

FIELD REPORTS

SPRING 1980

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WEATHER AND HABITAT CONDITIONS

March was relatively normal compared to last year with little precipitation. April was a record dry and warm month with no rainfall in most areas of the state. Dry conditions continued through mid-May but the temperatures were much cooler.

GENERAL TRENDS

The dry conditions provided good shorebirding in some areas. Geese were more evident than usual in e. Iowa. The warm April did not seem to accelerate the migration. Warblers and thrushes moved through in an unspectacular fashion. Unlike last year, few migrants were left after May 20.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Casual species reported included Ross' Goose, White-winged Scoter, Prairie Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Yellow Rail, and Yellow-

throated Warbler. A Mountain Bluebird near Mason City was substantiated by photograph. Two Mississippi Kites were documented by the same observers who have reported this species for the last two years. A male Western Tanager appeared at Forney L. Five other accidental species were reported -- two undocumented and three not on the state list. Two of the three documented reports were not convincing and the other a difficult to identify and highly unlikely species. There were two unusual winter records not previously reported -- a Sandhill Crane in Fayette Co. and a Ruddy Turnstone at Keckuk.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Common Loon: 1-2 birds were reported from nine localities from 8 Apr. at Montezuma (DK) to 28 May at Willow S. (BWi).

Horned Grebe: There were eight reports from 23 Mar. at Coralville Res. (TK) to 10 May at Riverton A. (BWi, RS, BJR). Since this is a regular species, it is likely that many more were seen.

Eared Grebe: Record early and late dates of 22 Mar. and 1 Jun. were set at Willow S. (BWi) and a large number (12) were at Pahoja L., Lyon Co. (JV). Other sightings were 25-31 Mar. at Cedar Rapids (TG), 10 May at Cardinal M. (DK) and 15 May at Coralville Res. (TK).

American White Pelican: Several thousand were at Riverton A. and Forney L. on 26 Apr. (RMy) and 250 lingered there until at least 13 May (RS, TK, TSh) and 2 were still at Willow S. on 30 May (BWi). Other reports were at Saylorville Res. on 22 Apr. (CL fide DN) and Sunken Cove on 28 Apr. (RC).

*seems
like more
than usual*

good #'s
Double-crested Cormorant: Cormorants were widespread throughout the state in small numbers in flocks of 25 to 45 birds with dates from 11 Apr. at Lizard L. (RC) to 18 May at Sweet M. (FM).

Green Heron: Five eggs were in the same nest as last year at Nora Springs (DAB).

Little Blue Heron: An immature was at Folsom L., Mills Co. on 13 May (RS, TSh, TK).

fewer
Cattle Egret: Only two sightings this year: 12 Apr. at Fayette (ISU) and 10 May in Mills Co. (RS).

more
Snowy Egret: 1 was seen at Riverton A. on 2 May (RS).

Black-crowned Night Heron: There were nine reports of 2 to 14 birds from widely scattered locations.

Least Bittern: Only 3 were reported: Muskrat S. 10 May (TK), Forney L. 13 May (TK, RS, TSh), and Hendrickson M. 14 May (ISU).

American Bittern: 7 individuals were reported from 12 Apr. at Montezuma (DK) to 26 May at Lost Island L. (RC).

Whistling Swan: Surprisingly there were as many reports from w. Iowa as e. Iowa: 4 on 21 Mar. at Willow S. (+BWi), 6 on 10 Apr. at Ames (HZ, LZ, PM), 14 and 30 on 10, 11 Apr. at Readlyn, Bremer Co., (FM, RMy), and 19 on 13 Apr. at Marathon, Buena Vista Co., (RC, TH, Doch).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Large numbers were present this year with up to 1500 at DeSoto N.W.R. on 27-29 Mar. (MB, DBi) and more than usual in central and e. Iowa: 150 at Cone M. on 29 Mar. (TK, m.ob.), many at Saylorville Res. on 20 Mar. (CL

fide DN), up to 40 at Hendrickson M. from 21 Mar. to 19 Apr. (TK, ISU), 7 in Story Co. on 12 Apr. (HZ) and 1 at L. LaShane on 31 Mar. (GDe). Stragglers were at Riverton A. on 13 May (RS, TSh, TK), and Willow S. on 30 May (BWi).

rare
Ross' Goose: Ross' Goose apparently occurs in Iowa on a regular basis but in such small numbers that it is luck to find one at close enough range to pick it out from among the Snow Geese with which it travels. Singles were found this spring on 19 Mar. on the near shore of Forney L. (+TK) and at Willow S. (+BWi).

