

Return to Phil S. Mont.

March 16, 1933.

Mr. W. B. Bell,
In Charge, Division of Biological Investigations,
Bureau of Biological Survey,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bell:

Your letter of March 1, 1933, addressed to Dr. F. L. R. Roberts of this city, was turned over to me today, with the request that I should answer it. In connection with my work of revising the Birds of Iowa, I have attempted to secure as complete a record of the spread of the Starling in Iowa as is possible. During the fall I sent a similar report to H. C. Hoffman of Lakewood, Ohio. Mr. Hoffman, at one time, had requested reports of Starlings, with the view in mind, I believe, of issuing a report, but I don't think those plans materialized.

The first record of the Starling in Iowa was of the single specimen caught and shown to W. S. Long, at Lamoni, Decatur Co., in December, 1922. This was recorded in the Auk (I haven't the reference at hand) and was cited by Miss Cooke in her report of the Starling.

Possible earlier records were mentioned in The Birds of Floyd County, Iowa (American Midland Naturalist, Issues of 1923-24, p. 48), by Dr. Carroll Lane Fenton. In the Hypothetical List he says: "Mr. Brown and I have at various times seen birds which we felt certain of as Starlings, but secured no specimens. The most reliable of my dates are: April 25, 1914; July 24, 1914; May 3, 1915. Mr. Gabrielson considers these records as positive errors, Dr. Bailey accepted them as hypothetical, and Miss Sherman accepts them. In a letter to me she expressed the opinion that the species had been introduced into the Mississippi Valley from the east. She mentioned a record for Rockford, Illinois, by Mr. Paul B. Riis." I am not using these records in my forthcoming list.

The first breeding record appears to be that of Prof. W. F. Kubichek at Cedar Rapids, Linn County, in the Spring of 1931. The most westerly breeding record that I know of is that of a pair seven miles south of Ogden, Boone County, June 15, 1932. The birds were seen by Walter Rosene and the writer and I collected the female. Reports of breeding have come from the following counties: Clayton, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Keokuk, and Boone. *Jefferson* Undoubtedly the Starling is breeding in some numbers in all of the three or four tiers of counties along the Mississippi River, and only a lack of observers has been the result of so few reports of breeding.

The most westerly record of occurrence in the state is of a flock of 8 seen at Onawa, Monona County, March 24, 1932 by W. C. Thietje.

In the Iowa Bird Life, Vol. 2, 1932, p. 41, under the title of "Field Characters of the Starling", I summarized the status of this bird in Iowa at the present time as, "A locally numerous breeding bird in the eastern half (as far west as Ogden) of the state and an irregular but not uncommon winter resident." Even this statement of last fall must be modified or amplified now as the Starling was very common in several parts of the eastern half of the state the past winter.

In the same issue is an article by Chas. J. Spiker on "The Increase of the Starling in Northeast Iowa." Spiker records about thirty observations made by himself and others from March, 1929 to the Summer of 1932.

Reports of Starlings have come to me from the following Iowa counties: Clayton, Fayette, Chickasaw, Bremer, Blackhawk, Buchanan, Delaware, Dubuque, Linn, Benton, Tama, Story, Boone, Monona, Polk, Poweshiek, Iowa, Johnson, Cedar, Scott, Muscatine, Washington, Lee, Van Buren, Jefferson, Keokuk, Marion, Decatur, and Union, and Jackson, *Mary Jones, Clinton, Louisa, Henry, Ida, Mahaska, Dallas.*

In answer to a questionnaire sent out recently were the following opinions as to the status of the Starling.

Frank E. Ellis- "becoming to numerous". Maquoketa, Jackson Co.

Charles J. Spiker- "occasional." New Hampton, Chickasaw Co.

Geo. O Hendrickson- "rare. I saw a flock of 10-12, Nov. 28, 1931, in Washington, County, Iowa. Have seen none at Ames." Ames, Story Co.

E. D. Nauman- "rare as yet-but nesting." Sigourney, Keokuk Co.

Walter Rosene- "becoming common." Ogden, Boone Co.

Oscar P. Allert- "now tolerably common." McGregor, Clayton Co.

There are Iowa taken specimens in the following collections: Allert, McGregor; Coe College, Cedar Rapids (several); University of Iowa, Iowa City (six); State Historical Museum, Des Moines; Bullock collection, Des Moines.

In nearly all instances in Iowa the birds have been found about the barns, dead trees, or feeding in the fields. The reports of these birds in the town proper is very unusual, and seems only at times of unfavorable weather. Competition for nesting areas is usually with the House sparrow or domestic pigeon. Undoubtedly some woodpeckers and bluebirds are dislodged from dead tree-tops.

I am appending a record of occurrences as complete as I know of them. Of course there are many observations that go unreported as the birds are common enough now as to attract but little attention.

Kindly call upon me if I may be of further service to you. With best wishes, I am,

Very truly yours,

Philip A. DuMont.

Reports of Starlings in Iowa.

