (73%) to exclude the birds banded by Nicoletti.

Age

Of the 259 birds, 163 were aged using wing molt patterns (Hornfeldt, *et al.*

Boreal Owl, 11 February 2001, Larsmont, Lake County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.

1988). This includes the 24 birds banded by Nicoletti and 7 banded at Hawk Ridge (Dave Evans, pers. com.). Of these known-age birds, 90% were adults (after-hatch year). This represents a marked increase over the proportion of adults from three previous irruptions, when they ranged from 24% (1988–89) to 62% (1996–97) of birds aged (Wilson 1997). The lack of juvenile (hatch-year) birds in last winter's irruption suggests Boreal Owls experienced a very poor breeding season in spring of 2000.

Discussion

A nomadic/migratory response to fluctuating prey populations is documented for this species within portions of its European range (Korpimaki 1986b). Minnesota's ten irruptions, largely into locales outside their breeding range, support the likelihood of a similar response by Boreal Owl populations in Minnesota and adjacent areas of Canada. But in at least eight of these irruptions a significant proportion of birds detected were found dead. The obvious biological question raised by these data is why the birds persist in a behavior that, at first glance, fails to enhance survival and breeding, since the alternative to staying put on a permanent breeding territory is presumably more favorable to the population as a whole. While this may seem like a contradiction, it is more likely an example of how incomplete information, along with a peculiarity of Boreal Owl irruption biology, can confound our understanding of these events.

For example, during irruptions Boreal Owls tend to appear — and often die — near homes, woodsheds, garages, and other places near human habitations (Roberts 1932, Wilson 1996). In the 1988–89 irruption, at least 62% were seen or found within 15 meters of a building, woodpile, or bird or livestock feeder. Boreal Owls are unable to hunt small mammals protected by deep snow (Korpimaki 1986a), and these sites either concentrate small mammals or make them more available on patches of bare ground or packed snow.

Starvation and an accompanying hypersensitivity to cold are perhaps responsible for a subset of Boreal Owls that aren't just found near buildings, but in them. At least a dozen Boreal Owls were found dead inside garages, barns, woodsheds or other outbuildings during the 1988–89 irruption. Birds were also discovered — alive or dead — inside buildings in each of the last three irruptions, including at least six last winter. Similar behavior was reported during the 1922–23 irruption (Forbush 1927), which occurred over much of northeastern United States and eastern Canada. Bent (1961) also reported on birds found dead or dying inside igloos in Alaska.

This tendency to be found in association with buildings probably means that a higher percentage of dead Boreal Owls are recovered during irruption years than is true for other species. If Minnesota owl irruptions are a mix of relatively healthy birds, along with food-stressed birds less likely to survive, the preponderance of dead birds reported could simply be due to the relative ease of detecting them compared to healthy birds maintaining a nocturnal habit.

We know from the 1977–78 irruption that large numbers of birds can survive irruptions (Table 1), even though apparently stressed enough to hunt in the daytime. Some evidence suggests a healthy but hidden (i.e., nocturnal) component to irruptions:

- Frank Nicoletti's targeted banding of 24 Boreal Owls last fall demonstrates that large numbers of Boreal Owls were present in the heart of the irruption area well before this year's apparent peak based on discovery dates, but remained invisible (i.e., nocturnal) until hunger forced some of them to hunt in the daytime and/or they died near homes. Records from the Hawk Ridge banding station had only hinted at the possibility that significant numbers of birds migrate south early in the season (only two of the last six irruptions started with above average numbers of Boreal Owls being

banded at the Ridge — in 1977 and 2000).

- In all of the last four irruptions, a small number of birds that were otherwise healthy and candidates to have survived the winter were killed in collisions with cars and windows.
- Following several irruptions, increased numbers of singing males were detected in portions of their Minnesota breeding range: Cook County in 1989 and 1997 (Lane 1997), and Lake and St. Louis counties in 2001 (L. Belmonti, pers. com.).

Nicoletti's work also suggests the possibility that altogether invisible irruptions occur in which birds migrate in search of food, but are successful enough to maintain their nocturnal habits and remain undetected. Banding records from Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Michigan, support this notion. Large numbers of northward-moving spring migrant Boreal Owls have been captured there, not always in years coinciding with known irruptions, particularly in 1988 when 163 were banded (Wiens 1989). Perhaps undetected irruptions occurred in Minnesota in 1976–77 and 1987–88. Those years saw the highest numbers of Boreal Owls banded at Hawk Ridge (eight each fall, D. Evans, pers. com.), but were not followed by documented irruptions. Continued fall/early winter banding efforts targeted specifically at Boreal Owls, including non-irruption years, could shed more light on this question.

Other issues

It is readily apparent from the data that the reported numbers of irrupting — and dead — Boreal Owls has been trending upward since at least the early 1980s. Probable explanations include that Boreal Owls are more likely to be identified when found because of a growing population of knowledgeable birders. Increased use of home computers, the internet, and bird listservices have almost certainly increased birders' awareness of ongoing irruptions and means that sightings are more likely reported. In addition, development in northeastern Minnesota — especially in rural areas and along the North Shore — combined with the Boreal Owl's tendency to appear near residences, presumably increases the likelihood that dead and dying owls are recovered. Changes in the proportion of irrupting birds reported due to these factors are hard to quantify. Since they are incremental in nature, though, any increase due to them will be more significant over time.

An alternate, and more troubling scenario for the increase in the reports of dead owls is that some irruption mortality is related to changes in environmental conditions. This possibility cannot be discounted, especially if the increased numbers in recent irruptions are not due solely to rural development or increased knowledge and vigilance by reporters and compilers (Wilson 1996). One example would be the reduction in conifer trees in Minnesota's northern forests over the last century due to logging (Green 1995). Conifers provide thermal protection for birds, and their branches intercept falling snow, moderating snow depths and allowing better access to small mammals, especially for a diminutive predator like the Boreal Owl. It's conceivable this or some other changed environmental factor has resulted in an increased mortality for irrupting Boreal Owls. Continued documentation of any future irruptions, and additional habitat-related research, could help sort out these issues.

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Above average numbers of Northern Saw-whet Owls are often reported during Boreal Owl irruptions (Hayward and Hayward 1993), and this was certainly the case last winter. A record total of 46 was reported between November 2000 and April 2001. All except four of the 44 dated reports came in January, February and March, with most coming in February (27).

Similar to Boreal Owl irruptions, many

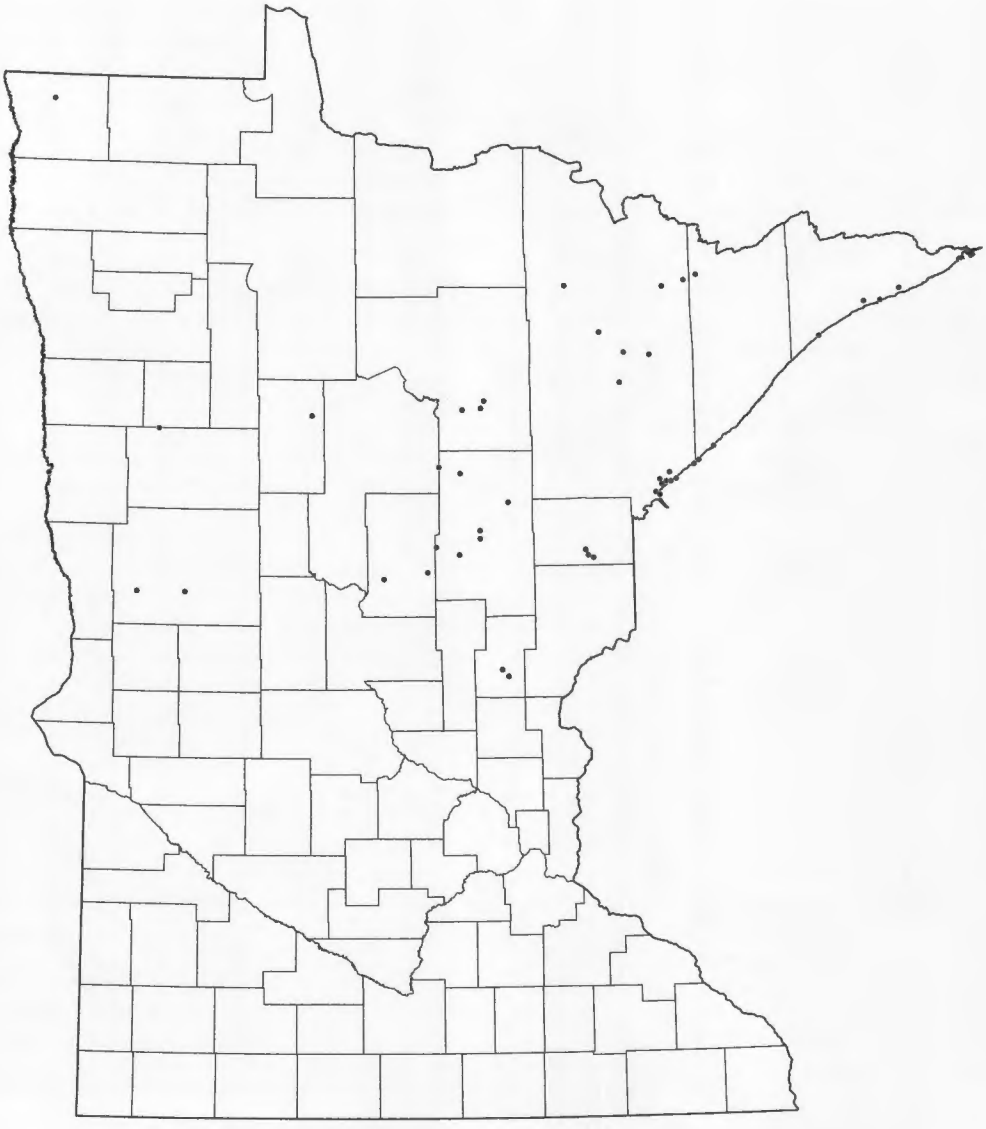

Figure 2. Locations of Northern Saw-whet Owl records, winter 2000–01. Solid circle (●) denotes individual record (n = 46).

Northern Saw-whet Owls were found injured, dead, or dying. Twenty-two such reports were received both last winter and from the irruption of 1988–1989. In 1995–96 at least six were reported dead or dying, and in 1996–97 there were 19 such reports. The same mechanism that brings starving Boreal Owls close to humans probably holds for Northern Saw-whet Owls also. Information accompanying reports is often sketchy, but last winter nine Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported "at feeders," another nine were "in yards," and two were found inside

buildings.

Northern Saw-whet Owls were found in 14 counties, most in a broad band extending from the Arrowhead Region in the northeast to the western border of Clay County (Figure 2). St. Louis County had the most reports (17), followed by Aitkin (6) and Cook (4).

At least six Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported in five southern counties, but it seems likely that more occurred there. Even in non-irruption years, reports of winter visitant Northern Saw-whet Owls in southern Minnesota aren't too unusual, and the species winters well into the southern U.S. A likely explanation is the "invisible irruption" scenario suggested for Boreal Owls. Last winter's distribution of Northern Saw-whet Owls reports could represent a zone of marginal survivability, where birds were food-stressed, hunted in the daytime around buildings, and risked death. The area to the south with fewer reports may be an area of increased survivability, where birds were successful enough to maintain a nocturnal habit and thus remain undetected. Conversely, the relative lack of reports in the northwest could mean conditions (snow cover, prey availability) were too adverse for most birds to even attempt overwintering there.

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In addition to those already acknowledged by Peder Svingen, Katie Haws, and Bruce Lenning in their report, I would like to thank Peder for compiling many of these records. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources offices near the North Shore, including Grand Marais, Schroeder, Two Harbors, Finland, Duluth, and Cloquet deserve special mention for bearing the brunt of the work of collecting and transferring specimens, as do David and Molly Evans. Many thanks to Mary Shedd and Marshall Helmberger for reviewing this manuscript. Assistance with layout and graphics from Anthony Hertzel, and his patience, is much appreciated.

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The Winter Season
(1 December 2000 to 28 February 2001)

Karl Bardon

*Birders flocked to the North Shore between Duluth and Two Harbors to observe an overwintering **Gyrfalcon** and record high numbers of **Great Gray** and **Northern Hawk Owls**, and as a result discovered many unusual species including **King Eider**, **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**, and **Barrow's Goldeneye**. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** overwintered in the state for the second winter in a row.*

After three mild winters, both snow and cold arrived early this season. December was the third coldest on record, with the average temperature about 11° F below normal. Snowfall during the month was 200% above the mean throughout much of the state. Although temperatures moderated somewhat in January, February was again colder than normal. In contrast to last winter when a huge surge of migrants took advantage of unseasonable weather beginning 24–25 February, this season saw a large snowstorm on these dates (as much as 23 inches of snow fell along the North Shore of Lake Superior), and the winter season closed with subzero lows, a snow depth of 12–24+ inches throughout the state (the most snow in late February since 1965), and no thaw in sight!

The continuous procession of birders into the Duluth–Two Harbors vicinity to observe a reliable, wintering **Gyrfalcon** and the numerous northern owls resulted in the discovery of several rare species, and also helped document the presence of several lingering or wintering species. **Horned Grebe** is casual in mid-winter on Lake Superior, and there are only two previous February reports in the last 40 years, so four individuals loitering from late December through mid-February was unusual. Except for an overwintering bird in 1977–78 in Big Stone County, the **Western Grebe** that lingered until 20 January at Two Harbors was the latest for the state. An adult male **Harlequin Duck** which hid along the rocky shoreline east of Duluth provided one of the few overwintering records for the North Shore. The **King Eider** at Two Harbors, Minnesota's fifteenth, furnished the latest date on record when it lingered until 15 January (the only previous January record was one collected on 13 January 1963). Intermittent reports of **White-winged Scoters** from December through early February indicated the possibility of overwintering, something suggested only once or twice previously, as indicated by dates reported in ***The Loon*** during the winters of 1963–64 and 1974–75.

The state's eleventh record of **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** was obtained when one was found feeding on spilled grain at the Port Terminal in Duluth by Gyrfalcon searchers. It was photographed and identified as representing the more expected Interior population (see Sibley, D. A. 2000. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*), unlike several previous records in the state which were (surprisingly) from the Coastal population, including a specimen collected in 1889. The parade of rarities along the North Shore concluded when an adult male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found in February. Even though there are over 50 records of this Casual species in the state, there are only two previous sightings from Duluth, the last in 1977!

During a winter when few waterfowl were reported, most extraordinary were six reports of **Greater Scaup**, a number equal to that for Lesser Scaup! The last few years have seen a marked increase in reports of Greater Scaup, a species which

was formerly considered quite rare in winter. Has there been an actual change in temporal distribution, or have birders become more or less proficient at scaup identification? A concentration of nearly 1000 **Common Goldeneyes** and about the same number of **Common Mergansers** on the Mississippi River near its confluence with the St. Croix River between Hastings, Minnesota and Prescott, Wisconsin attracted birds which are locally unusual as overwintering species, such as two **Long-tailed Ducks**, two **Double-crested Cormorants**, a **Tundra Swan**, and a male **Red-breasted Merganser**.

The numbers of accipiters were up. **Northern Goshawk** numbers increased due to their ten-year population cycle, **Cooper's Hawks** continued to be more prevalent than formerly, and **Sharp-shinneds** were reported almost as far north as the Canadian border! There was a corresponding increase in the number of claims of Cooper's Hawks in the north, despite the fact that this species has seldom been adequately documented in the north during the winter season. Among the sixteen **Golden Eagle** reports, one which spent several weeks along the Minnesota River near Black Dog Lake was noteworthy because there had been no previous winter reports from this area, and the bird was at a location where it could be enjoyed by many observers.

The **Great Egret** which lingered on the Minnesota River near Black Dog Lake was seen in both Hennepin and Dakota counties. The state's only other winter record was at Black Dog Lake in 1993. A **Turkey Vulture** was reportedly picked up injured near Forestville State Park and sent to the Raptor Rehabilitation Center. Although there have been reliable reports of early migrants in late February, there were no previous confirmed December records. A **Virginia Rail** found at Mound Springs Park in Hennepin County was approximately the ninth winter report. **Lesser Black-backed** and **Great Black-backed Gulls** from fall lingered into the winter season in the Twin Cities, but otherwise the number of gull reports was down from the previous three winters.

Record high numbers of **Great Gray** and **Northern Hawk Owls** were found between October and April, while significant numbers of **Snowy**, **Boreal**, and **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were seen. The unusually high number of Northern Saw-whet Owls in the north, mostly at feeders, resulted in widespread confusion with the concurrent irruption of Borealis. Details about the northern owl influx can be found elsewhere in this issue. In comparison to the number of northern owls, the number of **Short-eared** and **Long-eared Owls** was down considerably from the previous three winters.

Although still officially Accidental in the state, two **Eurasian Collared-Doves** overwintered at a Russell, Lyon County feeder — the second winter in a row that this species has overwintered. Among an above average seven **Yellow-rumped Warblers** was one which overwintered at Duluth, a most unusual and northerly wintering record. A **Summer Tanager** lingered from the fall season into early December at a feeder in Faribault, Rice County; the only previous winter record was furnished by one that lingered in Anoka County until 22 December 1988. There was another second-hand report of a **Baltimore Oriole** in mid-December. Why is it that nearly all of our winter oriole reports have been second-hand, often without adequate details? Note that the only accepted Bullock's Oriole record for Minnesota occurred in winter!

It was an excellent winter season for sparrows. The state was awash with at least seventeen **towhees**, including nine Easterns, six Spotteds, and two more not positively identified — certainly the best winter showing. There were two reliable reports of **Clay-colored Sparrows**, both from Hennepin County, even though there had been only one previous winter record (in 1984–85). A **Vesper Sparrow** described from Dakota County was the first of its kind to show up during winter since 1990 and represented the eleventh winter record for the state. Meanwhile, a **Savannah Sparrow** briefly caught and

photographed at a banding station in Washington County provided the state's fourth winter record. There were also more than the usual numbers of **Harris's** and **White-crowned Sparrows**.

Northern finches did not stray south, and only **Pine Grosbeak** was reported in good numbers in the north. **Redpolls** were nearly absent statewide. It seems odd that the only redpoll reports from the south were on Christmas Bird Counts. Is it possible that something as ordinary as a Common Redpoll is being routinely misidentified by less experienced observers who often participate in CBCs?

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Roger Schroeder for taking over the task of compiling and editing the Christmas Bird Counts. Betsy Beneke, Dave Benson, Kim Eckert, and Anthony Hertzel compiled sightings sent into the three rare bird reports, Paul Budde provided a summary of *Seasonal Reports* sent to him electronically, and Peder Svingen reviewed the manuscript.

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KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Upper case (**LEAST TERN**) indicates a Casual or Accidental species in the state.
2. Dates listed in bold (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the three earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold (**Aitkin**) indicate an unusual occurrence for that county.
4. Counties with an underline (**Aitkin**) indicate a first county record.
5. Counties listed in italics (*Aitkin*) indicate a first county breeding record.
6. Brackets [ ] indicate a species for which there is reasonable doubt as to its origin or wildness.
7. Counts listed in bold (**150**) indicate total within or exceeding the top three high counts for that species.
8. Dagger "†" preceding observer's initials denotes documentation was submitted.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.

Pacific Loon — Only the second winter record: **1/20** St. Louis (Duluth) †SP.

Common Loon — No reports.

Pied-billed Grebe — One overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County mob. Another seen 1/2–20 Hennepin (Stone Arch bridge, Minneapolis) SLC, TAT. Also reported on the St. Paul (count week) and †Morris CBCs.

Horned Grebe — Up to four individuals overwintered from 12/31 through mid-February on Lake Superior between Stoney Point, St. Louis County and Two Harbors, Lake County mob.

Red-necked Grebe — One or two birds seen 1/13 through mid-February on Lake Superior from Duluth, St. Louis County to Two Harbors, Lake County mob.

Western Grebe — One lingered from fall season (11/26) through **1/20** Lake (Two Harbors) mob.

American White Pelican — One overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County mob.

Double-crested Cormorant — Six birds still present at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County on 12/2 TAT, but only three overwintered at this location. Two individuals

overwintered along the Mississippi River near Hastings, Dakota County and Point Douglas, Washington County. Late north 12/4 St. Louis (Duluth) PHS.

Great Blue Heron — Reported from one north and nine south counties. Overwintered in Otter Tail and Ramsey. Peak 1/8 Ramsey (16 at the traditional location on the Mississippi R. at Pigs Eye Lake outlet, South St. Paul) AXH. One additional mid-winter report: 1/22 Waseca JEZ (frozen in ice). Possible early migrants 2/20 Fillmore SPM, DKM, 2/27 Freeborn AEB.

Great Egret — One reported **12/2** along the Minnesota River near Black Dog Lake, where seen in both Hennepin and Dakota counties †PEB, SLC. Minnesota's second winter record.

Turkey Vulture — Picked up injured 12/1 near Forestville S.P., Fillmore County *fide* KAK.

Greater White-fronted Goose — None.

Snow Goose — Reported from only three counties (22 last winter). One seen 1/1 – 2/26 Olmsted PWP, JJS, CRG. Also on the Faribault (2) and Wabasha (1) CBCs.

Canada Goose — Reported from only 40 counties throughout the state. Peak count 20,000 on the Rochester CBC.

Mute Swan — No reports.

Trumpeter Swan — DNR aerial survey of overwintering flock along Mississippi River at Monticello tallied 522 birds. Also reported 1/15, 2/3 Pine KM, BP, and on the following CBCs: Afton (16), Albert Lea (1), Battle Lake (204), Fergus Falls (12), Minneapolis (count week), Tamarac N.W.R. (3), and Wild River (19).

Tundra Swan — Two overwintered at Monticello, Wright County KJB (sixth consecutive winter). One overwintered on Mississippi River near Point Douglas, Dakota and Washington counties mob.

Wood Duck — Reported from eleven counties. Overwintered at Stone Lake in Sax-Zim bog, St. Louis County (12/10 – 2/18) mob. Also overwintered in Dakota County (Hastings and Black Dog Lake). Additional mid-winter report 2/15 Benton (Sauk Rapids) KJB. Birds only reported through 1/1 included 12/1 Freeborn AEB, 12/8 Waseca JJS, and the Crookston (count week), Fergus Falls, Le Sueur County, Owatonna, and Willmar CBCs.

Gadwall — Overwintered in Dakota, Scott, and possibly Winona counties. Also reported on Albert Lea, Austin, St. Paul (north), St. Paul (northeast suburban), and Wabasha CBCs.

American Wigeon — Only report: 12/8 Waseca JJS.

American Black Duck — Reported from 10 south and 3 north counties, all in the eastern and central regions.

Mallard — Reported from 42 counties throughout the state. Peak on the St. Paul CBC (6272).

Northern Shoveler — Late migrants seen on 12/2 Hennepin (50+) SLC, PEB, 12/2 Dakota TAT, and through 12/30 Scott CRM.

Northern Pintail — Seen in seven south counties. Overwintered in Dakota (5) PEJ *et al.* Additional mid-winter reports 1/9 Rice (1) FVS, KNS, 2/6 Ramsey (1) KJB. Also found on the Faribault (2), Le Sueur County, St. Paul (6), and Winona CBCs. Potential early returnees 2/14 Olmsted JJS, 2/25 Hennepin (2) DFJ.

Green-winged Teal — Overwintered in Dakota (17) PEJ *et al.* Also seen 12/30 on the Willmar CBC (1).

Canvasback — Overwintered in Dakota (1) mob. Late migrant 12/8 Waseca JJS.

Redhead — Only report: Fergus Falls CBC (1).

Harlequin Duck, 21 January 2001, French River, St. Louis County. Photo by Mark Junghans.

Ring-necked Duck — One overwintered in Otter Tail (Fergus Falls) SPM, DKM. One or two overwintered between the Blue Lake treatment plant, Scott County and Black Dog Lake, Dakota County mob. Late north 12/16 Bemidji CBC. Late south 12/3 McLeod DMF, 12/16 Excelsior (2) and Winona (1) CBCs.

Greater Scaup — Male overwintered in Scott (Blue Lake treatment plant) †AXH, mob. A female seen 2/6 Dakota (South St. Paul) KJB was more likely a wintering bird than an early spring migrant. Late north 12/4 Lake (Knife River) KRE. Late south 12/2 Hennepin PEB, 12/2–24 Washington (Point Douglas) BRL, and 1/3 Washington (Afton) KJB.

Lesser Scaup — Two overwintered in Otter Tail (Fergus Falls) SPM, DKM, and four overwintered in Scott (Blue Lake treatment plant) mob. Additional mid-winter reports from Dakota KJB, TAT and 1/2–19 Fillmore NBO. Late south 12/8 Waseca JJS, 1/1 Olmsted CRM.

Harlequin Duck — Adult male seen on Lake Superior 12/29 – 2/3 St. Louis (French River area) mob. Also reported through 12/19 Cook KMH.

White-winged Scoter — Scattered sightings 12/4 – 2/10 of one–two birds on Lake Superior between Duluth, St. Louis County and Two Harbors, Lake County, but the only documented reports were 12/16 (Duluth CBC) †PHS and **2/3** St. Louis (French River) †CAM. Also reported 12/2 Goodhue (Frontenac) BRL.

KING EIDER — Female/immature seen 12/29 – 1/15 Lake (Agate Bay in Two Harbors) †JWL, †PHS, mob.

Long-tailed Duck — Scattered reports from Lake Superior, including 52 on the Grand Marais CBC in Cook County, plus one or two in Lake and St. Louis. Two overwintered along the Mississippi River near Hastings, Dakota County.

Bufflehead — Three overwintered in

Scott (Blue Lake treatment plant) mob. Scattered reports of small numbers (max. 3) from Lake Superior through 1/4 Cook, 1/21 St. Louis, and 2/4 Lake. Late south 12/2 Hennepin PEB, SLC, 12/16 Excelsior CBC (8), 12/29 Wright KJB.

Common Goldeneye — Reported from 29 counties in all regions except the Northwest. Peak 1/21 Dakota (900 on the Mississippi River near Hastings) KJB.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE — Adult male found 2/3 St. Louis (Canal Park, Duluth) HHD remained through end of period.

Hooded Merganser — Reported from four north and eight south counties, most of which appeared to be overwintering.

Common Merganser — Reported from 25 counties in all regions except the Northwest. Peak 1/21 Dakota (1000 along Mississippi River near Hastings) KJB.

Red-breasted Merganser — Late south 12/2 Hennepin PEB, SLC. Small numbers probably overwintered on Lake Superior (max. 5). An adult male overwintered on the Mississippi River near Hastings, Dakota County KJB *et al.* Reports of females in February from Olmsted CRG, PWP, and 2/24 Ramsey TAT were difficult to classify as either migrants or overwintering birds.

Ruddy Duck — Late south 12/8 Waseca JJS, 12/16 †Rochester CBC.

Bald Eagle — Reported from 55 counties throughout the state. Peak 2/21 along the Mississippi River, Goodhue and Wabasha counties (215) OLJ.

Northern Harrier — Eleven individuals were reported from eleven counties in all regions, except none in West-central or Northeast. Only reports after December were 1/21 Clay RHO, 2/4 Dakota TAT, and 2/17 Scott CRM.

Sharp-shinned Hawk — Reported from all regions in 12 north and 21 south counties. Reported throughout the season both north and south.

Cooper's Hawk — Reported from 13 south counties throughout the season. Five north reports lacked details. **Note**: Please provide details for north reports of this species in winter.

Northern Goshawk — Approximately 65 individuals reported from 20 north and 8 south counties.

Red-shouldered Hawk — At least 17 individuals were reported from 14 south counties. Only reports after mid-January: 1/30 Wright *fide* AXH, 2/9 Anoka KJB.

Red-tailed Hawk — Reported from 51 counties, in all regions except Northwest.

Rough-legged Hawk — Reported from 35 counties though only as far north as Becker, Aitkin, and (southern?) St. Louis. Peak numbers 12/9 Aitkin (9) WEN and 12/16 Winona CBC (28). Four February reports (beginning 2/18). Of all dates given (not all reports had dates), none reported 1/27 – 2/18, suggesting that February reports were returning migrants.

Golden Eagle — At least 16 individuals reported from 13 counties. Reports were from the following main areas: the West-central region in Wilkin, Otter Tail and **Douglas** (2/8 SDM); along the upper Minnesota River (3); and the blufflands of four southeasternmost counties (6). Also seen 1/18 Morrison (Camp Ripley) WLB, 1/28 St. Louis (Sax-Zim bog) RSF *et al.*

American Kestrel — Reported from 6 north and 25 south counties. The only report north of a line from Wilkin to Kanabec was 1/4 Beltrami DPJ.

Merlin — About 13 individuals from 9 counties scattered throughout the state and season.

Gyrfalcon — Seven individuals found. Subadult gray morph overwintered at the

Port Terminal in Duluth, St. Louis County beginning 12/23 DLE, mob. Immature gray morph also reported from Duluth on 12/18 †PHS. Additional reports on Grand Marias CBC (count week), 1/12 Roseau (adult gray morph) MO, 1/11–13 St. Louis (adult gray morph at Virginia) BKY, 1/19 Kittson (immature gray morph at Donaldson) †CA, and 2/18 Roseau MAG.

Peregrine Falcon — Seen in Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, St. Louis, and Wabasha.

Prairie Falcon — None documented.

Gray Partridge — Increased numbers. Reported from 27 counties in the south and west. Maximum counts 2/5 Murray (44) ND, and on the Mountain Lake-Windom CBC (62).

Ring-necked Pheasant — Reported from 46 counties as far north as Clay, Becker, and St. Louis. Like last year, the report from the International Falls CBC probably not countable.

Ruffed Grouse — Reported from 29 counties in range.

Spruce Grouse — Reported from Lake (state highway 1, county road 2, and Isabella), Lake of the Woods (Norris Camp) JFo, GMe, and St. Louis (near Cook) KJB. Maximum count only two birds. The report near Kelsey, within the Sax-Zim bog area of southern St. Louis County, is suspect as there are no modern records from this area.

Sharp-tailed Grouse — Reported from Aitkin (29), Carlton (24), Kittson, Polk (7), Red Lake (3), and St. Louis counties. Also found on the Aurora (2), Baudette (1), International Falls (1), Sax-Zim (1), Pine County (1), and Warren (1) CBCs.

Greater Prairie-Chicken — Reported from Polk (50) and Wilkin (192).

Wild Turkey — Observed in 29 counties as far north as Otter Tail, Todd, and Pine. Peak count on the Rochester CBC (213).

Northern Bobwhite — Reported on the Wabasha CBC (wild?).

Virginia Rail — One was found 12/19 Hennepin (Mound Springs) †SLC.

American Coot — Reported from eight south counties, plus Otter Tail in north. Overwintered in both Scott (8+) mob and Otter Tail (several) SPM, DKM. One overwintered along the Mississippi River near Prescott, Wisconsin, which may account for the 1/20 Washington TEB sighting. All other reports were in December.

Killdeer — Reported 12/2 Washington (Afton) BRL and 12/16 Winona CBC (2).

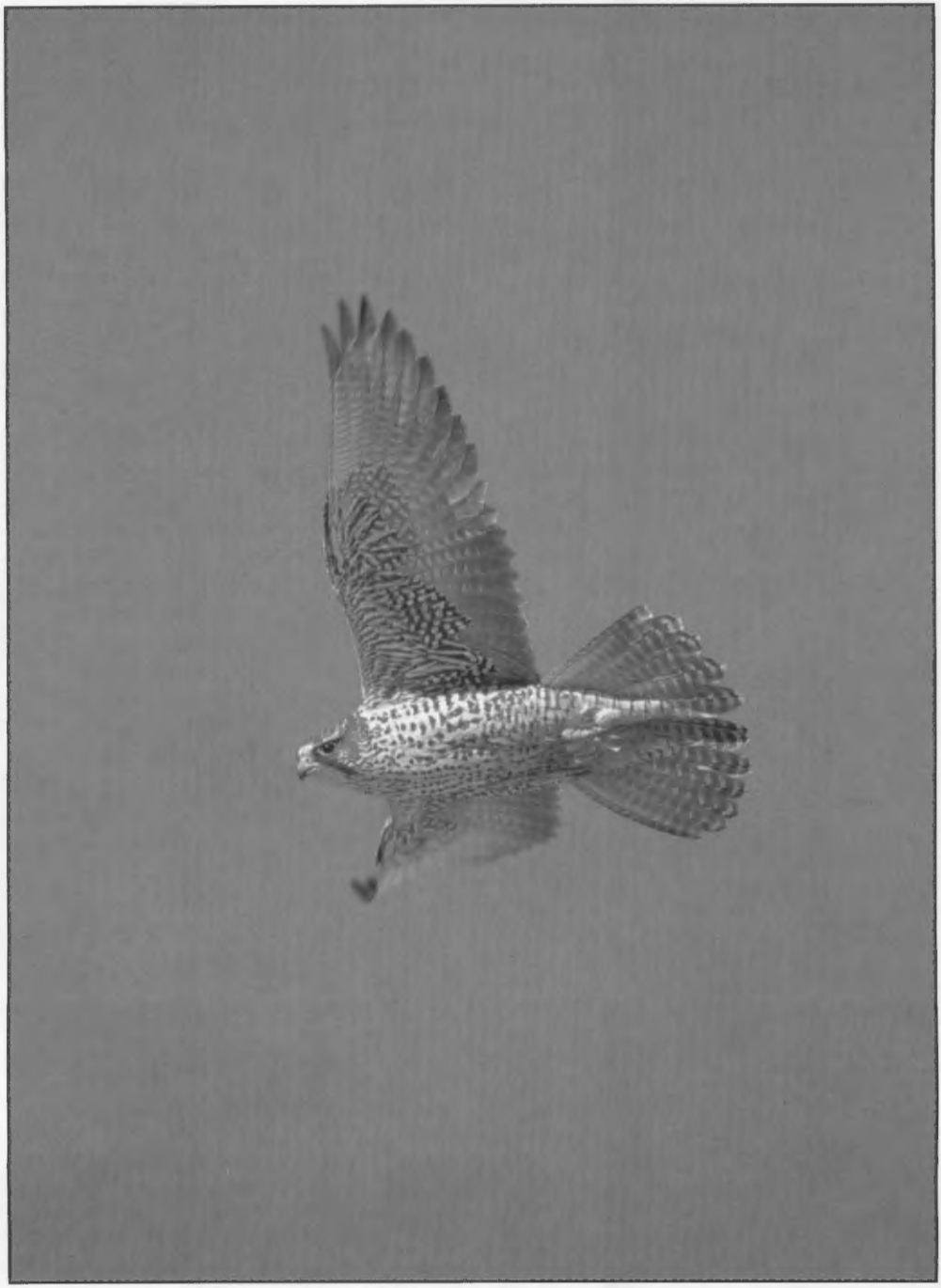
Common Snipe — Reported from eight south and two north counties. Overwintered in Hennepin (Mound Springs and Bass Ponds) SLC, TAT, Ramsey (Pigs Eye Lake) TAT, and Otter Tail SPM, DKM. Late north 12/4 Duluth MH *fide* KRE. Other south reports as late as 1/2 Houston JJS.

Bonaparte's Gull — Late south 12/2 Washington (15 at Afton) BRL.

Ring-billed Gull — Late north 12/3 Otter Tail SPM, DKM and 12/22 St. Louis PHS. Several mid-winter reports from the North Shore of Lake Superior omitted for lack of details. One first-winter bird lingered through 1/21 Dakota (Black Dog Lake) PEJ, TAT. Additional late south observations on 12/1 Freeborn AEB, 12/2 Hennepin mob, 12/16 St. Paul CBC (15), and Bloomington CBC (18).

Herring Gull — Overwintered on Lake Superior in St. Louis, Lake, and Cook. Late south 1/7 Dakota CRM, plus one that lingered to 2/5 Olmsted PWP. Apparent early migrant seen 2/6 Washington (Point Douglas) KJB, although no subsequent February reports.

Thayer's Gull — An adult and one first-



Gryfalcon, 20 February 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Frank Nicoletti.

winter bird both reported throughout the winter on Lake Superior from Duluth, St. Louis County to Two Harbors, Lake County. Late south 12/2 Hennepin SLC, 12/16 Bloomington CBC (3).

Lesser Black-backed Gull — Adult seen 12/2 Dakota (Black Dog Lake) TAT.

Glaucous Gull — The only reports from Lake Superior were 12/16 Duluth CBC and 12/18 Duluth PHS. At least four birds were in the Twin Cities — last seen 12/2 Hennepin SLC, 12/17 Dakota PEB.

Great Black-backed Gull — First-winter bird from the fall season (11/24) reported through 12/16 Bloomington CBC (Black Dog Lake). Same individual seen 12/2 Hennepin (Lake Calhoun) mob.

Rock Dove — Observed in 57 counties throughout the state.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE — Two overwintered at feeder in Russell, Lyon County †RJS (***The Loon*** 73:184–185).

Mourning Dove — Reported from 46 counties throughout the state.

Eastern Screech-Owl — Reported from 13 counties in the south, plus the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks CBC in the Northwest.

Great Horned Owl — Reported from 38 counties throughout the state.

Snowy Owl — From October through April, 111 individuals were reported, the fourth largest documented invasion (***The Loon*** 73:135–143)

Northern Hawk Owl — From October through April, a record high 190 birds were reported (***The Loon*** 73:135–143).

Barred Owl — Found in 24 counties and in all regions except the Southwest.

Great Gray Owl — From October through April, a record high 394 birds were reported (***The Loon*** 73:135–143).

Long-eared Owl — Single birds seen in seven counties: 12/1 **Wabasha** (Millville) NFT, 12/16 Excelsior CBC, 12/17 Cottonwood CBC, 12/23 Scott (Blue Lake) AXH, 12/26–27 Rice TFB, 1/31 Roseau JFo, GMe, 2/23 Fillmore NBO.

Short-eared Owl — Only reports: 12/22 Kittson (Lake Bronson) *fide* BAB, 12/29 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, and 1/4 Houston *fide* AXH.

Boreal Owl — Major irruption with high mortality (***The Loon*** 73:143–151).

Northern Saw-whet Owl — Numbers up in North-central and Northeast regions, but total unknown due to many reports of "small owls" at feeders. At least six individuals were reported from five south counties (see also ***The Loon*** 73:143–151).

Belted Kingfisher — Reported from 22 counties as far north as Becker. Reports after 1/1 were from Becker, Otter Tail, Hennepin, Dakota, Washington, Fillmore, and Houston.

Red-headed Woodpecker — Reported from 14 counties as far north and west as Crow Wing, Becker.