Canada Goose: 1000 were at Bay's Branch on 18 Mar. (DN); 7 were late at Cone M. on 10 May (TSta, CB, TSh, T K).

American Black Duck: Reports from central and w. Iowa were 17 Mar. at Forney L. (TB, EP, SK), 26 Mar. at Hendrickson M. (ISU) and 7 Apr. at Willow S. (+BWi)

rare e. Iowa
Cinnamon Teal: 1 was at Cone M. from 5 to 19 Apr. (TSta, m.ob.).

Canvasback: 600 at Hottes L. were unusual (DH). A pair possibly were nesting at Rush L., Osceola Co., on 14 May (DH). A pair was late at Willow S. on 19 May (BWi).

rare
Greater Scaup: 5 were reported from Hamburg in Nov. 1979 (+IG). Spring reports were from Bay's Branch on 21 Mar. (+TK), 2 on 5 Apr. at L. Macbride (+TK) and 4 at Cone M. on 6 Apr. (+PP).

rare
Oldsquaw: 1 was at George Wyth S.P. from 6-18 Apr. (TSt. m.ob.). 2 were reported from Forney L. on 16 Mar. (GW fide TB).

White-winged Scoter: 6 were reported at Forney L. on 16 Mar. (GW fide TB).

not known to me
Hooded Merganser: 3 at L. Manawa on 14 Mar. (TB, BP, S K), 2 at

Forney L. on 13 May (RS, TK, TSh), 1 at Sweet M. on 18 May (FM).

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 females at Forney L. on 9 May were late (RS).

Common Merganser: There was an impressive migration in w. Iowa with 600 from Forney L. to DeSoto N.W.R. on 20 Mar. (TK), and 350 at Cherokee on 24-25 Mar. (MB) as well as many in Sioux Co. (JV).

VULTURES THROUGH TURKEY

Turkey Vulture: Three Mar. records: 17 Mar. at Forney L. (TB, BP, SK), 21 Mar. at Ledges S.P. (DN) and 29 Mar. at Mark Twain N.W.R. (TK, m. ob.)

Osprey: 15 reports from 6 Apr. to 7 May.

Mississippi Kite: 2 were seen at close range and described in detail at Wabonsie S.P. on 14 May (+TSJr, TSt). The same observers have reported this accidental species three years in a row.

Bald Eagle: There were many reports from w. and central Iowa as well as e. Iowa.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: A pair in Hickory Hill P. in Iowa City on 11 May suggests possible nesting (MN, TK). A male flew into a window at Nora Springs and was photographed (DAB).

Cooper's Hawk: There were 14 reports (one documented, +WJ) with all but one being from central or e. Iowa. Joe Schaufenbuel reported a conservative estimate of 3 Cooper's to 25 Sharp-shinned. A nest was reported from Lucas Co. (fide JD).

Red-tailed Hawk: 3 nests were found at Cherokee (DBi) and a nest

help!

quite common now.

many, hard to judge identification

with young was found at L. Anita on 4 May (TB, DB, SB).

increased
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 on 14 Mar. at Coralville Res. (KM); 1 on 15 Mar. at Backbone S.P. (FM, TSJr, TSt); 2 on 16 Mar. at George Wyth S.P. (TSJr, TSt), 1 on 4-17 May at Vinton (FM); nest in early May in Alamakee Co. (ISU); and 2 on 13 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (TSJr, TSt).

