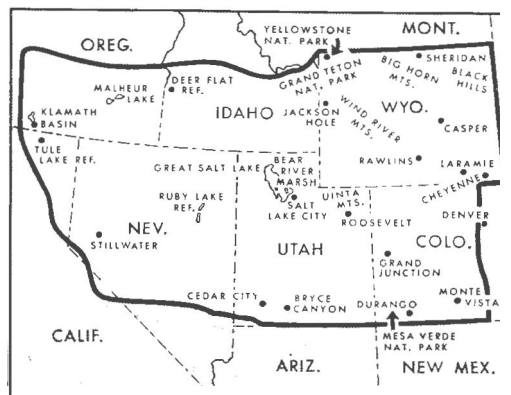


GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.—A great drought broke this sea-son and while the effects of the dry weather are



evident, the outlook for the future is better. Most of the Great Basin refuges are still without much water. The breaking of the drought was punctuated with repeated heavy snows in September in Wyoming. Brad House, biological station, Grand Teton Park, Jackson Hole, found 15 dead warblers in a small area of a few acres after a foot of wet snow on Sept. 20. These were Audubon's, Wilson's, and MacGillivray's. Many readers may be confused by the term "wet snow" since all eastern snow is wet. When the temperature is lower, the snow is fluffier, has smaller flakes, and seems to have less moisture content; hence in the Rockies there are mostly dry snows all winter; and wet snows in the spring and fall. Wet snows cling to vegetation and break it down while dry snow does not.

Swans—The number of Trumpeters has been steadily increasing in Jackson Hole within the confines of Grand Teton Nat'l Park. The annual swan count at Jackson Hole on Sept. 27 showed 52 swans with 8 cygnets. The height of the fall concentration on Flat Creek to the south of the National Elk Refuge (contiguous with the Park) had 59 on Nov. 26 (Robert Beans, manager of the Elk Refuge). This count is lower than in recent years and represents an effect of the drought. There were only 2 new Trumpeter cygnets at Ruby Lakes, northeastern Nevada, because of drought and early summer heat (Aldous).

At Malheur, eastern Oregon, 102 Whistling Swans were trapped, banded and dyed yellow. *Audubon Field Notes* readers, noting any such yellow dyed birds, should communicate with the Malheur Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Burns, Ore. Owing to the drought, the Malheur flight of swans was extremely poor, 210 instead of 3450 last year (Kridler). The Whistling

Swan peak at Bear River Marshes at the northeast end of Great Salt Lake was 24,265 on Nov. 29, a very high figure (R. D. Johnson).

Ducks and Geese—Although the drought is broken, the waterfowl migration is still way down. At Ruby Lakes it was only 25 per cent of normal (Clair Aldous) and only 50 per cent of last year at Klamath—the huge refuge area on the California-Oregon line. The high of 1,738,000 ducks on Nov. 3 seems substantial, however. The breeding areas of the geese are farther north and not so much affected by recent drought conditions; there were 603,000 at Klamath at the peak on Oct. 10, as compared with 451,000 in 1960 (O'Neill). At Malheur the drought caused a tremendous reduction in waterfowl from 137,000 last year, a peak, to 34,000. Last year was poor by comparison with the average (Kridler).

Stillwater in western Nevada remains the most damaged by drought of the great federal refuges in the Great Basin. Its waterfowl peak was only 5 per cent of the last good year there in 1958. This year the peak was 11,400. Some species that had been seen by the thousands, such as Canvasbacks (25,000 in 1958) were hardly recorded at all (George Wiseman).

At Bear River Marshes Refuge the migrating waterfowl were down from normal 700,000 to 421,000 this year (Johnson). At Deer Flat Refuge in southwestern Idaho the peak of the ducks was Nov. 5 with Mallards predominating as usual. There were 660,000, which is 60,000 better than last year (Gene Crawford). The Monte Vista Refuge in southern Colorado continues to grow and physically hopes to be up to 14,500 acres in a few years. It continues to attract the Mallard, the common wintering duck in the central Rockies. The high was 65,758, Nov. 19-25, but more are expected later in the season (Charles Bryant).