Red-bellied Woodpecker — Reported from 51 counties throughout the state as far north as Clay, Becker, Beltrami, Itasca, and St. Louis.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — Reported 12/1 – 1/3 Rice (Faribault) mob including two on the Faribault CBC. Also reported 12/13 – 2/28 Washington TEB, plus the †Excelsior, Le Sueur County, and Marshall CBCs. Almost all lacked details.

Downy Woodpecker — Reported from 63 counties throughout the state.

Hairy Woodpecker — Reported from 60 counties throughout the state.

Three-toed Woodpecker — At least eight individuals reported from Cook (Pike Lake), Lake (Endless Waters Road, Spruce Road), and the Isabella, Roseau, and Beltrami Island CBCs.

Black-backed Woodpecker — About 31 individuals reported from eight counties within coniferous zone. Peak count seven on both the Isabella and Roseau CBCs.

Northern Flicker — Reported from 20 south counties, plus Otter Tail in north. Many overwintered in south. Red-shafted form overwintered in Otter Tail (Battle Lake) †DTT, †SMT, GHB; also seen 12/1 Freeborn (2) AEB. Peak number on the Faribault CBC (12).

Pileated Woodpecker — Reported from 47 counties throughout the state.

Northern Shrike — Reported from 47 counties throughout the state. Maximum 12/9 Aitkin (14) WEN.

Gray Jay — Reported from 12 counties in range.

Blue Jay — Reported from 65 counties throughout the state.

Black-billed Magpie — Reported from 11 counties in range.

American Crow — Reported from 66 counties throughout the state.

Common Raven — Reported from 26 counties within normal range as far south as Anoka. Also reported on the fringe of its usual range 1/21 Otter Tail SPM, 2/8 **Douglas** SPM, and on the †St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC.

Horned Lark — Seen in 45 counties throughout the state. Unusual Northeast reports included 1/4 Cook KMH, plus early February reports from Duluth.

Black-capped Chickadee — Reported from 66 counties throughout the state.

Boreal Chickadee — Observed in Aitkin Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, and St. Louis.

Tufted Titmouse — Reported from five counties within range: Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona.

Red-breasted Nuthatch — Reported from 43 counties across the state. CBC total included 85 in south and 739 in north.

White-breasted Nuthatch — Reported from 63 counties throughout the state.

Brown Creeper — Reported from 42 counties in all regions.

Carolina Wren — Only report: 12/4 Kandiyohi (Willmar) RSF.

Winter Wren — All reports: 12/1 Hennepin (Old Cedar Avenue) BBB, 12/6–10 Hennepin (Mound Springs) SLC, 12/4 & 12/11 Rice TFB, and 12/9 Fillmore NBO.

Golden-crowned Kinglet — Reported from 12 counties, though the only sighting in the western regions was 12/1 Clay RHO. More January reports than usual, especially in the Northeast, but only one February report statewide.

Eastern Bluebird — Seven reports from five counties. Only report after 1/1 was 1/20 Washington (2) TEB.

Townsend's Solitaire — Seven reports. Two seen 12/2–6 Lake (Knife River) JWL, one of which overwintered. Also found 2/3 Lake (Two Harbors) *fide* DRB, 12/7 Hennepin (Bryn Mar Meadows Park) *fide* AXH, 12/16–23 Cook (Grand Marais) KMH, 1/1 Winona (Whitewater WMA) JJS *et al.*, 2/15 Otter Tail (Battle Lake) GHB.

Hermit Thrush — Seven individuals seen in seven south counties: 12/2 Brown †JSS, 12/26 Ramsey (St. Paul) *fide* AXH, 1/3 Fillmore NBO, 2/2 Ramsey (St. Paul) *fide* AXH, and the †Excelsior, Faribault, and Winona CBCs.

American Robin — Reported from 46 counties throughout the state. Peak count on Bloomington CBC (285).

Varied Thrush — Twelve individuals were reported: 12/3 Cass (near Remer) JWa, 12/4+ Aitkin (Wealthwood) CMG, through 12/7 Roseau (near Skime) *fide* BAB, 12/29 – 1/1 Olmsted (Rochester) JJS *et al.*, 12/30+ Freeborn AEB, 1/3 Duluth (found dead) *fide* KRE, 1/11+ Todd JSK, plus four which lacked specific dates, all *fide* AXH: Carver (Chanhassen), Hennepin (Orono), Ramsey (North Oaks), and Chisago (near Wild River S.P.).

Northern Mockingbird — No reports.

Brown Thrasher — Overwintered in Hennepin (Bloomington) SLC, mob. Also reported on the †Baudette, Fergus Falls, and Excelsior CBCs, and through 1/3 Mower JJS (including the Austin CBC).

European Starling — Reported from 62 counties throughout the state.

Bohemian Waxwing — Reported from 13 north counties. Peak 12/16 Duluth CBC (1258). Only south report 12/29–31 Fillmore (60) NBO. Scarce by February.

Cedar Waxwing — Reported from 27 south and 6 north counties, though none in North-central region. Scarce, especially in February.

Yellow-rumped Warbler — No fewer than seven individuals in six counties. One overwintered in St. Louis (Duluth) †KRE, mob. Only other north report was 12/23 Cook KMH. Only south reports after December: 1/4 & 1/20 Fillmore NBO.

Summer Tanager — Female from fall season (11/15) lingered to 12/5 Rice †TFB (***The Loon*** 73:176). Second winter record.

Spotted Towhee — Six birds reported. Two overwintered in Lyon (Russell) †RJS, mob (***The Loon*** 73:184–185). Also seen 11/26 – 12/4 Hennepin (Minneapolis) *fide* AXH, 12/9–31 Dakota (Burnsville) TAT, ADS, †PEB, 1/31 – 2/28 Murray NED, and late January in Scott (south of Shakopee) *fide* AXH.

Eastern Towhee — No fewer than nine individuals reported. One overwintered in Anoka (Coon Rapids) †RLR. Also seen 12/2 – 2/8 Cook (2 at Lutsen) *fide* KRE, 12/15 Hennepin (Champlin) *fide* AXH, and 1/9 Winona JJS, plus the †Mankato, Faribault, Winona (2), and International Falls CBCs.

towhee, sp. — A female *Piplio*, possibly a hybrid Spotted X Eastern Towhee, was seen through 1/1 Lake (Two Harbors) JWL, KRE, PHS. Another bird identified as Spotted but not convincingly described was seen 12/16 Northwest McLeod CBC.

American Tree Sparrow — Reported from 48 counties statewide, but only the Detroit Lakes CBC in Northwest region.

Clay-colored Sparrow — One observed **12/6** Hennepin (Mound Springs) †SLC. Another from fall season (11/16) lingered to **1/9** Hennepin (Richfield) †CBr, †RBJ, †CRM. Second and third winter records.

Vesper Sparrow — Only report: 1/22 Dakota †ADS.

Savannah Sparrow — One banded 2/9 Washington (Carpenter N.C.) †TEB; also observed several days prior to identification and banding, but not subsequently.

Fox Sparrow — Only observations: the Mankato CBC and 1/6 Meeker DMF.

Song Sparrow — Reported from 15 south and 5 north counties, in all regions except the Northwest. Reports after early January were Lake, St. Louis, Hennepin, Dakota, Washington, and Olmsted.

Swamp Sparrow — All reports: 12/2–19 Hennepin (Mound Springs, maximum of 3 on 12/13) SLC, 12/6 Hennepin (downtown Minneapolis) TAT, 1/1 Hennepin

(Old Cedar Avenue bridge) REH, SLC, and the Winona CBC (1).

White-throated Sparrow — Reported from 20 counties in all regions except the West-central. All north reports were in December; only south reports after early January were from Murray, Freeborn, Olmsted, Rice, and Hennepin.

Harris's Sparrow — Reported from 12 south and 3 north counties. Possibly overwintered in Kandiyohi RSF, Brown (2) JSS, Freeborn AEB, and Steele NFT. Only other report after early January was 1/13 Mahnomen SPM, DKM.

White-crowned Sparrow — Reported 12/10–17 Lake (Two Harbors) mob, 1/4 Dakota KEO, 1/10 Murray JJS, and on the Duluth, Fergus Falls, and Rochester CBCs.

Dark-eyed Junco — Reported from 60 counties throughout the state. Peak count on Winona CBC (1374).

Lapland Longspur — Reported from 32 counties, primarily in the south and west. None reported from Northeast or North-central regions, and only from Dakota in the East-central. Maximum counts: 12/30 Willmar CBC (230), 12/31 Battle Lake CBC (467), 1/16 Polk (250) DPJ, and 2/3 Wilkin (100+) CRG.

Snow Bunting — Reported from 56 counties throughout the state. Maximum counts 12/4 Marshall (600) EEF, 12/27 Baudette CBC (593), and 12/31 Battle Lake CBC (711).

Northern Cardinal — Reported from 50 counties throughout the state. Peak count 12/16 Winona CBC (358).

Red-winged Blackbird — Reported from 19 counties in all regions except the North-central. Overwintered in Otter Tail and Cook, plus reports after early January in Kandiyohi, Meeker, Wright, and Brown. Maximum count 12/16 Winona CBC (138).

Western Meadowlark — One of eleven found on the Marshall CBC, 12/16 Lyon †RJS, was visually identified as a Western.

meadowlark, sp. — Reported from eight south counties in December, plus two sightings in north: 12/5 Wilkin SPM, DKM, 12/23 Cook KMH.

Yellow-headed Blackbird — Reported on the Northwest McLeod CBC.

Rusty Blackbird — Decreased numbers. Reported from five south counties, plus 12/5–11 Pennington SAS in the north. Only reports after December were 1/12 Dakota (5) ADS and 2/11 Dakota (1) TAT.

Common Grackle — Reported from 22 south and 6 north counties. Overwintered in Otter Tail SPM, DKM, Lac Qui Parle FAE, and Ramsey JLH. All other reports after early January: 1/14 Anoka RLR, 1/20 Kandiyohi DMF, and 2/18 Dakota SWe.

Brown-headed Cowbird — All reports: 12/27 Dakota (8) TAT, 1/12 Dakota (10) DBS, 1/1 Olmsted JJS, and the Rochester (6) and Owatonna (1) CBCs.

Pine Grosbeak — Reported from 23 north counties as far south as Kanabec and Morrison. Maximum counts 1/14 & 2/17 Aitkin (200+) WEN, plus four CBCs in the 200–300 range.

Purple Finch — Seen in 48 counties across the state. Maximum counts 45–46 individuals in Fillmore NBO, and on the Rochester and Itasca S.P. CBCs.

House Finch — Reported from 37 south and 10 north counties. Maximum count on Minneapolis CBC (499).

Red Crossbill — Modest numbers in 13 north counties. Only south reports: 1/3 Big Stone N.W.R. CBC (2), 2/2 Freeborn AEB. Maximum count 12/23 on Itasca S.P. CBC (73).

White-winged Crossbill — Relatively

scarce. Reported from 12 counties north. Maximum count 12/28 Beltrami Island CBC (54).

Common Redpoll — Scarce. Reported from only 15 north and 5 south counties. Oddly, the only south reports were on CBCs. Maximum count 12/30 Isabella CBC (532).

Hoary Redpoll — All reports: 12/18 Lake CRM, 12/19 St. Louis KJB, plus singles on the Baudette, Beltrami Island, and Isabella CBCs. None had details.

Pine Siskin — Reported from 23 north and 17 south counties. Excellent numbers in Northeast region with maximum on Duluth CBC (1621).

American Goldfinch — Reported from 62 counties statewide. Maximum count 12/30 St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC (635). Numerous north CBCs had counts in 100–300 range: Tamarac N.W.R., Pine County, Pillager, International Falls, Fargo-Moorhead, Crosby, and Bemidji.

Evening Grosbeak — Reported from 14 counties within its normal range in the coniferous belt. Maximum number 12/16 International Falls CBC (212).

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH — Interior form reported 1/13 – 2/4 St. Louis (Port Terminal in Duluth) CHo, JWH, mob.

House Sparrow — Reported from 62 counties throughout the state.

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mob	many observers

Boreal Owl Migration in Duluth

A Pilot Study in November 2000

Frank J. Nicoletti

After several October 2000 reports of Boreal Owls (*Aegolius funereus*) in the vicinity of Duluth, St. Louis County, I decided to try to capture owls for the purpose of banding them. I was especially interested in the age ratio and condition of these birds, since most of the initial reports referred to injured or dead owls that apparently had collided with vehicles or windows.

Owl research at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth, Minnesota, including a study published by Evans and Rosenfield (1977), has suggested that Boreal Owl fall migration may be highly variable from year to year. From 1976 through 2000, a total of 49 Boreal Owls was captured at Hawk Ridge, an average of about 2 birds each fall season, but in 9 of these 25 years none were captured (D. Evans, pers. com.). During this period of time, higher numbers were sometimes captured during the fall immediately preceding a major irruption of Boreal Owls, but in two cases (eight banded in both Fall 1976 and Fall 1987), the highest numbers were caught about a year before the irruption became apparent!

Date	AHY	HY	Total	Hours	Weather	Avg. Winds	Temps
3 Nov	5	1	6	13	p. cloudy	NW 10	40s
4 Nov	2	1	3	13	p. cloudy	SW 5	40s
8 Nov	0	0	0	10	low ovc	W light	30s
9 Nov	1	0	1	13	cloudy	NNW 10–15	30s
10 Nov	1	0	1	13	p. cloudy	WNW 5–10	30s
14 Nov	5	1	6	13	p. cloudy	NW 10	20s
15 Nov	0	0	0	9.75	cloudy	NW/NE 5–10	20s
16 Nov	1	0	1	10.5	pc/snow	NW 10	20s
17 Nov	0	0	0	6.5	c/snow	NW 0–5	20s
21 Nov	1	0	1	12.5	snow/clear	? 10–15	20s–10s
23 Nov	2	0	2	12.5	pc/clear	WNW 5–10	20s–10s
24 Nov	2	1	3	12.5	clear	NNW 5–10	30s
Totals	**20**	**4**	**24**	**139.25**			

Table 1. After hatch year (AHY) and hatch year (HY) Boreal Owls captured and banded at Hartley Field in Duluth, St. Louis County, Minnesota, November 2000. Abbreviations: partly cloudy (pc), cloudy (c), overcast (ovc).

Methods

Boreal Owls were captured at Hartley Field, located within the city limits of Duluth, St. Louis County, between 3 and 24 November 2000. The original plan was to start banding in mid-October and continue into early December, but weather was unfavorable. Owls were captured by using four mist nets (CTX, Association of Field Ornithologists) placed in a small stand of 20–30 feet tall red pines. A broadcast call of the Boreal Owl was used to lure the owls, similar to the method used for attracting and capturing Northern Saw-whet Owls in fall at other locations including Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth.

After capture, owls were fitted with an aluminum U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band, size six lock-on type. Birds were weighed, and measurements were taken of the tail and wing chord. The presence of molt was recorded, birds were aged, and general health condition was noted. Although it was not easy to determine health and stress of these birds by visual inspection alone, I looked at the amount of body mass in and around the keel or breast (pectoral region) and looked for the presence of fault bars (stress bars that show up on flight feathers).

Results

During 12 nights between 3 and 24 November 2000, a total of 24 Boreal Owls was captured for banding at Hartley Field (Table 1). The age ratio was five to one for AHY (after-hatch year) to HY (hatch-year) birds; 83.3% (20 of 24) were AHY owls, hatched in 1999 or earlier, and 16.6% (4 of 24) were HY owls, hatched in 2000. This ratio was presumably skewed by small sample size and the relatively short period of sampling. The timing for fall migration of AHY vs. HY Boreal Owls in Minnesota is unknown. There may be an age and sex difference in the timing of migration, as with other raptor species.

I found that 16.6% (4 of 24) of the birds had keels that were slight to sharp, indicating a loss of body mass. The ages of these four birds were one HY and three AHY. Only one bird showed fault bars and it was one of the AHY birds that also showed a slight keel.

Discussion

Owl banding data from Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve suggests that Boreal Owl migration through the Duluth area varies significantly from year to year. Eight Boreal Owls were banded there in Fall 1976 (Evans and Rosenfield 1977), the first major observation of Fall migration in northeastern Minnesota. It should be noted that Boreal Owls were not targeted during that study, and that passive netting of the owls rather than active luring was

Boreal Owls captured for banding at Hartley Field in Duluth, November 2000. Photo by Frank Nicoletti.

used. In contrast, my study area was specifically selected for the capture of migrating Boreal Owls and birds were lured into the nets.

The timing of Boreal Owl migration and possibly the age ratio also appears to vary from one location to another within our region. A total of 159 Boreal Owls was banded between 23 September and 31 October 2000 (no banding attempted after 31 October) at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Chippewa County, Michigan (Berigon and Whitmore 2000). The age breakdown among the 159 was 44.65% HY, 42.14% AHY, and 13.21% unknown. The percentage of HY birds was much higher at Whitefish Point compared to this study, but as mentioned earlier, the age data were probably skewed by small sample size and a relatively short period of sampling. Sampling in November may have missed age and sex differences in Boreal Owl fall migration, which has not been adequately studied in Minnesota.

The relatively short period of time during which Boreal Owls were captured at Hartley Field further limits interpretation of the results from this pilot study. Based on fall seasonal reports in ***The Loon*** for the past 25 years, Boreal Owls have been discovered at Hawk Ridge and elsewhere in northeastern Minnesota throughout October and November, but most have been found between 10 October and 20 November, with a peak migration in early November. It should also be noted that several of these published records were undated and that some reports probably did not represent true migrants.

The general health of the 24 Boreal Owls captured and banded in November 2000 seemed good, although there were many reports of starving or dead Boreal Owls by late February 2001. As outlined elsewhere in this issue, Boreal and other species of northern owls irrupted during

Winter 2000–2001. The eight Boreal Owls banded during Fall 1976 also appeared to be in good health (Evans and Rosenfield 1977), but that influx was not followed by a winter irruption of Boreal Owls. There was a significant irruption one year later, during Winter 1977–78 (Eckert 1978). Similarly, eight Boreal Owls were banded during Fall 1987, but the next major irruption apparently did not begin until about one year later, during Winter 1988–89 (S. Wilson, unpub. data). Could there be a predictive correlation between high numbers of Boreal Owls captured at banding stations and the apparent onset of a major irruption 12–15 months later?

This pilot study points out the need for more research on the migration of Boreal Owls in northeastern Minnesota. Timing of migration, age and sex ratios, comparisons with data at Whitefish Point and elsewhere in our region, and looking for correlations with periodic irruptions of these owls, are among the interesting questions that can only be addressed through further investigation. I would like to expand the period of time during which banding is conducted and thereby determine whether this species migrates through the Duluth area each fall, regardless of whether or not an irruption is detected the following winter.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dave Alexander and Kate Nicoletti for assistance with net checks. Dave Carman reviewed an earlier draft of this paper and made helpful comments. Special thanks to Jeannette Morse at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory for providing data from that location, and to Peder Svingen for editorial and research assistance.

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Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, M.O.R.C. Chairman

The following records were voted on January – July 2001 and found to be Acceptable; these include one reconsidered record previously voted on as Unacceptable and another record whose origin was reconsidered:

• Chipping Sparrow, 4 December 1995, Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis Co. (record #96-30, vote 6–1). This record was originally found Acceptable (***The Loon*** 68:166), but then reconsidered and found Unacceptable (***The Loon*** 69:151–152). It

was again reconsidered and discussed at the April 2001 meeting of this Committee, however, a new vote was taken, and now this is once again considered an Acceptable record.

• Smew, 17 March 1999, Anderson County Park, Jackson Co. (record #99-55, A_O origin vote 10–0, ***The Loon*** 73:72–77). Note that all ten members vote on questions of origin. A previous vote on the origin of this bird had been taken, with a majority voting this to be most likely a wild bird, listed as "Accidental" with no qualifying subscript (***The Loon*** 72:40).

However, after this vote, additional research into the status of this species in captivity revealed it to be kept in game farms more often than previously thought. Accordingly, another origin vote was taken, and it was accepted as "Accidental (o)" — e.g., the possibilities of captive vs. wild origin are about equal.

• Red Phalarope, 14 October 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-86, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:183–184).

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 31 May 2000, Willmar, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2001-02, vote 7–0).

• King Eider, 29 December 2000 – 15 January 2001, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2001-05, vote 7–0).

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 22 May 1993, Washington Co. (record #2001-07, vote 6–1). This record had been filed in the MOU archives of records without ever having been voted on.

• Black-legged Kittiwake, 21 October 2000, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (record #2001-09, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:124–125).

• Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, 13–28 January 2001, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2001-10, vote 7–0.

• Pacific Loon, 21 January 2001, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2001-11, vote 6–1).

• Barrow's Goldeneye, 3 February – March 2001, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2001-12, vote 7–0,).

• Great-tailed Grackle, 20 May – 2 June 2000, Minneota Township, Jackson Co. (record #2001-14, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:108–114).

• Barrow's Goldeneye, 1 March 2001, Fergus Falls, Otter Tail Co. (record #2001-15, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:180–182).

• Black-headed Gull, 7 April 2001, Spirit Lake, Jackson Co. (record #2001-16, vote 7–0).

• Ruff, 26 April 2001, Vermillion Township, Dakota Co. (record #2001-17, vote 7–0,).

• White-eyed Vireo, 29 April 2001, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (record #2001-18, vote 7–0).

• Prairie Warbler, 30 April 2001, Faribault, Rice Co. (record #2001-19, vote 5–2).

• Great Black-backed Gull, 7 May 2001, Breckenridge sewage ponds, Wilkin Lake (record #2001-21, vote 6–1).

• Say's Phoebe, 11 May 2001, Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle Co. (record #2001-22, vote 5–2).

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 12 May 2001, near Starbuck, Pope Co. (record #2001-24, vote 6–1).

• Tricolored Heron, 21 May 2001, near Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2001-26, vote 7–0, ***The Loon*** 73:182–183).

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 23 May – 8 July 2001, Springsteel Island, Roseau Co. (record #2001-27, vote 7–0).

• White-eyed Vireo, 24 May 2001, Buffalo River State Park, Clay Co. (record #2001-28, vote 7–0).

• White-eyed Vireo, 28 May 2001, Camden State Park, Lyon Co. (record #2001-30, vote 6–1).

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, early May 2001, near Northome, Koochiching Co. (record #2001-31, vote 6–1).

• White-eyed Vireo, 6 May – July 2001, Rice Lake State Park, Steele Co. (record #2001-32, vote 7–0).

• Black-headed Grosbeak, 10 May 2001, White Earth Lake, Becker Co. (record #2001-33, vote 7–0).

The following records were voted on January – July 2001 and found to be Unacceptable; these include one reconsidered record previously voted on as Acceptable:

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 15 Decem-

ber 1998, near Alden, Freeborn Co. (record #99-12, vote 3–4).

This record was originally voted on and found Acceptable (***The Loon*** 71:157). However, the record was reconsidered and discussed at the April 2001 meeting of this Committee, and a new vote was taken. While this bird most likely was correctly identified, neither of the two diagnostic features which separate this from Ringed Turtle-Dove are documented. The dove was not heard to vocalize, and the presence or absence of black on the outer webs of the outer rectrices as seen from below is not clearly described.

• Eurasian Collared-Dove, 15–16 February 2000, Willmar, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2001-01, vote 2–5).

Although the documentation (including sketches) is very extensive, like the record above there is no description of any vocalizations or of the undersides of the outer webs of the outer rectrices. Again, however, in all likelihood the identification was correct.

• Western Tanager, 26 August 2000, Lyon Co. (record #2001-03, vote 2–5).

The observer was careful to consider and preclude the possibility of this being an aberrant Scarlet Tanager with wing bars, but the rest of the documentation is too unclear and somewhat inconsistent for the majority to accept the record. At one point the bill is described as black, which would preclude a Western Tanager, although later the bill is said to be light. Also, it is unclear what the observer means when using the terms mantle and back, and whether they were gray or olive or olive yellow. This lack of clarity weakens the record, since the back color of female tanagers is a key field mark.

• Semipalmated Sandpiper, 1 November 1999, Lyon Co. (record #2001-04, vote 0–7).

The documentation includes mention of a "buff colored breast with fine brown streaks," which is inconsistent with Semipalmated Sandpiper in any plumage. The Committee unanimously felt the somewhat vague description could just as easily fit any other small species of shorebird.

• Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 5 May 1987, Cook Co. (record #2001-06, vote 1–6).

This record had been filed in the MOU archives of records without ever having been voted on. While the gray plumage, long tail and reddish color on the wings certainly suggest the identification was correct, the description is second-hand, written by someone who did not see the bird. There is also no information provided about size, distance, optics, light conditions, observer experience and other variables.

• Parasitic Jaeger, 14 October 2000, Malmo, Aitkin Co. (record #2001-08, vote 1–6).

The Committee unanimously agreed this was a jaeger, but it is unclear which species was seen. The description includes mention of "short pointed central tail feathers," which would suggest this was indeed a Parasitic. However, the size is described as "slightly larger than the Ring-billed Gull it was chasing," which is more indicative of a Pomarine, not a Parasitic.

• Painted Bunting, 3–5 May 2001, near Pelican Rapids, Otter Tail Co. (record #2001-20, vote 0–7).

The identification was probably correct, since a male Painted Bunting is so distinctive, but the documentation by an inexperienced observer is too brief for such an unusual species. The description mentions blue on the "back of head," greenish color on the back, red "under the neck" and "orangish color under the stomach," but nothing is said of the size, wings, tail, optics used, and how or how soon the identification was made.

• White-throated Swift, 12 May 2001, Carson Township (?), Cottonwood Co. (record #2001-23, vote 0–7).

The Committee unanimously felt the documentation was too vague and brief for something as unusual as a potential second state record. The plumage is hardly described at all, and the bird's described size and manner of flight are confusing. The documentation also indicates

the observer was unsure of his identification and originally reluctant to report it.

• Red Phalarope, 20 May 2001, Acton Township., Meeker Co. (record #2001-25, vote 1–6).

The brief documentation seems consistent with this species, but the observer indicates he had doubts about his identification since the plumage did not match any of the references he consulted. The entire description is brief, incomplete and only included in the sketch, which does not clearly show the extent of "light reddish color" on the bird's underparts or what colors or markings there were on the back and wings.

The efforts of all those observers who document their reports of unusual species are appreciated, whether or not those records are accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided documentation for the records listed in this article: Karl Bardon (five records), Margaret Barringer, Al Batt (two records), Beth Blank, Tom Boevers, Brad Bolduan, Steve Carlson, Philip Chu (two records), Kim Eckert (three records), Ron Erpelding (two records), Dan Floren, Randy Frederickson, Colin Gjervold, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertzel, Nancy Jackson, Doug Johnson, Chuck Juhnke, Byron Kinkade, Mike Knox, Jackie Lay, Richard Lukenbill, Warren Nelson, David Peterson, Shaun Putz, Roger Schroeder (three records), Drew Smith, Peder Svingen (six records).

There were also other observers who documented records which were not submitted to the Committee for a vote. The documentations they provided, though not mentioned here, are also appreciated.

Summary: 35 records voted on: 26 Acceptable (74%), 9 Unacceptable (26%).

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BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at The Sibley Guide to Birds

Kim R. Eckert

So, the rave reviews have all been written, and David Sibley a birder, — of all things! — has emerged as a genuine media star. But the hype and excitement are about over, now that Sibley's new and monumental field guide has been out for a year. Perhaps it's time to calm down and take a second look at *The Sibley Guide to Birds* to see how successful it is in leading birders to correct field identifications.

A similar article about the third edition of the *National Geographic's* field guide appeared a couple years ago (***The Loon*** 71:107–111), discussing the changes in the new edition and how useful they are.

Back then, *Geographic* was acknowledged as the only accurate and comprehensive guide for birders to rely on, but now that assumption is no longer true.

So, if your pockets are big enough and you're in top physical condition, should you try to lug the massive *Sibley* guide into the field with you, or will you be missing something by opting for *Geographic's* more modest proportions? Start by asking yourself a few basic questions.

Is it true you can't tell a book by its cover? No matter, since neither guide features an inspiring bird on its cover. *Geographic's* Bald Eagle is an impressive enough bird, but — let's face it — too often this species has become a ubiquitous cliché. And Sibley's choice of a Red-tailed Hawk hardly motivates the reader to look inside, considering how often birders routinely see this raptor along the road — and so seldom step on the brakes.

Are songs and call notes an important part of your birding? If not, they should be, and this is where much of Sibley's text is devoted. The vocalizations of virtually every species in the book are covered in comprehensive detail to an extent far surpassing any other field guide. (I should add, however, some of Sibley's transliterations are difficult to interpret and others do not ring entirely true.)

Do you ever have trouble reading maps? If so, stick to the range maps in *Geographic*, which are far more accurate. To say the least, Sibley's range maps are puzzling, given the overall quality of this guide. To be blunt, how can such a good book have such bad maps? I have not studied all of them for species found in Minnesota, but some random samples show that perhaps only half of them are accurately shaded within this state's borders. Worse, its enigmatic system of dots for "locations of rare occurrence" is not explained and entirely fails to be logical, consistent, or accurate. Even if you've never had trouble reading maps before, you'll have trouble with these.

Before looking away in disgust, however, don't avert your eyes entirely from the bottom of the page where Sibley's range maps appear. Next to many of them are paragraphs on a variety of useful topics: e.g., elaboration on field marks, molt, behavior, and geographical variations.

Are you headed to Alaska? A good way to minimize those severe weight restrictions on that flight to Gambell is to leave your *Sibley* at home, since it excludes a lot of North American rarities, like those which regularly stray to Alaska — and which are found in *Geographic*. Or, just on a local level, you can forget about *Sibley* if you want to look for a second-state-record Smew or a realistically potential first-state-record Common Crane. Neither species is included.

Do you like to actually read or just look at pictures? If the former is true, you'll still need *Geographic* which features more actual text to explain which field marks in the paintings to concentrate on. While the great quantity and logical arrangement on the page of Sibley's illustrations are superior to *Geographic's* with most species, the text is typically limited to brief captions accompanying the paintings. In most cases, it is unclear when these captions point to diagnostic field marks, and there are many illustrations without any captions.

Still, there are certainly lots of pictures in *Sibley*, typically five to ten or more for each species, compared to only two or three in *Geographic*. Sibley's illustrations are spread over 515 pages, 77 more than *Geographic*, and the page size is larger. The content is overwhelming, at times distracting; there are almost too many pictures. Every species actually has at least two flight pictures, even the passerines — even though most of these don't show anything one would ever use in the field. And, as good as all this book's illustrations are, superior in most cases to those in *Geographic*, some are just too small — raptors and water birds especially.

To be fair, *Sibley* is more than just paintings, and there is some text beyond the vocalization sections and captions.

Several side-bar essays are included on the identification of some difficult groups: e.g., white herons/egrets, accipiters, buteos, falcons, peeps, phalaropes, gulls, fall warblers, trilled songs, tanagers, Rose-breasted/Black-headed grosbeaks, Indigo/Lazuli buntings, meadowlarks, orioles, and Red Crossbill. It would have been nice, though, to also include essays on flycatchers and sparrows.

So, specifically, what birds does *Sibley* cover more accurately than *Geographic*? Is *Geographic* better on anything? And are there any species which both guides fail to adequately address?

As pointed out in the *Hindsight* article a couple years ago on the *Geographic* field guide, its third edition still has several shortcomings. However, at least with the following ID points, to clear up the confusion and find more accuracy, you need only put *Geographic* aside and turn to *Sibley*:

- Bill colors of Western and Clark's grebes;
- More natural shapes and postures of herons and egrets;
- Differences between Snowy Egret and Little Blue Heron;
- Ross's Goose bill;
- Bill shape of Blue-winged vs. Cinnamon teal;
- Female Redhead vs. female Ring-necked Duck;
- Female scaup and goldeneyes;
- Wing patterns of ducks in flight;
- Virtually all the raptors, especially the buteos (e.g., there are 6 Red-tailed Hawk illustrations in *Geographic*, 39 in *Sibley!*);
- Differences between the "peeps";
- Juvenile plumages of Bonaparte's and other small gulls;
- Most gulls in flight;
- Hybrid, "white-winged" and "black-backed" gulls;
- Most of the flycatchers;
- *Oporornis* warblers;
- Virtually all the sparrows;
- Longspurs;
- Immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak;
- More natural-looking finches;
- Redpolls.

The *Sibley* guide would also be the preferred choice when dealing with a few other birds the *Hindsight* article did not discuss:

- Swans (OK in *Geographic*; better in *Sibley*);
- The juvenile Sora's white trailing edge on the secondaries (!: certainly, some flying Soras have been mistaken for Yellow Rails);
- Jaegers (far better coverage in *Sibley*);
- Thrushes (OK in *Geographic*; better in *Sibley*).

However, as good as it is, *Sibley* doesn't solve all the problems in *Geographic* mentioned in that article; both guides leave something to be desired when it comes to these points:

- The close similarity between subadult Franklin's Gulls and adult Laughing Gulls;
- The potential for confusing a juvenile Horned Lark with Sprague's Pipit;
- How bright green and yellow fall Tennessee Warblers really are;
- The unique combination of the Chestnut-sided Warbler's green back, bold eye ring and yellow wing bars.

And there is still more I find disappointing — or at least curious — in *Sibley*:

- More emphasis is needed on how any swimming loon, not just the Arctic, can show white on its sides and flanks at the water line.
- I am unconvinced that the "prominent buffy streak" shown on the female/juvenile Green-winged Teal's tail is a consistent difference from Blue-winged Teal. I have been unable to see it on some Green-wingeds, and the streak on those teal I looked at the other day was white (not buffy) and inconspicuous: much shorter and thinner than illustrated in *Sibley*. It also needs to be mentioned that a swimming teal showing a green

wing patch is not necessarily a Green-winged: as shown in the *Geographic* field guide, Blue-wingeds and Cinnamons also have this.

• In life, not all juvenile Northern Goshawks appear as illustrated: some have clean Cooper's-like underparts streaking, and some lack a noticeable white supercilium.

• The best way to distinguish a perched juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk from a juvenile Broad-winged is to note its banded secondaries. While this appears in the illustrations, it is not pointed out and it will be not be noticed by most readers.

• A picture is needed of one of those brownish Hudsonian Godwits you see in spring which are very difficult to tell from a Marbled unless it flies.

• In life, the Baird's Sandpiper — especially a juvenile — is much buffier than illustrated.

• Juvenile and first-winter Ring-billed Gulls do not always have a narrow tail band; some show (even though Sibley's pictures don't) an apparent all-black tail like a second-winter California. *Sibley* also needs to mention that some second-winter Ring-billeds have a dark eye and pinkish or grayish legs — again, much like a California Gull.

• Though there is serious talk of two species of Marsh Wrens, both of which may occur in Minnesota, neither *Sibley* nor any other reference I've seen clearly explains how to tell them apart.

• The caption "bright green back" points to a brown-backed Black-throated Green Warbler.

• Despite the captions, I can see no real difference between the top Louisiana Waterthrush picture and the Northern illustration next to it.

• Of the 12 Savannah Sparrow illustrations, only four show birds with yellow lores, and there is only one brief, inconspicuous and passing reference to this important field mark.

Given the vast amount of information in *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, it undoubtedly presents many other identification points which I have yet to discover in these pages and test in the field. But no time for that now. I'm off to go shopping for a birding jacket with an extra large pocket, and then it's off to the gym to do some weight lifting. Both I and my wardrobe need to get in shape for the new field guide in town. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA. Alan Poole and Frank Gill, Editors. The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Supported by the American Ornithologists' Union, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and the Academy of Natural Sciences. Price, $2,500 for charter subscription, $7.50 for individual species accounts

(available from Buteo Books, 800-722-2460; allen@buteobooks.com). Reviewed by Harrison B. Tordoff.

In 1990, the American Ornithologists' Union launched its most ambitious project ever, the encyclopedic Birds of North America (BNA). The goal was to compile all existing knowledge of North American birds as a platform for their conservation and continued study. Each species is covered in an account ranging from 12 to 40 pages. Accounts are individually numbered and published when ready, rather than in taxonomic order. Accounts are grouped in volumes, 40 per volume. As of this date (11 October 2001), 600 species accounts in 15 volumes have arrived at my desk, with completion of the series of 720 species in 18 volumes expected in 2002.

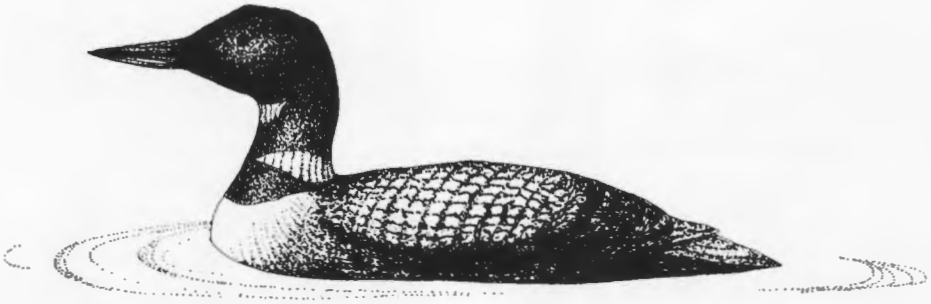
I am not an unbiased reviewer of this huge project. I was involved to some degree at every stage, helping especially with fund-raising, but I am not an author of any species account. I will try to avoid hyperbole, even though it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this project. Over 1000 colleagues have contributed to the series as authors, coauthors, or providers of unpublished data. In addition, a small army of reviewers helped to maintain the highest level of excellence. Many BNA authors and coauthors have completed more than one species profile. The champion, Peter Lowther, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, has authored or coauthored 24 of the 600 published to date.

Each BNA species account includes: Introduction, Distinguishing Characteristics, Distribution, Systematics, Migration, Habitat, Food Habits, Sounds, Behavior, Breeding, Demography and Populations, Conservation and Management, Appearance, Measurements, Priorities for Future Research, Acknowledgments, and References. These major topics are further subdivided as appropriate; Migration, for example, may include such subsections as Nature of Migration in the Species, Timing and Routes of Migration, Migratory Behavior, Methods of Orientation, Control and Physiology. The section on behavior may include subsections on locomotion; self-maintenance; sleeping, roosting, sunbathing; daily time budget; agonistic behavior; spacing; sexual behavior; social and interspecific behavior; predation.

The key to the exceptional level of excellence through the series is that each account is written by a volunteer, an expert, if not the expert, on that species. Many authors are professional ornithologists or wildlife biologists. Graduate students and serious birders are well represented. Authors are rewarded by a subscription to the series, not by a cash stipend.