Broad-winged Hawk: 600 at Sweet M. on 26 Apr. (FM).

regular
Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 19 Apr. in s.w. Iowa (RS); pairs at Ledges S.P. (PB fide DN) and Hartman Nature Center at same nest as last year (RMy, m.ob.) on 22 Apr.; 2 migrating in Fremont Co. on 13 May (RS, TSh, TK); 1 at Volga L. on 26 May (FM); 2 at Waucoma, Fayette Co., in late May (JSb); and a pair returning to the same nest for the third year in Osceola Co. (DBi).

Rough-legged Hawk: Two spring records; 19 Mar. near Albia (TK), 22 Mar. in Story Co. (R & TM).

Golden Eagle: Three ~~undocumented~~ reports: 6 Apr. at Riverton A. (+TSJr, TSt), 12 Apr. at Green I. (GC, JH) and Black Hawk P. (RMy). ~~This species should be documented except when seen by previous observers in extreme n.e. Iowa.~~

see doc.
Prairie Falcon: One near DeSoto NWR on 15 Mar. had the features of this species except the black axillaries were not seen (+RC, WJ, TH).

Merlin: Reported from Harper's Ferry and Backbone S.P. on 15 Mar. (RMy, FM, RH, TSJr, TSt).

recomming
Common Bobwhite: A number of observers noted increased numbers as evidence of recovery from the severe winters of the past few years. There were several reports from northern parts of

the state, the most notable being a return of this species to Sioux Co. in n.w. Iowa (JV).

Gray Partridge: 6 at Lizard L. on 9 May (RC) was the only report.

Wild Turkey: Turkeys are common in the Icess Hills of s.w. Iowa (RS). Other reports suggesting spread were from Coralville Res. (CB), Ledges (HZ), Linn Co. (TG), and Sweet M. (FM).

CRANES THROUGH YEARS

True
Sandhill Crane: One wintered in Fayette Co. from mid Nov. through Jan.--see separate note and photograph (+JS). One was seen on 16 Apr. near Ledges S.P. (+DN).

are they being seen?
King Rail: There were two undocumented reports. I found no reports of this species in the last 10 years so careful documentation and confirmation by several observers will be required to convince me of its existence in Iowa.

Virginia Rail: There were few reports: Sweet M. on 11 May (RMy), Willow S. on 14 May (TSJr, TSt), Forney L. on 15 May (TSJr, TSt) and Sunken Cove in 18 May (RC). I saw them at the usual locations but did not report them.

True
Yellow Rail: Two sightings were well documented: 28 Apr. near Swan L., Johnson Co. (+TSta, +MGl) and 11, 18 May at Sweet M. (+RMy, +FM).

True
Common Gallinule: 1 was at Swan L. Johnson Co., on 26-27 Apr. (TK, TSh, CB, RH) and 1 at Dudgeon L. on 17 May (RMy, FM, TSJr, TSt).

American Avocet: 12 at Forney L. on 2 May (RS) and 2 at Willow S. on 7 May (BWi) and 14 May (TSJr, TSt).

Semipalmated Plover: 1 at Cone M. on 13 Apr. is a recent record early data (TK, CB); 180 were a record number at Coralville Res. on 13 May (TG).

Piping Plover: 1 at Coralville Res. in early Apr. (MN) and 1 at Willow S. on 21 May (B.Wi).

Lesser Golden Plover: The migration was outstanding with 5 at a near record early date of 22 Mar. at Cone M. (TK, TSh) and progressing to numerous reports of 50 to 1200 across the state on the weekend of 10-11 May; 400 were still present in Dickinson Co. 18 May (MB).

Black-bellied Plover: 6 to 14 were reported from 11 May to 19 May from Coralville Res. (TK, TSta), Ames (HZ, LZ, PM), Forney L. (TSJr, TSt), and Dickinson Co. (FM).

Hudsonian Godwit: 1-20 birds from eleven localities from 4 May to 18 May.

Marbled Godwit: 1 on 17 Apr. in Pottwattamie Co. (+TB, BP, SK) and 1 on 10-11 May at Yager S. (PP, MIP, AH, HZ, LZ) had no white on the tail or wings. Another was reported from Sweet M. on 10 May (not flushed, RMy).

Upland Sandpiper: There were reports from 12 locations across the state.