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Iamoni	Dec. 1922	1	W.S. Long
Oxford	March 1928	a few	W.F. Kubichek
Oxford	April 1, 1929	1 (coll)	" "
Des Moines	March 21, 1929	2	Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Lee
Coralville	April 1929	20	Herbert Dill
New Hampton	April 8, 1929	1	Louis Fliger
" "	Nov. 27, 1929	2	Charles J. Spiker
North Liberty	Jan. 20, 1930	2	Ralph Hanlon
West Branch	Spring 1930	1	Mrs. J.E. Howard
Cedar Rapids	Spring 1931	nesting	F.L.R. Roberts & W.F. Kubichek
Marquette	Summer 1931	nesting	Oscar P. Allert
Washington	August 22, 1931	12	Philip A. DuMont
Manchester	Oct. 3, 1931	1	O.H. Greenwood
Davenport	Nov. 10, 1931	8	Philip A. DuMont
Janesville	Nov. 18, 1931	3	Charles J. Spiker
Adelphia	Nov. 27, 1931	7	James R. Harlan
Washington Co.	Nov. 28, 1931	10-12	G.O. Hendrickson
Des Moines	Dec. 4, 1931	2	James R. Harlan
Chickasaw	Dec. 9, 1931	9	Charles J. Spiker
Adelphia	Dec. 11, 1931	7	James R. Harlan
Ogden	Dec 18, 1931	several	Walter Rosene
Durango	Dec. 23, 1931	6	Charles J. Spiker
Johnson Co.	Winters 1930-'31	wintering	Homer R. Dill
Giard	Jan. 8, 1932	8	Chas. Spiker & O.F. Alle
"	Jan. 6, 1932	3	Oscar P. Allert
"	" 10, 1932	2	" "
"	" 13, 1932	1	" "
"	" 14, 1932	1	" "
"	" 15, 1932	3	" "
"	" 20, 1932	2	" "
Chickasaw	" 25, 1932	1	Charles J. Spiker
"	" 27, 1932	4	" "
Elkader	" 27, 1932	12	Miss Kathleen Hempel
Chickasaw	Febr. 5, 1932	1	Charles J. Spiker
"	" 6, 1932	2	" "
Creston	" 10, 1932	3	John Kennedy
New Hampton	" 13, 1932	1	Charles J. Spiker
Quasqueton	" 21, 1932	4	Fred J. Pierce
Ionia	" 25, 1932	15	Charles J. Spiker
Giard	" 27, 1932	1	Oscar P. Allert
Cedar Rapids	" 28, 1932	1	Mrs. C.C. Flodin
Giard	" 28, 1932	4	Oscar P. Allert
Winthrop	March 2, 1932	1	Charles J. Spiker
Monona	" 9, 1932	1	Oscar P. Allert
Onawa	" 24, 1932	8	Walter C. Thietje
Elgin	" 30, 1932	3	Oscar P. Allert
Des Moines	" 1932	18	A.F. DenBoer
Oxford	Spring 1932	nesting	W.F. Kubichek
Iowa City	" "	4	Joseph Whiting
Winthrop	May 1, 1932	2	Fred J. Pierce
Edgewood	" 22, 1932	2	" "

Marquette	Summer 1932	nesting	Oscar P. Allert
Washington	June 8, 1932	32	Philip A. DuMont
Ogden	" 15, 1932	nesting	W. Rosene & P.A. DuMont
Washington	" 18, 1932	21	Philip A. DuMont
Westchester	" 18, 1932	nesting	" "
Des Moines	" 26, 1932	15	John Kennedy
Back Bone State Park	" 29, 1932	118	" "
Des Moines	July 4, 1932	15	Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Hayward
Belle Plaine	" 5, 1932	1	Philip A. DuMont
Clarence	" 5, 1932	1	" "
Colo	August 5, 1932	4	" "
Washington	" 10, 1932	11	" "
Sigourney	" 10, 1932	1	" "
Polk Co.	Sept. 20, 1932	1	" "
Pella	" 20, 1932	3	" "
Iowa City	" 30, 1932	1	" "
Cedar Rapids	Oct. 4, 1932	62	W.F. Kubichek
Tiffin	Nov. 6, 1932	5	F.L.R. Roberts & P.A. DuMont
Mitchellville	" 28, 1932	1	Philip A. DuMont
Tama	Dec 18, 1932	3	Mrs. E.G. MacMartin
VanBuren Co.	Winter 1932-'33	100	W.W. Keck
Blackhawk Co.	Jan. 1933	1	Burr Lighty
Fairfield	" 24, 1933	1 (coll)	Student at S.U.I.
Cedar Bluff	" 22, 1933	4	Walter C. Thietje
Amara	Febr. 1933	100	W.F. Kubichek
Hillis	" 1933	100	Wesley J. Kubichek
Poweshiek Co.	" 5, 1933	25	Mrs. E.G. DuMont
Muscatine Co.	" 26, 1933	300	F.L.R. Roberts & P.A. DuMont
Iowa City	March 5, 1933	100	F.L.R. Robert
" "	" 8, 1933	1 (coll)	Wesley J. Kubichek

+ 37 additional reports from the following counties: Floyd, Johnson, Iowa, Cedar, Jones, Jackson, Clinton, Scott, Muscatine, Louisa, Linn, Fayette, Ida, Henry, Jefferson, Van Buren, Buchanan, Dallas, Boone, Story, and Mahaska. All but five are for

1933.