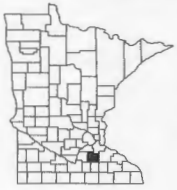
Minnesotans might particularly appreciate that the generosity of Wallace and Mary Lee Dayton and their daughters has helped 113 libraries and every state conservation agency to acquire the series by funding part of the cost. More than 850 institutions — colleges, universities, public libraries, government agencies, nature centers, bird clubs (including MOU), and others — subscribe to BNA.

This peer-reviewed series is now frequently cited in new publications on birds, is a primary reference of a new generation of ornithologists, and is used daily throughout the continent by conservationists and land managers. BNA is an impressive example of effective use of a uniquely human trait — namely, using the special talents of many individuals to accomplish a job not one of them could have. (Several species of social insects might argue about its "uniqueness.") Although the individual species accounts are a bargain if you divide the cost of the entire series by 705, a subscription is still expensive. It will be difficult in future years to do serious research on North American birds without access to BNA. So if you cannot afford your own set, make sure your local library, school library, or bird club buys it. **Bell Museum of Natural History and Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, University of Minnesota, 1987 Upper Buford Circle, St. Paul MN 55108.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

SUMMER TANAGER IN RICE COUNTY — On approximately 15 November 2000, Lisa Reuvers noticed a tanager at her feeder. After she saw the bird a couple more times, I looked for it and finally got to see it on 25 November at 8:50 A.M. The bird I saw was a female Summer Tanager. I watched it for about two minutes from about 25 feet away. I was using binoculars part of the time. When I tried to get close in order to take a picture, it flew away and did not return.



The first thing I looked for was wing bars, which the bird did not have. I noticed its large bill, which appeared very pale with a yellowish hue. It head and neck were yellowish. The bird's back, wings, and sides were all a dull, gray olive-green. When it flew, it did appear a bit more yellowish. The bill was bigger than what I remember as being characteristic of a Scarlet Tanager. I considered Evening Grosbeak but ruled it out because its body shape, bill shape, and coloring were all wrong for this species. I called several people and we looked for it on the 27th but could not find it. The bird subsequently returned and was last seen on 5 December, the second latest date for a Summer Tanager in Minnesota. **Tom Boevers, 820 Ravine St., Faribault, MN 55021.**

APPARENT HYBRID OF THE GREEN-WINGED TEAL IN CLAY COUNTY — On 23 April 2000, while birding near Downer in Clay County, I came across a mixed flock of Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) and Green-winged Teal (*A. crecca*) where an overflowing stream crossed under county road 10, just east of Minnesota highway 9. The flock included one aberrant individual which, in certain features, suggested Baikal Teal (*A. formosa*), but the bird was similar in size and other features to nearby Green-winged Teal. When it shook its wings or flew, it showed flashes of both green and white.

Its bill was dark. The ear patch and much of its crown and neck were a glossy green. From the base of its bill through the center of its crown to the center of its nape, the green blended smoothly with a glossy black stripe. The cheek and throat were a creamy buff — lightening to white where a drake Baikal Teal would have black. The edge between the buff and green formed a double curve, concave up and then concave down.

The flanks were brownish-gray with a hint of chestnut forward and more strongly gray to the rear. At the back of its flanks, the gray became a thin, vertical zebra-like striping, followed by a white area surrounding its black tail. A white edge separated the black upper-tail from the black under-tail.

Its back was slightly darker than the flanks and had dark streamer feathers. There was no white shoulder stripe or patch where either Baikal Teal or "our" Green-winged Teal would show white, suggesting to one of those who saw the bird, Spencer Meeks, that the Eurasian form of the Green-winged Teal, also known as the Common Teal, might have been one of the parent birds. An additional odd feature was a slight suggestion of a tuft at the back of the neck which became particularly visible when the bird scratched or shook its head.

I saw the bird in mid-afternoon and late evening on the 23rd, then late morning and early afternoon the next day. I used 10X Leica binoculars and a Kowa 20–60X spotting scope. The light was generally good, and the bird varied in distance from 100 yards to no more than 50 feet away. Spencer Meeks saw it on the 24th and Keith Corliss and David Lipp, who photographed the bird, relocated it on the 25th of April. Steve Millard and Betsy Beneke also saw this bird, but I'm not sure on what dates.

Although I could find no bird in an identical plumage in any field guide, I did find a published photograph of a similar-looking bird on page 379 of the fall 1990 issue (Vol. 44, No. 3) of *American Birds*. That bird, seen on 27 April 1990 in Saint-Zacharie, Quebec, is identified as a Green-winged Teal crossed with an unknown second bird. Madge and Burn (1988) state on page 20 in *Waterfowl* that hybrids between Mallard and Common Teal have a facial pattern that closely resembles that of a male Baikal Teal. **Bob O'Connor, 1625 Third St. S., Moorhead, MN 56560.**

ANOTHER JUVENILE POMARINE JAEGER IN DULUTH — Shortly after 5:00 P.M. on

23 September 2000, we (Kim Eckert, Steve Laufers, and Peder Svingen) discovered and identified a juvenile Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) on Lake Superior in St. Louis County. We were aware that as many as seven Parasitic Jaegers (*S. parasiticus*) had been reported at Wisconsin Point earlier in the day, along with unprecedented numbers of Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabini*), plus an adult Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). We decided to look for these species in the late afternoon when the light would be optimal for viewing, so we set up our spotting scopes near the Park Point Recreation Area.

While scanning the lake, Peder noticed a dark gull-like bird bobbing on the surface and called out to the others that he had found a jaeger. It took a few minutes to get all three spotting scopes trained on this bird because it was intermittently hidden behind the waves. After several minutes of scrutiny, Kim exclaimed, "Are you seeing what I'm seeing on the bill?" The base of its bill looked extremely pale with a dark tip. We knew this suggested *pomarinus* and studied this jaeger with even greater interest. Although it was smaller than an adult Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) floating nearby, the jaeger looked big and bulky, and the Herring Gull was not dramatically larger. Eventually the jaeger took off and chased a Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*). It appeared that the jaeger's wingspan was only slightly less than the Ring-billed's wingspan. When the jaeger landed on the water again, it was closer to the beach, so we were able to study additional aspects of its plumage.

This bird's overall color was chocolate brown with slightly paler flanks. Kim remarked that it was not as dark as the juvenile jaeger that he and Paul Egeland had studied at close range on 3 September 2000 at the mouth of the Lester River in Duluth. Our bird's lores and malar area looked blackish at all times — irrespective of angle of viewing or lighting — and contrasted with the rest of its head. This also supported its identification as *pomarinus* (Kaufman 1990). Depending on the position of its head with respect to the late afternoon sun, its nape occasionally looked slightly paler than the rest of its head (which is more often associated with *parasiticus*) but this was subtle and not consistently visible. Its nape never appeared golden or buff,

and when viewed from behind, the nape appeared concolor with the rest of its head.

Its scapulars and tertials showed thin, pale edging; although it was difficult to determine the exact color of this edging, it certainly was not bright buff or rufous-orange as on some juvenile *parasiticus*. In contrast, its wing coverts appeared completely solid; there was neither edging nor internal markings, even when viewed at 60x from 150 yards away. According to Olsen and Larsson (1997), unmarked wing coverts are typical for juvenile *pomarinus* but not for *parasiticus,* which ordinarily shows thick, rufous-tinged edging on the lesser, median, and greater wing coverts. Olsen and Larsson emphasize scrutiny of the coverts "at the bend of the wing" in order to distinguish between juveniles of these two species.

This jaeger's folded primaries were dark brown and solid — there was no evidence of pale edging. Olsen and Larsson (1997) state that uniformly colored primaries are characteristic of juvenile *pomarinus*. In contrast, the primaries on juvenile *parasiticus* are strongly edged with buff, recalling the folded wing pattern of juvenile Thayer's Gull (*L. thayeri*). We were unable to detect the exact pattern of barring (wavy or straight?) on its under-tail coverts. There was no visible projection of its two central rectrices beyond the tail tip at any time.

In flight, its underwing coverts looked heavily barred. The whitish underwing flash near the base of its primaries was extensive and easily seen. A second flash of white could not be detected on the greater primary coverts of the underwing, even though we specifically looked for this field mark. Olsen and Larsson (1997) and Kaufman (1990) note that juvenile *pomarinus* may lack a "double underwing flash" so this is neither an absolute nor a requisite criterion.

This jaeger consistently looked broad-winged and heavy-chested in flight, and flew with powerful wing strokes. It rarely glided but showed an angular profile when doing so — the inner wing was just above horizontal, while the outer wing or "hand" was angled down. Its wings appeared especially broad at their base. The distance from the trailing edge of its wing to the tip of its tail was judged less than the width of the wing at its root. According to Sherony and Brock (1997) this wing ratio strongly suggests *pomarinus*.

Its bill was bone-colored with a dark tip (distal one-quarter of the bill). This pale-based, dark-tipped bill could be easily seen from a distance of 250 yards or more. At one point, the bird chased a Ring-billed Gull and then landed on the water at least 500 yards offshore. Even at this distance, we could see its pale bill gleaming against its blackish face. According to Olsen and Larsson (1997) this strongly suggests *pomarinus* because the thinner bill of *parasiticus* usually cannot be detected at such distances. Juvenile *parasiticus* may have a pale-based bill, but shows minimal contrast between its bill and face because its malar area is relatively pale.

After watching the jaeger chase a couple of Ring-billeds and then land on the water again, Kim went into the beach house to write field notes while Steve and Peder continued to watch the bird (we saw it continuously for a total of 40 minutes). It made three more short flights in pursuit of Ring-billed Gulls which allowed further size comparisons. Its wingspan appeared approximately the same as two of the Ring-billeds and slightly less than three others. Although a few were in the vicinity from time to time, it never pursued any of the Herring Gulls. When Kim returned, we were still watching the jaeger, but then it abruptly took off and headed towards the Canal Park area. No one was able to relocate it on subsequent days in Duluth. What was apparently a different Pomarine (based on plumage details) was reported by Shaun Putz and Chris Wood at Wisconsin Point on 8 October 2000.

Although this represents only the thirteenth Minnesota record for this Accidental species, no fewer than three juveniles have now been found within the past year! One lingered in Duluth 8–25 September 1999 (MOU files) and another was found on Mille

Lacs L., 22 November 1999 (Svingen and Hertzel 2000). **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812.**

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A FALL RECORD OF THE BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK IN LAKE COUNTY — At

3:05 P.M. on 23 October 2000, I discovered a female or immature *Pheucticus* grosbeak in a mountain ash tree near the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 1st Street in Two Harbors, Lake County. I stopped at this location to look for a Townsend's Solitaire that had been found here, but initially saw only robins and waxwings. When a bird that was clearly not one of these species flew into the mountain ash, I got out of my car to investigate and was surprised to find a grosbeak. During careful study of its bill characteristics, facial pattern, and underparts, I repeatedly confirmed my impression that it was a Black-headed Grosbeak (*P. melanocephalus*). After about five minutes of observation, it flew off to the northeast and could not be relocated later that afternoon or on subsequent days.

At first, I could only see its bill, face, and most of its head and neck — the rest of the bird was hidden behind foliage. Its bill was very large and heavy-looking, as is typical for this genus. It was also bicolored, with the upper mandible completely dark gray (blackish) and the lower mandible pale (pinkish-gray). I am certain that the entire upper mandible was dark gray, not just the culmen. In May 1999, after finding a female Black-headed Grosbeak in Jackson County (Svingen 1999), I read Morlan's (1991) article in *Birding*, so recalled that at least during spring and early summer, a bicolored bill with a blackish upper mandible strongly suggests Black-headed Grosbeak. In contrast, the adult Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*P. ludovicianus*) shows an all pale pink or whitish bill. This distinction is less reliable in fall when adult female and immature Rose-breasteds may have dusky culmens, but all of the upper mandible on this bird was dark gray — not just the culmen. Morlan (1991) published a photograph of an immature male Black-headed Grosbeak (see article, Fig. 4) taken in the fall that shows pink on its lower mandible, yet the upper mandible still looks entirely dark.

This grosbeak's facial pattern, especially the strong buff tones on its supercilium, throat, and malar area, also caught my attention. Its nape and the sides of its crown were brown — I do not know whether or not its crown was streaked, since the top of its head was not well seen. Its dark eyes were surrounded by a faint, buff eye ring. The auriculars were dark brown, forming an angular facial patch, with much less facial contrast compared to female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Rose-breasteds typically show a stark white supercilium and a whitish border below the facial patch — these areas are usually buff on Black-headed Grosbeak, thereby producing less contrast.

After studying its bill and facial pattern for a minute or two, I slowly moved to a new position from which the entire bird (except for the rump and tail) could be seen. Its back was thickly streaked with dark brown. The wings were dark brown with two whitish wingbars. The buff on its lower face and throat clearly continued onto the breast and flanks. Except for whitish under-tail coverts, its entire underparts were buff, becoming orange-buff on the breast, with an apparent lack of streaking across

the center of its breast. I had good looks from close range at its breast and flanks. There was minimal streaking on its flanks and this was very thin, crisp, and pencil-sharp — much different than the thick, blurry streaks shown by female/immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Its legs were never visible and no vocalizations were heard.

When it flew out of the ash tree, it headed in a northeast direction but the ash tree and an adjacent lilac blocked any chance of observation in flight. Therefore, I was unable to see its underwing coverts. If present and well seen, yellowish wing linings rules out an immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which shows pink underwing coverts. Unbeknownst to me at the time, Jim & Sharon Lind had seen what was probably this same bird two days earlier and documented "buffy-yellow" wing linings.

Satisfactory in-flight views of a grosbeak's wing linings are difficult to obtain in the field and true colors may not be reliably appreciated unless the bird is in the hand. Perceived underwing color can be affected by light conditions and observer factors (Morlan 1991). Pyle (1997) states that the underwing coverts of Black-headed Grosbeak are "deep yellow to brownish yellow or mustard colored."

Other plumage characteristics help eliminate Rose-breasted Grosbeak without even considering the wing linings. An immature male Rose-breasted would probably show at least some reddish color on its underparts, most likely near the alula. Female and immature Rose-breasteds have relatively thick, blurry streaks on their underparts, including the mid-breast. They typically show a white supercilium and whitish feathering inferior to the facial patch. None of these characteristics were observed on the bird in Two Harbors. These two species hybridize on the Great Plains (Hill 1995, and references therein) but there were no indications of hybridization on this individual.
Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.

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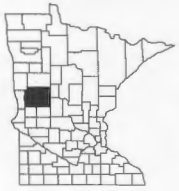
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY — While watching the goldeneyes coming in to roost along the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls on 1 March 2001, I noticed one female which had the head-shape of a Barrow's Goldeneye (i.e., the forehead rose vertically from the base of the bill), a feature which was visible at a distance of 50–100 yards with binoculars only. I spent the next half hour studying this female goldeneye, in direct comparison to the numerous Common Goldeneyes, until it became too dark for further observation.



The female Barrow's head shape remained consistent throughout the observation, with the forehead always rising vertically from the base of the bill, no matter whether she was alert, relaxed, or sleeping (this bird was not seen diving or displaying). The head had a more blocky, square appearance than the Common Goldeneyes, since the forehead rose vertically from the base of the bill, the highest point of the head was just above or slightly in front of the eye, and the top of the crown was relatively flat compared to the Common Goldeneyes. This head shape was different from all Common Goldeneyes, and entirely consistent with my experience

with Barrow's Goldeneye. By comparison, the Common Goldeneye's head shape slopes away from the base of the bill along the length of the forehead, and reaches a higher, more rounded peak behind the eye, creating a more triangular rather than square overall head shape. The more vertical appearance of Barrow's forehead is an actual skeletal difference from Common Goldeneye (Bellrose 1976).

The bill was also studied at length, and always appeared shorter, stubbier, and more triangular than the Common Goldeneyes. When an immature female Common Goldeneye swam in front of the Barrow's, I could see by direct comparison (with the two bird's bills nearly touching) that the Common Goldeneye's bill was noticeably longer, and less deep at its base in proportion to the Barrow's bill. The Barrow's bill was mostly a dusky orangish color (not bright carrot orange as in western adult female Barrow's), exhibiting some darkening towards the base, and an obvious dark nail. Although I regularly see Common Goldeneyes in fall (presumably immature birds) that have mostly dusky orangish bills (never bright orange), I had seldom, if ever, seen a Common Goldeneye in spring which showed such a bill coloration. It was therefore of great interest to me to see two Common Goldeneyes in this roost which showed similar bill coloration to the Barrow's (dusky orangish), similar to what I have occasionally seen on Common Goldeneyes in the fall. These two were clearly Common Goldeneyes and not Barrow's Goldeneyes however, because of their head shape and bill shape, quite different from the Barrow's I was observing, and neither of which had an obvious dark nail on the bill.

When the Barrow's did a wingflap, there did not appear to be any noticeable white feathering in the coverts of the forewing, and as a result, the only white in the wing was the square patch on the secondaries. With the wing closed while swimming on the water, the Barrow's did not show any white in the coverts of the upperwing, proximal to the visible white secondary wing patch. In contrast, the adult female Common Goldeneyes showed white in the coverts, visible even when perched with the wings closed as slivers of white proximal to the larger secondary wing patch. Although some of the young female Common Goldeneyes did not show visible white in the coverts of the forewing when perched, these individuals were not examined with the wing spread.

While doing subsequent research on the upperwing pattern of goldeneyes, I learned a species-specific difference of which I had been previously unaware. Immature female Barrow's Goldeneyes show the least amount of white in the wing of any age or sex of the two goldeneye species. In both immature Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes, a square white wing patch is formed by white secondaries and white greater secondary coverts, but the additional solid white wing patch on the lesser secondary coverts of immature Common Goldeneyes is replaced by only fringes of white (in the lesser secondary coverts) in Barrow's Goldeneye (Carney 1983, Tobish 1986). As a result, only in immature female Barrow's Goldeneyes can the entire forewing appear to be dark (Tobish 1986), as it did on the Barrow's I observed. Furthermore, in immature female Common Goldeneyes, a dark bar (created by mostly dark median secondary coverts) separates the white lesser secondary coverts from the white greater secondary coverts (Carney 1983). I am quite certain this additional area of solid white on the lesser secondary coverts, with a dark bar on the median secondary coverts, would have been visible on the Barrow's I was watching when it did the wingflap. Adult female goldeneyes of both species show a white patch in the lesser secondary coverts (though less white is shown by Barrow's), mostly dark median secondary coverts, and black-tipped white greater secondary coverts, creating double dark bars across the white of the wing.

The Barrow's was aged as an immature based on the wing pattern just described, as well as the dusky yellowish eye (rather than bright yellow as in adults), and the

dusky orangish bill (rather than bright orange). An adult female would presumably have attained the adult bill color, since all (or nearly all) the adult female Common Goldeneyes had adult bill color (dark with a yellowish-orange subterminal band).

I also noticed that the Barrow's flanks appeared darker and more uniform than the female Common Goldeneyes, and that the gray breast band was slightly darker. I could not detect a difference in the coloration of the head (knowing it should appear slightly darker in Barrow's); light conditions were not good for assessing such a subtle color difference, which is most obvious in sunlight (Millard 1990). I also noticed that the undertail coverts had more dusky mottling on the margins than all the Common Goldeneyes I examined, even the immature females (which all had almost entirely white undertail coverts); the undertail coverts were easily seen since the bird habitually held its tail at about a 30° angle out of the water.

Although the Barrow's Goldeneye has seemed like a Regular species in recent years (mostly due to the adult male which overwintered for three consecutive winters at the Blue Lake treatment plant, Scott County), this species is still casual, and in the absence of a regularly overwintering individual, remains a very difficult species to locate. Of the approximately 50 records of Barrow's Goldeneye in Minnesota, only 8 female birds have been documented. A well-documented female was seen at the same Fergus Falls location 1 January – 4 March 1990 (Millard 1990). Although there have been additional claims of male-female pairs of Barrow's (and even flocks of this species!) prior to the formation of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee, these older records generally lack descriptions and have never been reviewed by the Committee. **Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings Street NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**

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A TRICOLORED HERON IN LAKE COUNTY — During a Lake County Big Day on 21 May 2001, a Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) was found near Highway 61 just northeast of Two Harbors. Jim Lind, Dave Grossheusch, Peder Svingen, and I were approaching the small wetland between the Flood Bay Wayside and Superior Shores Resort, when a dark medium-sized heron caught my eye as it flew up from the edge of the water and landed atop an alder about 60 yards away. Though nothing was present for direct size comparison, the bird was too small to be a Great Blue Heron and larger than a Green Heron, and as it flew away from me I noticed its overall bluish gray color and two short white plumes on the back of the head/neck. As it turned slightly in flight I could then see a portion of its contrasting white belly, and I knew this was a Tricolored Heron, a species I see dozens of times annually on tours to Texas.

I called it to the attention of the other three observers, and for the next few minutes we watched it perched with its back to us, and I could then also see a tan or pale brownish wash on its back. Its bill was hard to see, but it looked mostly dark and bicolored, with the tip darker than the base. The legs appeared all dark. Because it was facing away, I was unable to see whether or not it had a pale stripe on its foreneck, but later as the heron flew by us I could see that the under wing linings — as

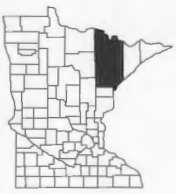
well as the belly — were solid white and contrasting with the dark flight feathers.

The heron was lost from view for several minutes after it dropped down into the marsh behind some alders and trees, but it later flew back up to a visible perch near some of the observers and then flew off again. It first started heading northeast along the shoreline, but eventually it circled back over Lake Superior towards us and soon was lost from sight to the southwest in the direction of Two Harbors.

Tricolored Heron, 21 May 2001, Flood Bay, Lake County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

This represents the first Tricolored Heron record in the northeastern quarter of the state, although there are apparently 13 previous Minnesota records, including four in northwestern Minnesota: May 1963 at Agassiz NWR, Marshall County (***The Loon*** 36:106); June 1971 at Thief Lake WMA, Marshall County (***The Loon*** 43:93); May 1982 at Osage, Becker County (***The Loon*** 54:188–189); and again at Agassiz NWR from June to August 1986 (***The Loon*** 59:49). **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

RED PHALAROPE IN MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN — On 14 October 2000, John Hockema and I found a Red Phalarope while birding at Wisconsin Point. Light drizzle alternated with fog while 15–20 mph east winds blew offshore. We were scanning the gulls on the Minnesota side of the Superior Entry when a medium-sized, gray shorebird flew in and disappeared behind the gulls. It briefly reappeared and John called out, "phalarope." As it flew away from us, we both saw its solid gray back and obvious white wing stripe, and I noted that the bottom rear of the bird did not readily contrast with its back and wings. John called out, "RED PHALAROPE!"



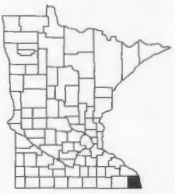
We watched for a few minutes to see if the bird would return but it did not. We consulted field guides to determine what other possibilities should be considered, but remained confident with our identification. When the drizzle stopped, we headed to the beach with our spotting scopes and found several other species of shorebirds. Then we noticed a phalarope swimming near several large rocks on the Wisconsin side of the Superior Entry and John said, "Look at the beak."

Even as the waves swung it about, the bird easily swam and spun as phalaropes often do. This bird seemed experienced at maneuvering in large, relentless waves. The first view I had through my scope was from the rear. I saw obvious rufous or reddish-orange under its tail. The beak was black and stubby (rather thick), somewhat like that of a Sanderling but possibly more stubby. The forehead back to the peak of the head was white. It showed a mildly mottled black stripe from the hindcrown down the back of the neck that blended into its solid gray back. It did not have the "black toupee" look of a Red-necked Phalarope. There was an elongated black patch behind each eye. The throat was faintly tinted orange. Its back was obviously uniform gray.

Except for twice when it flushed for no apparent reason and returned in a minute or so, we observed it continuously for about two hours from distances between 20

and 40 yards. After such a luxuriant period of observation and after checking field guides, it was obvious that this was an adult Red Phalarope in transitional plumage from summer to winter. As far as we know, no other phalaropes were seen anywhere along the North Shore that day and attempts to relocate this bird at Wisconsin Point on subsequent days were unsuccessful. **Chuck Juhnke, 120 East 1st Street #11, Stewartville, MN 55976.**

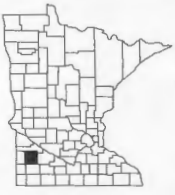
RECORD LATE BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER — At 3:00 P.M. on 15 November 2000, I watched and listened to a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher for about five minutes, along Minnesota state highway 26 north of Reno in Houston County. The bird was with a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos, nuthatches, and Black-capped Chickadees that responded vigorously to pishing, squeaking, and whistled screech-owl imitations.



The gnatcatcher first appeared about 50 feet away in open understory, flashing junco-like outer tail feathers except that the area of white was larger than on the rectrices of the juncos. It had a pewter-gray body (breast and back) and lacked the junco's black cowl. As it approached to within about 20 feet, a white eye-ring was noted. It fanned its long tail in an aggressive display or response to my pishing. The bird also gave the tinny, high-pitched gnatcatcher call.

This represents the latest date on record for this species in Minnesota. There is only one previous November record — on 6 November 1994 in Cook County (***The Loon*** 67:91). **Fred Lesher, 509 Winona St., La Crosse, WI 54603.**

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES AND SPOTTED TOWHEE OVER-WINTERING AT THE SAME FEEDER — The Marshall Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on 16 December 2000 in blizzard conditions. The temperature did not reach 10° F, light snow was falling throughout the day, and the winds were blowing from the northwest up to 25 mph. The count was conducted anyway with surprising results.



Several unique species were active at feeders protected from the harsh weather in the Redwood River Valley. I was about ready to leave one feeder in the town of Russell when a larger, dark shape joined the juncos on the ground. Through binoculars it was easy to see the characteristics of a Spotted Towhee. The rusty flanks stood out clearly against the white belly, and black head, bib, back, and wings. The wings were patterned with diagnostic white spots. White was also visible on the outer corners at the end of the tail when the bird flew back to the cover of a dense cedar hedge.

When the landowner, Mr. Lyle Struthers, came out I introduced myself, and asked him about the towhee. While talking about the bird, it came out to feed on scattered seeds under a tree just a few feet from where we were talking. Although not a birder, Mr. Struthers explained that two "Rufous-sided Towhees" were present, both of which "had the spots."

After informing him about the CBC, Mr. Struthers gave me an estimate of the species they had seen that day, and then described a dove that they had been seeing for a while that he could not find in any field guide. He described it by saying that it "was not a Mourning Dove. It looked like it, but had a black line across the back of the neck." THAT caught my attention! I asked if they had seen it that morning, and he explained that two came often to the feeders, but that they were wary of people.

I thanked Mr. Struthers for the information, and asked permission to park in his driveway to wait for the doves. During the 10–15 minute wait, both Spotted Towhees came to feed on the ground. By the difference in intensity of the dark head, back,

and wings, it seemed that one was definitely an adult male while the other was probably a first-year female, as the latter did not show a red eye and had a dark gray rather than black head, and back.

My attention was diverted to two doves that came in to perch in the lower branches of the cottonwood tree over the feeding area of the Struthers residence. The doves appeared slightly larger in size than Mourning Dove, with less slender appearance. Both birds had a dark bill, and appeared to have a dark red eye, although the lighting conditions were not optimal to decisively determine this feature.

The back and wings of both birds were light to moderate gray-brown and unmarked. The head, breast, and belly were a medium gray, and were also unmarked. However, a black stripe extended along the base of the nape of the birds. This black mark was bordered above and below by a very thin, white stripe.

The primary feathers of each bird were dark, a feature that was apparent at rest and in flight. This strongly contrasted with the gray-brown color of the remainder of the wings. While perched, the tail had a squared-off shape. It was white at the end, and dark in the outer web, which contrasted with the gray undertail coverts. While flying in to perch, the tail was fully extended and showing a white band (except for the very center of the tail) offset in appearance by the dark gray coloration on the remainder of the tail. In flight, the dark primaries were distinctly visible.

Their behavior was wary, just as Mr. Struthers described. They hesitated for at least 15 minutes in a tree above a ground feeding station before coming down to feed. These birds were easily distinguished from Mourning Dove by their color, size, shape of the tail, and lack of dark markings on the wings. They were distinguished from Ringed Turtle-Dove by the color of the undertail coverts and dark outer web of the tail.

Both the Spotted Towhees and Eurasian Collared-Doves were observed throughout the winter season, and well into spring. Mr. Struthers explained that he has been seeing both species during the winter for the past two or three years. **Roger Schroeder, 2520 County Road 20, Marshall, MN 56258.**

FIRST FALL RECORD OF THE ARCTIC TERN IN MINNESOTA — A first-ever fall record of the Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) in Minnesota was obtained 21–23 September 2000, when an adult was seen repeatedly as it worked its way back and forth across the Superior Entry between Minnesota Point and Wisconsin Point. Along with unprecedented numbers of Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabini*), it was first found on the 21st by Tom Schultz and Chris Wood while they were scouting for an upcoming Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) field trip.

On 23 September, I joined the WSO group for a morning "lake watch" at Wisconsin Point. Chris spotted the Arctic Tern flying towards us from the east with a loose flock of up to nine Common Terns (*S. hirundo*). It was first seen at approximately 10:45 A.M. and was studied continuously for at least two minutes before it traversed the Superior Entry into Minnesota, where it disappeared behind the breakwater.

About 30 minutes later, the same flock of terns reappeared and crossed back into Wisconsin waters. Most of the time while in view, the Arctic Tern was 150–200 yards away and was watched at all times through spotting scopes. The lighting was excellent as we were looking north to northeast under overcast skies. The winds were from the north at 10–15 mph. Up until the time I left (about 1:00 P.M.) the flock continued to fly back and forth across the entry at 30–40 minute intervals. Each time, the Arctic Tern was easily distinguished from the others by its shape, size, and flight characteristics, even without studying its plumage.

Compared to the Common Terns, its flight looked especially buoyant. Its body moved up and down with each wing stroke. At first glance, it looked smaller than the other terns because of its pot-bellied and foreshortened, "neckless" appearance. However, its wingspan was actually an inch or more longer than the Common Tern's. The Arctic Tern's wings were also relatively narrow, which contributed further to its rakish, long-winged jizz.

There were several plumage characteristics that distinguished this bird from the Common Terns and confirmed it as an adult Arctic. Unlike most (all?) of the Commons, it had a complete black cap and showed no evidence of molt — Arctic Tern does not usually begin prebasic molt until after reaching its wintering grounds off Antarctica. Regarding Arctic Tern, Olson and Larsson (1995) state, "Moult takes place in the winter quarters. Rarely, a few feathers of forehead and body are moulted in late summer and early autumn (presumably non-breeders or failed breeders), but otherwise shows no or only very limited moult before arriving in winter quarters."

The Arctic Tern's upper wing surface was carefully studied multiple times as it flew back and forth across the entry. This was especially well-seen whenever the bird flared briefly and rolled out towards the observers, presenting its dorsal surface for scrutiny. The entire upper wing surface was uniform gray, lacking the Common Tern's dark wedge on the primaries. Most of the Common Terns also showed slightly darker outermost primaries. The trailing edge of their underwings was difficult to see well, since the birds never soared overhead, but the Arctic appeared to show a thinner and more crisply defined black line on the trailing edge of its outer wing, compared to a thicker, blurred trailing edge on the Common Terns.

Its back was the same gray color as its wings, while its rump and tail appeared white. I did not try to compare the length of its tail streamers to those of the Common Terns. There was obvious contrast between its gray underparts and its whitish underwings, but I was unable to detect whether or not its cheeks were gray. Its bill color was not noted. Several observers mentioned that all of the Arctic Tern's flight feathers appeared translucent. The Common Tern shows translucency on its inner primaries only (Mullarney *et al.* 1999).

This represents the eighth year that Arctic Tern has been recorded in Duluth, yet it's the first fall record for the state. Previous occurrences were in 1973, 1974, 1978, 1983, and 1985 (Janssen 1987); plus two in 1997 (Svingen 1997, Eckert 1998) and one on 21 May 1999 (Svingen 1999). This individual also provided the latest date for Wisconsin. Apart from a purported 21 September 1897 specimen that cannot now be located, the latest dates listed in Robbins (1991) are 16 July 1988 and 6–13 August 1980.

Though still subject to review by state records committees, regional rare bird alerts and *North American Birds* for the Fall 2000 migration reported Arctic Terns in several non-coastal states. These included one adult at Lake Minatare, western Nebraska, 20 September; one in Jefferson County, Idaho, 22 September; one adult and one juvenile at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, 23 September; one or two at American Falls Reservoir, Idaho, 24–27 September; one adult at Big Johnson Reservoir, Colorado, 23 September; one adult at Elephant Butte Lake, New Mexico, 26 September; and one adult at Pueblo Reservoir, Colorado, 29 September. The adult at the Superior Entry on 21–23 September fits neatly into this ten day span of dates. Juvenile Arctic Terns were also reported in Oklahoma and two more Colorado locations during the second week in October. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.**

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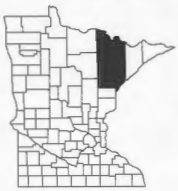
RECORD HIGH COUNTS OF SABINE'S GULLS AT THE SUPERIOR ENTRY — An amazing number of Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabini*) was seen on both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the Superior Entry during late September 2000. The Superior Entry divides Minnesota Point from Wisconsin Point and delineates the state line. The first report was on the 21st when a flock of 19 Sabine's (17 juveniles and 2 adults) was found by Tom Schultz and Chris Wood while scouting for an upcoming Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) field trip. This entire flock was observed in both states. The following day several Sabine's were relocated but the four-day extravaganza had not yet peaked!



On the morning of 23 September, I joined about 30 WSO members as they scanned Lake Superior from Wisconsin Point. Shaun Putz and Chris Wood spotted a flock of 11 Sabine's Gulls near Gull Bluff, along the South Shore of Lake Superior. This flock eventually made its way towards us, then streamed past the Superior Entry and into Minnesota. These graceful fliers are among the most beautiful of all gulls and so it was thrilling to watch them fly in formation just above the surface of the lake. I continued watching the first flock as the others discovered a second flock of 18 Sabine's Gulls! Once again, the second flock eventually streamed past the Superior Entry but only 15 from the second flock were actually seen in Minnesota waters. Thus, among the total of 29 Sabine's seen that morning, 26 were confirmed as present in Minnesota — 3 adults plus 23 juveniles. The last report was on 24 September when I saw a single juvenile Sabine's off Minnesota Point.

These are unprecedented high counts for Minnesota, Wisconsin, and for the Great Lakes Basin (GLB). The previous Minnesota high count was provided by one adult with two juveniles on the fish hatchery ponds near Waterville, Le Sueur County, during late September 1993 (***The Loon*** 65:210–212). According to Bob Russell (unpubl.) the highest previous count in autumn for the GLB was 11 Sabine's Gulls on 29 October 1984 at Hamlin Beach State Park, New York. The question then arises — how do these data compare to high counts outside of the GLB?

I reviewed the past 25 years of *American Birds* (AB) and its successors including *North American Birds* (NAB) for inland reports of Sabine's Gulls migrating in flocks, but found no mention of comparable numbers during fall migration until year 2000! Up to 20 Sabine's were at Red Bluff Reservoir, Texas, 20 October 2000 (NAB 55:71) and 11 were on Pyramid Lake, Nevada, 25 September (NAB 55:80). Higher than usual numbers were found in several other states in Fall 2000, especially in Colorado which had a total of 75 between 7 September and 23 October (mostly singles or small groups) in various locations (NAB 55:77). Flocks as large as those at the Superior Entry have been seen during spring migration in the Canadian interior, e.g., 23 at Turtle Lake, Saskatchewan, 2 June 1985 (AB 39:927); 30 at St. Paul, Alberta, 28 May 1987 (AB 41:449); 23 adults migrating past the mouth of the Little Shagamu River on Hudson Bay, Ontario, 7 June 1990 (AB 44:1130); and 22 at Cold Lake, Alberta, 27 May 1993 (AB 47:424). Much larger concentrations occur at sea off both coasts, such as the single flock of 2800 seen during a pelagic survey off British Columbia on 24 August 1989 (AB 44:147). **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds. We aim to create and increase public interest in birds, and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

To carry out these aims, we publish a journal, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* we conduct field trips; we encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; we hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. Any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, Notes of Interest, color slides, and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission in any standard format on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. See inside front cover. Bird sighting reports for each season should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See key to the "Seasonal Report."

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Obituary
Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr.
1907–2001

Paul J. Baicich

The two very first bird-finding guides to encourage long-range travel and bird-appreciation were *A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi* and *A Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi*. Published in 1951 and 1953 respectively, they were the brainchild of Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr.

Products of the post-war expansion of travel and of prosperity, these two guides opened up a world of birds to those willing to travel beyond their neighborhoods. From his teaching position at Carlton College in Minnesota, Pettingill estimated that one book on U.S. sites was the text-target, with a potential audience of "serious to casual bird-watchers." What was a one-book plan evolved into a two-book reality. Combined, the volumes sold just short of 20,000 copies and set a standard, one which future bird-finding guides copied and perfected.

Pettingill's credentials were not simply recreational, they were ornithological. Along with such luminaries as Ludlow Griscom, Herbert Friedman, Peter Paul Kellogg, and George M. Sutton, he was a product of Arthur A. Allen's pre-war "Grad Lab" at Cornell. He had already made his mark by his *Laboratory and Field Manual of Ornithology*, launched in 1939. This volume would be revised four more times and used in over a hundred colleges and universities in well over 40 states. Pettingill taught ornithology at Carlton College for 17 years.

Had Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. stopped with the two guides and the one manual, he would have been duly lauded in birding and ornithological lore. But he kept going. From 1957 to 1968 he wrote a bird-finding column in *Audubon*; there were 62 columns in all. He served on National Audubon's board for 19 years (1955–1974), was the Director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (1960–1973), produced films (on albatrosses, penguins, and other topics), and taught at the University of Michigan Biological Station for 35 summers. Among his many accomplishments, he co-authored a classic bird-finding guide, *Enjoying Birds Around New York City*, written with Robert S. Arbib, Jr. and Sally Hoyt Spofford in 1966. In 1972, he launched the first edition of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's popular *Home Study Course in Bird Biology*. Later, he re-wrote his two classic bird-finding guides (1977 and 1981, respectively). His insightful autobiography, *My Way to Ornithology*, was published in 1992.

The Cornell Lab's Arthur A. Allen Award, for those individuals who have worked to widen popular interest in ornithology, went to Pettingill in 1974.

At the 1982 American Birding Association Convention, in Plantation, Florida, he was also the recipient of ABA's highest honor, the Ludlow Griscom Award. (It was only the second such award ABA had given, the first having been awarded to Roger Tory Peterson in 1980.)

Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. passed away on 11 December 2001 in Bedford, Texas, at the age of 94.

P.O. Box 404, Oxon Hill, MD, 20750.