Greater Yellowlegs: 5 were early at Cone M. on 22 Mar. (TK, TSh) and 30 at Coralville Res. on 20 Apr. is a record number (TK).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Near record early dates were 14 Mar. at Forney L. (TB, BP, SK) and Cone M. (TK, TSh); 2 were late at Coralville Res. on 25 May (TK).

Willet: 1 to 14 were reported from widely scattered areas from

rare
very heavy migration

many

2/3 verified

19 Apr. (Sweet M., RMy, FM) to 13 May (Boone Co., ISU)

Ruddy Turnstone: 8 were at Forney L. on 13 May (TK, TSh, RS) and 3 at Coralvill Res. on 18 May (TK, TSh, CB). A most unusual record of a Turnstone in Feb. at the Keokuk Dam Power House was substantiated by a photograph (HMF).

Wilson's Phalarope: Few were reported and numbers were down compared to 1979.

Northern Phalarope: 1 on 26 Apr. at Riverton A. (RMy, RS) is a record early date (RMy, RS fide RMy); 1-2 on 12, 13 May at Coralville Res. (TSJr, TSt, TG), 1 on 17 May at Dubuque (GC), and 7 on 24 May at Willow S. (+BWi).

American Woodcock: The earliest date was 26 Mar. in Iowa City (TSh). There were several reports from central and w. Iowa: Ames (ISU), Poweshiek Co. (DK), Larabee (MB, DBi), L. Manawa (TB), and Riverton A. (RS, BWi).

Common Snipe: 50 were at Cone M. on 13 Apr. (TK, CB); late birds were at Muskrat S. and Coralville Res. on 10 May (TK, TSh, CB, TSta).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Several observers reported details on Dowitcher identification and most identified species. Short-bills were reported from 6 May at Princeton A. (TK) to 18 May at Coralville Res. (TK). On 10 May 100 were at Sweet M. (TSJr, TSt).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Fewer details were provided on long-bills. 28 were at Cone M. on 7 May (TK, TSta) and 25 were at Riverton on 13 May (TK, TSh, RS).

Sanderling: 13 at Riverton and Council Bluffs on 13 May (RS,

TSh, TK); 1 at Amana L on 12, 13 May (CB, TSta); 2-3 at Ames on 30-31 May (HZ, LZ).

Western Sandpiper: The only reports were singles at Coralville Res. on 8 May (TSh) and Sweet M. on 18 May (TSJr).

White-rumped Sandpiper: 2 on 8 May at Coralville Res. (TSh), 3 on 11 May at Yager S. (PP, MLP, AH), 75 on 13 May at Riverton A. (RS, TSh, TK), 2 on 20 May at Coralville Res. (TSta), and 6 on 31 May at Ames (MR).

Baird's Sandpiper: Reports were from 8, 12, 13 May from s.w. Iowa (TB, BP, SK, RS, TSh, TK), Dickinson Co. on 11 May (PP, MCP, AH), Sweet M. on 18 May (FM) and Ames on 30, 31 May (HZ, LZ). The peak number was 28 in Ames.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 11 on 22 Mar. were early at Cone M. (TK, TSh); 1000 at Coralville Res. were peak numbers (TK).

Dunlin: Reports were from 27 Apr. at Nashua (FM, TSJr, TSt) to 25 May at Coralville Res. (TK). There were 50 at Coralville Res. on 20 May (TSta) and 30 at Nashua on 11 May (TSJr, TSt).

Franklin's Gull: 3 at L. Manawa on 20 Mar. were early (TK). Small numbers (1-30) were reported from w. Iowa but only 1 was reported from e. Iowa in Scott Co. on 12 Apr. (PP).

Bonaparte's Gull: There were 6 reports from w. Iowa with a late date of 13 May at Forney L. (RS, TSh, TK) and one report from e. Iowa at L. Macbride on 20 Apr. (TK).

Forster's Tern: Migrants passed by Willow S. from 2 to 19 May (BWi).

