

Waubonsie State Park
Hamburg, Iowa
March 3, 1944

Mr. Phillip A. Du Mont
2730 Central St.
Evanston, Illinois

Dear Phil:

I have been intending to write to you for a couple of years but neglected a lot of my pencil pushing until now I have to take a week or two off and take care of all correspondence personal or scientific.

I am especially desirous of getting your opinion and reaction on a bird observation problem here in Fremont County (Waubonsie State Park.).

As I recall from your "BIRDS OF IOWA" (which I am not able to find just now) I believe the Summer Tanager is not supposed to be at all common; in fact, as I recall it, it has been absent from Iowa about 50 years according to recorded observations.

Now my opinion is that this lack of records is due to the lack of observations made in places where the birds has been fairly common all along. For example, here at Waubonsie Mrs. Jones and I have seen the Summer Tanager all summer long for the past two summers. We believe that there are at least six pairs in this 600 acre park. They seem to be as numerous as the Scarlet Tanager and considerably more in evidence. One pair nested over my horse lot here but I found the nest too late to trap or photograph the adults. I did, however, band the young while both parents remained in the tree and complained.

On a number of occasions we have seen the male Summer Tanager bathe in the bird bath about fifty feet back of our house. Last summer they often sat right out in plain sight like a cardinal and sang continuously.

If this bird is as uncommon as the lack of records indicate, then I do not like to stand alone on even numerous sight records, yet it is next to impossible to collect one legally.

As common as they are here it seems quite unnecessary to have specimens for I see no reason why one could not assume that they have been just as common here for the past 50 years as they are now and will continue to be common. Of course it is barely possible that they were for a long time entirely absent from Iowa but unless I knew that this particular area had been carefully searched by capable observers I would surely question that.

Do you know of any information or any good observers dealing with northern Missouri?

I'm doing all I can to get Fred Pierce, Geo. Hendrickson, and Bruce Stiles down here this spring at about the usual I.O.U. meeting time but you know how the transportation difficulties are.

It probably would not surprise you to know that I have seen a number of yellow-breasted chats here. (Had a repeat banding record on one last fall.) Also that the Bell's Vireo might be classed as common. We saw or heard 9 singing individuals one morning near

Nebraska City. One nested in the neighbor's chicken yard last spring and another was heard near our garden about all summer last year.

The Kentucky Warbler sings at us from almost every little side branch of the main valley of the picnic area here. I trapped two of them, of course banding them also photographing one of them in color- -in the hand for my banding series, and for the records.

The one thing I want to photograph in color this spring is the Summer Tanager. I would not refuse a chance at a Scarlet Tanager, of course. How unfortunate that Rosen is not still with us to get them in movies. All my pictures are 35mm' stills which are O K for some things, especially educational work but lack much of the entertainment value.

Sincerely,

M. L. Jones

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