Editor's Note: Dr. Pettingill was a longtime member of the MOU, becoming a Life Member in 1962. — *AXH.*

A Look at Boreal Owl Nesting Habitat in Minnesota Using Landsat Thematic Mapper Data

Peter T. Wolter[1]
and
William H. Lane

Introduction

Prior to 1978, the known breeding distribution of Boreal Owls (*Aegolius funereus*) included much of the boreal forest zone of Canada, but did not extend south of the Canada–United States border. In 1978, however, a Boreal Owl nest was documented in northeast Minnesota (Eckert and Savaloja 1979). Subsequent to that discovery, the owl has been documented as a breeding species throughout the western Rocky Mountain states (Palmer and Ryder 1984, Holt and Ermatinger 1989, Hayward *et al.* 1993), and today is considered to be a regular nesting species in Minnesota (Lane 1997). The Boreal Owl is currently listed as a sensitive species in the Superior National Forest (SNF 1986) but is not listed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as endangered, threatened or species of special concern.

As Minnesota's forests face increased logging pressures (Wolter and White 2002), it remains unclear if habitat changes due to forest management practices are related to the rarity of the Boreal Owl in northern Minnesota (Lane 1989, Wilson 1990, Lane 1990, Green 1995, Lane 1997). In Finland, Hakkarainen *et al.* (1997) found that moderate amounts of forest management (clearcuts) actually increased Boreal Owl reproductive success. In addition to preservation of suitable nesting sites, they suggested installation of artificial nest boxes to compensate for forestry-related loss of natural nesting habitat. At the moment, we are only beginning to understand what limits Boreal Owl abundance in Minnesota (Lane 1989, Lane and Andersen 1995).

To understand fully the reproductive success of Boreal Owls in Minnesota, we need to know more about the forest elements that they prefer; forest cover type and arrangement of types across the landscape is just a start. This paper examines the use of raw Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) data on a band-by-band basis, coupled with Boreal Owl nest tree locations to examine potential links between satellite-measured forest reflectance and forest structural attributes as measured on the ground. If the leap to a satellite-based understanding of the habitat preference of Boreal Owls in Minnesota can be made, we will then be better equipped to make timely forest management decisions over large areas, which will be critical for the preservation of this unique forest predator in this region.

Background

In general, owls occur in many different habitats that support prey species (Craighead and Craighead 1956). Boreal Owls also live in a wide range of habitats throughout the boreal zone of the holarctic (Sonerud 1986, Korpimaki 1988, Hayward *et al.* 1993). North American populations of Boreal Owls appear to be more habitat specific than populations occurring elsewhere (Hayward *et al.*

1993, Lane *et al.* 1993, Wilson 1990). The requirements noted for North American populations may be a function of low population density. Conversely, European populations appear to be forced, by nature of their breeding success, to use suboptimal nesting habitats (Hayward *et al.* 1993). In Idaho, Hayward *et al.* (1993) concluded that Boreal Owl populations were not self-sustaining and relied largely on recruitment from larger Canadian source populations.

For populations found in North America, the question of what constitutes prime Boreal Owl breeding habitat is not clear. In Idaho, Hayward *et al.* (1993) studied forest vegetation structure at 33 Boreal Owl nest sites and 101 random sites. A large proportion of the sites where owls actually nested were characterized as having mature, uneven-aged (multistoried), spruce-fir cover types of higher basal area when compared to random sites. Furthermore, 21 vegetation structural variables including tree density, basal area, percent tree canopy cover by height, percent shrub canopy cover, and percent ground cover were analyzed for both nest and random sites. Six major vegetation structural components were identified. The first component described a gradient from older forest types with a high degree of structure and layering to younger forest types with little overall diversity. Successive components described discrete vegetation structural features such as dense cover 0–2 m above ground, heavy upper canopy cover and presence of large snags as being significant habitat variables. The fact that 21% of the singing and breeding sites were located in aspen dominated stands, the smallest cover type component in the study region (<1%), was noteworthy. Earlier, working in Ontario and Saskatchewan, Canada, Bondrup-Nielsen (1978) made similar observations concluding that Boreal Owls preferred older trembling aspen even though it was a minor forest component. Although these Idaho results shed much light on the habitats used by Boreal Owls in the northern Rocky Mountains, the authors advised against using their conclusions to make assumptions about populations elsewhere.

In Minnesota there appear to be two common variables associated with Boreal Owl territories: 1) large trees approaching pathological rotation (Lane and Andersen 1995), and 2) forest stand complexes made up of mixed hardwood and conifer (Wilson 1990). Lane and Andersen (1995) found that Boreal Owls prefer over-mature aspen ~85–90 years of age, adjacent to lowland stands of black spruce, as nesting sites. The proximity of lowland black spruce to nesting substrate apparently serves as roosting habitat (Lane 1997). Over-mature aspen (>40 years old) are important because they are susceptible to heartwood decay by the fungi *Phellinus tremulae*. Once infected, Pileated (*Dryocopus pileatus*) and other woodpeckers excavate the trees during their foraging and nesting activities. Boreal Owls then use the vacant cavities as nest substrate (Wilson 1990, Lane and Andersen 1995). Lane and Andersen (1995) also measured 20 habitat variables at plots centered around nest trees and plots randomly located in similar habitat and found significant variables included lower conifer basal area, larger cavity trees and shorter distances to other trees than on random plots. Other variables such as percent conifer cover, deciduous tree basal area and understory tree component were not found to be significant.

Digital satellite data have been shown to be a useful wildlife management tool for describing and/or quantifying avian habitat variables (Palmeirim 1988, Andries *et al.* 1994, Hunter *et al.* 1995, Hepinstall and Sader 1997). A popular source of these satellite data is the Thematic Mapper (TM) on board both Landsats 5 and 7, which provides spectral information about the earth's surface in seven bands or wavelength intervals: three visible, three reflective infrared and one thermal infrared. TM data are commonly classified into land use or cover type classes

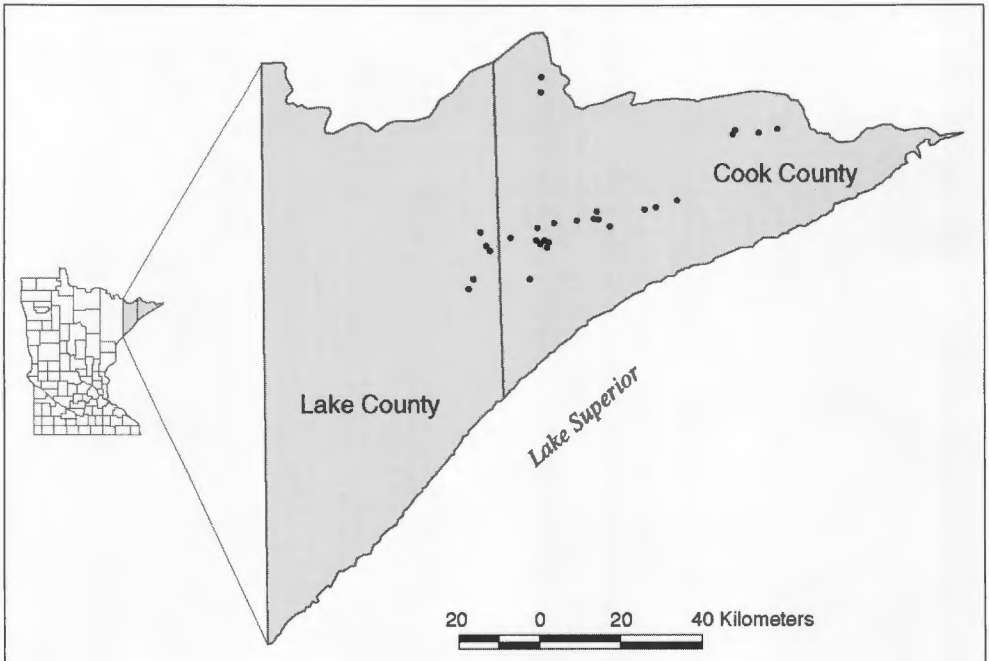

Figure 1. Boreal Owl nest tree locations in northeast Minnesota.

(Wolter *et al.* 1995). Ultimately, the digital land use or cover type maps produced are used as independent habitat variables for predicting whether some vertebrate species of interest is potentially present or absent from a particular landscape of interest (Andries *et al.* 1994, Hunter *et al.* 1995, Hepinstall and Sader 1997).

Use of satellite data in their raw-band form (reflectance or radiance) to describe avian habitats is rarely seen in scientific literature (Wallin *et al.* 1992, Hepinstall and Sader 1997). Potentially important forest structural information that may be inherent in raw satellite data are homogenized or completely lost when TM images are classified into vegetation cover types or land use classes. This may be problematic when trying to make predictions about avian habitat preference on a landscape scale — especially when it is not well known which habitat variables the bird species in question is responding to. Hayward *et al.* (1993) found that classification of forest cover type alone was insufficient in describing Boreal Owl nest site habitat. They found that key vegetation structural variables were not related to forest cover type. Furthermore, Hepinstall and Sader (1997) warn that habitat-class errors associated with a cover type map's arbitrarily defined classification scheme (e.g., pine, oak, aspen-birch, spruce-fir, lowland grass, etc.) will lead to errors in resulting predictive models regarding a wildlife species habitat preference.

Therefore, the focus of this research was the use of TM raw-band information and owl nesting data to determine if cover type reflectance surrounding Boreal Owl nest locations is significantly different from reflectance at random points in similar habitats. The null hypothesis was that raw TM reflectance information from nest-site locations could not be distinguished from TM reflectance at random locations within similar habitat. The

alternative hypothesis states that raw TM data provide enough information on landscape variables to distinguish Boreal Owl nesting habitat from similar, random locations. A 2-way Student's T-test is used to test this hypothesis.

Data and Methods

Boreal Owl cavity tree locations (Figure 1) are from surveys conducted during the late winter/early spring breeding season in northeastern Minnesota between 1988 and 1992 (Lane and Andersen 1995). For a description of the study area, see Lane (1997) or Lane and Andersen (1995).

The imagery used was acquired by Landsat TM on 2 July 1988. Raw TM spectral variables consisted of the seven individual TM bands and two derived indices: the normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and moisture stress index (MSI), where TM3 is visible red (0.63-0.69 mm), TM4 is near-infrared (NIR, 0.76-0.90 mm) and TM5 is shortwave infrared (SWIR, 1.55-1.75 mm).

$$NDVI = [(TM4-TM3)/(TM4+TM3) +1] * 100 \quad (1)$$

$$MSI = [(TM5-TM4)/(TM5+TM4) + 1] * 100 \quad (2)$$

Copies of field maps and written descriptions of 30 Boreal Owl cavity tree locations were used to locate points within the satellite image. Once the points were located, reflectance information was extracted from the Landsat image and stored in a separate file. Since Boreal Owl nest cavities are largely located within intact forest stands of mixed conifer and hardwood composition in northeastern Minnesota (Wilson 1990, Lane and Andersen 1995, Lane 1997), a satellite-derived forest cover type classification (Wolter and White 2002) containing these general types was used to stratify the imagery prior to the selection of 120 random points.

A 2-way Student's T-test was used to determine whether there were significant spectral differences between Boreal Owl nest cavity locations and stratified random locations.

Results

Of the seven raw-band variables tested, three were statistically significant (Table 1). TM band 3 (visible red) was the only visible band to show a significant difference (negative) from stratified random visible reflectance data. Conversely, the near-infrared (TM band 4) reflectance of areas around cavity tree locations exhibited nearly equal but opposite significance (positive) from reflectance around randomly located sites. Also, a positive significant difference was detected between nest sites and stratified random sites using TM band 6 (TIR, 10.4-12.5 mm) thermal data (Table 1), which is sensitive to landscape surface temperature differences.

Of the two indices tested (equations 1 and 2), NDVI data from Boreal Owl cavity tree locations showed a strong positive significant difference from random site, NDVI data. This index is a ratio of near-infrared to visible red reflectance and is positively correlated to leaf area index, photosynthetically active radiation, photosynthetic capacity and several other important vegetation parameters (Tucker and Sellers 1986, Sellers 1987). Lastly, MSI values from the nest locations were not significantly different from random location MSI values.

Discussion

Lower visible red reflectance at nest sites (Table 1) may be suggestive of more densely arranged vigorous trees than trees at random sites. Visible red electromagnetic energy is known to inversely correspond to the amount of chlorophyll in plant leaf tissue (Tucker 1979). As chlorophyll density increases, greater quantities of visible red radiation are absorbed, leaving less to be reflected back into the atmosphere.

The greater near-infrared reflectance detected at nest site locations (Table 1) may be indicative of a reduced conifer component in the forests around nesting areas. Because broad-leaf tree species have an extra layer of cells — palisade mesophyl l— on their top surface and far

	TM1 (blue)	TM2 (green)	TM3 (red)	TM4 (NIR)	TM5 (SWIR)	TM6 (TIR)	TM7	NDVI	MSI
S^2_{owl}	3.37	1.43	1.28	139.76	40.15	5.54	2.34	19.89	11.45
S^2_{rand}	6.36	4.36	5.29	540.31	168.40	5.59	15.24	144.21	47.80
$mean_{owl}$	71.05	26.55	22.64	101.03	66.64	131.52	19.01	162.33	81.38
$mean_{rand}$	70.96	26.74	23.31	93.57	64.76	130.31	19.23	158.10	82.38
t-value	0.22	-0.67	**-2.26**	**2.46**	1.14	**2.52**	-0.47	**3.10**	-1.12

Table 1. Two tailed Student's T-test for significance (a = +/- 0.025) between TM spectral data from Boreal Owl nest tree locations and spectral data from random locations in similar habitat (df = 29). Significant T-values are in bold.

greater foliar surface area than needle-leaved species, they are generally much more near-infrared reflective than conifers. Near-infrared wavelengths are also sensitive to the status of leaf cellular structure (Tucker 1979). For example, healthy, green leaves are generally more near-infrared reflective than unhealthy, drought stricken or chlorotic leaves.

The NDVI (equation 1) is a ratio of near-infrared to visible red reflectance and is positively correlated to leaf area index, photosynthetically active radiation, photosynthetic capacity and several other important vegetation parameters (Tucker and Sellers 1986, Sellers 1987). Our NDVI results appear to be consistent with Lane and Anderson (1995). They found lower conifer basal area and higher tree density to be characteristic differences between nest sites and random sites. Consequently, broad-leaved tree species tend to have higher NDVI values than needle-leafed tree species due to the leaf area and cellular difference discussed above. Furthermore, densely spaced trees generally yield higher NDVI values than trees more sparsely arranged. With that said, since NDVI values were significantly higher at nest locations than the random location, it is possible that TM data are, indeed, detecting some of the forest composition differences that Lane and Anderson (1995) described. That is, forests with trees more densely arranged and/or with a greater hardwood component than random sites of similarly defined forest composition. Unfortunately, information regarding the overall age structure and subcanopy layer composition of forest trees surrounding Boreal Owl nest sites cannot be gleaned directly from these results without detailed habitat measurements on the ground.

Hayward *et al.* (1993) noted that Boreal Owls seem to preferentially select over-mature aspen as nesting substrate in Idaho. They also found the abundance of snags greater than 38 cm in diameter was significant in describing Boreal Owl habitat there. In Minnesota, Lane and Andersen (1995) found 92.3% of cavity trees used by Boreal Owls to be trembling aspens of advanced age; by 1997, this figure increased to 93.2% (Lane 1997).

We theorized that the MSI (equation 2) might be able to detect subtle differences in the number of snags or trees showing decreased vigor between nest and random sites. MSI was included as a variable in these tests because it has previously been used as an index to monitor the severity of forest decline (Vogelmann and Rock, 1988) and reduced canopy vigor (Vogelmann and Rock 1989) in the eastern United States. Shortwave infrared reflectance of vegetation is driven, in part, by the amount of moisture contained in leaf tissues. Drought stricken or dead leaves have higher shortwave infrared re-

flectance than normally hydrated, healthy leaves. As a result, the normalized ratio of shortwave infrared to near-infrared reflectance (equation 2) is higher for stressed and dying leaves than for healthy leaves. Ultimately, MSI information was not found to be a significant variable.

Perhaps the lack of significance between nest site MSI values and random MSI values is ecologically characteristic of Minnesota Boreal Owl habitat. Lane and Andersen (1995) concluded in their Boreal Owl management recommendations for the Superior National Forest that snag retention, as a silvicultural practice, was not necessary in Minnesota but provided no data to substantiate this recommendation.

The most unusual, and unpredicted, result was the significance of the thermal band (TIR) in characterizing Boreal Owl nest locations. In this study, the forest around nest locations was found to be slightly warmer than random sites (Table 1). Although these satellite data were not from the Boreal Owl breeding season in Minnesota, it remains encouraging that TM data may be capable of detecting this potentially important habitat difference. In Idaho, Boreal Owls appear to roost in vegetation that minimizes heat stress when ambient temperatures exceed 4° C (Hayward *et al.* 1993). Hayward *et al.* (1993) observed that Boreal Owls exhibited physical signs of heat stress (gular fluttering) when temperatures were as mild as 18–23° C. In Minnesota, Boreal Owls roost in lowland black spruce stands near nest locations (Lane and Andersen 1995), which are cooler during the warm days of spring than more mesic sites (personal observation). Landsat thermal data could be a useful, additional tool for understanding Boreal Owl habitat preference throughout northern Minnesota.

Suggestions for Future Work

The next phase of this research should be aimed at repeating these procedures using TM data acquired during the vocalization and nesting period from 15 March – 15 April. These TM data might allow a look through the top of the forest canopy at potentially significant forest structural variables below. It would also be interesting to see whether TM thermal data could be used to discriminate between nest sites, randomly located sites in similar habitat and the roosting habitats used by Boreal Owls in northern Minnesota within this time frame.

Furthermore, a spatial component to the analysis should be incorporated. Hayward *et al.* (1993) found that Boreal Owls rarely roosted within 500 meters of the nest tree and most of the roosts were greater than 1000 meters away. Lane and Andersen (1995) found that lowland black spruce stands near Boreal Owl nest sites are the preferred roosting and foraging habitat of nesting males. The authors speculate that size of the nesting home range might reflect limited resources. In northeastern Minnesota, black spruce lowlands are not a scarce resource, although suitable nesting habitat adjacent to these lowlands may be. Also, proximity of suitable nest trees to larger, predatory owl nests may affect breeding success of Boreal Owls (Hakkarainen and Korpimaki 1996). Therefore, step-wise buffering procedures performed on raw and classified TM data, with nesting/singing locations as focal points, may shed light on what defines Boreal Owl abundance in Minnesota.

Conclusions

Nest trees of 30 singing male Boreal Owls were located by Lane and Andersen (1995) during the late winter/early spring breeding seasons in northeast Minnesota from 1988 to 1992. Raw Landsat TM reflectance information from 2 July 1988 were extracted for each of these locations. These satellite data consisted of the seven raw TM bands, normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and the moisture stress index (MSI). TM data from 120 stratified, random locations were also selected for comparison. Of the nine spectral variables, TM3, TM4, TM6

and NDVI data from the nest locations were statistically distinguishable from the stratified, random TM information. Boreal Owl nest sites were distinguished from random locations by having higher near-infrared, higher NDVI, lower red and higher thermal infrared spectra. These spectral signatures are suggestive of Boreal Owl nest sites being slightly warmer, possibly with greater hardwood composition and/or having greater tree density than sites randomly located in similar habitat. However, to be more useful as a landscape scale predictive tool, field measurements of Boreal Owl nest areas, during the breeding season, must be made to validate the satellite reflectance information. Empirically, though, TM data does appear to contain significant spectral information about the physical nest site characteristics of the Boreal Owl in Minnesota.

Whether Boreal Owls prefer over-mature trees directly or whether they are drawn to structural attributes inherent to older forest ecosystems is unknown. Hayward *et al.* (1993) theorized that Boreal Owls could perhaps be focusing on old growth forest ecosystems because owls inherently associate these communities with greater abundance of nest substrates.

Using these simple techniques, it is evident that certain information contained in raw TM data may be characteristic of Boreal Owl nest locations in Minnesota. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis of this research must be adopted. To this end, satellite remote sensing may be useful to investigators as a first-pass template for highlighting those habitats that are spectrally most similar to known nesting locations. Future research should be focused toward analyzing TM data collected during the breeding season. These data will afford a better look at subcanopy vegetation structure indicative of Boreal Owl nesting sites. In addition, a spatial component should be incorporated into the analysis of TM data. This would be done for the purpose of investigating the spatial relationships between roosting, foraging and nesting habitat. The results of these analyses may be invaluable for characterizing Boreal Owl habitat requirements on public and private lands in northeastern Minnesota.

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The Spring Season
(1 March to 31 May 2001)

Peder H. Svingen

In dramatic contradistinction from last spring, migration was dull with relatively few Casual or Accidental species. Most remarkable (and most troubling) was the long list of undocumented rarities. Among those documented and found acceptable were northeastern Minnesota's first ***Tricolored Heron****, another* ***Black-headed Gull*** *in Jackson County, several* ***California Gulls****, and unprecedented numbers of* ***White-eyed Vireos****, including the first observation of a nest and eggs in Minnesota. Fascinating insights into spring migration came from Frank Nicoletti at the West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth, the fifth year for that count, and from a new census conducted by Karl Bardon at the confluence of the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers.*

For the second consecutive spring, record high concentrations of **Red-throated Loons** were observed off Park Point in Duluth. Providing not only a first Hennepin County record, but also tying the earliest Minnesota date and then lingering for more than two weeks, the **Clark's Grebe** at Coon Rapids Dam must have been the most-watched of its kind ever to occur in the state. Three others were documented but curiously, none could be found at Thielke Lake in Big Stone County, where recently reliable.

Although far fewer than last spring's unprecedented influx (***The Loon*** 73:3–7), six **Snowy Egrets** in five counties was still a good showing. One of Minnesota's three **Little Blue Herons** was reported on both sides of the state line in Fargo-Moorhead and contributed to a pattern of "spring overshoots" in the mid-continent. But most remarkable of all among the *Ardeidae* was the **Tricolored Heron** at Two Harbors in Lake County — the first ever found in northeastern Minnesota. A statewide total of 90 **Cattle Egrets** was this species' best showing since the 105+ in Spring 1993. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** is barely hanging on as a Regular species in Minnesota, but a **White-faced Ibis** in Scott County inched this currently Casual species closer to Regular status.

Except for a record high count of 3415 **White-fronted Geese**, goose migration was uneventful. Only when compared to recent spring migrations could a total of 30 **Ross's Geese** be considered unusually low! Possibly overlooked there in the past, exceptional numbers of **Greater Scaup** were found in the Northwest. No **scoters** were discovered away from Lake Superior but a female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was carefully documented in Fergus Falls, nicely complementing the drake at Canal Park in Duluth.

Frank Nicoletti's fifth annual spring census at the West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth provided valuable data, incredible views of migrating hawks, eagles, and falcons, and infallible treatment for spring fever. Unforgettable on 14 April were 19 dark-morph or rufous-morph **Red-tailed Hawks**! For the first time, these migration data were supplemented by a census at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers in Dakota County, dubbed the Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (HPBC). This census focused on waterbirds, but all bird species were counted. During 176 hours of coverage at HPBC over a period of 30 days between 11 March and 25 April 2001, Karl Bardon tallied more than 100,000 migrants! Like the West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth, HPBC provided insights and surprises from its inception. Though some HPBC totals included birds seen only on the Wisconsin side of the river, they were mentioned in *The Season*

as a representation of that species' peak migration through the area.

The seasonal total of 22,554 raptors at West Skyline Hawkwatch declined almost 16% (26,550 last spring) but this reflected about 20% less coverage (355 hours over 68 days, compared to 454.5 hours over 85 days last year). Among the highlights were a record high **113 Ospreys** on 24 April and a total of **66 Golden Eagles** for the season (63 last spring). Table 1 in the species accounts showcases these data.

Unlike Spring 2000 when shorebirds seemed to be everywhere, low numbers and spotty distribution kept observers off balance. Several species including the **American Golden-Plover**, **Whimbrel**, **Baird's Sandpiper**, and **Long-billed Dowitcher** were extremely scarce. A pair of **Piping Plovers** was certainly noteworthy in Dakota County; in recent years, this endangered species has been rarely detected as a spring migrant except at Duluth. Average or better numbers of **American Avocets** and **Willets** were found but **Hudsonian Godwits** were down 75% from last spring. A flock of **17 Red Knots** provided Minnesota's second highest count, exceeded only by 20 in the same county 18 years ago. The only unexpected shorebird species was the **Ruff** in Dakota County, unfortunately not relocated by other birders. Encouraging was the statewide total of **950+ Wilson's Phalaropes** which included a count of 320 at the Crookston sewage ponds. Most observers submitted counts and specific locations as requested, which made it possible to calculate this total.

An unidentified **jaeger** was observed off Park Point in Duluth. Though annual as a fall migrant, at least one jaeger has occurred there during six out of the past seven spring migrations. A **Black-headed Gull** was seen in Jackson County. Recent records in that area may refer to the same individuals, so this species can be looked for near Spirit Lake during late March or early April — it may be as reliable then as in October or November. At least one adult **Little Gull** transited Duluth for the third consecutive May. **California Gulls** were photographed in Lyon and Wilkin counties, providing irrefutable evidence of what may be an annual occurrence in western Minnesota. This species has been reported between April and October at the Grand Forks, North Dakota sewage lagoons, but apparently cannot be found just across the border at either the East Grand Forks or Crookston lagoons in Polk County! A first-year **Iceland** and three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported, but more interesting was Wilkin County's and western Minnesota's first **Great Black-backed Gull**.

Considering the total of ten acceptable records within just three years, **Eurasian Collared-Dove** may be losing some of its appeal, but its identification remains challenging and this species deserves careful documentation of its continuing spread in North America (*Journal of Field Ornithology* 64:477–489). Less than four miles from the Canadian border, one at Springsteel Island north of Warroad was Minnesota's first documented occurrence north of the Minnesota River Valley. As expected, a few **Northern Hawk Owls** lingered after their record high irruption (***The Loon*** 73:135–143) but the number of nesting locations was unprecedented! Please see the last issue of ***The Loon*** for additional information on the 2000–2001 influx of northern owls. An irruption of **Short-eared Owls** that began sometime before Spring 2000 reached a crescendo when an extraordinary concentration of **51** owls was found in an ordinary-looking stubble field in Kittson County.

Reported from westernmost counties less frequently than might be expected, a **Say's Phoebe** briefly strayed to Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge. Two **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** in spring were almost expected (***The Loon*** 73:39–43), but the locations were not. Reversing a downhill trend since 1995, the number of **Loggerhead Shrikes** increased from 15 birds in Spring 2000 to 23 birds this spring, and the number of counties increased from 11 to 17, but most reports were of singles and this species' prognosis remains very guarded. Among an unprecedented num-

ber of **White-eyed Vireos** was a nesting pair at Rice Lake State Park in Steele County. Scores of birders were able to obtain stunning views of the adults with four young, while totally respecting park guidelines and minding the birds' welfare above all. Kudos to Al Batt for finding these vireos and effectively liaising with park personnel.

A cooperative male **Mountain Bluebird** stayed put for a week at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and another was seen briefly in Cottonwood County. Four additional **Townsend's Solitaires** and two **Varied Thrushes** were discovered, bringing Fall 2000 – Spring 2001 totals to 18 and 14 respectively. Compared to 14 **Northern Mockingbirds** last spring, this spring's total of 9 was closer to average.

Warbler migration was disappointing and peaked earlier than usual in southern Minnesota. A remarkably early wave of 18 species of warblers and vireos reached Anoka County on 30 April (KJB). Other examples of warbler diversity included 17 species in Kandiyohi County (RJF) and 20 species in Rice County (TFB) on 6 May, 22 species at Litchfield Nature Center in Meeker County on the 9th (DMF), and 22 species in Goodhue County on the 10th (KJB). In northern regions, peak diversity included territorial birds when 19 species were found in Aitkin County 19–20 May (WEN), and 23 species were in Roseau County on 19 May (AXH, PHS) and Lake County on 21 May (KRE *et al.*). Most of the 20 species at Park Point in Duluth on 26 May (BKY, KRS) were still migrating.

For only the second time since 1993, **Yellow-throated Warbler** could not be found at Sibley State Park. Discovered 30 April in Rice County, a **Prairie Warbler** was Minnesota's earliest ever. **Cerulean Warblers** were reported in low numbers from seven counties, down from nine counties last spring. Craig Mandel has been finding unusual and out-of-range species for years, but the **Prothonotary Warbler** at Morris Point on Lake of the Woods must have surprised him! Two **Worm-eating Warblers** were seen by only a handful of people; most observers had to be content with five **Kentucky** and multiple **Hooded Warblers**. Another rare but Regular warbler species, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, was reported from three locations, including a first for Pipestone.

Unlike the three chats, both **Summer Tanagers** were well-documented. Rarities briefly seen near feeders included a male **Black-headed Grosbeak** in rural Becker County and a male **Lazuli Bunting** at Climax in Polk County, but Hennepin County's famous male **Painted Bunting** failed to return for an encore after two consecutive years. **Great-tailed Grackles** were reported from four locations but unfortunately, only two of these were documented.

Coverage this season was significantly more comprehensive than usual, as more data were submitted electronically than ever before. Though not an indication of peak migration, an 18 year-old record for the highest number of species within a 24 hour period (***The Loon*** 56:15–17) fell when 200 species were found on 19 May in northwestern Minnesota along a route from Roseau to Fergus Falls (AXH, PHS).

Unconfirmed and/or Undocumented Reports: **White-faced Ibis** 4/30 Marshall (Thief L.); **Mississippi Kite** 5/16 Duluth; **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in Renville and Pipestone/Rock; **Say's Phoebe** 5/9 Lac Qui Parle; **White-eyed Vireos** 4/29 Hennepin (Bass Ponds), 5/17+ Brown (Flandrau S.P.), and 5/30 Hennepin (Wood L.); **Lark Bunting** 5/12 Stearns; **Lazuli Bunting** 5/22 Pope; **Great-tailed Grackles** 4/15+ Jackson, 5/12+ Nicollet.

Exotics: **Mandarin Ducks** 5/3 Clay (Moorhead) RHO, 5/23 Aitkin (west of Aitkin) JPR; **Chukar** 4/9 Crow Wing.

Weather Summary: All nine regions, but especially the Southwest and South-central, were colder than usual in March while precipitation was below average statewide. April was exactly the opposite, with temperatures one to two degrees above normal, except in the South-central and Southeast where it was even warmer. Rain defined the month of April — four to five inches above normal in a wide swath from Southwest to Northeast, while

the statewide average was 3.41 inches above normal for the month.

May was also warmer than normal statewide, with slightly above average rainfall in most regions. Warmest were the Northwest (3.0°F above normal), North-central (2.2°F above), West-central and Southeast (both 2.0°F above). Warm temperatures during late April and early May encouraged early leaf development which made it difficult to spot warblers and other passerines, but the relative lack of significant weather fronts undoubtedly contributed to their lackluster migration.

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KEY TO SEASONAL REPORTS

1. Upper case (**LEAST TERN**) indicates a Casual or Accidental species in the state.
2. Dates listed in bold (**10/9**) indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the three earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold (**Aitkin**) indicate an unusual occurrence for that county.
4. Counties with an underline (**Becker**) indicate a first county record.
5. Counties listed in italics (*Crow Wing*) indicate a first county breeding record.
6. Brackets [ ] indicate a species for which there is reasonable doubt as to its origin or wildness.
7. Counts listed in bold (**150**) indicate total within or exceeding the top three high counts for that species.
8. Dagger "†" preceding observer's initials denotes documentation was submitted.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from throughout Minnesota. We particularly invite reports from parts of the state that have been neglected or covered lightly in past reports. To become a contributor, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.

Loons through Vultures

Red-throated Loon — More reports than usual, all from Park Point in Duluth, St. Louis County. First observed 4/30 (3) †PHS. One to three birds reported on six dates during May, but KJB tallied **28** on 5/2 and **39** on 5/9 (***The Loon*** 73:248–249), the latter surpassing the state's record high count (30 at Park Point on 31 May 2000).

Common Loon — Seen in 28 south and 28 north counties within all regions. Early south 3/29 Dakota KJB and Hennepin OLJ, 3/30–31 in three counties. First seen north 3/25 Wadena PJB, no other March reports. Migration began 4/9–14 (mob) in South-central and Southwest. Numbers up in Twin Cities area 4/17–24 (KJB). Peak concentrations 4/9 Washington (99) BRL, 4/22 Kanabec (146 at Knife L.) KJB, 4/24 St. Louis (75 at Duluth) FJN.

Pied-billed Grebe — Reported from 43 south and 25 north counties. See winter report regarding overwintering in Dakota;

first migrants 3/17 Hennepin SLC and Olmsted CRG, 3/21–23 in four south counties. Early north 3/22 St. Louis *fide* KRE, 3/31 Wadena PJB.

Horned Grebe — Observed in 25 south and 24 north counties. More reports than last spring but numbers remain low on L. Superior. Early south 3/19 Olmsted PWP, 3/21 Freeborn AEB. Early north 4/5 Cass and Morrison (Camp Ripley) WLB, 4/12 St. Louis JWL. Peak concentrations 4/17 Hennepin (268) KJB, 4/22 Grant (156+ on Pelican L.) CRM. Only May report south: 5/2 Hennepin SLC. Many late May reports in Northwest. Late north 5/25 Cook DFN and Pennington JMJ, 5/27 Roseau WCM and Marshall JMJ, but see summer report.

Red-necked Grebe — Reported from 24 south and 22 north counties and in all regions, but only Cottonwood in Southwest, Olmsted in Southeast. Arrived later than recent medians south (4/3) and north (4/7). Early south 4/5+ Hennepin mob, 4/7 McLeod DMF. Early north 4/11 Aitkin CLB and St. Louis NAJ. Peak count 4/23 St. Louis (365+ at Duluth) PHS.

Eared Grebe — Seen in 16 south and 12 north counties, but none in Northeast. More reports than last spring but numbers of birds usually omitted; peak count 5/17 Marshall (125 at Warren lagoons) PHS. Early south (median 4/9) 4/8 Rice FVS, KNS. Early north (median 4/25) **4/10** Beltrami (one in basic plumage, L. Bemidji) †DPJ, 4/26 Wilkin KJB.

Western Grebe — Observed in 21 south and 12 north counties, none in Southeast or Northeast. Reported from Hennepin in East-central, Clearwater in North-central. Early south (median 4/11) 4/5–6 Rice mob, 4/8 Lyon RJS. Early north (median 4/24) 4/19 Grant CRM, 4/20–23 in four counties.

Clark's Grebe — One photographed at Coon Rapids Dam tied the earliest arrival date for the state **4/9–25 Hennepin** †OLJ *et al.*; also reported without details from the Anoka County side. All other reports: **4/27** (second earliest north) Marshall (ANWR) †KJB, 4/28 Meeker (Long L.) †DDM, BJM, 5/5 Renville (Boon L.) †DMF.

American White Pelican — Reported from 40 south and 23 north counties statewide. Excluding Dakota where one overwintered, early south 3/29 Nobles CRM and Goodhue ADS. Early north 4/9 Itasca JWL, 4/11–14 in ten counties. Total 3147 for season at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, where peak migration 984 on 4/24 (KJB). Total 161 for season at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth, including 78 on 4/24 (FJN). Numbers up in West-central region (SPM).

Double-crested Cormorant — Seen in 39 south and 27 north counties throughout the state. Overwintered in Dakota but migrants noted there 3/18 (median 3/19) PEJ. Peak migration and record high count 4/9 (**4147** at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count) KJB. Only report north during March: 3/28 Otter Tail SPM, DKM.

American Bittern — Observed in 12 south and 18 north counties, but only Mower in Southeast, and Cottonwood and Jackson in Southwest. First reported 4/25–28 from five south counties. Early north 4/22 Wilkin CRM, 4/27 Roseau KJB and Kanabec CAM.

Least Bittern — Reported from only three south counties beginning 5/19 Meeker DMF; also seen in Freeborn and Nicollet. All north reports: 5/20 Becker (3 at TNWR) mob, (no date) Kittson HHD.

Great Blue Heron — Seen in 43 south and 25 north counties. Overwintered in Twin Cities area (see winter report) but migrants reported 3/14 in Anoka, Dakota and Rice (recent median 3/8). Early north (median 3/20) 3/21–22 Otter Tail mob.

Great Egret — Reported from 35 south counties, where first seen 3/27 Dakota SWe (only March report, recent median 3/22). Also arrived north later than usual,

but seen in 14 north counties, more than normal. Early north (median 3/31) 4/9 Crow Wing JPR; also observed in Grant, Douglas, Otter Tail, Wilkin, Clay, Polk, Pennington, Kittson, Todd, Cass, Morrison, Kanabec, and 5/13 **Lake** (Flood Bay near Two Harbors) JWL.

Snowy Egret — Total of six birds in five counties: 5/5 Hennepin (Maple Grove) †SLC, 5/8 Kandiyohi RAE, 5/11 Otter Tail SPM, 5/12 Yellow Medicine (2) RJS, 5/25 Stearns (near St. Joseph) †MAJ, †DCT.

Little Blue Heron — All observations: **5/8** Clay (Gooseberry Park in Moorhead) RHO, 5/16 Ramsey AXH, 5/18 Houston (La Crescent) CBe.

TRICOLORED HERON — Reported 5/21 **Lake** (near Two Harbors) †KRE *et al.* (***The Loon*** 73:182–183). Fourteenth state record but first for the Northeast.

Cattle Egret — Grand total of about 90 birds, the best spring showing since 1993. Seen in 16 south counties beginning **4/12** Dakota (one at Rosemount) ADS, 4/18 Rice (Warsaw Twp.) CRG. Highest counts 5/10 Dakota (18 at Rosemount) KJB, 5/13 Cottonwood (17 at Oaks L.) ED. All north reports: **4/18–22** Clay (Moorhead) RHO, 4/26 Clay (Ulen) KJB, 5/19 Roseau (2 at Salol) AXH, PHS, 5/29 Otter Tail SPM.

Green Heron — Reported from 33 south and 13 north counties statewide, but only Polk in Northwest. Early south 4/21 Houston MHF and Hennepin KEO, then 4/22–25 in six counties. Early north **4/27** Kanabec BLA and Otter Tail (Fergus Falls) SPM, DKM, 4/30 Otter Tail (Battle Lake) DTT, SMT.

Black-crowned Night-Heron — Seen in 21 south and 6 north counties, but none in North-central or Northeast. Early south (median 3/29) 4/2 Lac Qui Parle (13) FAE. Early north 4/14 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/20 Kanabec CAM and Otter Tail CRM.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron — Only report: 5/13 **Meeker** (Pigeon L.) †DMF.