Common Tern: More than usual were reported with observers noting field marks observed: 1 on 20 Apr. at Cedar Rapids (TG), 8 on

May 71
can't
judge
accuracy

3 May at Muscatine (TSh, TK, CB, TSta), 1 on 15 May at Coralville Res. (TK), 2 on 18 May at Sweet M. (RMy, FM, RH, TSJr, TSt), 3 and 10 at Willow S. on 19, 24 May (+BWl).

Caspian Tern: 3 on 7 May at L. LaShane (GDe); 2 on 8 May at Council Bluffs (TB, BP, SK); 12 on 18 May at Sweet M. (RMy, FM); 1 on 24 May at Willow S. (BWl).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Barn Owl: 1 was found near Silcock's in Mills Co. on 2 May but did not return to same nest tree (RS).

Long-eared Owl: 6 on 15 Mar. at Big Creek S.P. (HZ, LZ); 3 on 6 Apr. at George Wyth S.P. (RMy, FM); 1 injured bird on 21 Apr. in Osceola Co. (RS fide DH).

Short-eared Owl: Singles on 15 Mar. at Cherokee (MB), on 19 Mar. at Ames (PM) and Dickinson Co. (DH), and on 29 Mar. at Sweet M. (RMy, FM).

Saw-whet Owl: 2 at Ledges S.P. on 8, 9 Mar. (HZ, LZ).

Chuck-will's-widow: 2 were heard in n.w. Mills Co. on 10 May where they have been found previously (TB). *S. of Council Bluffs*

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: There were 9 reports from 14 to 25 May, all singles except 5 at Lamoni (GLe) and 12 at Montezuma (DK).

Common Flicker: A Red-shafted Flicker was at Willow S. on 17 Apr. (BWl).

Pileated Woodpecker: Unusual locations were in Des Moines on 16 Apr. (J & MM) and at Willow S., Mills Co., in the spring of 1979 (EG fide BWl).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Late birds were at Decorah (?breeding)

on 17 May (JSb) and Iowa City on 20 May (MN).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH STARLING

Eastern Kingbird: Numbers were lowest in years at Cherokee (DBi)

Western Kingbird: The only report away from the Missouri R. flats was at Willow S. on 21 May (BWi). It was considered unusual at this location which is about one county away from the Missouri.

Eastern Phoebe: Good numbers were reported in n.w. and n.e. areas (JV, JSb). There are early indications of recovery of this species. The early date was 28 Mar. (TG).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: There were sight records from Vinton on 18 May (FM), St. Lucas on 22 May (JSb), and Ames on 26 May (JR) in addition to the usual netted birds at Davenport on 18 May (PP). Joe Schaufenbuel got them to respond to a tape recording. Perhaps this technique could lead to a better understanding of the migration of this species in Iowa.

Acadian Flycatcher: Reported from typical e. Iowa habitats--Wildcat Den S.P. (m.ob.), Amana Woods (CB), Palisades-Kepler S.P. (TK, TSh, CB), Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (TSJr, TSt).

Willow Flycatcher: Reported from Willow S. by 21 May (BWi) and on 24 May at Pocahontas (RC) and Cone M. (TK).

Alder Flycatcher: On 26 May 6 were heard at Willow S. (BWi) and 3 at Volga L. (FM).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Four reports: 15 May Ames (ISU), 20 May Iowa City (TK), 21 May Mills Co. (FWi) and 27 May Lamoni (GDe).

Tree Swallow: The earliest date was 28 Mar. at Muskrat S. (TG), one day earlier than the earliest date in Brown's Annotated Checklist.

Bank Swallow: The first arrived at Hamburg on 12 Apr (IG), a week earliest than Brown's record date.

Rough-winged Swallow: This species was also reported from Hamburg on 12 Apr (IG).

Purple Martin: First arrivals were 2 Apr. at Elkhart (DMos), 5 Apr. at Sioux Center (JV) and 6 Apr. at Ames (ISU).

Tufted Titmouse: Reported scarce at Ames (only one seen, PM).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Only two reports: 1 at Ames on 2 Mar. (PM) and several at Sioux Center in early Mar. (JV).

House Wren: One arrived at a record early date at Hamburg on 7 Apr. (IG).

