

SOME JUNE-JULY BIRD RECORDS FOR THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

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This article was originally written for *American Birds*, published six times a year by the National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. Four issues cover reports of outstanding bird events throughout North America in spring, summer, fall and winter. Hundreds of cooperators contribute records to compilers of data for 26 regions, including the Prairie Provinces region. Of the other two issues, one is devoted to breeding and wintering bird censuses and the other to Christmas Bird Counts — 1357 in 1981. The six issues, which also contain articles on birds, exceed 1000 pages. Subscription is \$18 (US).

For Saskatchewan, reports are usually received from natural history societies in Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon and from birdwatchers living in Biggar, Broadview, Harnduff, Dilke, Eastend, Foam Lake, Frontier, Good Spirit Lake, Grenfell, Indian Head, Lenaston, Kenosee Lake, Kindersley, La Roche, Oxbow, Raymore, Spring Valley, Val Marie, Waskesiu Lake, Webb, White Bear and Wolseley. A separate report is compiled from these data. (See Jim Wedgwood's summary of spring migration in this issue.)

Anyone wishing to become part of this network should contact Bernie Gollop. Notices and forms will then be sent out. The winter period covers Dec. 1 through Feb. 28. Species are discussed in A.O.U. order.

Mean temperatures in June 1982 ranged from 2.5°C above normal in central Alberta to 3°C below average at Churchill and Winnipeg. July temperatures were near normal across the region. Precipitation was scanty everywhere in June. Edmonton reported its second-driest June on record and many locations in Saskatchewan were the driest in more than 20 years. Lethbridge, Alta., had 4 in. of snow 5-6 June. July precipitation was almost nor-

mal in Saskatchewan and up to twice normal west of Edmonton and north of Winnipeg. Lethbridge, Alta., had 63 mm rain in less than 1 hour and Emerson, Man., had 81 mm in 75 minutes.

July ponds in s. Alberta totalled 503,000 (54% above last year), 964,000 in s. Saskatchewan (165% more than last July) and 195,000 in s. Manitoba (7% better than a year ago).

On 29 May from Saskatoon w. and s. in Saskatchewan (and into s. Alberta), there was a snowstorm that dumped 10 cm (4 in.) of snow around Saskatoon with average winds of 38 km/hour and a temperature range of 0°-2.6°C. In the Cypress Hills area drifts reached 6 ft. and thousands of livestock were lost. Near Saskatoon, many swallows rested on the snow while others were apparently feeding over open water. Much of the snow disappeared within 3 days but the effect on birds, particularly insectivorous species, must have been devastating. However, no one reported numbers of dead birds. Barn Swallows, Least Flycatchers, House Wrens and Clay-colored Sparrows decreased significantly after the storm around Swift Current (CH). See also Tree Swallow and Mountain Bluebird accounts below.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Thirty Com. Loons had congregated on Waskesiu L., Prince Albert N.P., by 25 June (S. Ross). A Red-necked Grebe 5 June was a first for Churchill (S. Shadick) while a Pied-billed Grebe 30 June was an accidental there (BC). There were good indications of a Great Blue Heron colony at Ft. McMurray, n. of the published breeding range (JG).

An ad. Snowy Egret 19 June at Ninette was a Manitoba rarity (ph., DF, HL). A Least Bittern 30 June was another first for Churchill (BC). Five Brant 7 June and three on 12 June were accidentals there (BC). A Snow Goose at Whitebear, Sask., regularly associated with a Canada Goose in a small flock of Canada until all left about mid-June (S. Jordheim). A Garganey was photographed near Strathmore 12 June Alberta's third record (ML). Another accidental at Churchill was a Harlequin Duck 24 June (BC), while the first Ruddy Duck for the area was a 3 June (K. John).