White-faced Ibis, 26 April 2001, Scott County. Photo by Dennis Martin.

WHITE-FACED IBIS — First documented county record 4/26 **Scott** (adult at Spring Lake Twp.) †FTM, †KG.

PLEGADIS, sp? — Probable White-faced Ibis photographed **4/15** Olmsted (East Landfill Reservoir near Rochester) †JJS.

Turkey Vulture — Reported from 39 south and 24 north counties. Unlike last spring's record early migration, arrived later than recent medians south (3/9) and north (4/2). Early south 3/17 Olmsted CRG, 3/20 Mower RRK. Early north 4/3 Otter Tail SPM, 4/4 Aitkin CLB, WEN.

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Goose — Seen in 22 south counties, where arrived later than usual (median 3/8) beginning 3/18 Dakota (6) PEJ. Unusual location 5/16–19 **St. Louis** (40th Avenue West in Duluth) mob, but only two additional reports north: 4/3 Traverse SPM, 5/13 Pennington

JMJ. Record high count 4/14 Big Stone (**3415**) PEJ. Late south 5/20 Rock (Jasper) BRL, **5/29** Hennepin (French L.) SLC.

Snow Goose — Arrived later than usual. No significant concentrations. See winter report regarding one in Olmsted County, but also observed in 24 south counties starting 3/19 Olmsted PWP, 3/20 Dakota KJB, DDM. All dates north were between 4/16 and 5/8 in four counties. Late south 5/17 in two counties, 5/29 Hennepin SLC.

Ross's Goose — Associated with low numbers of Snow Geese, reports were down sharply compared to recent years. Approximate statewide total of 30 birds in 14 counties (575+ in 24 counties last spring). Early south 3/20 Murray CRM and Rice FVS, KNS, 3/23+ Olmsted †PWP, †CMJ; additional reports from Jackson, Cottonwood, Lincoln, Lyon, Big Stone, Dodge, and (late south) 4/14–17 Dakota †TAT *et al.* Peak count 3/31 Olmsted (9 at Silver L., Rochester) CBe. All observations north: 4/3 Traverse SPM, 4/16 Wilkin (Prairie View Twp.) CRG, 4/26 Wilkin (Manston Twp.) KJB, 5/7–13 **Pennington** (near Thief River Falls) †PHS *et al.*, **5/29** Aitkin (Cedarbrook) WEN.

Canada Goose — Reported statewide.

Mute Swan — More reports than usual, but mostly near urban areas where origin questionable. Presumably "wild" based on habitat and remote location, one adult furnished a first county record 5/25 **Polk** (wild rice paddies along county road 2 in Johnson Twp.) KRE *et al.* Also reported 3/24–26 Wright (Monticello) DFJ, CRM *et al.*, 3/24–27 Winona (2 near Winona) PEJ, DFN *et al.*, 3/31 – 4/8+ Hennepin/Dakota (apparently same bird seen at Bass Ponds, Old Cedar Avenue, and Black Dog L.) mob, 4/3 Goodhue (Cannon Falls) JJS, 5/30 Dakota (Rosemount) ADS.

Trumpeter Swan — Excluding the overwintering flock at Monticello (see winter report), approximate total of 123 birds reported from 17 south and 21 north counties, mostly in central regions. No reports from Southeast, but more than usual in Northwest, where seen for first time (since becoming Regular in January 1999) in **Kittson**, **Roseau**, **Marshall**, **Pennington**, and **Red Lake**. Additional first county occurrences 4/2 **Nobles** †CRM, 4/28 **Lac Qui Parle** CRG, 5/16 **Lake of the Woods** (5 near Carp) PHS, 5/17 **Lake** (2 near Two Harbors) JWL.

Tundra Swan — See winter report for overwintering. Apparent migrants arrived later than recent medians south (3/11) and north (3/26). Reported from 33 south counties beginning 3/16–17 Dakota mob, and 15 north counties beginning 4/1 Kanabec CAM. Total 1956 for season at Hastings-Prescott Count, including 776 on 4/3 (KJB). Late south 5/2 Olmsted PWP, 5/5 Meeker DMF. Late north 5/20 Roseau CRM, 5/28 Polk KRE *et al.*, but also see summer report!

Wood Duck — Observed in 40 south and 27 north counties. Overwintered in Dakota and St. Louis. Many north reports in early April starting 4/1 Morrison RJS.

Gadwall — Seen in 37 south and 21 north counties. See winter report for overwintering south. Only March report north (median arrival 3/26) 3/24 Grant KKW. Peak number 4/24 Dakota (293 on Hastings-Prescott Bird Count) KJB.

American Wigeon — Reported from 32 south and 22 north counties. Early south 3/14 Freeborn AEB, 3/17 Winona PWP. Only March report north (median 3/23) 3/20 Douglas KKW.

American Black Duck — Reported from 16 south and 7 north counties, similar to last spring, though none in West-central and only Jackson in Southwest. Late south 5/19–21 Hennepin (Sylvan L.) SLC, KJB.

Mallard — Seen throughout the state.

Blue-winged Teal — Reported from 42 south and 23 north counties statewide.

Early south 3/7 Blue Earth MJF, 3/14 Freeborn AEB. Early north (median 3/30) 4/5 Morrison/Cass (Camp Ripley) WLB, 4/7 Aitkin WEN.

Cinnamon Teal — No reports.

Northern Shoveler — Seen in 44 south and 23 north counties. First migrants 3/7 Blue Earth MJF, 3/13 Dakota PEJ. Early north 4/5 Clay RHO, 4/7 Aitkin, Kanabec and Lake.

Northern Pintail — Reported from 28 south and 17 north counties. Early south 3/4 Ramsey TAT, but see winter report. Early north 4/7 Aitkin WEN, 4/8 Kanabec CAM. Peak 4/28 Roseau (1400) KJB.

Green-winged Teal — Observed in 36 south and 21 north counties statewide. Overwintered in Dakota, though possible migrant there 3/10 (TAT); next seen 3/11 Ramsey KJB. Early north (median 3/27) 4/5 Morrison/Cass (Camp Ripley) WLB. Peak count 4/28 Roseau (800) KJB.

Canvasback — Reported from 34 south and 19 north counties, but only St. Louis in Northeast. First migrants 3/10 Dakota (17) TAT, but see winter report. Early north (median 3/26) 3/20 Douglas KKW, only March report north.

Redhead — Seen in 41 south and 23 north counties. Early south 3/3 McLeod DMF, 3/12 Olmsted PWP. Early north 4/5 Clay RHO, 4/10–14 in four counties.

Ring-necked Duck — Observed in 44 south and 25 north counties. Probable migrants 3/4 Waseca JPS, 3/12 Olmsted PWP; also see winter report. Excluding Otter Tail where one overwintered, early north (recent median 3/20) 3/26 Beltrami DPJ; no other March reports north.

Greater Scaup — Reported from 20 south and 18 north counties statewide. See winter report for overwintering south, but migrants found 3/9 Dakota KJB, PEJ, 3/13–14 Hennepin OLJ. Early north 4/4 Lake JWL, 4/9 Kanabec CAM. Numbers up in Northwest (***The Loon*** 73:251–252) including peak count 4/27–28 Roseau (1800+ near Roseau R.) KJB. Only May report south: 5/19 Waseca JPS. Seen in five north counties during late May but none after 5/28–29 St. Louis DMF, CRM.

Lesser Scaup — Seen in 45 south and 22 north counties. Early south 3/1 Fillmore JJS, 3/7 Olmsted PWP, but also see winter report. Overwintered in Otter Tail; first migrants north 3/20 Douglas KKW, 3/28 Crow Wing PSP. Peak 4/17 Hennepin (4000 at French L.) KJB.

Harlequin Duck — No reports.

Surf Scoter — All reports: 5/2 St. Louis (Duluth) KJB, 5/19–29 St. Louis (Duluth) mob, 5/25–29 Cook (2–3) DCZ, DMF.

White-winged Scoter — Reported 5/16 Lake (9 at Two Harbors) JWL, 5/18 Lake (3 at Silver Creek) JWL, 5/23 Lake of the Woods (10+ at Warroad) KJB, 5/25–27 Cook (Grand Marais area) DCZ, PHS, and 5/28–29 St. Louis (Duluth) CRG, CRM.

Black Scoter — One seen 5/9 St. Louis (Duluth) KJB.

Long-tailed Duck — All south reports: from winter season through 3/24 Dakota (Hastings area) mob, 4/17–18 Hennepin (male at French L.) SLC, †OLJ, 4/28 **Lac Qui Parle** (Salt L.) †WCM. Only north report away from Lake Superior: 5/11 **Polk** (Crookston) RBJ, JEB. Also reported 4/21 St. Louis (25) *fide* DRB, 5/16–18 Lake (max. 7) JWL, 5/19 St. Louis KRE *et al.*, 5/25–27 Cook (max. 30) DCZ.

Bufflehead — Observed in 44 south and 23 north counties. Overwintered in Scott; presumed migrant 3/2 Ramsey KJB. Early north 3/5 St. Louis CRM, 3/8 Lake JWL, but see winter report. Peak number 4/18 Hennepin (196 at French Lake) KJB. Late south 5/29 Hennepin SLC.

Common Goldeneye — Reported from

37 south and 26 north counties statewide. Peak number 4/11 Cass (1000+ at Sylvan Reservoir) MRN. Late south 5/8 Stevens JJS, 5/12 Rice TFB.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE — Immature female seen 3/1 Otter Tail (Fergus Falls) †KJB (***The Loon*** 73:180–182). The drake at Canal Park in Duluth since 2/3 was last reported 3/19 St. Louis *fide* KRE.

Hooded Merganser — Seen in 42 south and 24 north counties, and in all regions. Overwintered south and north. Probable migrants 3/19 St. Louis PHS, 3/20–24 in four north counties.

Common Merganser — Observed in 42 south and 24 north counties throughout the state. Peak count 3/27 Dakota (1032 at Spring L.) KJB. Only May report south: 5/8 Stevens JJS.

Red-breasted Merganser — Observed in 30 south and 20 north counties, and in all regions. Reported 3/3 Olmsted PWP and Dakota TAT, but see winter report; migrants 3/16 Wabasha CRG, 3/18 Dakota KJB. Away from L. Superior, early north 3/29 Crow Wing PSP, then 4/5–7 in three counties. Late south 5/1 Olmsted PWP.

Ruddy Duck — Reported from 42 south and 17 north counties, including unusual report 5/3 St. Louis (Duluth) †BCM. Early south 3/11 Dakota TAT, 3/19 in four counties. Early north 3/30 Otter Tail CRG, 4/3+ Beltrami DPJ.

Raptors

Osprey — Reported from 26 south and 19 north counties statewide, but only Lac Qui Parle in West-central. Early south **3/9** (second earliest date) Mower RDK, RCK, 3/23 Hennepin TAT. Early north (median 4/1) 4/10 St. Louis NAJ, 4/11–14 in eight counties.

Bald Eagle — Reported from 37 south and 29 north counties statewide. Total 2188 for season at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, including peak count 330 on 3/27 (KJB). Also see Table 1.

Dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk, 14 April 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Frank Nicoletti.

Northern Harrier — Observed in 37 south and 25 north counties throughout the state. Early south (median 3/4) 3/11 Houston KAK, 3/14 Dakota KJB, but see winter report. Early north (median 3/10) 3/22 Morrison/Cass (Camp Ripley) WLB, 3/25–26 Wilkin mob.

Sharp-shinned Hawk — Seen in 33 south and 19 north counties. Early dates indeterminable, see winter report. Total 153 for season at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, including peak count 28 on 4/24 (KJB). Migrants last seen 5/12–13 in four south counties, 5/25 Houston MHF.

Cooper's Hawk — Reported from 28 south and 19 north counties. Total 45 for season at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, including peak counts 20 on 4/1 and 4/8 (KJB); compare with Table 1. Early north **3/5** (ties second earliest date) St. Louis (Duluth) FJN, plus additional reports in

Table 1. Spring 2001 West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth.

Species	Mar	Apr	May	Total	Range	Peak	Peak#
Turkey Vulture	0	2110	99	2209	4/03–5/16	4/14	637
Osprey	0	263	8	271	4/08–5/17	4/24	113
Bald Eagle	1198	1354	79	2631	3/01–5/16	3/20	340
Northern Harrier	0	37	1	38	4/01–5/09	4/24	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	1783	264	2051	3/20–5/16	4/13	312
Cooper's Hawk	3	42	9	54	3/17–5/17	4/14	10
Northern Goshawk	10	13	0	23	3/14–4/28	3/20	3
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	3	0	3	4/10–4/13	4/13	2
Broad-winged Hawk	0	6568	2898	9466	4/13–5/17	4/26	2520
Swainson's Hawk	0	3	1	4	4/13–5/03	4/27	2
Red-tailed Hawk	68	5266	80	5414	3/14–5/17	4/13	1188
Rough-legged Hawk	5	183	6	194	3/20–5/16	4/146	38
Golden Eagle	37	27	2	66	3/09–5/03	3/22	9
American Kestrel	1	81	0	82	3/21–4/29	4/27	25
Merlin	2	11	4	17	3/09–5/11	4/25	3
Peregrine Falcon	1	6	0	7	3/27–4/28	4/14	3
Gyrfalcon	1	0	0	1	—	3/14	1
unidentified	4	15	3	22	—	—	—

March from same location.

Northern Goshawk — More than twice as many reports as last spring. Reported from eight south counties (same number as winter season) through 4/15 Ramsey REH, 4/17 Hennepin OLJ. Reported from ten north counties, including 4/5 Wilkin SPM, 4/14 Mille Lacs MRN.

Red-shouldered Hawk — Reported from 20 south and 13 north counties, but only St. Louis (West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth) in Northeast, where total of three adults seen 4/10–13 (Table 1). Only report from the Southwest: 3/20 **Murray** CRM. Early south 3/1 Hennepin RBJ, 3/3 Winona PWP. Noteworthy count 3/14 Rice (6) TFB; remarkable total of 90 for season at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, including peak 32 on 3/20, though many actually in Wisconsin (KJB). Early north 3/22 Morrison/Cass (Camp Ripley) WLB, 3/23 Todd JSK. First county record 4/8 **Traverse** SPM; additional north reports from Wilkin, Otter Tail, Mahnomen, Polk, Clearwater, Wadena, Crow Wing, Aitkin.

Broad-winged Hawk — Seen in 28 south and 26 north counties. Early south 4/7 Sherburne LMC, RMN, 4/13–15 in seven counties. Early north 4/14 Mille Lacs MRN, 4/20–27 in 12 counties. Peak migration 4/24 at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (KJB). Seven adult dark morphs at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth (FJN); also see Table 1.

Swainson's Hawk — Reported from 22 south and 6 north counties, primarily in the western and southern regions. Early south 4/10 Olmsted JJS, 4/11–15 in nine counties. Peak migration 4/25 (total of 18 in three West-central counties) SPM. First county occurrence 5/18 **Sibley** JJS. Early north 4/13 Otter Tail SPM, DKM and St. Louis (adult light morph at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth) FJN; also at latter location 4/27 (adult light and adult rufous morph), 5/3 (immature light morph) FJN. Additional north reports from Wilkin, Clay, Polk, Morrison.

Red-tailed Hawk — Seen in 76 counties. Peak migration 4/1 at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (KJB). Unusual counts 3/30 (238) and 4/1 (198) Mower RDK, RCK. See Table 1 for totals at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth, where noteworthy sightings included a partial albino on 4/4 and no fewer than 51 adult dark/rufous morphs — 19 of these in one day! Total of 19 "Harlan's" Hawks at the Hastings-Prescott Bird Count, including peak of 8

on 4/3 (KJB). Harlan's also reported 3/25 Dakota (adult light) JMa, 4/5 Jackson (two adult dark) and Murray (adult dark) KJB, 4/8 Grant SPM, 4/13 St. Louis (adult dark) FJN, 4/14 Stevens RBJ.

Ferruginous Hawk — Only report: 5/12 Yellow Medicine (Florida Twp.) †TAT.

Rough-legged Hawk — Reported from 24 south and 17 north counties statewide. See Table 1 for migration at Duluth. Late south (recent median 5/11) 4/20 Dakota KJB. Peak migration 4/14–28 Beltrami DPJ, 4/19 Cass and Wadena MRN. Late north 5/26 Beltrami DPJ and Marshall KRE *et al.*, but see summer report.

Golden Eagle — Reported from seven south and five north counties. Late south 4/14 Washington (L. Elmo) JPS; also seen in Steele, Mower, Winona, Wabasha, and Dakota (3). Three observed at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (KJB). Late north 5/3 St. Louis (West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth) FJN, where 66 was a seasonal high (Table 1). Also reported north from Wilkin, Becker, Aitkin (2), Crow Wing.

American Kestrel — Observed in 46 south and 28 north counties. Peak counts 3/28 Mower (28) RBJ, 4/27 St. Louis (25) FJN. Also see Table 1.

Merlin — Reported from 16 south and 15 north counties, and in all regions except Southeast. First county occurrence 3/28 **Stevens** SPM. Seasonal totals 8 at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (KJB) and 17 at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth (FJN); also see Table 1. Late south 5/4 Dakota SWe, but see summer report. "Richardson's" Merlin 3/15 Beltrami †DPJ, 3/25 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 3/31 Dakota TAT, 4/1 Meeker DMF, 4/30 – 5/5 St. Louis (West Skyline Hawkwatch, Duluth) FJN, 5/8+ Kittson (pair) †PHS.

Gyrfalcon — Three reported in St. Louis County: adult gray morph videotaped 3/9 at Sax-Zim bog *fide* FJN, subadult gray morph overwintering into early March at Port Terminal in Duluth, and first-year immature observed 3/14 at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth (FJN).

Peregrine Falcon — Seen in 16 south and 14 north counties statewide. Seasonal totals six at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (KJB) and seven at West Skyline Hawkwatch in Duluth (FJN); also see Table 1. Early north (excluding Duluth, where overwintered) 4/13 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/17 Cass MRN. Peak influx 5/4–12 in six north counties.

Prairie Falcon — No reports.

Partridges through Cranes

Gray Partridge — Reported from 15 south counties (22 last spring), primarily in Southwest. Peak count 3/4 Renville (7) DMF. Only north reports: Clay (2), Wilkin (2).

Ring-necked Pheasant — Seen in 47 south and 12 north counties, as far north as Mahnomen, Cass, Itasca, Kanabec, and Pine.

Ruffed Grouse — Reported from 12 south and 22 north counties, including the periphery of its normal range 4/14 **McLeod** DDM, BJM.

Spruce Grouse — Only reports: Roseau (U.S. highway 310) and Lake.

Sharp-tailed Grouse — Peak count 4/15 Aitkin (14) CLB. Small numbers seen in Roseau, Marshall, Polk, Kanabec, Carlton, St. Louis (Sax-Zim bog).

Greater Prairie-Chicken — Reported within usual range from Wilkin (max. 50), Clay (22), and Polk (3), plus 4/13 Wadena (male) MRN.

Wild Turkey — Observed in 33 south counties, including 5/18 **Pope** REH. Peak count 55 crossing road in single file near Houston KAK. Expanding farther north, though some may be released or escaped

birds, e.g. 5/19 Kittson (2 near Caribou) PHS. All other north reports: Traverse, Douglas, Becker, Clay, Todd, 4/13 **Mille Lacs** DDM, BJM, 3/9 **Pine** (30) KIM, BAP.

Northern Bobwhite — No reports.

Yellow Rail — Reported 5/19+ Roseau (Roseau River W.M.A.) AXH, PHS, 5/30+ Aitkin (McGregor) MCBS.

Virginia Rail — Reported from 23 south and 8 north counties. Early south (recent median 4/16) **4/9** Anoka KJB, 4/21 Meeker DMF. Early north 5/8 Kanabec CAM and Roseau PHS.

Sora — Reported from 34 south and 20 north counties statewide, but only St. Louis in the Northeast. Early south 4/19 Dakota CRG, 4/21–27 in eight counties. Early north **4/13** Wadena and Cass MRN, 4/27 Roseau KJB and Kanabec CAM.

Common Moorhen — Singles seen 5/11 Olmsted (county road 9 marsh) JJS, 5/25 Winona (Whitewater W.M.A.) CRG.

American Coot — Reported from 46 south and 22 north counties, and in all regions. Overwintered in Scott, but early south migrants noted 3/14 Dakota KJB, 3/16–20 in six counties. Overwintered in Otter Tail and possibly in Douglas, since **3/12** Douglas KKW would be second earliest north date; next seen 3/28 Crow Wing PSP. Peak migration 4/26 in West-central region KJB.

Sandhill Crane — Seen in 20 south and 24 north counties but none in Southwest. Early south 3/14 Freeborn AEB and Anoka PKL, 3/17–21 in six counties. Early north **3/18** Todd JSK, 3/22 Morrison/Cass (Camp Ripley) WLB. Lingered into late May in Houston, Winona, and Wabasha, where recently seen during summer.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover — Observed in 8 south and 12 north counties, twice as many as last spring. No reports from Southwest, and only Wabasha in Southeast. First county record 5/17 **Red Lake** RBJ. Early south **4/18** Sherburne LMC, RMN, 4/27 Dakota ADS. Early north 5/17 in three counties. Peak counts 5/18 Wilkin (51 in Manston Twp.) KJB, 5/23 Roseau (30) KJB.

American Golden-Plover — Reported from only seven south and two north counties. Several active observers (SLC, RBJ, SPM, ADS, PHS) found none. Early south **3/20** (second earliest) Brown †RJS, 4/20 Freeborn AEB. Early north 4/29 Wilkin (3) KJB; only other north reports from Aitkin. Peak flock size (20) down for second consecutive spring.

Semipalmated Plover — Reported from 15 south and 9 north counties statewide, but only Cottonwood in Southwest and Wilkin in West-central. Early south (median 4/22) 4/25 Dakota RBJ. Early north 4/29 Wilkin KJB, 5/16–20 in six counties. Peak count 5/23 Marshall (28) KJB. Last reported 5/29 Mower RDK, RCK.

Piping Plover — Only two reports: 4/24 Dakota (2 at L. Byllesby) †ADS, 5/20+ Lake of the Woods (2 at Morris Pt.) mob.

Killdeer — Observed in 45 south and 26 north counties throughout the state. Early south 3/10 Houston FZL, 3/14 Dakota KJB. Early north 3/20 St. Louis *fide* KRE, 3/21 in three counties.

American Avocet — Statewide total 43+ birds in 11 counties, similar to last spring. All south reports: 4/22–23 Dakota (max. 5 at L. Byllesby) mob, 4/23 Goodhue (5) CRG, 4/28–29 Wabasha mob, 5/3 Hennepin (Diamond L.) PMJ, 5/7 Hennepin (18 at Rogers) WCM *et al.* Early north 4/25 Traverse SPM, 4/26 Wilkin KJB and Todd JSK, 4/30 St. Louis (Duluth) PHS. Also reported in May from Pennington (2), Polk (2), Red Lake, Roseau (4).

Greater Yellowlegs — Reported from 36 south and 14 north counties throughout

the state. Early south 3/31 Meeker DMF; peak migration 4/5–10 in seven counties. Early north 4/10 Aitkin and Pine MCBS, 4/13–17 in five counties. Record high count 4/22 Hennepin (**106**) SLC.

Lesser Yellowlegs — Observed in 35 south and 18 north counties statewide. Early south 4/2 Martin CRM and Mower RDK, RCK, 4/3–7 in five counties. Early north 4/11 Kanabec CAM, 4/14 Wilkin CRG. Peak counts 4/28 Roseau (100) KJB, 5/8 Kittson (87 at Lancaster) PHS.

Solitary Sandpiper — Seen in 25 south and 11 north counties. Early south 4/15 Blue Earth ChH, 4/19 Freeborn AEB. Early north 4/24 Aitkin CLB, 4/30 in two counties. Peak 5/1 Hennepin (9) KJB.

Willet — Grand total of 126+ individuals, similar to last spring. Reported from eight south and ten north counties, five of these in Northwest. Early south 4/26 Stearns (2) PCC, 4/28 in three counties. Early north 4/26 Wilkin KJB, 4/27–30 in three counties. Peak counts 4/28 Lac Qui Parle (max. 10) mob, 4/30 Dakota (16–19 at L. Byllesby) mob, 5/1 Rice (**70–75** near Faribault, record high count) TFB *et al.*

Spotted Sandpiper — Reported from 33 south and 18 north counties. Arrived within one day of recent medians. Early south 4/23 Rice CRM, 4/24–28 in six counties. Early north 4/29 Clay RHO and Todd JSK. Peak count 5/17 Marshall (54 at Warren lagoons) PHS.

Upland Sandpiper — Observed in 12 south and 8 north counties, mostly in western regions. No reports from Southeast or North-central. Early south 4/28 Lac Qui Parle and Swift mob, 4/29 Big Stone WCM. Early north 4/29 Wilkin KJB, 5/3 Pine MCBS.

Whimbrel — Exceptional report 5/19 **Marshall** (7 at ANWR) CRM *et al.* Very low numbers along North Shore of Lake Superior, where reported **5/10+** St. Louis mob, 5/29 Cook DMF.

Hudsonian Godwit — Statewide total 73+ individuals in 11 south and 7 north counties, down from last spring's 280+ birds. Found in all regions except Northeast. Arrived on time. Early south 4/21 Blue Earth LWF, 4/22 Hennepin SLC. Early north 5/8 Roseau PHS, 5/11 Polk JEB. All counts less than a dozen.

Marbled Godwit — Reported from 10 south and 14 north counties. Early south (median 4/13) 4/14 Lincoln, Redwood and Stearns. Early north **4/5** Wilkin SPM, 4/14 Polk DPJ. Only eastern report: 5/19 Dakota (14–16) ADS, TAT.

Ruddy Turnstone — Early south 5/7 Big Stone KJB; also seen in Murray, Meeker, Olmsted, Dakota, Hennepin. Early north 5/13 Polk DPJ and St. Louis PHS; also observed in Wilkin, Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Aitkin, Lake. Peak count 5/19 Meeker (12) DMF.

Red Knot — No south reports. All north reports: 5/16 Lake of the Woods (**17** near Carp) PHS, 5/21–23 Aitkin (Cedarbrook area) CLB *et al.*, 5/28 St. Louis (Hearding Island in Duluth) CRG.

Sanderling — Early south (median 5/8) 5/7 Big Stone KJB; also seen in Meeker (2), Stearns, Dakota (max. 13), Hennepin (2). Reported from nine north counties, mostly in the Northwest. Early north 5/11 Norman RBJ, 5/17–19 in five counties. Numbers continue to be low in Duluth; peak 5/24 St. Louis (20) DFN.

Semipalmated Sandpiper — Reported from 17 south and 9 north counties. Only April report south: 4/30 Wabasha BRL (recent median 4/17). Early north 4/29 Todd JSK, 5/7 Wilkin KJB. No significant counts.

Least Sandpiper — Observed in total of 20 south and 15 north counties. Early south 4/21 Dakota ADS, 4/26–30 in eight counties. No April reports north, where first seen 5/6 Todd JSK. Peak count 5/11 Stearns (120 at Albany) KJB.

White-rumped Sandpiper — Seen in 12 south and 7 north counties. Early south 5/1 Martin CRM, JJS, 5/12 Lac Qui Parle TAT. Early north **5/7** Wilkin KJB, 5/11 Polk JEB. Unusual location 5/21 Lake KRE *et al.* Peak 5/22 Big Stone and Wilkin (50 in each) KJB.

Baird's Sandpiper — Reported from 12 south and 4 north counties. Few reports and low counts compared to last spring. Arrived well after recent median dates. Early south 4/21 Freeborn AEB. Early north 5/13 Becker AAB; subsequently seen in Marshall, Polk, Aitkin. Peak count 5/18 Big Stone (42) KJB.

Pectoral Sandpiper — Observed in 30 south and 8 north counties. Arrived within two days of recent medians. Early south 4/2 Martin CRM. Early north 4/20 Wilkin CRM. Peak 4/29 Wilkin (150) KJB.

Dunlin — Reported from 15 south and 9 north counties, and in all regions except Southwest. Early south 4/23 Dakota ADS, CRM, 4/24 Freeborn AEB. First seen north 5/11 Norman RBJ, 5/13 St. Louis PHS. Numbers down compared to last spring; peak 5/25 Wabasha (50) CRG.

Stilt Sandpiper — Seen in six south and three north counties. First reported 4/30 Freeborn AEB and Dakota ADS, TAT. All north reports from Northwest, beginning 5/17 Marshall PHS.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper — No reports.

RUFF — Female (Reeve) observed 4/26 **Dakota** (Vermillion Twp.) †ADS (***The Loon*** 73:246–247).

Short-billed Dowitcher — Reported from 13 south and 8 north counties, and in all regions except West-central. Early south 5/2 Waseca RBJ, 5/4–10 in seven counties. Arrived north 5/9 St. Louis KJB, 5/11 Polk JEB. Unusual location for peak count: 5/10 Hennepin (39) SLC.

Long-billed Dowitcher — Very scarce. Early south 4/24 Freeborn AEB and Rice JGL, 4/28 Lac Qui Parle CRG. No north reports. Last seen 5/12 Meeker DMF.

Common Snipe — Seen in 28 south and 23 north counties. Overwintered south, and also in Otter Tail (see winter report), yet presumed migrants later than usual. Early north 4/13 Cass MRN, 4/14–20 in nine counties.

American Woodcock — Reported from 18 south and 14 north counties, and in all regions except Southwest. Arrived south 3/26 Waseca JRZ, then daily through end of month. Early north 3/14 Carlton *fide* KRE, 3/25 Pine KIM, BAP.

Wilson's Phalarope — Observed in 15 south and 14 north counties. Statewide total 950+ individuals. Peak numbers up from last spring in Northwest region, but all south counts were single digits. Early south 4/21 Freeborn AEB and Rice JGL, 4/23–27 in six counties. Early north 4/26 Wilkin KJB, 4/28 in three counties. Peak numbers 5/16 Roseau (141 at Warroad) PHS, 5/17 Pennington (189 at Thief River Falls) CRM, 5/17 Polk (320 at Crookston) PHS. **Note**: Please continue giving exact locations and numbers for all reports.

Red-necked Phalarope — Half as many reports compared to last spring, but still more than usual. Reported from four south and six north counties, mostly in Northwest. Early south 5/11–12 Hennepin (2) WCM, SLC, 5/12 Lac Qui Parle TAT; also reported from Dakota (max. 10), Nicollet. Early north **5/13** Pennington RBJ; only north report outside of Northwest region 5/18–22 Wilkin (max. 6) KJB.

Jaegers through Terns

jaeger, sp? — Single Parasitic/Pomarine 5/19 St. Louis (Duluth) †PCC.

Franklin's Gull — Reported from 27 south and 12 north counties, and in all regions except Northeast. Arrived south 3/15 Dakota KJB, only March date. Early

north 4/12 Grant SPM. No significant counts; numbers up in Hennepin (SLC).

Little Gull — Single adults reported at Duluth, St. Louis County, 5/9 (Hearding Is.) †PHS and 5/19 (Interstate Is.) DRB.

BLACK-HEADED GULL — One adult 4/7 Jackson (Spirit L.) †KJB was in the same general location where this species has occurred almost every year (mostly on the Iowa side of the border) since 1994.

Bonaparte's Gull — Seen in 26 south and 13 north counties. Arrived within two days of recent medians. Early south 4/5 Nobles KJB and Lyon RBJ, 4/7 in four counties. Early north 4/15 Douglas SPM, DKM, 4/19–20 in four counties. Late south 5/22 Hennepin SLC, 5/31+ Dakota (adult) ADS. Peak count 5/9 St. Louis (1380 in Duluth) KJB.

Ring-billed Gull — Reported from 46 south and 26 north counties. Early north (median 3/17) 3/10 St. Louis RJS. Adults prospecting for territories at Interstate Is. in Duluth by 3/18 (FJN, PHS) and 8000+ there by 4/30 (PHS). Peak migration 4/1 Dakota (4336 at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count) KJB.

CALIFORNIA GULL — Documented 5/22 Wilkin (3 third-summer individuals at the Breckenridge lagoons) †KJB and 5/26 Lyon (Fairview Twp.) †RJS (***The Loon*** 73:250–251). All were photographed.

Herring Gull — Reported from 18 south and 19 north counties. Probable migrants 3/14 Dakota KJB, PEJ, 3/15 Hennepin OLJ, but see winter report. Overwintered on Lake Superior but arrived 3/14 Becker BRK. Peak migration 4/1 at the Hastings-Prescott Bird Count (294) KJB.

Thayer's Gull — Early south 3/21 Goodhue (adult) KJB. Many reports from Dakota (3+ birds at Pine Bend) beginning 3/24 (2) TAT; also observed 4/13, 4/14 at Hastings-Prescott Bird Count KJB. Overwintered through 3/22 St. Louis (first-year at Canal Park in Duluth) †BCM, PHS. Late south **5/5** Dakota (first-year) TAT.

Iceland Gull — One documented report: 3/24 Dakota (first-year) †TAT.

Lesser Black-backed Gull — All reports: 4/4 Goodhue (adult on Lake Pepin) †KJB, 4/10 Wabasha (third-year on Lake Pepin) †KJB, 4/10 Hennepin (adult) JMa.

Glaucous Gull — All south reports: 3/30 Hennepin TAT, 4/3 Washington (second-year, Point Douglas) KJB, 4/8 **Rice** (first-year, Wells L.) †CRG, 4/9+ Dakota mob, 4/17 Rice (third-year, Union L.) GBa *et al.* Unusual location 4/3, 4/25 **Traverse** (two different immatures) †SPM. Also reported in March from St. Louis, Lake.

Great Black-backed Gull — A first-year bird **5/7 Wilkin** (Breckenridge lagoons) †KJB, JDa was the first one ever found in western Minnesota (***The Loon*** 73:249–250).

Caspian Tern — Seen in 12 south and 14 north counties, and all regions except Southwest. Early south 4/21 Carver CRG, 4/30 Wabasha BRL. Early north 4/30 St. Louis SPM, DKM, 5/2 Kanabec CAM. Peak count 5/23 St. Louis (93 at Interstate Is., Duluth) PHS.

Common Tern — Observed in 11 south and 9 north counties, though none in West-central. Arrived later than recent medians south (4/24) and north (4/29). Early south 5/5 Freeborn RBJ and Meeker DMF. Early north 5/1 Crow Wing and Mille Lacs MRN. Peak count 5/17 St. Louis (700 in Duluth) KJB.

Forster's Tern — Observed in 36 south and 15 north counties. Unlike previous species, earlier than recent medians south (4/10) and north (4/20). Early south 4/3 Goodhue JJS, 4/8 Rice AAB. Early north **4/15** Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/21 Douglas SPM, DKM. Peak migration 4/15–22 in 12 south counties.

Black Tern — Reported from 29 south

Great Gray Owl, 1 April 2001, Koochiching County. Photo by Frank Nicoletti.

and 16 north counties. Only April report south (median 4/27) 4/30 Ramsey REH. Early north 5/5 Clay RHO, 5/6 Todd JSK. Peak influx 5/5–12 in 11 south counties.

Doves through Kingfishers

Rock Dove — Occurs in all regions.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE — One at Springsteel Island north of Warroad 5/23+ **Roseau** †KJB provided the first record north of the Minnesota River Valley.

Mourning Dove — Seen statewide.

Black-billed Cuckoo — Reported from 13 south and 12 north counties, but none in Southwest and only St. Louis in Northeast. Arrived within three days of recent medians. Early south 5/6 Rice TFB. Early north 5/15 Kanabec CAM. Peak migration 5/14–18 south (4 counties) and 5/18–19 north (5 counties).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo — Seen in five south counties starting 5/13 Washington

DFN, 5/14 Houston MHF; also reported from Brown, Meeker, Sherburne. Only north report: 5/19 Roseau AXH, PHS.

Eastern Screech-Owl — All reports south: Lac Qui Parle, Benton, Meeker, Murray, Cottonwood, Freeborn, Olmsted, Houston (pair with 5 fledglings, KAK). Two north reports: 3/8+ Todd JSK, 5/19 **Roseau** AXH, PHS.

Great Horned Owl — Reported from 22 south and 14 north counties statewide.

Snowy Owl — Lingered as late as 4/6 Pennington *fide* BAB, 4/27 Marshall KJB. Also see ***The Loon*** 73:135–143.

Northern Hawk Owl — Birds lingering after the record setting 2000–2001 influx (***The Loon*** 73:135–143) furnished four confirmed and two probable breeding records (see summer report).

Barred Owl — Seen in 22 south and 15 north counties, and in all regions except Southwest, but only Otter Tail in West-central and Mahnomen, Roseau in Northwest.

Great Gray Owl — Record high number during 2000–2001 irruption (***The Loon*** 73:135–143). Peak count 3/22 St. Louis (17 in vicinity of Aurora-Hoyt Lakes) NAJ. Reported into late May in Aitkin, Lake of the Woods, St. Louis.

Long-eared Owl — Only south reports: 3/23 Hennepin (Old Cedar Avenue) BBB, 5/1 Watonwan (2 at Butterfield) ED. Also found in Roseau, Koochiching, and St. Louis.

Short-eared Owl — Approximate total of 74 reported from 13 counties, mostly in West-central and Northwest regions, including record high count 4/23 Kittson (**51** in field near Orleans) GBr. All south reports: 4/9 Anoka (Carlos Avery W.M.A.) KJB, 4/14 Scott (Saint Patrick) JMa, 4/17 **Redwood** (Sky Prairie S.N.A.) BRB, 4/28 Lac Qui Parle (Plover Prairie) CRG. Early north 3/3 Pennington EEF, 3/11 Lake of the Woods BJS. All other north reports: Grant, Otter Tail, Wilkin (4+), Marshall, Roseau (3), Aitkin (5).

Boreal Owl — Second largest irruption in state history (***The Loon*** 73:143–151). Discovered as far south as 3/18 **Carver** (Victoria) JBr *et al.* First county record mid-March **Clearwater** *fide* BAB.

Northern Saw-whet Owl — Reported from two south and eight north counties following significant irruption (***The Loon*** 73:143–151). Also see winter report. Only south reports: 3/3 Houston KAK, 3/19 Rice TFB. Many North-central and Northeast reports, including peak count 5/27 Cook (9) AXH, PHS.

Common Nighthawk — Observed in 23 south and 10 north counties throughout the state. Arrived just after recent median dates south (4/27) and north (5/9). Early south 4/28 Lac Qui Parle FAE, then 5/4. Early north 5/13 Itasca BRN.