Winter Wren: 1-2 were reported from Cone M., Waterloo and Vinton (TK, CB, FM, TSJr, TSt).

Carolina Wren: None reported.

Marsh Wren: Reports of 1 to 8 birds from widely scattered locations across the entire state from 30 Apr. to 24 May.

Sedge Wren: Reports of 1 to 6 birds from widely scattered locations across the entire state from 3 May to 26 May.

Northern Mockingbird: Reports of single birds were from Greene and Calhoun Cos. on 10, 12 Apr. (GJ), Cedar Rapids on 20 Apr (TG), near Wildcat Den S.P. on 7 May (PP, MLP, SC) and Larabee on 31 May (MB).

Brown Thrasher: One was at Ames on 6 Apr. (ISU).

Hermit Thrush: Early and late dates reported were 5 Apr. in

Sioux Co. (JV) and 5 May at Ames (ISU).

Veery: Singing birds at Ledges S.P. on 31 May may be residents (HZ).

Eastern Bluebird: Most who commented reported a few and some observers regularly monitor nesting sites. The field reports do not seem to be an adequate means of monitoring the status of this species. Any ideas?

accidental
Mountain Bluebird: One was found near Mason City on 16 Mar. by Thelma Fromm and an identifiable photograph provided by Curt Nelson.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: A pair was constructing a nest at Vinton on 17 May (FM).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: From 2 to 10 birds were reported from eight locations from 2 to 17 Apr. (m.ob.) with 2 probably winter birds at Waterloo on 9 Mar. (FM).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Three early reports were 22 Mar. at Ames (ISU), 28 Mar. at Iowa City (RH) and 4 Apr. at Ledges S.P. (DN). The latest date was 16 May at Iowa City (TK).

Water Pipit: Few reported: 1 at Cone M. on 26 Apr. (TK, TSh), 3 at Nashua on 27 Apr. (FM) and 1 at Ames on 4 May (HZ, LZ, PM).

rare
Bohemian Waxwing: One was closely observed at Cedar Falls on 9 Mar. (FM, RH).

Cedar Waxwing: A flock of 65 were still present at Ledges S.P. on 31 May (HZ, LZ).

also 27 May - ? see doc.
Northern Shrike: One was seen on 8 Mar. in Clayton Co. (FM).

Loggerhead Shrike: This is another species that is inadequately evaluated by field reports--14 widely scattered sightings from

maybe some evidence to recovery?

26 Mar. to 31 May including nests near Bay's Branch on 5 Apr. and Muskrat S. on 10 May. My perception is that this species is a regular resident with s.w. Iowa and scattered elsewhere in the state.

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

White-eyed Vireo: Reported from four locations: Hickory Hill P. in Iowa City (m.ob.), Ledges S.P. (banded, +DN), Montezuma (DK), and Dudgeon L at Vinton (RMy, FM).

Philadelphia Vireo: There were 8 sightings by 5 observers from 11 to 18 May (TK, JR, HZ, LZ, FM).

Prothonotary Warbler: 4 were at Dudgeon L. on 17 May (RMy, FM, RH, TSJr, TSt) and 10 at Guttenberg on 24 May (TSJr).

red
Worm-eating Warbler: 1 was at Lacey-Kecsauqua S.P. on 13 May (TSJr, TSt); one was probably present (heard) at Effigy Mounds on 29 May (C B).

Golden-winged Warbler: 2 at Spirit L on 10 May were unusual for n.w. Iowa (DBi).

Blue-winged Warbler: Brewster's hybrid was seen at Ledges S.P. on 19 May (+DN, BE). Territorial birds were at the Ledges on 26 May (ISU).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Near record early dates were 21 Apr. in Mills Co. (BWi) and 23 Apr. in Ames and Iowa City (ISU, TK). One was late in Davenport on 19 May (banded, PP).