HAWKS THROUGH COOTS — Sharp-shinned Hawks were noticeably down in Saskatchewan's boreal forest (WH) while one wandered to Churchill 15 June (V. Chartier, D. Paulson). In Saskatchewan, Swainson's Hawks had more failures than usual; 35 of 71 nests in three areas produced 68 young. The late May snowstorm apparently caused six Golden Eagle nests to slump down clay cliffs. Prairie Falcons had average success and Merlins continued to re-occupy sites in the Kindersley-Kerrobert area deserted during the heavy dieldrin period of the 1960's (SH). A flock of 20± Swainson's Hawks in a field at Lyleton, Man., was unusual for 19 June (DF, HL). Marsh Hawks increased in the Raymore and Calgary areas (WH, SL, AW). Four young Peregrine Falcons were released in Saskatoon; two are known to have died and two have disappeared (BG). An adult sighted near Delisle, Sask., was unusual for 8 June (BG). A pair of Sandhill Cranes was found regularly s. of Water Valley, Alta., from late May through 5 June, 60± mi. s. of their published breeding range (L. Gibb, JP, LO, SJ). A white Am. Coot was seen with normally plumaged birds at Moose Jaw 15 July (S.&G. Wait, C. Letkeman).

SHOREBIRDS — On 14 July Chris Adam (ph.) discovered two ad. Piping

Plovers (plus Semipalmateds) with downy young on the s. shore of Lake Athabasca — a n. extension of its published Saskatchewan breeding range by more than 400 mi. He has seen an adult in the same location 1 July 1981. Two ad. Mountain Plovers were observed near Onefour, Alta., 1 July (CH). An estimated 6,000 Ruddy Turnstones were found near Churchill 12 June (BC) while a Willet there 28 June (TS, DM) and 3 Purple Sandpipers 12 June were accidentals (BC). A Whimbrel turned up at Birds Hill P.F. near Winnipeg 1 July, an unusual date (R. Koes). Rare shorebirds in the Calgary area included a Red Knot 2 July, a White-rumped Sandpiper 2 July, two W. Sandpipers 24 July, 1 Hudsonian Godwits 14 July and one of two Ruffs 24-31 July (JS, MS, RBa, RBu, AS, B. Storm). Another Western was seen near Cochrane, Alta., 3 June (SJ, LO). On 27 July a flock of 11 Marbled Godwits was found on Ingebright L., Sask., just w. of the Great Sand Hills, as were 1,700 Wilson's Phalaropes (CH). What appeared to be a late non-breeding concentration of 3 Am. Avocets was noted 5 June near Calgary (RBu). Pakowki L., Alta., had one Black-necked Stilt 15 May (G. Thorn) and two 3 Aug. (ML). What is apparently the second spring record for a Red Phalarope in Alberta was a fully plumaged, studied for 10± minutes on a mudflat with other shorebirds, 3 June near Ft. McMurray (JG).

JAEGERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — The first documented Saskatchewan record of a Long-tailed Jaeger, diagnosed as being in its second-year nuptial plumage, stayed at Last Mt. L. 8-17 July and was caught (SL, WH, BK, ph., B. Luterbach); there are fewer than 10 records for the province. Alberta's third record for a Black-legged Kittiwake was an adult or nearly adult-plumaged individual n.e. of Calgary 6 June (ph., JS, MS, W. Wilson). Churchill's first California Gul



Long-tailed Jaeger

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was seen 8 and 11 June (F. Cooke) and its first Franklin's Gull 17 July (L&CW). Other accidentals there included a Black-headed Gull 15 July (DM, TS), a Laughing Gull 9-25 July (BC, DM), Little Gulls periodically through the period with a maximum of three 5 June (DM) and an ad. Black-legged Kittiwake 18 July (BC, m.ob.); Ross' Gulls peaked at 10 on 20 June (BC). Southern Manitoba had its second Great Black-backed Gull, an immature, at Oak Hammock 2-5 June (T. French, m.ob.). Stragglers continued at Churchill with a Black Guillemot 17&18 July (BC, H. Currie). Saskatchewan's fifth Band-tailed Pigeon was seen 25 and 28 June near Raymore (WH). Great Horned Owls in Saskatchewan showed the effects of the declining snowshoe hare population after peaking in 1981. About 30% of pairs did not attempt nesting and 78 nests produced 153 young, just under 2.0 young per successful nest (SH). Burrowing Owls appeared to be up in Manitoba and the Saskatoon area but down near Regina (H. Copland, BG, BK). More than 50 breeding pairs settled in s. Manitoba where over 100 young were banded (B. Ratcliff *vide* W. Koonz).