Whip-poor-will — Arrived south 4/21 Houston MHF, 4/24 Stearns MAJ, DCT; also observed in Lyon, Freeborn, Dakota, Hennepin. All north reports: 5/17 Crow Wing MCBS, 5/17+ Marshall CRM *et al.*, 5/19+ Roseau mob, 5/19 St. Louis mob.

Chimney Swift — Observed in 35 south and 21 north counties. Early south 4/25 Rice JGL, 4/27–30 in 10 counties. Early north 4/27 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/29 Crow Wing RJS.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird — Seen in 20 south and 22 north counties, and in all regions. Arrived before recent median dates south (5/5) and north (5/9). Early south 5/1 Houston KAK, 5/3–5 in eight counties. Early north 4/29 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 5/3 Becker BRK.

Belted Kingfisher — Found in 36 south and 27 north counties. Early north 4/3 Wadena PJB, also see winter report. Peak migration 4/10–20 in 12 north counties.

Woodpeckers through Flycatchers

Red-headed Woodpecker — Reported from 28 south and 13 north counties (30 and 11 respectively, last spring) as far north as Kittson, Roseau, Clearwater, and Cass. No reports from Northeast. Arrivals indistinguishable from overwintering in most areas (see winter report). Migrants 5/3 Pennington JMJ, 5/6 Cass WLB.

Red-bellied Woodpecker — Seen in 39 south and 15 north counties, and in all regions, but only St. Louis in Northeast. North-central reports from Wadena, Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin. Consistent with this species' recent status, multiple Northwest reports including 5/13+ Pennington JMJ, 5/17 Marshall CRM, 5/28 Roseau JJS.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — Observed in 35 south and 23 north counties. Early south 3/28 Rice TFB, only March report (recent median 3/29). Early north 4/10 Morrison WLB, 4/11–14 in five counties.

Downy Woodpecker — Statewide.

Hairy Woodpecker — Statewide.

Three-toed Woodpecker — Reported until 5/30 Lake (Spruce Rd.) KRE.

Black-backed Woodpecker — Several reports from three locations in Lake, plus late May observations in Roseau and Lake of the Woods KRE *et al.*, Hubbard FZL, Clearwater DPJ, Itasca OLJ.

Northern Flicker — Found in 40 south and 27 north counties. Overwintered in Otter Tail, but early north migrants tardy (median 3/27) 4/6 St. Louis TPW, 4/8 Grant SPM. "Red-shafted" Flicker overwintered through 3/4 in Otter Tail †DTT, †SMT; another seen 4/18 Clay †RHO.

Pileated Woodpecker — Observed in 31 south and 26 north counties, but only Lyon and Yellow Medicine in Southwest.

Olive-sided Flycatcher — Observed in 18 south and 10 north counties. Arrived within three days of recent median dates. Early south 5/9 Chippewa JJS and Le Sueur RPR, 5/12–14 in seven counties. Early north 5/14 Morrison WLB, 5/19–20 in Clay, Roseau, St. Louis.

Eastern Wood-Pewee — Reported from 24 south and 16 north counties statewide. Early south 5/9 Meeker DMF, 5/12–14 in nine counties. Early north 5/11 Becker BRK, 5/13 Douglas PWP. Peak migration 5/12–14 south, 5/19–20 north.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher — Migrants reported in seven south counties beginning 5/9 Meeker †DMF, 5/16 Hennepin †SLC. Also reported without accompanying details from eight additional counties. No reports from the West-central or Southeast regions.

Acadian Flycatcher — All reports: **5/5** Freeborn RBJ, 5/13 Hennepin (Elm Creek Park) †WCM, 5/16+ Houston mob, 5/19 Rice †TFB, 5/28 Dakota/Scott (Murphy-Hanrehan Park) †ADS, †TAT.

Alder Flycatcher — Early south 5/19 Rice †TFB and Meeker †DMF, 5/20 Hennepin †SLC; also documented late May in Brown, Dakota. Early north 5/17 Roseau †PHS, 5/18 St. Louis †SES; documented in Aitkin and Cass. Reported without details from eight additional counties.

Willow Flycatcher — Early south 5/19 Dakota †TAT and Meeker †DMF; reported without details from nine south counties. Only documented report north: 5/19 Hubbard †FZL. **Note**: During spring and fall migration, please provide details for silent *Empidonax* flycatchers and on the *Seasonal Report* form, denote those birds identified by voice.

Least Flycatcher — Reported from 38 south and 27 north counties. Arrived on time throughout the state; first seen in 11 south counties 4/29 – 5/2 (recent median 4/29). Early north 5/2 Aitkin †MCBS and Itasca †JWL.

Loggerhead Shrike, 21 May 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Frank Nicoletti.

Eastern Phoebe — Reported from 37 south and 29 north counties statewide. Early south (median 3/21) 3/24 Winona JJS and Olmsted PWP, JJS. Arrived north later than usual (recent median 3/29); first seen 4/9 Crow Wing MRN, PSP, then daily arrivals through 4/14.

SAY'S PHOEBE — Reported 5/11 Big Stone (BSNWR) †MKn.

Great Crested Flycatcher — Seen in 35 south and 24 north counties statewide. Early south 4/29 Hennepin SLC, 4/30 in three counties. Early north 5/5 Kanabec BLA and Wadena PJB, 5/9 Carlton MCBS.

Western Kingbird — Seen in 10 south and 9 north counties, though none in Southeast or Northeast. Early south 5/10 Murray NED, 5/12 Meeker DMF and Wright DFJ. Early north 5/12 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 5/15–19 in eight counties. Peak count 5/24 Lake of the Woods (20 at Rocky Point) KJB.

Eastern Kingbird — Reported from 37 south and 22 north counties statewide. Early south 4/24 Carver RMD, TJD, 4/25 Rice TFB. Early north 5/9 Aitkin CLB and Carlton LAW, 5/10–12 in six counties.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER — Two reports: 5/10 **Koochiching** (west of Northome) †RLu (***The Loon*** 73:254), 5/12 **Pope** (near Starbuck) †DPe (***The Loon*** 73:252).

Shrikes through Swallows

Loggerhead Shrike — Approximately 23 individuals reported from 11 south and 6 north counties; numbers up compared to last four springs. Early south 4/6 Lyon RJS, 4/8 Jackson MJC; also Big Stone (Otrey Twp.), Kandiyohi/Pope, Brown, Meeker (Acton Twp.), Sherburne (Sherburne N.W.R.), Hennepin (Old Cedar Ave.), Freeborn, and six locations in Dakota. All north reports: 4/15 Becker BAB, 4/20 Otter Tail (Norwegian Grove Twp.) CRM *et al.*, 4/26+ Clay (2 at the Felton Prairie) mob, 5/6–7 Pennington (Thief River Falls) SAS, JMJ, PHS, 5/18 Wilkin (Tauberg) OLJ, 5/19–27 **St. Louis** (Duluth) RPR *et al.* **Note**: Please give exact locations and numbers of birds for all seasons.

Northern Shrike — Reported from 20 south and 12 north counties. Late south 4/5 Meeker DMF, 4/18 Sherburne LMC, RMN, **4/25** (record late south date) Stevens SPM. Late north (recent median 4/19) 4/17 Aitkin PSP, 4/20 Todd JSK.

WHITE-EYED VIREO — Record high number of reports in one season. Second earliest date **4/29** Hennepin (Cedar Lake) †SLC. Providing only the second breeding record for the state, a pair at Rice Lake S.P., 5/6+ Steele †AEB, was copulating and nest-building 5/12 †NSw, †NFT; also see summer report. One seen and heard 5/24 **Clay** (Buffalo River S.P.) †DPJ *et al.* (***The Loon*** 73:252), was the second for that county but only the third for northern Minnesota. Others seen 5/12 Hennepin (Hy-land Park) †PEJ, 5/28 **Lyon** (Camden S.P.) †RJS (***The Loon*** 73:253–254).

Bell's Vireo — Reported north of usual range 5/14 Stearns (Roscoe Prairie) DDM,

White-eyed Vireo, mid-May 2001, Rice Lake State Park, Steele County. Photo by Norma Swanson.

BJM. Also: 5/19+ Dakota (Black Dog L.) TAT, ADS, 5/25 Goodhue (Frontenac S.P.) CRG, 5/26+ Blue Earth (Minneopa S.P.) BRB *et al.*

Yellow-throated Vireo — Observed in 33 south and 21 north counties, including 5/19 **Lincoln** RJS, but only St. Louis in Northeast region. Early south 4/30 in six counties, 5/1 in three. Early north (record early) **4/30** Kanabec CAM, **5/1** Aitkin WEN, **5/3** Carlton LAW, 5/5 Wadena PJB.

Blue-headed Vireo — Seen in 26 south and 19 north counties. Arrived about one week before recent median dates. Early south **4/21** (ties earliest south) Hennepin SLC, 4/23 Freeborn AEB; peak migration 4/28–30. Arrived north 4/29 Becker BRK, 4/30 Crow Wing MRN. Late south 5/26 Brown JSS.

Warbling Vireo — Seen in 39 south and 21 north counties statewide. Daily arrivals south (median 5/1) starting **4/26** Dakota JJS and Freeborn AEB, 4/27–30 in seven counties. Early north **5/1** Kanabec CAM, 5/5 Aitkin WEN.

Philadelphia Vireo — Reported from 15 south and 11 north counties statewide. Remarkably early influx south, where 5/4 had been earliest ever: **4/29** Carver †TWi, **4/30** Freeborn AEB, Hennepin TAT and Anoka KJB, 5/5 Dakota ADS. Early north **5/1** (ties earliest north) Aitkin WEN, 5/9 Carlton MCBS, 5/10 Douglas SPM. Last reported south 5/20 Rock BRL.

Red-eyed Vireo — Observed in 34 south and 24 north counties statewide. Arrived near median dates south (5/5) and north (5/10). First seen 5/2 Houston KAK, then daily 5/4–7. Early north **5/5** Wadena PJB and St. Louis SES, then none until 5/11.

Gray Jay — Reported within usual range from Roseau, Beltrami, Aitkin, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake.

Blue Jay — Occurs throughout the state.

Black-billed Magpie — Observed in six Northwest counties, plus Lake of the Woods, Clearwater, Beltrami, Aitkin, Itasca, St. Louis.

American Crow — Seen statewide

Common Raven — Reported from 18 north counties, as far south as a line from Becker to Morrison, Mille Lacs, Pine. No reports from usual locations in Sherburne and Anoka.

Horned Lark — Observed in 47 south and 19 north counties, but only Lake in Northeast.

Purple Martin — Seen in 32 south and 18 north counties statewide. Arrived on time. Early south 4/4 Dakota KJB, then daily arrivals 4/8–13. Early north 4/11 Douglas REH, 4/14 Becker BAB.

Tree Swallow — Arrived within two days of recent median dates south and north. Early south 3/19 Wabasha JJS, 3/22 Houston FZL. Early north 4/3 Kanabec CAM, 4/4 Cass MRN.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow —

Reported from 34 south and 18 north counties. Early south (median 4/13) **4/4** Fillmore NBO, then daily arrivals 4/7–10. Early north 4/20 Otter Tail DKM, 4/30 Beltrami DPJ.

Bank Swallow — Observed in 29 south and 14 north counties, and in all regions. Early south **4/4** (earliest ever) Sibley RBJ, 4/10 Hennepin KJB, 4/12 Steele NFT. Early north (median 4/30) 5/5 Clay, Polk, and Kanabec.

Cliff Swallow — Reported from 30 south and 23 north counties statewide. Early south (median 4/19) 4/17 Lac Qui Parle FAE, 4/21 in two counties. Early north (median 4/24) 4/29 in three counties.

Barn Swallow — Seen in 39 south and 23 north counties. Early south 4/9 Dakota KJB and Goodhue BRL, 4/10 Hennepin SLC. Early north 4/16 Beltrami DPJ, 4/20 Wadena PJB.

Chickadees through Gnatcatchers

Black-capped Chickadee — Observed throughout the state.

Boreal Chickadee — Reported from Itasca, Lake.

Tufted Titmouse — Seen in Olmsted, Goodhue, Fillmore, Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch — Observed in 10 south counties as late as 5/22 Olmsted PWP. Also seen throughout usual range in north.

White-breasted Nuthatch — Reported statewide.

Brown Creeper — Observed in 24 south and 16 north counties throughout the state. Late south 4/26 Fillmore NBO, 5/3 Olmsted PWP.

Carolina Wren — No reports.

House Wren — Seen in 39 south and 24 north counties statewide. Arrived within three days of recent medians south (4/20) and north (4/27). Early south 4/17 Rice TFB, 4/19 Houston FZL, then numerous reports 4/22–25. Daily arrivals north starting 4/30 Becker, Clay, and St. Louis.

Winter Wren — Reported from 12 south and 10 north counties. No reports from Southwest or West-central. Scarce and moved quickly through Anoka KJB. Early south **3/16** Hennepin TAT, 3/26 Freeborn AEB. Early north 4/10 Clay RHO, 4/13 St. Louis SES. Late south (median departure 5/13) 4/22 Brown JSS, 5/2 Ramsey REH.

Sedge Wren — Observed in 26 south and 21 north counties, and in all regions except Southwest. Arrived south (median 4/27) 4/23 Dakota CRM, 4/26–30 in seven counties. Arrived north (median 5/4) 5/2 Aitkin CLB, 5/3 Pine MCBS.

Marsh Wren — Reported from 21 south and 12 north counties statewide, but only St. Louis in Northeast. Arrived on time. Early south 4/26 Houston, Meeker and Dakota. Early north 5/5 Clay RHO, then many reports 5/12–17.

Golden-crowned Kinglet — Reported from 14 south and 11 north counties statewide, but only Jackson in Southwest and Wilkin in West-central. Many south reports beginning 3/31 Rice TFB; also see winter report. Excluding St. Louis (where overwintered, JWL), early north 4/14 Clay RHO, 4/15 Lake JWL.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet — Seen in 32 south and 20 north counties statewide. Arrived about five days later than recent medians south and north. Early south 4/1 Lyon RJS, 4/2–10 in 12 counties. Early north 4/12 Douglas REH, then daily in 10 counties through 4/20. Numerous south reports in early May, but none later than 5/14 Dakota TAT.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — Observed in 34 south counties beginning 4/20 Brown, Steele and Dakota. Early north **4/28** Clay

MO and Otter Tail SPM, DKM, **4/29** Crow Wing JPR, **4/30** Crow Wing (3) MRN, **5/1** Cass MRN, 5/5 Wadena PJB. All additional north counties: Douglas, Todd, Morrison, Kanabec.

Bluebirds through Waxwings

Eastern Bluebird — Seen in 40 south and 25 north counties throughout the state. More reports than usual. See winter report for early migrants south. Only March report north: 3/22 Morrison WLB.

Mountain Bluebird — Lone males seen 3/23–30 Becker (TNWR) LDe *et al.*, 4/14 Cottonwood (Red Rock) BRB, ED.

Townsend's Solitaire — Not previously reported in winter, possible migrants seen 3/2–5 Carver (Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chanhassen) *fide* AXH, 3/2–7 Stearns (Brockway Twp.) †DCT, MAJ, and 3/2–17 Dakota (Acacia Cemetery) †TAT *et al.* Late north **4/15** Lake (Two Harbors) JWL. One overwintered through 4/5 Lake (Knife River) mob.

Veery — Observed in 19 south and 22 north counties, but none in Southwest. Only reports from West-central: Douglas, Pope. Early south 4/25 Freeborn AEB, then 5/5–6 in eight counties. Early north 5/9 Carlton MCBS, then daily 5/10–17.

Gray-cheeked Thrush — Reported from 17 south and 7 north counties, but none in the North-central. Early south 4/30 Mower RCK, RDK, 5/1 Hennepin KJB, SLC. Early north 5/8 Traverse JJS, 5/10 Douglas SPM. Late south 5/27 Meeker DMF, 5/29 Lac Qui Parle FAE. Late north 5/27 Wilkin SPM, DKM, 5/28 Lake CRG.

Swainson's Thrush — Seen in 34 south and 17 north counties statewide. Early south 4/28 Lincoln RJS, 4/30 in four counties. Arrived north 4/30 Crow Wing MRN, 5/6 Clay and Kanabec. Late south 5/27 Ramsey TAT, 5/29 Hennepin SLC.

Hermit Thrush — Reported from 23 south and 12 north counties, but none in West-central. Arrived after recent median dates south (3/28) and north (4/11). Early south 4/3 Rice TFB, 4/5 in Freeborn and Meeker. Early north 4/14 Kanabec CAM, 4/15 Carlton LAW. Late south 5/13 Houston MHF, 5/23 Jackson MJC.

Wood Thrush — Seen in 24 south and 9 north counties, but only Clay in Northwest and none in Southwest. Arrived five to six days before recent median dates. Early south 4/25 Freeborn AEB, 4/30 Rice TFB. Early north 5/4 Kanabec BLA, 5/9 Aitkin CLB.

American Robin — Observed statewide in 76 counties. Peak migration 4/15–17 St. Louis TPW, 4/19 Cass MRN.

Varied Thrush — Birds found in winter season last seen 3/1 Carver (Chanhassen) DDM, BJM, 3/1 Freeborn AEB, mid-March Hennepin (Orono) *fide* AXH, 3/30 Todd JSK, 4/5 Aitkin (Wealthwood) CMG. Also reported 3/1 Lake (T64N, R9W) SES, **4/20** St. Louis (Duluth) *fide* DRB.

Gray Catbird — Reported from 38 south and 25 north counties. Significant influx in late April; early south 4/27 Houston MHF, 4/29 Freeborn AEB, 4/30 in seven counties. Early north 4/28 Pine KIM, BAP, then daily 5/6–10 in seven counties.

Northern Mockingbird — All reports south: 4/24 McLeod RTF, 5/11 Ramsey TAN, 5/12 Goodhue DFN, 5/12 **Meeker** (Corvuso) TAT, 5/12 **Yellow Medicine** (Burr) BRL, TAT, 5/16 Kandiyohi *fide* RAE, 5/26 Rice TFB, JGL. Two north reports from St. Louis County: 5/5–7 (Duluth Twp.) UK, 5/23–27 (Park Point in Duluth) mob.

Brown Thrasher — Observed in 37 south and 18 north counties statewide. See winter report for overwintering birds in Hennepin, Dakota. Early south 4/13 Fillmore NBO, then daily arrivals in four counties 4/14–16. Early north 4/19 Otter Tail KKW, 4/29 Aitkin PEJ.

European Starling — Seen everywhere.

American Pipit — Found in only six south and four north counties. Only April report: 4/26 Dakota ADS. Peak count 5/7 Stearns (46 at Albany) KJB, reportedly a record high count for spring.

Bohemian Waxwing — Scarce as noted during previous season. Peak counts 3/1 Kittson (183) KJB, 4/9 Aitkin (50) WEN. Late north 4/17 Kanabec CAM, 4/18 St. Louis (18) TPW.

Cedar Waxwing — Observed in 29 south and 17 north counties. Reported as far northwest as Kittson (KJB) and Clay (RHO) in early March; see winter report. Possible migrants 4/10 Wadena PJB, 4/20 Otter Tail CRM.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler — Reported from 23 south counties, including unexpected location 5/6 Cottonwood ED and first county record 5/12 **Yellow Medicine** RJS. Many late April reports south (recent median 5/2). Early south 4/28 Rice TFB, 4/29 Dakota, Fillmore, and Winona, 4/30 in three counties. All reports north: **5/10** (record early north) Douglas SPM, **5/16** Kanabec CAM.

Golden-winged Warbler — Observed in 20 south and 14 north counties, and in all regions, but only Roseau in Northwest. Early south **4/30** (ties earliest) Anoka KJB and Dakota CRG, **5/1** Scott CMM, 5/4 Fillmore and Rice. Early north **4/30** Crow Wing MRN and St. Louis SPM, DKM, 5/5 Aitkin WEN and Cass WLB, 5/6 Wadena PJB. Latest south 5/28 Hennepin SLC. "Brewster's" hybrid 5/12 Anoka (Boot Lake S.N.A.) †PEB.

Tennessee Warbler — Seen in 38 south and 23 north counties throughout the state. Early south 4/26 Meeker DMF, then daily arrivals 4/29 – 5/1 in six counties. Early north (median 5/6) **4/30** Crow Wing MRN, 5/6 Todd JSK, 5/9–13 in eight counties. Late south 5/28 Brown JSS and Lyon (7) RJS, 5/29 Hennepin SLC, also see summer report.

Orange-crowned Warbler — Seen in 27 south and 15 north counties. Early south 4/22 Hennepin TAT, 4/23–26 in eight counties. Early north **4/20** Wilkin CRM, 4/27 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/30 in three counties. Only two reports after mid-May: 5/19 Roseau PHS, 5/23 Hennepin SLC.

Nashville Warbler — Reported from 30 south and 20 north counties, and in all regions. Early south 4/26 Fillmore NBO and Meeker DMF, 4/28–30 in nine counties. Early north **4/28** Beltrami DPJ, 4/30 Crow Wing MRN and Kanabec CAM.

Northern Parula — Found in 19 south and 10 north counties, though none in Southwest. Reported only from Lac Qui Parle (5/10, JJS) in West-central region, Roseau in Northwest. Early south 4/28 Rice TFB, then daily 4/29 – 5/2 in seven counties. Early north **4/30** St. Louis (Park Point in Duluth) SPM, DKM, 5/4 St. Louis (Ely) SES; first north report away from Northeast region 5/11 Cass MRN. Peak count 5/15 St. Louis (**10** at Duluth) PHS. Late south (median 5/23) 5/25 McLeod RWS, 5/26 Anoka KJB and Waseca JPS.

Yellow Warbler — Reported from 39 south and 26 north counties statewide. Early south 4/23 Dakota CRM, then daily 4/26–30 in 15 counties. Early north 4/30 Beltrami DPJ, 5/2 Kanabec CAM.

Chestnut-sided Warbler — Seen in 31 south and 22 north counties. Early south **4/29** (record early) Fillmore NBO, **4/30** Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, Olmsted. Early north (median 5/9) 5/4 Carlton LAW, 5/5 St. Louis ALE, 5/6 Aitkin WEN.

Magnolia Warbler — Reported from 30 south and 15 north counties statewide. Arrived exactly on recent median dates. Early south 5/5 Fillmore, Nicollet and Hennepin, 5/6 in seven counties. Early north 5/9 Carlton MCBS and St. Louis

ALE, NAJ, 5/10 in three counties.

Cape May Warbler — Reported from 11 south and 15 north counties, though none in West-central and only Yellow Medicine (5/12, BRL, TAT) in Southwest. Early south **5/3** Hennepin KJB, 5/5–8 in seven counties. Early north 5/9 Aitkin, Carlton and St. Louis, 5/10–13 in five counties. Late south (recent median 5/21) 5/24 McLeod RWS, 5/27 Hennepin DCZ.

Black-throated Blue Warbler — Several reports from Lake beginning **5/11** (LAW), 5/12+ Lake and Cook (35–40 territories) MSt. Also observed 5/16 St. Louis ALE.

Yellow-rumped Warbler — Seen in 36 south and 28 north counties statewide. Overwintered north (until 3/13 in Duluth, see winter report) and probably south, since 3/8 Fillmore NBO unlikely an early migrant — recent median arrival 4/1 and no other March reports. Early south 4/6 Dakota ADS, 4/8–12 in seven counties. Early north 4/8 Aitkin CLB, 4/10–15 in seven counties. Last seen 5/19 Hennepin SLC, 5/23 Jackson MJC.

Black-throated Green Warbler — Seen in 23 south and 15 north counties in all regions, but only Swift (5/9, JJS) in West-central. Early south **4/25** (ties earliest date) Hennepin SLC, 4/30 Anoka KJB and Rice TFB. Early north 5/2 Itasca JWL, then daily arrivals next four days. Late south 5/27 Hennepin SLC, 5/29 Rice TFB.

Blackburnian Warbler — Reported from 18 south and 15 north counties in all regions, but only Lac Qui Parle (5/28, FAE) in West-central. Early south 5/3 Hennepin KJB, SLC, then 5/5–9 in eight counties. Early north **4/30** (record early) Crow Wing MRN, 5/4 St. Louis ALE, then 5/9–11 in five counties. Late south 5/28 in three counties, 5/29 Anoka KJB.

Pine Warbler — Seen in 11 south and 16 north counties, about twice as many as last spring. None reported from South-central or West-central regions. Early south (median 4/26) 4/19 Washington RBJ, 4/24 Carver RMD, TJD. Early north (median 4/27) **4/19** Becker BAB, 4/20 Aitkin CLB, 4/25 Mille Lacs PSP.

PRAIRIE WARBLER — One seen **4/30** (record early date) **Rice** (Faribault) †TFB *et al.*

Palm Warbler — Seen in 33 south and 17 north counties. Arrived on time south and north. Many late April reports south, beginning 4/22 Hennepin TAT. Reported from nine north counties during April, beginning 4/27 Wadena PJB. Only south report in late May: 5/26 Hennepin TAT.

Bay-breasted Warbler — Reported from 10 south and 6 north counties, but none in West-central or North-central regions. Early south **5/1** Hennepin SLC, TAT, 5/6 Dakota ADS, then daily arrivals 5/7–13. Early north 5/10 St. Louis (Hoyt Lakes) ALE, 5/15 St. Louis (Duluth) TPW. Late migrant and only report from Southwest: 5/28 Lyon RJS.

Blackpoll Warbler — Observed in 30 south and 18 north counties. Earliest and latest dates all within two days of recent medians south and north. Early south 5/1 Rice TFB and Hennepin SLC, KJB. Early north 5/8 Traverse JJS. Observed in eight south counties 5/24–28. Late north 5/27 Beltrami, Roseau, and Lake of the Woods.

Cerulean Warbler — Reported in low numbers from seven south counties: **5/1+** Scott/Dakota (Murphy-Hanrehan Park) CMM, mob, 5/6+ Houston (Beaver Creek Valley S.P.) GLS *et al.*, 5/12+ Goodhue (Frontenac S.P.) CRM, DFN, 5/14 Rice TFB, JJS, 5/15 Hennepin (Elm Creek Park) SLC, 5/20 Goodhue (Red Wing) KJB and **Rock** (male at Blue Mounds S.P.) BRL. Only north reports: 5/19+ Becker (TNWR) mob, 5/26 Otter Tail SPM, DKM.

Black-and-white Warbler — Seen in 36 south and 24 north counties. Early south (recent median 4/27) 4/21 Fillmore NBO,

4/24–28 in seven counties. Early north (median 5/3) 4/28 Otter Tail SPM, DKM, 4/30 Crow Wing MRN, then daily 5/1–8.

American Redstart — Reported from 36 south and 25 north counties. Early south 4/30 Scott CRM, then daily arrivals 5/1–5 in nine counties. Early north 5/4 Crow Wing PSP, 5/6 Pine KIM, BAP.

Prothonotary Warbler — Arrived south 4/30 Rice TFB and Mower RDK, RCK, 5/3 Hennepin SLC. Exceptional location and first county occurrence 5/15 **Lake of the Woods** (Morris Point) CRM. Also reported south in Nicollet, Dakota, Wabasha.

Worm-eating Warbler — Documented **5/1** Hennepin (Veteran's Park, Richfield) LE, SLC, †TAT, 5/12–20 Hennepin (Hyland Park) †PEJ.

Ovenbird — Observed in 36 south and 23 north counties statewide. Early south 4/29 Jackson MJC and Carver RMD, TJD, 4/30 in five counties. Early north **4/30** Morrison WLB and Crow Wing MRN, 5/2 Aitkin, Carlton and Itasca.

Northern Waterthrush — Seen in 34 south and 13 north counties. Early south 4/21 Dakota ADS, 4/23 Ramsey TAT, then 4/26–30 in six counties. Early north 5/2 Aitkin CLB, 5/3 St. Louis *fide* DRB, 5/6–9 in seven counties. No late south migrants after 5/28 Brown JSS.

Louisiana Waterthrush — All reports: **4/8** Houston JJS, 4/25+ Houston (Beaver Creek Valley S.P.) FZL, mob, 5/6 Rice TFB, 5/9 Washington RBJ, 5/11 Dakota (Miesville Ravine) †ADS, 5/27 Washington (Falls Creek S.N.A.) KJB.

Kentucky Warbler — Earliest date ever and first county occurrence **4/29 Meeker** (Litchfield N.C.) †DMF. All other reports: 5/13+ Olmsted (Nelson Fen) JDu *et al.*, 5/21–25 Rice (Nerstrand Woods S.P.) TFB, RBJ, 5/28 Blue Earth (Williams C.P.) ChH, 5/28+ Scott (Murphy-Hanrehan Regional park) mob.

Connecticut Warbler — Reported from ten south and eight north counties. None seen in Southeast or West-central regions. First reported 5/13 Freeborn AEB and Meeker DMF. Early north 5/17+ Roseau PHS, 5/19+ St. Louis JWL *et al.* Late south 5/29 Hennepin SLC, TAT, but also see summer report.

Mourning Warbler — Reported from 18 south counties (twice as many as last spring) beginning 5/6 Lac Qui Parle FAE, 5/9 Meeker DMF. Observed in 14 north counties beginning 5/15 Kanabec CAM, then daily arrivals over next six days. Last reported 5/31 Hennepin OLJ, but also see summer report.

Common Yellowthroat — Seen in 38 south and 22 north counties statewide. Early south 4/29 Mower RNS, 4/30 in six counties. Arrived north 5/1 St. Louis SPM, DKM, 5/6 Aitkin, Clay.

Hooded Warbler — All reports: 5/7+ Dakota/Scott (Murphy-Hanrehan) mob, 5/10 Goodhue (Old Frontenac) KJB, 5/13 Hennepin (Roberts Sanctuary) SGr, 5/14 Rice (River Bend N.C.) mob, 5/26 Ramsey (Battle Creek Park) †JPS, 5/29+ Anoka (Linwood L.) KJB.

Wilson's Warbler — Reported from 27 south and 17 north counties statewide. Arrived within one day of recent medians south and north. Early south 5/6 Cottonwood ED and Rice TFB, 5/7–10 in seven counties. Early north 5/9 Carlton MCBS, 5/12–15 in ten counties. Last reported south 5/29 Hennepin SLC.

Canada Warbler — Found in 17 south and 11 north counties, scattered across all regions. Early south 5/6 Mower RNS, 5/7 Rice TFB. Arrived north exactly on the recent median date — 5/13 Wadena PJB. Late south 5/29 Hennepin SLC.

Yellow-breasted Chat — All reports: 5/6 **Pipestone** (Osborne Twp.) CKr, JJS, 5/12 Rice (River Bend N.C.) TFB and Olmsted (Mayowood) AXH, PHS.

Summer Tanager — Documented 5/3–6 Mower (south of Austin) †RNS, mob, 5/8 Hennepin (Bass Ponds) †SLC, †KJB.

Scarlet Tanager — Seen in 32 south and 21 north counties. Early south (recent median 5/7) 4/30 Fillmore NBO and Scott CRM, 5/1 Hennepin KJB, SLC. Early north 5/10 Douglas, Wadena, Crow Wing, and Kanabec. Unusual locale 5/31 Hennepin (downtown Minneapolis) TAT. Migration peaked 5/5–7 south, 5/12–15 north.

Western Tanager — No reports.

Spotted Towhee — Birds from winter season last reported 3/1 Scott (Shakopee) *fide* AXH, 3/17 Lyon (Russell) mob, 3/18 Murray (Moulton Twp.) NED. Also found during its usual spring migration period 4/26 Pipestone (Edgerton) NED, 5/6 Rock JJS.

Eastern Towhee — Reported from 29 south and 7 north counties. One from winter season last seen 3/24 Anoka RLR. Early south 4/9 Mower RNS, 4/10 Freeborn AEB. Early north 4/30 Crow Wing PSP, 5/8 Aitkin CLB. First county records 5/2 **Watonwan** JJS, 5/10 **Douglas** SPM. Also reported as far southwest as Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Cottonwood.

American Tree Sparrow — Seen in 39 south and 16 north counties. Many late April reports south, but exodus complete by end of month, except 5/7 Carver KEO, 5/8 Hennepin KEO 5/12, Winona AJB. Late north (where recent median 5/11) 4/25 St. Louis TPW.

Chipping Sparrow — Observed in 40 south and 28 north counties. Early south (median 3/26) 3/21 Houston MHF, 3/29 Cottonwood BRB. Early north 4/14 Crow Wing PSP, 4/17–20 in eight counties.

Clay-colored Sparrow — Reported from 34 south and 23 north counties. One from winter last seen 3/1 Hennepin RBJ, CRM. Early south 4/16 Washington TEB, 4/26–30 in 11 counties. Arrived north on time; first seen 4/28 Clay RHO, 4/30 in three counties.

Field Sparrow — Observed in 36 south counties beginning **3/17** Houston FZL, then none for three weeks until 4/8–10 in five counties. Early north (median 4/24) 4/15 Aitkin †CLB, 4/22 Cass MRN. Other north reports: Otter Tail, Todd, Morrison, **St. Louis** (5/19, MH and 5/29, CRM).

Vesper Sparrow — Reported from 37 south and 20 north counties in all regions except Northeast. Arrived later than usual. Early south (median 3/29) 4/5 Meeker DMF, 4/7–8 in seven counties. Early north (median 4/12) 4/16 Wadena PJB, 4/19 in three counties.

Lark Sparrow — Observed in 11 south counties within normal breeding range, plus 5/1 **Martin** CRM, JJS. Arrived south on time, where first seen 4/23 Dakota CRM. All north reports: 5/8 Kittson PHS, approximately 5/11 Polk *fide* BAB, 5/12 **St. Louis** (state highway 135) ALE, 5/13 **St. Louis** (Lakewood Twp.) †TPW, 5/18+ Pennington JMJ.

Savannah Sparrow — Seen in 34 south and 23 north counties. Record early south date **3/19** Olmsted CRM, then no reports until 4/5 Murray NED and Meeker DMF. Early north 4/20 Wilkin CRM and Lake JWL, 4/21–27 in eight counties.

Grasshopper Sparrow — Observed in 17 south counties beginning 4/19 Rice TFB, 4/24 Rice JGL (recent median 4/28). Reported from usual breeding range 5/3 Otter Tail NAJ, 5/5–7 Red Lake JMJ, PHS, 5/9+ Clay PHS *et al.* Only other north report: 5/13 **Lake** (Flood Bay) JWL, PHS.

Henslow's Sparrow — Two birds 5/30 Hennepin (Crow-Hassan Park) HCT, †SLC. Also reported without details during early May from Washington (5 birds), Goodhue (4 birds), Winona (no data).

LeConte's Sparrow — All south reports:

4/26 Hennepin (Minneapolis) TAT, 5/5 Wabasha SWe. Reported from nine north counties, all but two (Aitkin, St. Louis) in Northwest. Early north 4/27 Pennington KJB, 5/5 Clay RHO.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow — All reports were within usual breeding range but some were in marginal habitat: 5/19+ Roseau mob, 5/26–28 Marshall KRE *et al.*, 5/30+ Aitkin (McGregor) MCBS.

Fox Sparrow — Observed in 24 south and 15 north counties. Arrived more than a week late and quickly departed, well before recent medians — migration thus compressed to approximately four weeks. Early south 3/24 Fillmore NBO. Early north 4/5 Aitkin WEN. Reported as scarce (KJB, PHS) despite 4/10 Fillmore (50+) NBO. Late south 4/21 Carver CRG. Late north 4/26 St. Louis TPW.

Song Sparrow — Found in 40 south and 25 north counties. See winter report for early south migrants and overwintering birds. High count 4/5 Jackson (22) KJB. One from the winter season last reported 3/16 Lake JWL. Early north (median 3/26) 4/7 Douglas, Todd, and Lake.

Lincoln's Sparrow — Reported from 24 south and 12 north counties. Early south 4/13 Carver RMD, TJD, 4/23–26 in ten counties. Early north (median 4/26) 4/25 Clay RHO and Polk EEF. Late south 5/18 Brown JSS.

Swamp Sparrow — Seen in 32 south and 21 north counties. Tardy south, but arrived north within three days of recent median (4/17). Early south 4/5 Meeker DMF, 4/8 Hennepin SLC, TAT. Early north 4/20 Wilkin, Carlton, and Lake.

White-throated Sparrow — Reported from 34 south and 27 north counties. Possible migrants 3/18 Dakota KEO, 3/19 Winona CRM, but next seen 4/7–8 in five counties. Overwintering individuals 3/1 Freeborn AEB, 3/17–18 Olmsted mob. Early north 4/14 St. Louis (Duluth) TPW, 4/17 St. Louis (Ely) SES. Late south 5/27 Meeker DMF, but see summer report.

Harris's Sparrow — Seen in 28 south and 13 north counties, and in all regions except Northeast. Earliest migrants not separable from overwintering birds (see winter report); peak migration 4/28 – 5/6 in southern Minnesota. Early north 4/27 Wadena PJB, 4/29 Clay RHO. Departed four days earlier than recent medians. Late south 5/18 Lac Qui Parle FAE. Late north 5/18 Pennington PHS.

White-crowned Sparrow — Observed in 23 south and 14 north counties. Early south 4/17 Rice FVS, KNS, 4/25 Stearns MAJ, DCT. Early north 4/21 Pine KIM, BAP, and 4/29 Clay RHO. Apparently overwintered in St. Louis, where seen 3/14 Duluth *fide* KRE; compare with earliest north date (4/12). Peak migration dates 4/28 – 5/6 in south. Departed state 7–10 days earlier than usual. Late south 5/12 Brown JJS. Late north 5/18 St. Louis TPW.

Dark-eyed Junco — Found in 39 south and 23 north counties throughout state. Peak counts 4/9–13 Otter Tail (200 in yard) DTT, SMT, 4/15 Wright (total 300 in 2 flocks) DPJ. "Oregon" Junco 3/31 – 4/1 Otter Tail DTT, SMT.

Lapland Longspur — Reported from 13 south and 4 north counties, mostly in the Southwest and South-central regions. See winter report for dates of early migrants. BRB reported thousands migrating 3/30 Jackson (near Heron Lake). No south reports after 4/28 Lac Qui Parle mob, except **5/16** Dakota (female) ADS. Late north (median 5/18) 5/16 Lake of the Woods (male) PHS.

Smith's Longspur — Reported 4/28 Lac Qui Parle (8 at Plover Prairie) †CRG, JWH.

Chestnut-collared Longspur — Earliest south date and first county record **4/7 Kandiyohi** †RAE *et al.* (***The Loon*** 73:254) Also seen 4/26+ Clay (Felton Prairie) KJB, mob.

Lazuli Bunting, 18 May 2001, Climax, Polk County. Photo by Leon Thoreson.