Magnolia Warbler: 20 were observed in the Iowa City area on 18 May (TSh, T K, CB).

more than usual
Cape May Warbler: Eight reports were mostly from e. Iowa but ranged west to Ames (ISU) and n.w to Dickinson Co. (RC) with

dates from 10 May to the dead bird at Ames on 20 May.

none Black-throated Blue Warbler: Both reports were from 18 May at Wildcat Den S.P. (MN). and St. Lucas (JSb).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: A late migrant was banded at Davenport on 19 May (PP).

Black-throated Green Warbler: One at Sioux Center on 30 Apr. was a rare find for n.w. Iowa (JV).

Cerulean Warbler: One on 2 May in the Amana Woods (CB) precedes the earliest date given by Brown.

4 locations. will soon be added to regular list! Yellow-throated Warbler: One or two were seen and heard at Wildcat Den S.P. from 3 to 22 May (+RT, +TK, m.ob.), and Ledges S.P. on 27 Apr. (HZ, LZ, PM); 5 were at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on 12-13 May (TSJr, TSt); and 4 were at White Pine Hollow *on 12 May* ~~(no date)~~ (+TSJr).

Pine Warbler: None reported.

Palm Warbler: 2 were late at Davenport on 19 May (PP).

Northern Waterthrush: 1 was relatively early at Ames on 19 Apr. (PM).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Sightings were from typical locations: Waubonsie S.P. (RMy, m.ob.), n.e. Mills Co. (BWi), Ledges S.P. (HZ, m.ob.), Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (TSJr, TSt), Wildcat Den S.P. (m.ob.), and Amana Woods (CB). The earliest date was 19 Apr. at the Ledges (ISU).

none Connecticut Warbler: Reports were from Sunken Cove on 18 May (+RC, WJ, JC) and Ames on 24 May (PM).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Reports were from Pleasantville (RT, GB) and Davenport (PP).

Hooded Warbler: 1 was seen at Sunken Cove on 18 May (+RC) which is unusually far north and west for this species.

Wilson's Warbler: John VanDyk considers this species regular in Sioux Co.

MEADOWLARKS THROUGH BUNTINGS

Orchard Oriole: This species is common in S.W. Iowa. More easterly reports were from Ames (PM, AT), near Cone M. (TSh, TSta, CB, TK) and near Wildcat Den S.P. (PP).

Brewer's Blackbird: 30 at Cone M. 5 Apr. (TSta, m.ob.); 8 at Hamburg on 13 Apr. (IG).

accidental
Western Tanager: A male was easily identified at Forney L. on 26 Apr. (+RMy, +RS).

Summer Tanager: Only report was from the usual location at Waubonsie S.P.

Blue Grosbeak: Early dates for this late arriving species were 9 May in Mills Co. (RS, BJR, BWi) and 13 May at Forney L. (RS, TSh, TK).

Dickcissel: Our n.w. Iowa colleagues disagree: "not very common, numbers seem alarmingly low" (DBi) and "are present in good (and normal) numbers. Need not be blue-listed in northwest Iowa" (JV). Two other observers suggested a decrease (FM, TK). Breeding bird surveys should give us a much better assessment of this possibly declining species. Unfortunately this information is not available for our immediate evaluation.

Purple Finch: There was a marked absence of Purple Finches. The only report was a single bird at Hickory Hill P. in Iowa City

on 27 Apr. and 2 May (TK). They were gone from Lamoni where they are regularly banded in Mar. (GDe).

Pine Siskin: Like the other n. finches, Pine Siskins were rare; 5 were at Davenport until 16 Apr. (PP) and 2 were in Iowa City on 23 Mar. (TSta).

Rufous-sided Towhee: An overwintering western race remained in Iowa City until 5 Apr. (TK), the same date the first migrant was reported in Ames (PM). A nest with 4 eggs was found at Volga L. on 26 May (FM).

Grasshopper Sparrow: The scattered reports do not provide an adequate evaluation of this Blue Listed species.

Henslow's Sparrow: Present at the usual Hayden Prairie location on 24, 31 May (FM, TSJr, TSt) but one near Red Oak in s.w. Iowa on 26 Apr. was unusual (FMy).