Rare ducks reported were a White-winged Scoter at Lower Klamath on Nov. 12 and a European Widgeon on the same date and place (Browning). A Surf Scoter was present at Tule Lake, Nov. 4-24 (O'Neill). A Black Brant and Emperor Goose were shot at Lower Klamath, Oct. 21 (Tom Harper). A Wood Duck was shot at Lower Klamath, Nov. 15, and another was seen on Nov. 22 (McCaskie). A White-fronted Goose was seen in Moffat County, Colo., Oct. 8 (Gene Green). The White-front rarely gets east of the Klamath Basin.

Eagles—Twenty-three Bald Eagles and 11 Golden Eagles were reported at the Lower Klamath Refuges, Nov. 17 (O'Neill). This is the highest concentration reported, but below previous years. Six Bald and 6 Golden Eagles at Bear River were fewer than usual (Johnson). Monte Vista had up to 6 Bald Eagles by the end of this season (Bryant). The central Wyoming flyway had a very poor flight up to the end of this period, perhaps associated with a shortage of rabbits (OKS). Stewart Murie had 3 Bald and 2 Golden Eagles at Parowan, southwestern Utah, in November.

Gallinule—A *Common Gallinule* was seen on July 13 at Ruby Lakes, Nev., a second record for the state (Aldous).

Owls—A Snowy Owl was reported staying at Ruby Lakes this fall by C. Aldous. This is a very rare bird in Nevada.

Swifts, Hummingbirds—Kingery had 6 Black Swifts at 11,500 ft. on Mt. Powell in the Gore Range, central Colorado, Aug. 20. The exact status of the Black Swift in Colorado is not clear, but it is rare. Mrs. Crews at Hotchkiss in the Colorado mesa country had few hummingbirds of any species this fall, in contrast to previous years. She had no explanation.

Swallows, Jays—A Purple Martin was seen again in Utah on Sept. 11 at Bear River Marshes (C. H. Snyder). This is a rare bird in Utah. Reitz reported the Piñon Jay common as far east as Torrington in extreme eastern Wyoming.

Wrens, Waxwings—The Winter Wren is rare over most of this area. Carol MacIver had one on Sept. 5 at Rockville, Oreg. Another was seen by A. Webb on Sept. 4 at Salt Lake City. Bohemian Waxwings were reported early this year. A. B. Mickey had 250 at Laramie, Wyo. by Nov. 12.

Warblers—In Wyoming the peak of the warbler migration was the first week in September when the Wilson's Warbler was most common. A *Chestnut-sided Warbler*, a casual visitor to the state, was seen near Casper, Sept. 2 (OKS). The Townsend's Warbler is one of the peculiar birds in this Region that is seen much more rarely in spring than in fall migration, and was seen everywhere this fall. Even Bear River Marshes had them for the first time on Sept. 11 (C. H. Snyder). Gleb Kashin had them in fair numbers at Salt Lake City, up to 4 at a time from Sept. 12 to Oct. 15. They were seen repeatedly at Casper. Kingery had 2 north of Boulder in the foothills of the Rockies on Oct. 1.

McCaskie had a *Blackpoll Warbler* on Honey Lake in the northeastern California part of the Great Basin, Sept. 23; the second sight record in the state for this bird. A *Black-throated Blue Warbler* was banded at the Malheur headquarters, the third record for the state—all in the same spot (Kridler). Gene Kridler is showing the remarkable things a mist net can do.

Grosbeaks—As usual, Durango, Colo. had great numbers of Evening Grosbeaks, but this year there were more. Oppie Reams had up to 1000 birds present at one time in October. Durango remains the Evening Grosbeak capital of this Region, perhaps of the continent.

Sparrows—Harris' Sparrow at Tule Lake, Nov. 23 (McCaskie) is a far western record. The bird is relatively common in Wyoming, unusual in Utah and farther west very rare. Another bird was banded at Malheur, Nov. 9 (Kridler).

Whether the migration of perching birds was better than usual is hard to say. In Wyoming, at least, the warblers were better than usual, but snowstorms caused great losses. More experienced observers were in the field than ever before, and they communicated with this editor.—DR. OLIVER K. SCOTT, 437 East 13th St., Casper, Wyo.