Snow Bunting — Seen in 11 south and 11 north counties. Peak count 3/1 Kittson (585) KJB. Late south 4/12 Stevens SPM, 4/16 McLeod CRG. Late north 4/14 Aitkin WEN, 4/22 Marshall JMJ.

Cardinals through Orioles

Northern Cardinal — Seen in 36 south and 14 north counties, as far north as Kittson (4/4, *fide* BAB) and Lake of the Woods (5/16, PHS). Continues to increase in St. Louis County (*fide* KRE). Pair observed mid-March in Lake (Two Harbors) DBz.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak — Seen in 38 south and 24 north counties. Early south **4/19** Washington DFN, 4/24 Houston MHF, then 11 additional counties by end of April. Early north (median 5/3) 4/30 Kanabec BLA, 5/1–3 in five counties.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK — Male at feeder 5/10 **Becker** (Maple Grove Twp.) †BRK.

Blue Grosbeak — Most unusual was the male seen and photographed along State Line Road **5/13 Pine** (Arna Twp.) †DUn, †CHk (***The Loon*** 73:254). All south reports: 5/18+ Murray NED, 5/20+ Rock BRL *et al.*

LAZULI BUNTING — One photographed 5/18 **Polk** (male at Climax) LDT.

Indigo Bunting — Reported from 36 south and 15 north counties. Early south (median 5/5) 4/28 Yellow Medicine BRL, 4/29 Houston KAK and Lac Qui Parle FAE, 4/30 Fillmore NBO. Arrived north (median 5/11) 5/3 Kanabec BLA, 5/6 Kanabec CAM, 5/10–14 in seven counties.

Dickcissel — All reports: 5/12 Stearns RPR, 5/28 Murray NED, Blue Earth ChH and Olmsted PWP, 5/29 Lyon RJS.

Bobolink — Observed in 33 south and 20 north counties statewide. Early south (median 5/3) 4/26 Dakota ADS, 5/2–5 in seven counties. Early north 5/5 Clay RHO, 5/6–10 in five counties.

Red-winged Blackbird — Seen in 45 south and 29 north counties. See winter report for early south migrants and overwintering birds. Probable migrant 3/21 Todd JSK; peak influx 3/28 – 4/4 when first reported from 13 north counties.

Eastern Meadowlark — Reported from 24 south and 11 north counties, though none in the Southwest or Northwest, and only Wilkin (5/18, OLJ) in West-central. Possible migrant 3/19 Dodge CRM; many south reports 3/29 – 4/10. Early north (median 3/26) 4/3+ Kanabec CAM, BLA.

Western Meadowlark — Reported from 31 south and 17 north counties, but none in Northeast and only Dakota in East-central. Presumed migrants 3/18 Murray NED, 3/21 Nicollet MJF. Peak migration 3/23 – 4/2 in ten south counties. Early north 3/26 Otter Tail and Wilkin CRM.

Yellow-headed Blackbird — Observed in 38 south and 22 north counties statewide. Unusual reports 4/16, 5/1, 5/17 (2) Lake (Two Harbors) JWL. Early south 4/5

Yellow Medicine RBJ, 4/7–8 in three counties. Early north (median 4/10) 4/9 Douglas REH.

Rusty Blackbird — Reported from 22 south and 9 north counties. Early south 3/17 Dakota ADS, TAT, but see winter report. Early north (median 3/17) 4/12 Todd JSK, 4/14–15 in four counties. Late south 4/26 Hennepin PEB, 4/27 Wabasha JJS. Last reported 5/8 Roseau PHS, 5/19 Roseau AXH, PHS.

Brewer's Blackbird — Seen in 17 south and 19 north counties statewide. Arrived at least 10 days later than recent medians south and north. Early south 3/22 Mower RDK, RCK. Early north 4/12 Todd JSK.

Common Grackle — Reported from 78 counties. Early north 3/14 Lake JWL, 3/15 Becker BRK; also see winter report.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE — Seen 4/8 **Lyon** (male at Black Rush L.) †RJS, 5/7+ **Olmsted** (pair at county road 9 marsh near Rochester) DSq *et al.*, †PHS.

Brown-headed Cowbird — Observed in 74 counties. Daily arrivals south in late March beginning 3/23 Martin RBJ, but see winter report. Early north 4/13 Otter Tail DTT, SMT, 4/14 in two counties.

Orchard Oriole — Reported from 20 south counties beginning 5/3 Dakota TAT and Hennepin KJB, 5/4 Freeborn AEB. Peak influx 5/7–14 in 10 counties. All north reports: 5/12 Otter Tail mob, 5/18 Cass WLB, 5/19–20 Clay AXH, PHS *et al.*, 5/27 Wilkin SPM, DKM.

Baltimore Oriole — More reports than usual; found in 43 south and 23 north counties. Early south 4/28 Hennepin TAT and Houston FZL, 4/29 in five counties. Early north (median 5/5) 4/28 Otter Tail EJE, 4/30 Becker BRK. Peak influx 5/6–10 in 13 south and 10 north counties. Peak count 5/24 Lake of the Woods (**38** at Rocky Point) KJB.

Pine Grosbeak — Reported from eight north counties in March, plus 4/3 Lake of the Woods *fide* BAB and mid-April in Marshall (ANWR staff).

Purple Finch — Observed in 17 south and 23 north counties, and in all regions except Southwest. Late south 5/15 Anoka DCZ, **5/28** Olmsted PWP.

House Finch — Seen in 58 counties throughout the state.

Red Crossbill — One observation south: 3/18–19 Benton HHD, DDM. Reported in March from Aitkin, Itasca, and Lake. Also seen 5/27 Lake of the Woods WCM, 5/28 Aitkin CLB.

White-winged Crossbill — None in the south. Reported north from Aitkin, Itasca, Lake, St. Louis. Multiple sightings during May along county road 2 in Lake and Sax-Zim bog in St. Louis.

Common Redpoll — Reported in very low numbers during March from Aitkin, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, plus 4/4 Kittson *fide* BAB.

Hoary Redpoll — No reports.

Pine Siskin — Reported from 11 south and 20 north counties. Most of those in south were from Twin Cities metro area or extreme Southeast; one report from Southwest (3/20 Murray CRM). No south observations after mid-May except 5/19 Winona GLS.

American Goldfinch — Reported from 56 counties throughout the state.

Evening Grosbeak — Seen in 11 north counties, all in North-central or Northeast regions, except Becker in Northwest and Pine (4/1–29, KIM, BAP) in East-central.

House Sparrow — Seen in 54 counties.

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WOS William O. Stjern
WPS Wally P. Swanson
WW Warren Woessner
mob many observers

ANWR Agassiz N.W.R.
BSNWR Big Stone N.W.R.
HPBC Hastings–Prescott Bird Count
MCBS Minnesota County Biological Survey
MDNR Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
TNWR Tamarac N.W.R.
USFWS U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Hastings-Prescott Bird Count

Karl J. Bardon

For the last ten years, I have been aware of a major spring migration corridor for birds moving up the Mississippi River and past the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers in the vicinity of Hastings, Minnesota and Prescott, Wisconsin. Exceptional numbers of waterbirds, raptors, and passerines can be seen moving up the river in daylight hours, and on the peak days, this spectacle becomes a river of birds. This location is unique because the Mississippi River Valley narrows to a one-mile wide corridor, creating a natural bottleneck, and making coverage of bird migration on both sides of the river feasible. Farther to the south, the river valley becomes significantly wider, and thus the bottleneck effect is lost; farther to the north, the river valley divides into both the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, and the mighty Mississippi River Valley loses its geological and avian significance.

My effort to quantify the migration at Hastings-Prescott prior to 2001 was sporadic, limited to the peak migration period, and focused almost entirely on waterbirds. For example, during 1999, I spent a total of 24 hours on 10 different dates between 13 March and 5 April, counting a total of 23,818 waterbirds. The majority of these were Ring-billed Gulls (12,381), Mallards (4,292) and Canada Geese (2,502). Similarly, in 1991, I spent 40 hours on 7 different days from 10 March through 16 April, and counted 30,173 waterbirds. By the far the best day was 25 March, with peak counts on this date of 187 Great Blue Herons, 1884 Tundra Swans, over 9000 Mallards, 117 Northern Pintails, 910 scaup, and 5025 gulls (mostly Ring-billed) among a grand total of 20,539 waterbirds counted on that date alone!

Although it was obvious that a large number of waterbirds moved up the Mississippi River in spring, I also knew good numbers of raptors, passerines, and other birds also migrated up the river. But until spring 2001, I never had the time to spend every day counting birds at this site. This article presents the results of the 2001 spring bird count at Hastings-Prescott, and compares these data to the limited results from previous years, as well as to the results of other official migratory bird counts.

As far as I know, there has been no attempt to quantify the migration of birds moving up the Mississippi River in Minnesota in spring. The only organized counts of migrating birds in Minnesota have been at Duluth where hawk migration has been studied in spring since 1997 (West Skyline Hawkwatch) and in fall since 1951 (Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve), and a general bird count that was conducted in fall migration for a few years beginning in 1983 (Lakewood Pumping Station).

Methods

My intent was to count all birds migrating up the Mississippi River during the hours of coverage, and to count a majority of the birds migrating up the river during the range of dates covered. Binoculars and a telescope were used to scan for migrants (much of the migration appeared to occur beyond the range routinely visible to the naked eye, and additional migrants were occasionally seen with a telescope that had not been seen when scanning with binoculars).

Coverage usually began at sunrise, then continued as long as migration continued. During days of heavy migration, coverage continued throughout daylight hours. Although there was coverage on several evenings when migration continued throughout the day, many additional evenings with favorable weather were not covered, and significant waterfowl migration may have been missed. There was no coverage during weather considered unconducive to significant migration, such as rain, snow, fog, or strong winds with a northerly component. Only birds in active migration were counted; birds believed to be in daily roosting or foraging flights were not.

Since the migration was complex with many different species moving up the river valley along different flight lines, various sites in the vicinity of Hastings and Prescott were tried, depending on wind direction, time of day, and the type of birds being focused on. For example, different sites were often used for early morning waterbird flights than for midday raptor flights. Although over half a dozen different sites were used, all these sites lie within one mile of each other.

Results

During 2001, there was a total of 30 days of coverage from 11 March to 25 April, totalling 176 hours. Although I made several attempts to count prior to 11 March, 11 March appeared to be the first date of any significant migration. Counting ended on 25 April only because of other obligations; although waterfowl movement had clearly mostly ended by this date, additional migration of Broad-winged Hawks, Double-crested Cormorants, Bonaparte's Gulls, terns, various passerines and other birds probably continued. A total of 100,332 migrants were counted. These included 75,584 waterbirds (*Gaviidae, Podicipedidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Ardeidae, Anatidae, Gruidae, Scolopacidae* and *Laridae*), 5,315 raptors (*Accipitridae, Falconidae* and *Cathartidae*), and 19,432 other birds, mostly passerines (*Columbidae, Alcedinidae, Picidae*, and *Passeriformes*).

Migration moved up the Mississippi River, then more or less divided itself between the Mississippi corridor towards Hastings (Minnesota), and the St. Croix River corridor over Prescott (Wisconsin). Although the number of birds using each corridor and the number of birds seen in the two respective states was not quantified, I estimated that a majority of the waterbird flight occurred within Minnesota on the west side of the river, while a majority of the raptor flight occurred in Wisconsin on the east side of the river. The waterfowl appeared to move up the main channel of the Mississippi River, while the raptors preferred to move inland over Prescott. Since the predominant wind direction was south and west, most raptors were blown to the east side of the river, while waterfowl seemed little affected by wind direction. During rare days of strong east winds, raptors were blown to the Minnesota side of the river (such as nearly all of the 286 Bald Eagles on 15 March when there were strong northeast winds).

Occasionally, raptors and other birds were seen moving up the Wisconsin side of the river, then crossing over to the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River once they had moved north of its confluence with the Mississippi. Also, flocks of geese and other birds were often seen heading overland away from both the Mississippi and St. Croix River corridors once they had met the confluence of these two rivers. Based on observations during previous years at sites further up the Mississippi River, I believe most of the birds seen at Hastings-Prescott scatter into many different directions after passing by my watch sites, and most birds probably do not use the Mississippi River corridor beyond the vicinity of Hastings and Spring Lake. For example, most of the waterfowl movement noted in past springs along the Mississippi River in Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County was in a west or northwesterly direction, without appearing to follow the north-south orientation of the river at all.

Waterbirds

The total of 75,584 waterbirds counted during spring 2001 particularly noteworthy. By comparison, was the spring waterbird count at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory in Michigan averages about 24,000 birds during a standardized count of 6 weeks and about 360 hours of coverage, while the fall count at that site averages about 77,000 waterbirds during 3 months and 700 hours of coverage.

Except at Duluth, **Common Loons** are seldom sighted flying overhead during migration in Minnesota, and the Mississippi River is seldom used as a stopover, so the total of 57 Common Loons seen moving up the river valley during spring 2001 is of interest. The river is clearly a minor corridor for loons — contrast this with the thousands seen on passage through the Great Lakes, such as at Whitefish Point.

Although **American White Pelicans** are occasionally common in eastern Minnesota in fall during post-breeding dispersal, they are less common in spring in the east, so the season total of 3147 was rather surprising, and included two peak days over 900 individuals.

It was occasionally difficult to distinguish early morning **Double-crested Cormorant** migration from daily post-roost foraging flights, but the count of 4147 on 9 April was clearly not guilty of double-counting, and represents a record count for Minnesota (the flight was confined entirely to Minnesota).

The number of **Great Blue Herons** (154) was disappointing since this species had previously been more common at this site during migration (e.g., 187 on 25 March 1991). The number of western geese was also disappointing, since again, the species had previously been more common at this site (e.g., 503 Snow Geese and 7 Greater White-fronted Geese during the 1999 coverage, and 79 Snow Geese, 140 Greater White-fronted, and 5 Ross's during two days of coverage in late February 2000). Western geese only occasionally shift eastward during migration, and thus are considered uncommon or even rare in the east during spring.

One of the more frustrating aspects of counting waterfowl in active migration is that an unknown percentage, perhaps even a majority, of ducks migrate nocturnally. While counting migration at Hastings-Prescott, I have frequently arrived at the count site at dawn to find flocks of ducks that clearly had to have arrived sometime in the night since they had not been seen during the previous day's observation. The 2001 count of **scaup** was especially low, perhaps due to this species' tendency to migrate at night. Previous counts of scaup include 2980 during limited coverage in 1991, and 2875 on 3 April 1992 alone. One interesting aspect of the dabbler flight was that the flocks of **Mallards** were frequently mixed with **Northern Pintails**, even though this latter species is a relatively rare migrant in eastern Minnesota. Some examples include 18 Northern Pintail (3%) among 575 Mallards on 22 March 1994, 142 Northern Pintail (3%) among 4292 Mallards during 1999 coverage, 247 Northern Pintails (2%) among 10,890 Mallards during 1991 coverage, and 130 Northern Pintails (1%) among 11,680 Mallards during the 2001 coverage.

The number of gulls was less than expected. Although nearly 20,000 **Ring-billed Gulls** were counted, peak day concentrations at nearby Spring Lake on the Mississippi River have been as high as 30,000 during previous springs (6 April 1996). The percentage of **Herring Gulls** (5%) to Ring-billed Gulls compares favorably to the average percentage (4.1%) found during a previous study of gulls moving through the Twin Cities area during spring migration (***The Loon*** 68:24).

Raptors

Since hundreds of Bald Eagles gather along the Mississippi River each spring just to the south of Hastings-Prescott on Lake Pepin, the total of 2188 **Bald Eagles** was not too surprising. This compares to 2631 counted at Duluth this spring. Interestingly, only 3 **Golden Eagles** were

seen, even though 66 were counted at Duluth. One of the biggest surprises at Hastings-Prescott was the season total of 90 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, considered a species of Special Concern in Minnesota. A peak of 32 was recorded on 20 March (although this would have been a state high count for Minnesota, many of these birds were in Wisconsin). Buteos and eagles clearly use the river valley as a migration corridor in spring, but accipiters and falcons do not; for example, the count of 153 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** differs dramatically from the 2051 counted at Duluth this spring. Interestingly, 851 Sharp-shinned Hawks were counted by other observers using the Mississippi River corridor at Reno, Houston County during 120 hours of coverage in fall 1995 (***The Loon*** 68:158–164).

Perhaps most significant, while sifting through the dark/rufous-morph Red-tailed Hawks, I discovered that there were significantly more "Harlan's" Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) than dark/rufous-morph Western Red-tailed Hawks (*B. j. calurus*) — the reverse of what I had expected. Of the 1,757 Red-tailed Hawks counted, 36 dark/rufous-morph birds were seen (2%), which is a higher proportion than at Hawk Ridge, Duluth, where about 1% of all Red-tailed Hawks have been dark/rufous morph, during both spring and fall (Frank Nicolleti, personal communication). Of the 36 dark/rufous-morph birds at Hastings-Prescott, 16 were dark adult "Harlan's", including one barred-tailed morph. At least three light-morph adult "Harlan's" were also carefully identified. The total number of "Harlan's" was therefore at least 19 individuals! The "Harlan's" flight was concentrated, with all seen between 28 March and 9 April, and a peak of 8 on 3 April. By the time the first Harlan's was seen on 28 March, 31% of the total Red-tailed Hawks had already been seen. Of the remaining 20 dark/rufous-morph birds, only 5 were dark adult Western individuals; the rest were unidentified to race. Only one adult "Krider's" Hawk (*B. j. krideri*) was seen.

Passerines and other species

The study period ended before most passerines began significant migration, but good numbers of **Tree Swallows**, **American Robins**, **Red-winged Blackbirds**, and **Common Grackles** were noted. In many ways, it was just as interesting to note which species were found in large numbers as which species were not. For example, it seems puzzling that more **Mourning Doves**, **Northern Flickers**, **American Crows**, and **Eastern Bluebirds** weren't seen, since the count occurred within the peak migration period for those species.

This effort at Hastings-Prescott was similar to counts previously done at the Lakewood Pumping Station at Duluth, since daily coverage began at sunrise at both sites, and all migrant birds were counted. The focus of the Lakewood counts was non-raptors (although raptors were included in the totals), with few waterbirds seen. The primary focus of the Hastings-Prescott count was waterbirds, even though all birds were counted.

The Hastings-Prescott totals of 100,332 migrants during 30 days and 176 hours of effort, or 570 migrants per hour, compares to the Lakewood counts as follows: During 1994–1996, when coverage at Lakewood was on an every-other day basis, an average of 31 days and 60.5 hours of effort resulted in an average of 60,588 migrants being counted, or 1012 migrants per hour. During daily coverage at Lakewood from 1988–1990, an average of 166.25 hours of effort on 84 days resulted in an average of 251,695 migrants, or 1514 migrants per hour. These comparisons are difficult to make, however, since methods in coverage differed between the two sites; for example, coverage at Lakewood was usually limited to a few hours in the early morning during peak movement of large numbers of birds, which tended to inflate the number of birds per hour. **13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**

Table 1. Hastings-Prescott Bird Count 2001 (11 March – 25 April 2001).

Species	Total	Peak Number	Peak Date	Species	Total	Peak Number	Peak Date
Common Loon	57	14	8-Apr	Swainson's Hawk	3	1	——
Red-necked Grebe	1	1	13-Apr	Red-tailed Hawk	1757	393	1-Apr
American White Pelican	3147	984	24-Apr	Rough-legged Hawk	25	5	20-Mar
Double-crested Cormorant	17,609	4147	9-Apr	Golden Eagle	3	1	——
Great Blue Heron	152	38	28-Mar	American Kestrel	16	3	28-Mar
Great Egret	77	35	14-Apr	Merlin	8	2	17-Mar
Turkey Vulture	117	28	13-Apr	Peregrine Falcon	6	2	24-Apr
Greater White-fronted Goose	33	17	3-Apr	Sandhill Crane	177	87	1-Apr
Snow Goose	35	19	14-Apr	Killdeer	41	13	2-Apr
Canada Goose	13,319	3063	1-Apr	Greater Yellowlegs	25	20	19-Apr
Tundra Swan	1956	776	3-Apr	Lesser Yellowlegs	16	16	24-Apr
Wood Duck	563	246	8-Apr	shorebird, sp.	5	5	19-Apr
Gadwall	502	293	24-Apr	Franklin's Gull	6	3	25-Apr
American Wigeon	171	53	14-Apr	Bonaparte's Gull	494	294	24-Apr
American Black Duck	7	3	4-Apr	Ring-billed Gull	19,596	4336	1-Apr
Mallard	11680	4044	8-Apr	Herring Gull	1028	294	1-Apr
Blue-winged Teal	7	3	24-Apr	Thayer's Gull	2	1	——
Northern Shoveler	380	110	14-Apr	Glaucous Gull	1	1	3-Apr
Northern Pintail	130	46	8-Apr	gull, sp.	2	2	24-Apr
Green-winged Teal	9	9	9-Apr	Forster's Tern	8	3	——
dabbler, sp.	56	29	10-Apr	Mourning Dove	14	7	1-Apr
Canvasback	677	458	14-Apr	Belted Kingfisher	3	1	——
Redhead	59	21	13-Apr	Northern Flicker	11	4	14-Apr
Ring-necked Duck	47	14	9-Apr	American Crow	72	43	14-Mar
Greater Scaup	4	4	18-Apr	Horned Lark	3	2	20-Mar
Lesser Scaup	472	258	14-Apr	Tree Swallow	1522	745	9-Apr
scaup, sp.	57	16	20-Apr	Barn Swallow	2	1	——
Aythya, sp.	522	252	8-Apr	Eastern Bluebird	46	21	1-Apr
Bufflehead	26	14	14-Apr	American Robin	928	151	13-Apr
Common Goldeneye	329	71	3-Apr	European Starling	99	30	18-Mar
Hooded Merganser	93	15	3-Apr	Cedar Waxwing	31	19	18-Apr
Common Merganser	1069	107	3-Apr	Yellow-rumped Warbler	35	24	18-Apr
Red-breasted Merganser	886	241	9-Apr	warbler, sp.	11	11	24-Apr
duck, sp.	50	48	28-Mar	Red-winged Blackbird	1005	500	3-Apr
Osprey	23	8	24-Apr	meadowlark, sp.	4	2	4-Apr
Bald Eagle	2188	330	27-Mar	Rusty Blackbird	40	20	9-Apr
Northern Harrier	84	11	8-Apr	Common Grackle	2198	461	1-Apr
Sharp-shinned Hawk	153	28	24-Apr	Brown-headed Cowbird	65	49	24-Apr
Cooper's Hawk	45	20	8-Apr	blackbird, sp.	13,320	3970	1-Apr
Northern Goshawk	2	1	——	passerine, sp.	23	8	13-Apr
Red-shouldered Hawk	90	32	20-Mar				
Broad-winged Hawk	795	510	24-Apr	**TOTAL**	**100,332**	**13984**	**1-Apr**

First Successful Minnesota Breeding Record of the Yellow-throated Warbler

James P. Mattsson

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), a common nesting species of the southeastern United States, is currently listed as a Casual species in Minnesota. Its breeding range extends from Florida northward through the Atlantic coastal states to southern New York and westward to eastern Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas. In the Midwest, small numbers breed as far north as the extreme southern portions of Michigan (Evers 1994), Wisconsin (Robbins 1991), and Iowa (Jackson *et al.* 1996). The highest breeding densities occur in the Cumberland Plateau region of Kentucky and Tennessee (Robbins *et al.* 1986). The first sight record for Minnesota was 6 May 1980, Ramsey County (***The Loon*** 52:111–112). The species has since been recorded in ten Minnesota counties (Janssen and Hertzel 1996). During the 22-year period, 1980 to 2001, the species has been recorded in all but six years. From 1993 to 2001 it has been reported in the state each year but one (1998). During these nine years, there have been at least 18 reports of 21 individual birds (Table 1).

In 1997, the first documented nesting attempt for this species in the state was at Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi County (***The Loon*** 70:230–231). An adult was observed visiting a nest in a cottonwood and was joined later by a second adult. However, the nest was apparently abandoned and no evidence of eggs could be documented.

Yellow-throated Warbler, 6 June 2001, Acacia Park Cemetery, Mendota Heights, Dakota County. Photo by Dave Cahlander.

The "Acacia" Birds

At 4:00 P.M., 11 June 2001, I stopped at Acacia Park Cemetery in Mendota Heights, Dakota County, to listen for crossbills amidst the many conifers. I immediately heard a familiar song from atop a nearby pine tree that I suspected was a Yellow-throated Warbler, a bird I am familiar with from the southeastern U.S. I also noticed a formidable dark wall cloud approaching from the west at a rapid pace. This storm proved to be the first of three intense storm systems that swept through the area during the next several days, causing considerable wind damage. At the same moment that the rain began to fall, I spotted movement and saw a black and white warbler with a bright lemon-yellow throat and bold black streaks on the flanks. The long bill and white postocular vertical line clinched the identification as a Yellow-throated Warbler. I observed the bird for

Date	Location	*Loon* Reference
6–8 May 1980	Roseville, Ramsey County	52:111–112
4–7 May 1982	Wood Lake Nature Center, Hennepin County	54:180
7–9 May 1984	Lake Elmo, Washington County	56:188
21 April 1985	Murphy-Hanrehan Park, Scott County	57:111
22 September 1985	Moorhead, Clay County	57:105–106
4 May 1986	Freeborn, Freeborn County	58:130
24 May – 3 June 1987	Frontenac S.P., Goodhue County	59:156, 60:27
7 April 1991	Eden Twp, Brown/Nicollet counties	63:197
1 May 1991	Vasa, Goodhue County	63:205
13 May 1993	Willmar, Kandiyohi County	65:156
30 May – July 1994	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County	66:210–211
8 October 1994	Stillwater, Washington County	66:211
7–10 December 1994	Rockford, Wright County	67:65–66
18 May – 5 August 1995	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County	67:226
28 April – 27 Aug 1996	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County	68:207
19 May 1996	Minnesota River Valley, Hennepin County	68:207
27 April 1997	Northfield, Rice County	69:229–230
13 – 16 May 1997	Minneapolis, Hennepin County	69:204
18 May 1997	Old Cedar Avenue Bridge, Hennepin County	69:229
19 May 1997	Lebanon Hills, Dakota County	70:181–182
23 – 24 May 1997	Agassiz NWR, Marshall County	69:204
27 – 29 May 1997	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County (nest built)	70:230–232
6 September 1997	Fridley, Anoka County	71:156–159
6 May – 24 July 1999	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County	71:208, 72:31
13 May - 17 June 2000	Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi County (2 birds)	72:223, 73:29
18 June, 2 August 2000	William O'Brien S.P., Washington County	73:62, 73:29
11 June – 9 Sept. 2001	Acacia Park Cemetery Park, Dakota County	73:231–235
24 August 2001	Fort Snelling S.P., Dakota County	—

Table 1. Accepted records for Yellow-throated Warbler in Minnesota, 1980–2001. All records published in *The Loon*.

perhaps 2–3 seconds before it flew in response to the heavy downpour that also totally obscured my vision. Rather than wait for the storm to pass, I drove home to phone a few birders and to post the sighting on the two Minnesota birding listservices.

After the storm passed that evening, Tom Tustison checked the area and found a singing male as well as a second bird that he suspected to be a female. I visited the site the next morning (12 June) and also saw the two birds which behaved as a possible mated pair, i.e., a singing male followed a second bird as it moved and fed among the trees. Both birds appeared nearly identical in plumage. The second bird made frequent "chip" notes, but was never heard singing. No aggressive or antagonistic behavior was observed between the two birds, further suggesting they were a consort rather than competing males.

Plumage differences between the male and female were slight. On one occasion on 13 June, both birds perched close together (1 m) and preened for three minutes in what turned out to be the nest tree. Through my spotting scope it appeared that the yellow throat was a bit richer on the male (who sang intermittently) than on the female. Also, the areas of black on white, such as the flanks and head, showed slightly more contrast on the male. However, this contrast was essentially not detectable (by me at least)

Adult Yellow-throated Warbler feeding young. Photo by Dennis Martin.

when the birds were seen individually. The male had slightly more black feathers on the forehead and adjacent to the white supercilium.

The Nest Site

On the evening of June 20, the first evidence of nesting was detected when Tom Tustison observed the male singing and carrying food to what turned out to be the nest tree. At 8:45 A.M. the following morning, 21 June, Bruce Fall located the nest by observing repeated food carrying visits to the same spot in the nest tree. The nest tree was a Norway spruce, approximately 17 m tall. The cup-shaped nest was located in the SE quadrant of the tree and I estimated it to be about 11–12 m from the ground and about 2.3 m from the trunk. It was about 0.3 m from the end of a bough and 12 cm below the top of the bough. It was very well concealed and appeared to have 100 percent canopy overhead. Fortunately, the nest could be viewed from the parking lot from a safe distance without causing disturbance to the birds. From this vantage point, a portion of the nest was visible through a narrow 3–4 cm-wide opening in the foliage. Of particular interest was the park-like nature of the habitat (mowed grass with no understory), which is typical of cemeteries, but is uncharacteristic of forest habitats normally used by Yellow-throated Warbler (Hall 1996).

Evidence of Young

I first observed young in the nest on the morning of 25 June. At least three young became visible when the adults brought food to the nest. They appeared to be all the same size and essentially naked. The skin on the head was dull pinkish tan and the orbital areas appeared large and gray. The gape flanges were cream-colored and contrasted with the mouth linings which were pinkish red. The small size compared to the adults indicated that they were young warblers and not Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), which would have been much larger at this stage. By 29 June, the three young were well developed and actively moving about the nest, even stepping away from the nest occasionally. The plumage appeared generally light gray, with two wing bars being clearly evident. The head pattern was similar to the adult, albeit faintly so, in that there was a white eye line, white crescent below the eye, and a white vertical supraloral area behind a darker cheek patch.

On 30 June, between 8:30 and 11:30 A.M., I observed only one young remaining in the nest. Both adults made frequent forays to the nest with food. In early afternoon that day, Bruce Fall and Denny Martin located all three young, each in different trees. By this time the last nestling had left the nest, but remained in the same tree. One chick was in a spruce about 30 m to the north and the other was in an ash about 25 m to the south. The chicks were vocalizing quite loudly. Denny observed the "ash" bird fly west with surprisingly strong flight to land in a nearby tree. At 8:30 A.M., 1 July, I observed a single young about 8 m high in a spruce tree being fed

by an adult. The tree was about 40 m from the nest. To my knowledge this was the last time any of the young were seen. Interestingly, on 8 and 9 September, Tom Tustison observed an adult Yellow-throated Warbler in the area, including the nest tree. On the 9th, he saw the bird chasing a Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), exhibiting what appeared to be territorial behavior.

Numerous birders observed the Acacia birds daily; therefore, it is very likely hatching occurred on 20 June, the day the adults were first observed carrying food. The young fledged on 30 June, a period of approximately ten days. Baicich and Harrison (1997) state that Yellow-throated Warblers incubate eggs for 12 days and fledge at about 10 days after hatching. Therefore, incubation probably began on 8 June and the first of three eggs was probably laid on 6 June. Nest building would have begun during the first few days in June.

Discussion

Evers (1994) discussed the extirpation of breeding populations of this species in the southern Great Lakes Region around the turn of the last century (1900s) presumably due to habitat alteration and degradation. He also documented the apparent reestablishment of breeding into the Region in recent decades. For example, he located a presumably reestablished breeding population consisting of 14–21 territories in extreme southwestern Michigan in 1988 and 1989. He noted that this population was associated with relatively undisturbed floodplain forests dominated by large sycamore trees. Throughout its breeding range, Yellow-throated Warbler is most often associated with either sycamore or various species of pine. The natural range of sycamore does not quite extend into southern Minnesota, that portion of the state where all but one (Marshall County) record has occurred; however, introduced and natural pines and other conifers are relatively common. I could find no record of spruce trees being used for breeding by Yellow-throated Warblers, so the choice of a Norway spruce by the Acacia birds appears to be unique.

Robbins (1991) stated that "proven breeding" in Rock County, Wisconsin, led the state to list Yellow-throated Warbler as an endangered species in 1989. The species is now regularly found each year at Wyalusing State Park along the Mississippi River in southeastern Wisconsin, approximately 450 km from the Acacia site. In southeast Iowa, the species again nested in May 2001 at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park in Van Buren County (Kenne 2001). This is the only confirmed nesting site for the species in Iowa (James Dinsmore, pers. comm. November 2001), although the 1996 *Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas* lists "probable" nesting in Boone Co. (Ledges State Park), in central Iowa, and "possible" nesting in the northern counties of Kossuth and Dickinson, both of which border Minnesota.

This record documents the first successful fledging of Yellow-throated Warblers in Minnesota. Combined with the 1997 nesting attempt in Kandiyohi County, the Dakota County nest supports growing evidence that this species is undergoing a gradual northward expansion throughout its breeding range. It appears likely that at least some of the Minnesota birds are from reproduction occurring in Wisconsin and Iowa. Yellow-throated Warbler is now recorded almost annually in Minnesota. With more birders becoming familiar with its clear, resonant "tchewy tchewy tchewy chit" song, as well as its striking plumage, it seems reasonable that future evidence may establish this "southern" species as a regular breeding member of Minnesota's avifauna.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank all of the considerate birders who demonstrated courtesy and respect not only for the nesting warblers, but also for the Acacia Cemetery Park property and its employees. Thanks especially to Bruce Fall and Tom Tustison for their efforts to find the nest and for making several useful comments on this pa-

per. Bob Russell suggested several improvements to the manuscript. Anthony Hertzel provided the historical records as well as suggestions on improving the manuscript. Jim Dinsmore kindly provided records for the state of Iowa.

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BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Hindsight

Kim R. Eckert

They say hindsight is 20–20. That, after looking back on something you experienced, after you have time to reflect on it, it's a lot easier to accurately evaluate what happened. I'm not so sure. Especially when it comes to thinking back on a bird you saw, what it really looked like, and how you identified it.

About a year ago, I happened upon an article in *The New Yorker* magazine that was both intriguing and sobering. It was about the criminal justice system and the accuracy of eyewitness testimony at trials, but it could have been about birding and documenting rarities just as well.

Over a hundred years ago, a law professor staged a crime in his classroom, without telling his class in advance it was all an act. After it was over: "He asked his students, as eyewitnesses, to describe exactly what they had seen....The results were dismal. The most accurate witness

got 26 per cent of the significant details wrong; others up to 80 per cent."

The students' performance was no aberration, the article went on to say, as this experiment and similar results have recurred on countless occasions in the next hundred years. In other words, eyewitnesses get the facts wrong at a high rate, and the author's repeated use of the word "misidentification" in this discussion immediately caught my eye. Was I reading about eyewitness testimony at trials or inadequately documented bird sightings?

Similar experiments revealed something further. It had been assumed that a witness with a high level of confidence would correspond to more accurate testimony. Not so: "The witnesses who picked the wrong person out of the lineup were just as confident about their choices as those who identified the right person." This reminded me of how often a rarity is reported by those who make a point of insisting how there was absolutely no doubt about what they saw.

Another pattern emerged from these experiments: "Having multiple witnesses did not ensure accurate identifications." Unfortunately, the same is true in bird identification, even though many state bird records committees consider rarities seen by multiple observers to be automatically more credible than single-observer records. The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) does not have this policy, which I believe is the correct approach.

While it always adds to the credibility of a record to have as many observers as possible document a sighting, a higher number of birders seeing a rarity does not on its own guarantee a correct identification. Years ago in Faribault County, two Mountain Plovers were reported and apparently correctly identified, and several observers flocked to the site the next few days, relocated the birds, and agreed on the ID. Unfortunately, a couple years later, it was shown the birds were actually American Golden-Plovers in a plumage unfamiliar to most birders and not then covered in any field guides. This was simply a matter of birders assuming the initial identification was correct and repeating the error when they saw the birds.

This was not an isolated event. Much more recently, in the fall of 2001, there were actually two similar incidents. A Yellow-billed Loon was found on Mille Lacs, and during the next few days several birders tried to relocate it. Some were sure they were successful, although it is now apparent the Yellow-billed Loon was only present for one day. What happened? It seems a Common Loon with a paler-than-normal bill and plumage showed up the next day in the same area, and birders naturally and incorrectly assumed this had to be the Yellow-billed.

And the following week and not far away in Aitkin County there was a report of a Brant. Some birders relocated the goose and understandably checked it off as a Brant, assuming the original ID was right. Others relocated the goose, took a second look, and correctly identified it as an immature blue-morph Snow Goose. The original observer made a simple ID error, and it was repeated by others who looked more at what the first observer said than at the bird and its actual field marks.

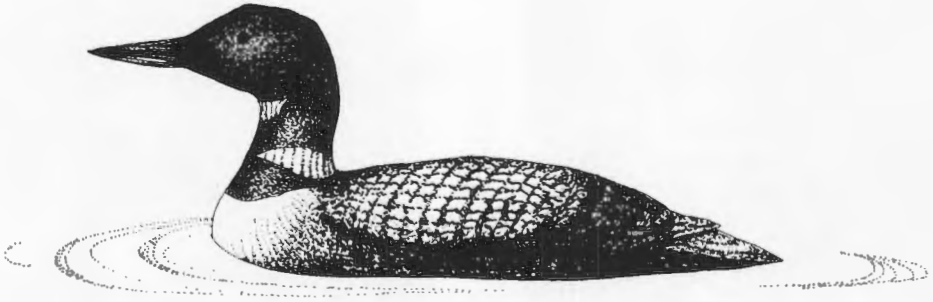
The *New Yorker* article continues with another account of witnesses to a staged crime who were shown six "mug shots," which included the actual guilty person. Although all the witnesses had close and repeated looks at him, only 54 per cent made the correct ID. And when another group was shown six other photos which did not include the culprit, only 32 per cent correctly picked no one: "But most of the rest chose the wrong person — the one who most resembled the perpetrator."

Again, consider how this parallels birders misidentifying birds. The mug shots are pictures in the field guide, and when someone says "it looked just like the picture in the book," this doesn't mean the ID was correct. And if the field guide mug shots the birder looks at don't include the species or plumage of the bird actually seen, it's easy to see how errors are made if the birder simply chooses the picture that seems the closest.

There is one final parallel with birding. "Witnesses who are not explicitly warned that a lineup may not include the actual perpetrator are substantially more likely to make a false identification, under the misapprehension that they've got to pick someone." Similarly, some birders seem to think that everything they see can and should be identified. Such a notion is hardly the case, and forcing an ID on every bird will certainly lead to cases of mistaken identities.