LeConte's Sparrow: Reports from Waterloo on 19 Apr. (TSJr), Lizard L. on 21 Apr. (RC), Cone M. on 26 Apr. (TSh, TK), Willow S. and Hendrickson M. on 15 May (BWi, JR).

Vesper Sparrow: Very common in Sioux and Lyon Cos. (JV); otherwise scattered reports are insufficient to evaluate this species.

Lark Sparrow: This species is regular in s.w. Iowa but apparently now rare in other localities; 1 on 4 May at Coralville Res. (TK), 4-6 on 4 May at Vinton (FM, m.ob.), 2 on 24 May in w. Sioux Co. (JV), 1 on 31 May in Cherokee Co. (MB).

Northern Junco: One was late at Cone M. on 3 May (TK, TSh, CB, TSta).

Clay-colored Sparrow: There were 5 reports from w. Iowa, 2 from

central Iowa and 1 from e. Iowa reflecting the usual distribution of this species. Extreme dates were from 25 Apr. to 16 May (both at Willow S., BWi)

Harris' Sparrow: Late dates were 13 May at Riverton A. (RS, TSh, TK) and 15 May at Iowa City (TK).

Lapland Longspur: 25 were in Hamilton Co. on 6 Mar (HZ, LZ); no others reported.

+ = documented

CONTRIBUTORS

✓ *Fromm*
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work.

Most contributors were cognizant of the problems in substantiating rare and difficult-to-identify species. I am gradually developing a philosophy toward handling these problems. As I see it, my job is to include in the field reports observations that are significant and beyond reasonable doubt. Let me first discuss what constitutes "beyond reasonable doubt." There is no reason to question species which are common, in season, easy to identify and seen by experienced, conservative observers known to me. Not surprisingly, some of the most significant sightings fall at the opposite end of the spectrum. Evidence which must be considered, more or less in the order of reliability, is: (1) Specimen or diagnostic photograph. In this report photographs of a Ruddy Turnstone in February and of a Mountain Bluebird were the convincing evidence. (2) A netted or injured bird examined by a competent observer. (3) Independent description of a bird by more than one observer including key field marks. If the birders see the same bird without knowing that the other has seen it and make notes immediately they have not biased each other nor been biased by a book. More frequently, two or more observers look at a bird together, a situation in which group psychology is likely to come into play. The observers should avoid expressing conclusions but remind each other of field marks to look for and consult books only if the bird is still in view. Immediately upon

completion of observation and before discussing the identification, each person should write down a description of the bird. The separate documentations, in spite of their crudeness, are likely to be more convincing than a composite documentation written hours or days later. (4) Verification of a bird found by one individual that can be found by other birders he/she has notified. (5) A bird seen by one individual in which the key field marks are discussed, whether present or absent, and documented objectively. (6) Observations by birders known to be experienced, competent and conservative. (7) A less well documented bird that is observed in other locations during the time period. These guidelines are helpful for accidental, casual and rare, regular species which are difficult to identify. Handling of more common, difficult-to-identify species such as Dowitchers and Common Terns is a problem we need to address in the future.

How should I handle the reporting of birds that are not "beyond reasonable doubt"? Here are my current feelings. Single sightings of accidental and difficult-to-identify casual species will not be included in the Field Reports without convincing documentation. I will request documentation from regular contributors who do not consistently fail to provide it. The same procedure will be applied to some of the rare regular species. I hope to develop a list of regular species that need to be documented.

Ray Cummins and Barb Wilson have sent their suggestions. I hope you will too. Full documentation is not always needed; for example, mention of key field marks for Marbled Godwits, Dowitchers, Northern Shrike and Bohemian Waxwing would convince me of the quality of the observation.

I will make only a few comments on what is significant to report. I judge that most contributors are including almost all of the unusual sightings. Some doubtful ones should be left out. Major contributors represent a spectrum when it comes to reporting more common species ranging from none to all. I would appreciate your leaving out common species present in normal numbers at normal times. I hope that we can develop some means to handle moderately common species such as Common Loon, Great Egret and Stilt Sandpiper and selected Blue List species such as Eastern Bluebird and Loggerhead Shrike.

One final thought: Encourage those birding with you to join the IOU.