

Read at the Annual (1932) Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union
at Des Moines.

A REPORT ON THE REVISED NOMENCLATURE OF THE LIST OF IOWA BIRDS.

There have been numerous suggestions, recently, that since Anderson published the Birds of Iowa in 1907, conditions of bird-life in the state have undergone such changes that this list is out of date and a new publication on the Birds of Iowa is now needed.

I am willing to subscribe to this view in part. I believe there is no doubt that with the increase in population in the state, more intensive farming, draining of many ponds and sloughs, introduction of alien species and all the other less noticed disturbances of nature, the changes that have taken place in the past twenty-five years are well worth treatment in great detail in a new publication. But I am of the opinion that collecting, field observations, and knowledge of the present distribution of subspecific forms has not kept pace with these changes. Collecting seems to be a lost art in Iowa, and while the Universities of Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas continue to build up study collections of birds from their states we have no "clearing house" for the accumulation or dissemination of knowledge on the birds of the State. Until such a time as some institution (preferably the University of Iowa) shall encourage such a study we probably will continue referring to Anderson's list, or publications from adjoining states.

This lack of a recent publication unfortunately has resulted in the knowledge of exact distribution of birds in Iowa being very scanty and in many cases even questionable. This is most forcefully shown in the new A.O.U. Check-List, 4th Edition, 1931 in which Iowa is often excluded entirely in the ranges of the species.

While a new state publication, if issued at this time, might

contain our latest findings as to behaviour, life-histories and general distribution still I believe such a work should be preceded by a revision of the nomenclature of such a list and thus allow close and careful checking by all ornithologists in the state.

This paper therefore is in the nature of a report on such a revision.

In the Birds of Iowa Anderson listed 354 species and subspecies of birds known to occur or had occurred within the state. In addition 25 species were included in a Hypothetical List due to insufficient evidence or lack of a specimen. In the last 25 years there have been 15 additional species recorded as occurring in the state. These are as follows:-Western Goshawk, Long-tailed Jaeger, Eastern Ground Dove, Russet-backed Thrush, Northern Water-Thrush, Lazuli Bunting, Arctic Horned Owl, European Partridge, Ring-necked Pheasant, Lewis's Woodpecker, Starling, Kittiwake, Wood Ibis, Arctic Towhee, Mississippi and Dakota Song Spanows. It is possible there are others and I would appreciate it if anyone knowing of additional species would inform me of the record.

With the appearance of the new A.O.U. Check-List last November we find tremendous changes have taken place in the nomenclature, generically, specifically and subspecifically, as compared to that of the 2nd Addition as used by Anderson. No less than 52 generic names have been changed, as noted in the appended list, and 66 specific names have been changed.

The ranges of a few species have been changes as to have excluded them from having been correctly recorded from this state. Such is the status now accorded the Cackling Goose.

In addition numerous subspecific forms have been recognized which require a review of existing specimens for determination of the status of each within the state. These forms which may be found represented in Iowa material are:-Lesser Loon, Ward's Heron, Common Black Duck, Henderson's Dowitcher (see Auk, Jan. 1932), Northwestern Shrike, Maryland Yellowthroat, Nevada Cowbird, Giant Red-wing, Mississippi Song Sparrow, Dakota Song Sparrow, and Northern Curlew.

A few subspecies given by Anderson are not now recognized:-Belted Piping Plover, Traill's Flycatcher. And Oberholser's Rocky Mountain Orange-crowned Warbler recorded by Oscar P. Allert from Clayton County, Iowa, has not been recognized in the last checklist.

The Western form of the Willet is recorded in the Check-list for Iowa and not the Eastern Willet. The Willow Thrush and not Wilson's is accredited to the state and the Bachman's Sparrow (included by Anderson in the Hypothetical List) and Holboell's Redpoll are recorded for Iowa.

It is a generally accepted rule among ornithologists that no bird is entitled to a place on a state list until a specimen is secured, labelled and preserved in some collection. We seem to have lost sight of this rule in Iowa. As nearly as I have been able to determine Anderson included 42 species of birds in the Iowa list without having definite specimens on which to base the record. These are:-Pacific Loon, Red-throated Loon, Holboell's Grebe, Western Grebe, Anhinga, American Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Brant, Greater Snow Goose, Harlequin Duck, Mississippi Kite, Arizona Scaled Quail, Eastern Turkey, Whooping Crane, Purple Gallinule, Golden Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, Eastern Dowitcher, Marbled Godwit, Black-necked Stilt, Red Phalarope, Laughing Gull, Louisiana Paroquet, Great Gray Owl, Nuttall's Poor-will,

Western Nighthawk, Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Northern Horned Lark, American Magpie, American Raven, Chestnut-backed Bluebird, Sprague's Pipit, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Prairie Warbler, Gray-crowned Rosy-finch, Greater Redpoll, Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow, and Baird's Sparrow.

This situation is one which must be considered by the ornithologists of the state and I believe a decision should now be expressed as to the procedure in accepting;

1. Records of species once common, now rare (or extinct), but not represented by any existing specimens (such as Carolina Paroquet, Wild Turkey, etc)

2. Records of species always rare within the state the record having been based on a formerly existing specimen which cannot now be found (Red-throated Loon, etc.)

3. Records of species found only rarely within the state and recorded without having collected the specimen.

We must remember that a sight record which is entirely satisfactory to us may be viewed as skeptically 25 years from now as we so consider some of those of a few years ago. I believe, as Dr. Grinnell has pointed out, that the taking of a wandering individual (unless the species is rare every-where) will have absolutely no effect on the population of that species as the wanderer is more than likely a young bird which will not become established, having pushed out to far from center of its population. While such individuals may indicate a general invasion of new territory still I believe their greatest good will come in being prepared and preserved as a display specimen for the education of people for years to come and not as a thriller for a few people at the moment.

In this connection I have recently written Mr. Albert, State Game Warden, asking that no barrier be placed in the way of anyone wishing a collecting permit for birds as long as that individual will agree to keep the specimens secured in a well cared and accessible collection within the state. The number of birds taken under a state permit would not amount to one one-hundredth of the game birds killed by hunters, and yet most of the smaller species are many times more numerous.

I have appended a directory of the collections known to me to contain specimens of birds from Iowa. While it will be impossible for one individual to examine each of these collections, it will be possible, I believe, for them to be visited by ornithologists in the different parts of the state. If any other collections are known not here listed I would appreciate knowing of them. And further I would welcome reports of rare species, with definite data, known to have been taken in the state.

I propose to examine as many of these collections as time allows and to attempt to compile a tentative list of the species that are entitled to a place on our state list.