Although nests of Pygmy and Boreal Owls are rarely found one of the former held two young near Priddis, Alta., 11 July (AW, KJ, GS); one of the latter had two young 25 July in Calgary (AS) and there was another nest at Birds Hill P.P., Man. (G. Smith). Late Com. Nighthawks were migrating 1 June (30 birds) at Good Spirit Lake and 2 June (45±) at Regina (J.&W. Anaka, T. Riffel, BK). A very dark swift with a slightly forked tail, apparently a Black Swift, not previously reported in Saskatchewan, was studied for 5 minutes over Mortlach 4 July at heights from 30 to 80 ft. (P. Browne). A hummingbird with a completely orange body, the description of a Rufous Hummingbird, was seen 13 June n.w. of Southend, Sask., more than 500 mi. n.e. of its breeding range (K. Roney).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH BLUEBIRDS — A Lewis' Woodpecker strayed to Calgary 17 July (RBa). With about 15 Manitoba reports to date, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was a rarity at Oak Hammock 5 June (ph., DF). A Say's Phoebe 18 June was the first record for Churchill (K. Kaufman). Four species, recently common at Ft. Mc-

Murray, increased significantly over 1981: Tree and Barn Swallows more than doubled and Black-billed Magpies and Common Crows increased fourfold (JG). Tree Swallow nesting around Saskatoon was delayed until after the May storm, and was thus more uniform than usual; occupancy and success were down modestly with 91 successful and 21 unsuccessful nesting attempts. Nevertheless, the usually evident surplus of swallows seemed not to be present; it may be that half the swallow population perished during the storm (MH). The first summer record of a Black-capped Chickadee for Churchill was 11 June (BC). A breeding record for White-breasted Nuthatch was a rarity for Calgary (AS). The first recent breeding record for Sage Thrashers in Saskatchewan was a flightless young caught 8 July n.w. of Govenlock (ph., WH). Two Hermit Thrushes singing 17-23 July near Dundurn, Sask., were s. of their published breeding range (BG).

Wershler). Connecticut Warblers apparently on territory were n. of the published breeding range at Ft. McMurray in June (one bird; JG) and s. of near Priddis 11 July (2; AW, KJ, GS) and near Bottrel, Alta., (at least 5; SJ). Brewer's Blackbirds, another common bird at Ft. McMurray, quadrupled this summer (JG). A pair of Scarlet Tanagers nesting at Dauphin, Man., was n. of their previously known breeding range (B. Walley). In Calgary three singing Rose-breasted Grosbeaks 20 June hinted at breeding s. of their normal range (AS). An Indigo Bunting near Roche Percee, Sask., 5 July indicated a new breeding area (WH). Single Lazuli Buntings were well out of range at Maidstone 20 June (WH) and near Beausejour, Man., 3 June (M. Siepman, G. Grief, N. Cleveland). There has been only one record of a Purple Finch at Churchill until one was seen 18 July (L&CW). Lone Sharp-tailed Sparrows singing 12 June near Irricana and Langdon, Alta., (JS, AW) and 18 July near Calgary (W. Hall) were beyond their normal breeding range. A Dark-eyed Junco was seen in Moose Jaw 27 June (M. Ritchie). A Field Sparrow showed up again this year near Beausejour, Man., through June and July (P. Taylor). Clay-colored Sparrow numbers more than doubled at Ft. McMurray, possibly because of increasing habitat (JG). An undocumented Brewer's Sparrow was reported at Churchill 20 June, far from its closest range in s.w. Saskatchewan (DM, J. Skykoff, TS).



Sage Thrasher

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WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES — A Magnolia Warbler singing in Calgary 30 June was apparently out of its breeding range (JP) as were a 12 June Chestnut-sided, also singing (RBa), and a Cape May in the foothills w. of Calgary 18 July (AW, C.&M.

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