I'm sure you've noticed by now this *Hindsight* installment offers no helpful household hints on any tough ID problems. You may also be discouraged by all this, perhaps wondering if there's any point or accuracy in sight records. But rather than discouraging you, this brief essay is meant instead to encourage you to be aware of pitfalls involved with identifying difficult birds, to take accurate field notes (if not photos) at the time of your observation, and to realize how matching pictures in the field guide to the birds in the field isn't always as easy as it sounds.

And, if nothing else, just realize that we're all human, and it's human nature to have fallible memories of what we saw, to make mistakes, and to dislike making them. No, despite that article in *The New Yorker*, MOURC is not going to reject all sight records. But when it does turn one down, and that record is one of yours, relax. This is not a criminal trial. This is birding, it's fun, and no one is convicted or sent to jail as the result of our misidentifications. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

GYRFALCON IN DULUTH — On 18 December 2000, I found an immature gray-morph Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) at the Port Terminal in Duluth, St. Louis County. Though unable to see the color of its bare parts, I concluded that it was a juvenile because it showed thick, grayish-brown, vertical streaking on its underparts, while its mantle, wings and tail appeared grayish-brown (predominately brownish). Several birders looked for it over the next few days without success. Later that week, Dave Evans told me that he had seen a Gyr in the same area on the 23rd but believed it to be an adult.

Intrigued by the possibility of two different birds (but chagrined by the possibility that I had simply made a mistake), I relocated Dave's Gyr on the 24th and watched it

for nearly 45 minutes. During this time it was usually soaring overhead or perched far away on the AGP Elevator. Intending to study its plumage, I found myself distracted from this task by its spectacular aerial interactions with an adult Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*). The Peregrine repeatedly circled high and stooped on the Gyr, which took evasive action by changing its altitude or rolling onto its side as the Peregrine flashed by. Several times, the Gyr appeared to roll completely onto its back in order to present its talons towards the Peregrine.

On Christmas Day, Sue Barton and I, and Dave, Pamela, Jonas, and Lars Benson, searched the Port Terminal and eventually had great looks through my Leica spotting scope at a Gyrfalcon perched on the Cargill Elevator. It was clearly not a juvenile, since its underparts showed gray transverse barring — not brownish vertical streaking. These markings were less extensive across the upper breast, giving it a pale-chested look from a distance. Its upperparts including the back, wings, rump and tail were gray, lacking any discernible brown tones. After a few minutes it took flight and began harassing an adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) which had perched on the same elevator. As the Gyr made pass after pass and drove off the Red-tailed, Dave remarked, "It doesn't get any better than this ..."

After the Bensons left, the Gyr started hunting in earnest. We lost sight of it but after searching for a few minutes, Sue spotted it standing on the ice only 50 feet away! It had just caught and decapitated a Rock Dove (*Columba livia*) — feathers were flying every which way and fresh blood stained the ice. From such close range, we could see that three or four of the Gyr's scapulars showed subtle brownish-gray tones, suggesting subadult plumage, but its mantle still looked gray overall. Its tail was broad and tapering, with a dozen or more alternating bands of gray and lighter gray, all of which were about equal width, except for a thin, whitish terminal band. Its feet and legs were definitely yellow.

At this point, Sue and I were already thrilled but its "gyrations" towards other raptors had just begun! As it took off from the ice, carrying the pigeon's corpse, one of the two adult Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in the area began chasing it around and around the AGP Elevator! Eventually, the Gyr dropped its prey and returned to one of its favorite perches on the Cargill Elevator, while the two eagles squabbled over the pigeon. On the 26th I watched the Gyr for about an hour, during which time it easily caught and ate another pigeon. This time it finished its meal in peace while the eagle chased after the Peregrine!

Dave Evans aged this Gyr as an AHY (after hatch year) female, probably a second-year subadult, when he caught and banded it in late December. Once its routines and favorite perches were understood, this bird proved remarkably reliable — I looked for it on 19 dates and only missed it twice. It remained in the area through early March and thrilled hundreds of birders while hunting pigeons, soaring overhead, and interacting with other raptors. Most spectacular were its aerial gyrations while harassing Red-tailed Hawks and the Peregrine Falcon. The two falcons were often observed soaring together, and Steve and Diane Millard once found them perching side-by-side! **Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812-1533.**

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH IN DULUTH — On 13 January 2001 at approximately 11:00 A.M., Chris Hockema spotted an unusual-looking bird near the Cargill Elevator in Duluth, St. Louis County, that we (Chris and John) eventually identified as a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

We were looking for the Gyrfalcon that had been seen in the area and unknowingly trespassed onto Cargill property. Jeff Stephenson was also watching for the Gyr. We got impatient and decided to go for a walk despite the cold and blustery weather, leaving Jeff behind.

Neither of us was prepared when Chris casually said, "I think I have a weird sparrow over here." John skeptically replied, "You're probably looking at an odd-ball House Finch," and continued to look for the Gyr. Chris then said, with a little more urgency and uncharacteristic seriousness, "I really have something different." After looking at the sparrow-sized bird, John turned to Chris and said, "It looks like a rosy-finch." Now it was Chris' turn to be skeptical. The bird flew off and disappeared from view only to reappear a few minutes later. We saw it simultaneously and agreed that it must be a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

Chris ran to where Jeff had stationed himself. They soon returned and we started taking notes at 11:25 A.M.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, 14 January 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Dave Cahlander.

"Gray crown. Brown breast and back. Gray in folded wings. Yellow bill with black tip. Lighter undertail coverts with slight rosy tint." At 12:34 P.M. and with better views we were able to add, "...black fore-crown; gray crown and nape; overall body color brown with a few gray feathers; chest entirely brown; rear flanks diffuse with rosy; rump rosy with gray; gray wingbars in greater coverts."

Looking in *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Jeff discovered that variants of the Brown-capped Rosy-Finch have a straight border between the gray crown and the dark face, but the border on the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch is curved toward the nape.

Initially the bird was feeding on the ground with House Sparrows, but overall the rosy-finch was a loner. It fed on spilled grain near the railroad tracks, but also spent time roosting on the grain elevator ledges, seeming to prefer to rest at higher elevations. Once we had clearly identified the bird, we celebrated while Jeff used his cell phone to alert Duluth birders.

This sighting was very special in that many people got to see this bird over the next several weeks. The managers at the Cargill property graciously allowed people access to the property on weekends. This observation was accepted by the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee as the 11th state record for this species. We did it together — observed first by Chris and identified by his skeptical brother who now has complete faith in his younger sibling! **Chris Hockema, RR 3, Box 83, Spring Valley, MN 55975, and John Hockema, 849 – 24 St. S.E., Rochester, MN 55904.**

A WINTER RECORD OF THE KING EIDER IN LAKE COUNTY — On 30 December 2000, John Hockema, Chuck Juhnke and I relocated an eider on Agate Bay in Lake County that had been found the previous afternoon by Jim Lind. Jim was unable to make a positive identification at the time but believed it to be a King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). Although Minnesota records of the King outnumber those of the Common Eider (*S. mollissima*) by more than 2:1, we knew that Common Eiders have occurred in Minnesota during late fall and early winter — most recently at Stoney Point, St. Louis County on 27

December 1978 (***The Loon*** 51:144). We were anxious to make a firm identification of this bird either way, but secretly hoped that it would prove to be a Common Eider!

From the parking lot at the lighthouse in Two Harbors and then from the end of the breakwater, we studied the bird for about an hour between 9:15 and 10:15 A.M. Cold temperatures (about 10° F) and high humidity (dewpoint 6.8° F), combined with north winds, produced significant optical distortion and made the viewing conditions unpleasant, especially after hiking out to the end of the breakwater. From there, we were looking west under overcast skies, so contrast was good, but the combination of our shivering and optical shimmering allowed only brief periods of viewing with clarity. My immediate impression, based on head shape and bill characteristics, was an immature or female King Eider, but there remained some doubt since the bird was actively diving and stayed about 500 yards away. Chuck lugged his five-inch Celestron telescope out onto the breakwater but the identification still could not be resolved.

We discussed various strategies and decided to seek permission from the DMIR railroad for access to their property behind the ore docks on the west side of Agate Bay. We were granted one-time access so that the bird could be positively identified. The yard supervisor escorted us to an overlook which placed us high above the eider but within about 150 yards. We then enjoyed premier looks through my Leica Televid scope with a 20–60x eyepiece. The skies were still overcast but by that time (10:45 A.M.) the sun was higher in the sky and since we were well above the lake, optical distortion was no longer a factor.

The bird was much larger than the two female Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*) and one male Bufflehead (*B. albeola*) which associated with one another, but not with the eider. Its behavior when diving reminded me of an immature male King Eider that I had seen in Cook County about 10 weeks earlier (also found by Jim Lind). As the eider dove, it partially opened its wings and leaped forward into the water. Several times, it rose from the surface and flapped its wings a few times. This revealed whitish axillary feathers, but there was no obvious contrast anywhere else on its underwing. The upperwing surface appeared uniformly dark brown.

From a distance it appeared all brown, with the head and neck slightly paler than the body. Unlike the immature male King Eider in Cook County, none of its scapulars or coverts showed rust or buff edging. When viewed at closer range from behind the ore docks, we could see that its flanks were neatly marked with small chevrons. A Common Eider would show relatively straight, dark parallel bars on its flanks. When seen from behind while diving, the bird's under-tail coverts appeared uniform brown while the tail itself looked darker brown than the body.

Its eyes were dark. The head shape and bill characteristics were sketched. Its bill was entirely black. The culmen was concave and met the forehead at a gentle angle. Unlike Common Eider, where most of the bill sides are covered by feathering which terminates in a sharp point, the anterior margin of the feathering on this bird's bill was rounded, and the feathering ended well before the nares. There was an obvious but ill-defined pale area on its face where the feathering met the base of its bill.

Many observers reported this King Eider at Two Harbors through 15 January 2001. It furnished the 15th record of this Casual species in Minnesota. Eleven are from the North Shore of Lake Superior and, except for an exceptional spring occurrence of two pair on Lower Red Lake, all records refer to immature or female birds between mid-October and mid-January. The frequency of occurrence in Minnesota has increased over the past decade. This trend is the opposite of that for western North America, where King Eider vagrancy has decreased since the mid-1980s (Mlodinow 1999).

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Peder H. Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.

RUFF IN DAKOTA COUNTY — While out birding with Tom Tustison on the evening of 22 April 2001, we found a very interesting flooded pasture area along Donnelly Avenue and the Vermillion River in Empire, Dakota County. No birds were present at the time, but we speculated on what nice habitat it would be for several shorebird species. This area was a short block off U.S. highway 52, which I drive daily to work in Cannon Falls. I decided to check it twice a day on my way to and from the office, while the habitat remained flooded.

The next morning, 23 April, the area was filled with shorebirds. Over 100 mixed yellowlegs, Common Snipe, and a Basic-plumaged Dunlin had come in overnight. While the numbers and mix of species changed slightly with each subsequent visit, the yellowlegs and snipe seemed to remain. Nothing notable made an appearance over the next couple days.

On Thursday, 26 April, on my evening stop, I was immediately aware that many more birds had arrived since the morning. I slowly crossed the small bridge over the river, eased my vehicle into a good viewing position and stopped. Scanning the flock with binoculars, it took only a few moments to find an odd shorebird I had never seen before, about 40 feet from my vehicle. It was foraging belly deep in water through some of the higher grass above water level. In a quick comparison with both yellowlegs species nearby, its size was between the two.

The bill was of moderate length and slightly decurved, the head and neck a consistent gray-brown color. There was no supercilium or distinct eye-ring. The back had a definite scaled pattern, particularly due to the larger scapulars being dark-centered with a thin, pale edge. The bird had an upright posture and a plumper look than the yellowlegs. The shape of the back seemed more rounded, but this was difficult to determine due to the bird's very active feeding behavior. Going through possibilities in my mind, I quickly determined this had to be a Ruff, or more specifically, a Reeve — an adult female bird.

Wanting a look through my scope, I slowly began to back my truck up, thinking I would be less likely to spook the birds when I got out if I were a little farther away. But one bird did spook and it was the Ruff. I quickly stopped and watched the bird in flight through my binoculars. This was actually a great stroke of luck. Spread wide in flight, I could now clearly see its uniquely patterned tail. The central feathers were dark, and there was a dark terminal band. The rest of the tail was clean white. Dangling out behind were bright orangish feet. These details were not discernable while the bird was feeding in the water and grass.

The bird flew back about 100 feet and landed on an exposed bank close to the main river channel beside and a little behind a Lesser Yellowlegs. I continued to back up and was able to stop and get my scope out without spooking the birds again. Through the scope I could see the breast well for the first time. The bird was standing in profile and I could see the mottled looking breast pattern with blotchy black marks. This ended against the white belly in an irregular line, unlike the clean delineated pattern of a Pectoral Sandpiper. The rear of the bird was blocked from view by the Lesser Yellowlegs.

Confident that this was a Ruff, I quickly drove to nearby Coates to make some phone calls. I didn't have my reading glasses with me, and called the only two people whose phone numbers I had memorized. Neither was home, and I could only leave messages. I returned immediately to the Donnelly Avenue location. On the south side of the river directly behind where I had last seen the bird are several homes. Two

young men had started joy-riding on an ATV close to the river. Not a good sign.

No birds were present along the bank where I had last seen the Ruff, apparently frightened off by the roaring ATV. Many birds were still in the flooded pasture area, where I had initially found it feeding, so I scanned that area. No luck. I checked and rechecked, carefully looking through all the birds. Not there. Then I noticed many shorebirds back in some taller grass near puddles of standing water. I carefully searched here as well, but it was more difficult viewing due to the increased distance, habitat and now setting sun. I continued searching for another 45 minutes, but it seemed certain the bird had flown off after being disturbed by the ATV.

I realized it was necessary to write some notes while my memory was fresh, but I didn't have my glasses with me. I made notes and drew a sketch anyway, even though everything was a blur. Time for me to start keeping a pair of glasses in the car!

I checked the location again early the next morning, and it was obvious the water level had gone down. There were less than half the birds present than were there the evening before, and unfortunately the Ruff was not among them. Still hopeful, I returned again early that afternoon. By then, the flood waters had completely receded and only three Lesser Yellowlegs remained. **Drew Smith, 3606 Widgeon Way, Eagan MN 55123.**

OVERWINTERING YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER — On 13 December 2000, we observed a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker eating at one of our suet feeders less than 20 feet from our viewing windows. We live on Grey Cloud Island, which is located in the southwest corner of Washington County. The habitat is wooded with large residential lots along a backwater channel of the Mississippi River. After feeding birds at this location for 36 years, it was our first winter Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. It was especially great that he returned almost daily and was last seen on 16 March 2001.

It was an easy task to look up previous Minnesota winter records by checking the *Complete Species Index to The Flicker and The Loon*, by Anthony Hertzel *et al.* The following records have appeared in ***The Loon***: In Volume 60, page 90 in the "Notes of Interest," Manley Olson reported a sapsucker he saw on the Normandale Community College Campus, Bloomington, Hennepin County, on 23 February 1988. The Editor's Note following this listed two other February dates for the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Minnesota, one overwintering at Pickwick, Winona County during the winter of 1964–65, and the other on 29 February and 1 March 1964, in Ramsey County.

Volume 61, page 41 reported a female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at suet on 10 February 1989, in Rushford, Fillmore County. This was observed and written up by Anne Marie Plunkett. In Volume 65, page 34, the *Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee* noted an observation of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on 7 March 1992, from Cologne, Carver County, which was accepted by all members voting.

Another report referred to an immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on 1 January 1993, in Minnetonka, Hennepin County. The bird was still present four days later when Richard Brasket wrote the "Note of Interest" which was published in Volume 65, page 96.

An additional observation, which was reported in *The Season*, occurred at Carpenter Nature Center, Washington County, during the winter of 1992–93. It was an immature bird first seen on 29 December 1992 and observed several times until 19 February 1993.

Certainly there have been other observations that were not written up, but to have a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker return to a feeding station for a winter season is a rare

event and a real treat. It preferred the suet concoction we prepared over plain beef suet. The sapsucker would attach himself to the bottom of the suet cage and stay there feeding upside down for up to 20 minutes. We never observed the sapsucker feeding at plain beef suet. **Tom and Elizabeth Bell, 5868 Pioneer Road South, Saint Paul Park MN 55071.**

HIGH COUNTS OF RED-THROATED LOONS AT DULUTH — Record numbers of Red-throated Loons were present on Lake Superior in Duluth during May 2001. My first visit this spring was on 2 May 2001, when I didn't check the lake for waterbirds until 8:45 A.M., but while observing from the Superior Entry during the next two hours, I counted a minimum of 28 Red-throated Loons on the Minnesota side of the entry. These birds flew up from the water several times in various groups and circled around, but eventually all 28 loons departed the area by flying out of sight eastward up along the Wisconsin side of the lake. Conditions were good for migration with mostly clear skies and light southwest winds. Although 2 May seems early for such a large flock of Red-throated Loons, this observation followed a period of very strong southerly winds 28–30 April, which resulted in an exceptionally early wave of migrants into the region.

On 9 May 2001, I returned to Duluth at sunrise to see the lake completely calm, perfect for scanning for loons. During the next two hours (6:00–8:00 A.M.), I repeatedly scanned the lake from various points along Minnesota Point from Canal Park to Sky Harbor Airport, and was able to count a minimum of 39 Red-throated Loons while standing at one location near Sky Harbor Airport. Since some of these birds were diving, the total number was probably even higher. I felt that my scanning was able to pick up Red-throated Loons as much as two miles away. Unlike the experience on 2 May 2001, these birds did not get up and fly east, but in anticipation of this event, at 8:00 A.M. I moved farther up the North Shore to Lester River, Brighton Beach, Talmadge River, and French River, hoping to see birds that were heading northeast up the shore, and possibly even encounter additional concentrations of birds on the water. Although the lake was still calm, no more Red-throated Loons were found, indicating that the birds were indeed entirely confined to the western end of the lake within several miles of Minnesota Point. Back in Duluth at 10:00, there was now chop on the lake, and most of the birds were either gone or not visible, although I did see one flock of seven Red-throateds that got up and flew a short distance before relanding on the lake. I made additional trips to Duluth this spring on 15 May and 17 May, but the conditions on 15 May with strong northeast winds were miserable for scanning, and I saw only one Red-throated Loon. On 17 May, the conditions were perfect for scanning with mostly calm conditions and overcast skies, but during several hours of observation beginning at 6:30 A.M., I was able to find only three Red-throated Loons.

Previous high counts of Red-throated Loons at Duluth have been 30 counted by Scott Wolff on 31 May 2000 (***The Loon*** 72:205), and 26 counted by myself on 2 June 1999 (***The Loon*** 72:16). The conditions on the morning of 2 June 1999 were calm, and the count of 26 included a flock of 18 that swam in very close to shore but then got up and flew farther out onto the lake. Interestingly, on 5 June 1999, I observed two flocks of Red-throated Loons of three and four birds each that flew over Minnesota Point, gained altitude, and then appeared to begin heading northeast up the lakeshore before disappearing. Kim Eckert documented a sighting of as many as 18 Red-throated Loons from Minnesota Point on 5 May 1994 (***The Loon*** 66:104–105), and mentioned that additional locations on the North Shore were checked as far as Stoney Point without seeing any other Red-throated Loons.

My theory has been that Red-throated Loons get "trapped" on the western end of Lake Superior during their northward spring migration (much as jaegers get blown into the Duluth area in fall), where they remain concentrated for an unknown length of time before resuming their migration northeastward up the lake. Red-throated Loons appear to be more reluctant to cross land than Common Loons, which may concentrate the birds on the western end of the lake (although obviously the birds must leave the Lake Superior basin at some point!). Hundreds of Red-throated Loons are seen each spring and fall at Whitefish Point, Michigan, on the eastern end of Lake Superior, with a maximum of over 900 birds counted by myself 16 April – 31 May 1998 (*Field Notes* 52:331). All of the loons at Whitefish Point are heading over the lake in a westerly direction, so it is no surprise that at least some of these birds would make it to the western end of the lake at Duluth, and I believe that Red-throated Loons are probably much more common than previously realized at Duluth in spring from late April to early June.

During seven trips to Duluth during this time frame over the last three years, I have always encountered at least one Red-throated Loon, and have seen a total of 106 Red-throated Loons. Two reasons that Red-throated Loons may not have been noticed at Duluth more often are that relatively calm conditions are needed for scanning the lake, and that the view from Minnesota Point in the morning (when the loons seem to be most prevalent) is into the rising sun, making most of the birds visible only as silhouettes. An interesting project for someone to undertake would be daily observations from Minnesota Point during spring, in an attempt to document when and under what conditions the birds arrive and depart and for how long they stay. **Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN WILKIN COUNTY — When Jeff Dains and I arrived at the Breckenridge sewage ponds in Wilkin County on 7 May 2001, we encountered what appeared to be an immature Great Black-backed Gull, but the bird was still distant and I dismissed this identification as very unlikely. But as we moved closer to the gull, it took off from the pond, displaying its distinctive tail pattern, and it was then that I realized the bird really was a Great Black-backed Gull.

The rump and basal two-thirds of the tail were almost entirely white, contrasting with the dark tail band, which occupied only the distal third of the tail, and had a marbled and barred appearance which is unique to Great Black-backed Gull. The tail bands of other species of large gulls in first-year plumage are solid in color. In flight, the inner primaries were only slightly lighter than the outer primaries and secondaries, and thus the bird lacked the obviously paler inner primary panel of immature Herring Gulls. The head and body were whitish, and the coverts were so heavily worn and faded they also appeared nearly whitish. The distinctive "checkering" on the mantle of an immature Great Black-backed Gull was present, and contrasted sharply with the whitish covert panel. The dark eye appeared proportionately small on the head. The bill was mostly blackish, but there was some lightening towards the base, and a pale tip; overall, the dark bill contrasted sharply with the whitish head. The bill appeared massive in size, with a very prominent gonydeal swelling. In fact, the bill appeared as long as that of an adjacent male Northern Shoveler, which compares favorably with bill measurements given by Grant for Great Black-backed Gull (57–72 mm) and given by Madge and Burn for male Northern Shoveler (62–72); the bills of both Lesser Black-backed Gull and Herring Gull are shorter than a male Northern Shoveler's.

These details confirm this as a first-summer Great Black-backed Gull. This observation represents the first report of a Great Black-backed Gull in western Minnesota.

Aside from now-annual observations on the North Shore of Lake Superior, there are eight records from the Twin Cities, and single records from Goodhue and Wabasha counties along the Mississippi River in the southeast. By comparison, North Dakota has only a single record on 23 November 1996 at Garrison Dam (Martin 1997), and South Dakota has no records. My thanks to Ron Martin and Dan Tallman for answering my query concerning records in the Dakotas.

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Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.

CALIFORNIA GULL IN LYON COUNTY — On the morning of 26 May 2001, I was returning home after searching Lyon County for shorebirds, as very few were seen here this spring. Approaching Marshall from the north on state highway 68, I slowed to check on a flooded field. Here, a Marbled Godwit was present along with three gulls. The gulls piqued my curiosity since the day before in Murray County, I observed a migrating flock of 35–40 birds that contained Herring, Ring-billed, and possibly California Gulls, though I never did get a long enough look at these migrating gulls to say for certain.

The three unusual gulls were medium-sized, appearing slightly larger than Ring-billed Gull, but significantly smaller than Herring Gull, although neither of these two species were available for direct comparison. Two of the birds were in adult breeding plumage, showing very clean and crisp coloration on the head, wings, and soft parts. The third individual present appeared to be in second-winter plumage.

Only one bird could be positively identified as a California Gull. The most conclusive field marks used to identify this bird were the markings on the bill. The bill was yellow, and had a small red patch on the lower mandible at the gonys. Immediately distal of the red patch was a dark line across both mandibles. The dark line was thicker on the lower mandible, and lighter on the upper mandible, giving the illusion of a slight diagonal line forward and up the bill.

Though the lighting was not optimal — the sun was only partially behind me, while the bird was slightly in front of me — I was able to observe the yellow legs, and dark eye. The head, neck, breast, and belly were all bright white, while the back and upperwings were gray. The primaries were seen only while the bird was standing, and were black with visible white spotting toward the tips. The second bird may have also been a California Gull but I could not be certain.

With regard to the immature bird, the following characteristics were distinct: I was especially drawn to the dark eye on the nearly white head. The head was only slightly washed with light brown streaking. The shape of the head was also noticeable, appearing flat and elongated. The legs were yellow, but not as bright yellow as in the adult birds in basic plumage, nor was it as yellow as this immature bird's bill. The bill was noticeably long and yellow, with a black band toward the outer end of the tip of the bill, yet not fully covering to the outer tip. The very tip of the bill was yellow. This bird was probably a Ring-billed Gull.

Neither of the two adult birds were large enough to be a Herring Gull. Further-

more, both showed a dark line or ring on the bill in addition to the red spot at the gonys, a characteristic that is absent in adult Herring Gull. With respect to the immature bird, the leg color was also yellow — albeit a paler yellow than the adult birds — unlike the pale pink in immature Herring Gull, and the eye color was dark, unlike the cream color of immature Herring Gull.

Considering Ring-billed Gull, the two adults appeared slightly larger than one would expect from Ring-billed Gull. The shape also appeared more streamlined (especially in the head) than in Ring-billed Gull. Although Ring-billed Gull legs are yellow, Ring-billeds does not show a red spot on the lower mandible in adult plumage. Eye color is also a factor; adult Ring-billed Gulls have a cream colored or yellow eye unlike the dark eye shown in California Gull. **Roger Schroeder, 2520 County Road 20, Marshall, MN 56258.**

UNUSUAL CONCENTRATION OF GREATER SCAUP IN NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA — While birding in northwestern Minnesota on 26–28 April 2001, I encountered an unusual number of Greater Scaup. During my traditional survey of sewage ponds and other locations in Polk, Pennington, Marshall, and Roseau counties, I noticed that the flocks of scaup consistently contained a greater proportion of Greater Scaup than Lesser Scaup, a most unusual situation for any area of Minnesota away from Lake Superior and the Mississippi River Valley.

The initial observation of at least 150 Greater Scaup among 500 Lesser Scaup at the Crookston lagoons on 26 April may actually have been a low estimate, based on subsequent observations at additional locations, and because of both poor light conditions at dusk and my disbelief that Greaters could outnumber Lessers in western Minnesota. But the following locations and numbers from 27 April indicate Greaters consistently constituted more than half of the scaup flocks encountered: Thief River Falls sewage lagoons — 485 Greater Scaup (54%) and 400 Lesser Scaup; Agassiz NWR — 460 Greater Scaup (64%) and 250 Lesser Scaup; Warroad (opening on Lake of the Woods) — 300 Greater Scaup (60%) and 200 Lesser Scaup. By far the largest concentration of scaup was in flooded fields along the Roseau River north of Roseau, Roseau County. Here, on the evening of 27 April, I estimated 2500 scaup, of which as many as 75% were Greater Scaup. I returned to this area on 28 April, and by checking additional areas, was able to find 3200 scaup, and more carefully estimated 1800 Greater Scaup (56%) and 1400 Lesser Scaup.

By comparison, high counts for the state have been at Duluth where 3000 were estimated by myself on 14 April 1999 (***The Loon*** 71:194) and 2500 were reported by Jan Green on 21 April 1962 (***The Loon*** 33:51). Interestingly, 2400 Greater Scaup were counted in northeastern North Dakota on 15 April 2000 (Martin 2000). In my experience birding throughout the state, with a particular interest in waterfowl, and including many previous observations in northwestern Minnesota in April, thousands of Lesser Scaup can be scanned without finding more than a few Greater Scaup. For example, during a trip to southwestern Minnesota on 5 April 2001, I observed at least 3000 Lesser Scaup in Jackson and Nobles counties, many of which were close to the road and easily scanned, but I found only one Greater Scaup. Similarly, among 3000–4000 Lesser Scaup at French Lake, Hennepin County on 17–18 April 2001, only one group of five Greater Scaup was seen.

Identification of Greater Scaup is not necessarily a simple task, and although head shape is often cited as the most useful characteristic, it is quite common for Lesser Scaup to show a rounded head shape, especially when actively feeding, but also during other circumstances, such as when in a crouch display. It is necessary to watch individual birds for some time to determine the true head shape. Also, size is more

useful than other authors (Kaufman 1990, Eckert 1994) suggest when sorting through mixed groups of scaup, since there is apparently no overlap in size between Lesser Scaup and the North American subspecies of Greater Scaup in both bill and wing lengths (Madge and Burn 1988). The larger overall size, more massive bill, thicker neck, and puffier head are better features to focus on than head shape alone. One must also be aware that males average larger than females in both scaup species, which could result in confusion, but this can also help since a female Greater often appears noticeably larger than a male Lesser.

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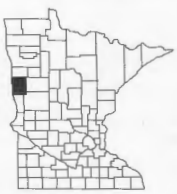
Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.

WHITE-EYED VIREO IN CLAY COUNTY — Between 6:45 and 7:30 A.M. on 24 May 2001, I was able to closely observe a White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) at Buffalo River State Park, Clay County. I first heard a loud, somewhat familiar call from the trees to the west of the swimming beach, which sounded something like "whit, witch, wheateo" with the last part of the song frequently repeated. I immediately thought the bird was a White-eyed Vireo, since it had a typical vireo shape, white wingbars, and yellow on the sides of its chest. The bird flew to the other side of the picnic grounds, where I got excellent eye-level looks as it foraged in the willowy shrubs near the start of a hiking trail.



The bird had two white wingbars, the upper one rather faint or obscured by darker wing coverts. Its upperparts were dark gray, but there was also obvious green feathering on the upper back. The head was a lighter gray with faint, narrow, yellow spectacles. The eye itself was white. The underparts were grayish-white with small, yellow areas on either side of the upper breast.

I consulted my *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* after and while viewing the bird. The head coloring was darker than shown in the guide and the yellow spectacles were much less prominent. Inside the car, I also played my Peterson's *Songs of Eastern Birds* tape and the song was virtually identical. The bird was so close that it responded to the tape, so I quickly stopped playing the tape so as not to drive it away. It was still emphatically singing as I drove away to get back to work in Bemidji. **Douglas P. Johnson, 7203 Tall Pines Road NE, Bemidji, MN 56601.**

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER IN POPE COUNTY — On 12 May 2001, I saw a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on my farm 4 and 1/4 miles northwest of Starbuck in Pope County, while I was seeding wheat. The field had many short pieces of last year's corn stalks sticking out of the ground. The bird was flying from one corn stalk to another. I watched it from as close as 60 feet. It was a silver-gray bird with a very long tail. The white edges on its tail and the reddish markings on its sides were clearly visible, but after getting my binoculars I was unable to find it again. **David Peterson, 18741 320th Ave., Starbuck, MN 56381.**

WHITE-EYED VIREO IN LYON COUNTY — On 28 May 2001, I was at Camden State Park ready to leave the swimming pool area when I heard an unfamiliar vocalization nearby — a blurry, "vrheet" that ascended slightly in pitch — reminding me of Great Crested Flycatcher. This vocalization was quick, and not long and drawn out. I had heard several Great Crested vocalizations that morning, and this one seemed quite different. It was softer in volume, and seemed to be said faster than Great Crested. The bird said the "vhreet" call note again, then started on another vocalization that I knew was not Great Crested Flycatcher, but was unsure of what species could be making the sound.

The second vocalization was repeated about 18–20 times during the ten minutes I listened to the bird. This vocalization consisted of four syllables that could be mnemonically expressed as "chick-ba-rheeer-chick." The starting and ending "chick" notes were clear, (not blurry or raspy) and very quick. Regarding the "ba-rheeer" syllables, the "ba" sound was brief and did not seem to have any emphasis to it — having sort of an "introductory note" sound. The "rheeer" sound had a blurry quality to it, rising in pitch quickly through the "rhe" part, and dropping in pitch through the "eer" part. The end of the "rheeer" syllable was slightly drawn out as compared to the first part of the syllable. The "chick-ba-rheeer-chick" phrase was repeated with long pauses (15–20 seconds) before the start of the next phrase. At most, three of these phrases were sung within two minutes, then the bird paused for up to five minutes before singing another one to three phrases.

After leaving the area without finding the bird, I went home and listened to several *Myiarchus* recordings, thinking that the bird would be in this genus based on the "vhreet" call note. The structure of the vocalizations of one Ash-throated Flycatcher matched closely to what I heard, but not exactly. Other recordings of Ash-throated did not match closely at all, but gave an indication of the variability of vocalizations of this species.

Knowing that Ash-throated Flycatcher would be a very unusual sighting, I posted a message to the internet listservice operated by the MOU, MOU-net, about the vocalization, and soon received a response suggesting that I listen to a White-eyed Vireo recording. That suggestion proved to be invaluable, as the first White-eyed Vireo song that I listened to matched what I heard in the field almost exactly. The recording had the "chick" note at the beginning AND end of the song — just what I heard in the field. The Ash-throated Flycatcher vocalization only had the "chick" note at the beginning, though other recordings gave a variety of vocal patterns.

The middle of the song on the White-eyed Vireo recording (what I termed the "ba-rheeer" part of the phrase) was a bit different than the bird heard in the field. However, various sources suggest that White-eyed Vireo also has variation in its song. Basically stated, the song heard in the field was simpler than the recording. In the recording, the "ba-rheeer" part was more up and down in pitch, and seemed to have an additional syllable in the middle of the "ba-rheer" phrase as compared to the bird I heard. But again, the recording was nearly exact.

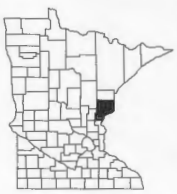
I did finally see the White-eyed Vireo the following afternoon. The bird was again heard singing the "chick-ba-rheer-chick" song. Soon after I saw a small bird approximately five inches in size foraging in the middle branches of a tree as it hopped and flew from branch to branch. Unfortunately the entire bird was in full view for only a couple seconds. The bird had a light colored eye, and had yellow "spectacles" above the eye and extending forward toward the bill, which contrasted with the olive-gray plumage of the head. The flanks of this individual looked yellow, which contrasted with the dark wings and the overall gray appearance of the back and tail. The wings had two visible white wing bars.

The bird was chased off by another small bird (presumably a Red-eyed Vireo) and was not seen again. Several attempts to relocate the bird in this area were made by several local birders, but they were unsuccessful. **Roger Schroeder, 2520 County Road 20, Marshall, MN 56258.**

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY — At 10:39 A.M. on 7 April 2001, while birding along Horizon Hills Road north of Willmar with Randy Frederickson and Jeff Weitzel, I spotted a male Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) in breeding plumage. It was feeding in a chisel-plowed soybean field on the north side of the road with a large flock of Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*). The bird was observed for eleven minutes from as close as 25 feet by all three observers who were inside the car.

The Chestnut-collared Longspur had a black bib that extended all the way down its belly. Its cream-colored throat and cheek patches were very evident. Several of the male Lapland Longspurs in breeding plumage were feeding as close as two feet away. Both species showed a rufous-colored nape, but the extent of its black bib, and the cream-colored throat and cheek patches distinguished the Chestnut-collared Longspur from the Lapland Longspurs. The Chestnut-collared also appeared to be a little smaller than the Laplands. This species has never been documented before in Kandiyohi County. **Ronald A. Erpelding, 701 SW 4th St., Willmar, MN 56201.**

BLUE GROSBEAK IN PINE COUNTY — On 13 May 2001 at 11:15 A.M., we discovered and photographed a male Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) along State Line Road, which forms the border between Pine County, Minnesota and Burnett County, Wisconsin. The bird was most frequently seen on the Minnesota side of the road, but crossed over to the Wisconsin side at least once during the 25 minutes that we watched it from a distance of 12–40 feet in good lighting. It foraged along the roadside on the ground, and in the flowering bushes that were part of a hedgerow along this paved road.



The bird was about seven inches long, and deep blue in color with a heavy, large, silvery bill. The black at the base of its bill was apparent and two rufous wing-bars were easily seen. Delia even saw the small white patches on the outer corners of its tail as it flew. We have seen this species previously in Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, and ruled out Indigo Bunting because of this bird's larger size, larger beak, darker blue body, and the two clearly discerned, rufous wing-bars. **Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen, 5018 Odana Rd, Madison, WI 53711.**

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER IN KOOCHICHING COUNTY — On or about 10 May 2001, I was driving east on state highway 1, about one mile west of the intersection with U.S. highway 71, when I saw a gray bird with an extremely long tail on a fence wire. I turned the car around to go back for a closer look. When it flew up to catch an insect, I saw its tail fan out into a wide fork. Then it returned to the wire. It flew up and caught about four insects during the five minutes or so that I watched it from a distance of 50 feet, each time returning to the fence wire. Its body was light gray with black tail feathers. The Fork-tailed Flycatcher is similar, but has black markings on the head which this bird lacked. **Richard Lukenbill, 12897 Highway 1, Northome, MN 56661.**

Index to *The Loon*
Volume 73

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Index to Authors

This index lists the names of authors found in the 2001 issues of ***The Loon.***

Index to Species

This index lists the common names of birds referenced in the 2001 issues of ***The Loon.***

Corrections to *The Loon*

Volume 72:

Delete the two dots from central Iowa on the map depicting extralimital records of the Eurasian Tree Sparrow (***The Loon*** 72:136).

Corrections to "The Season"

Volume 72:

Add **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** 5/31 **Kandiyohi** (Willmar) †RAE, †RJF, Spring 2000 report (***The Loon*** 72:215).

Delete **Red-bellied Woodpecker** 4/13 St. Louis (Hoyt Lakes) AE, Spring 2000 report (***The Loon*** 72:217).

Volume 73:

Change high count for Semipalmated Plover from 56 to 66 at BSNWR, 8/3 Lac Qui Parle BEO, Fall 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:89).

Change citation under **Lesser Black-backed Gull** in Polk County, Summer 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:22) from 73:59–60 to 73:60–61.

Delete **Great Gray Owl** 11/5 Polk (CR 44 at U.S. Hwy 2) EEF, Fall 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:93).

Add first county breeding records in *Kanabec* and *Kandiyohi* to the species account and map for **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, Summer 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:23).

Delete **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** 11/3 Brown JSS, Fall 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:98).

Change citation under **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** in Washington County, Summer 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:29) from 73:61–62 to 73:62–63.

Change date for **Yellow Warbler** in Pine County, Fall 2000 report (***The Loon*** 73:100) from **10/31** to **10/29–30**.

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is an organization of both professionals and amateurs interested in birds. We foster the study of birds. We aim to create and increase public interest in birds, and to promote the preservation of birdlife and its natural habitat.

To carry out these aims, we publish a journal, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* we conduct field trips; we encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; we hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. Any or all phases of the MOU program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, Notes of Interest, color slides, and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission in any standard format on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. See inside front cover. Bird sighting reports for each season should be sent promptly at the end of February, May, July and November to Peder Svingen. See key to the "Seasonal Report."