

(21) 26
14 pt. Cape Iowa Bird Life
34: 44-49, 1964
FIELD REPORTS.

The first week of March in central Iowa was abnormally warm but colder weather set in, and the remainder of the month was cold with sub-zero recorded on the 26th. The average temperature for the month was 5° below normal. April was likewise colder than normal with average wind speeds the highest since 1955. May, to date, has been abnormally warm with winds of tornadic force in the first week and these may be responsible for some of the unusual spring observations: several Little Blue Herons, a species usually seen in the late summer if at all; a Purple Gallinule in the Conesville area photographed in color by Fred Kent; a Whimbrel at Cardinal Marsh; several Goshawks; a Mountain Plover on Credit Island; Chuck-wills-widow in Wildcat Den State Park; a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Cedar Falls; a male Lark Bunting in breeding plumage near Des Moines, and another near Goldfield, and two near Akron. A good case for a Yellow-throated Warbler is made by Mrs. Getscher, and another warbler appearing to be the Prairie is reported by Mrs. Hanna. In general, the migration was thought to be early with opinions regarding numbers varying from place to place.

Loons, Grebes, Pelicans. Two reports mentioned the Common Loon in Iowa, one at Lake Keomah on 4 May, (KL), and 26 April on the Shell Rock River, (AH), but 200 were seen at Gavin's Point Dam in South Dakota, about 70 miles west of Sioux City, (RM). A Red-necked Grebe was seen at W. Twin Lake near Goodell on 18 May, (HP). White Pelicans were seen: 12 on 10 April, (DG); 1 on 17 April, (JK); and 1 for two unspecified days, (RM).

Cormorants, Herons. A flock of 50 Double-crested Cormorants seen 12 April, (RH); most ever observed, (RM); 2 at Big Wall Lake 25 April, (Dick K). Great Blue and Green Herons were thought scarce, (KL); Little Blue were seen; 18 April, Amana Lake by L. Serbousek, (FK); 10 May by Mrs. Hewitt, (RH); and 17 May at Cardinal Marsh. Common Egrets were seen: 1 on 11 April, 4 on 19 April and 1 on 17 May, (DH); with several scattered observations in April, (DG).

3 reg

(22)

Yellow-crowned Night Herons, which appear to be fairly well established as nesters are reported: 1 on 21 April in a heavy residential area, (DH); 2 each on 7 May, (RH), (FK); 1 on 9 May on the Des Moines Audubon Spring Census; 1 on 10 May at Goose Lake where several pairs usually nest, (JF). No bitterns and few herons is Kent's comment.

Swans, Geese. At Jefferson on 16 March, 31 Whistling Swans, (JF), and 3 spent several days near Van Meter at the end of March. On 7 March flocks of 100 each Canada, Blue and Snow, and White-fronted Geese with 15 "smaller Canadas" were seen in the Blue Lake area. Wm. Felton found a dead Hutchin's Goose with plastic and aluminum bands in mid-May. An estimated 50,000 Blue and Snow Geese northwest of Sioux City, near Elk Point, S. D., the largest concentration in many years were seen 30 March, (DH). On the night of 6 April a reverse migration of Blue and Snow over Des Moines was noted. A pair of Canada Geese are reported nesting at Goose Lake near Jewell, (Dick K).

Ducks. One of the best seasons at Iowa City, due perhaps to cold later on, with first big influx on 6 March. There were 100 Canvasbacks for 10 days, but few Ruddy Ducks. On 11 April 3,000 Lesser Scaups and Shovelers. Surprising numbers of Pintails present into April, (FK). Best spring ever at Lake Keomah, (KL). Ducks plentiful and early, (JK). Blue-winged Teal migration very early, (Dick K). Not many early Mallards and Pintails, but in late April 1,000 of all species present for two weeks, including 7 Buffleheads for 10 days, (DG). A flock of 200 Goldeneyes on the Missouri River in mid-February, and on 7 March "thousands and thousands" of ducks, mostly Mallards and Pintails in the Blue Lake area. Fewer Green-winged Teal than last year and very small numbers of Canvasbacks, Redheads, American Widgeons and Gadwalls, but Lesser Scaups and Shovelers up, (DH). Most ducks arrived at Lock & Dam 9 by 18 March, a week earlier than last year. Numerous Redheads, (DK). Not as many Pintails as in previous years but Buffleheads were the most ever seen, (RM). A good year for Mallards

(23)

and Pintails, and more Goldeneyes than usual, (DR). Wood Ducks seem to be staging a good come-back: 25 at Lake Keosauqua on 3 April, (KL); best year ever seen, (DR); a flock of 55 on Credit Island 25 March, (PP); and a occasional pairs seen around Des Moines. About 75 Common Mergansers were on the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir on 14 March, and Red-breasted came later in very good numbers.

Vultures, Hawks. Turkey Vultures were seen: 11 April, 5 (FK); 7 on 12 April, (RH); 2 pairs, but few and far between, (KL); and, numbers definitely up, (DR). On 14 March a mature Goshawk chasing a pigeon flew into a Cedar Rapids window, according to Dr. Vane, (FK); one was seen 23 March, (JF); and another at Rock-Sioux Access, north of Hawarden, (RM). The accipiter migration was thought poor, (DR). Red-tailed Hawks were normal with three nests under observation, (EB); one observation where there should be more, (RM); only 1 pair in Pleasantville area and none where they had nested for seven years, (GB); more than other years, (JK). A Krider's was observed at close range on 18 April, (EB). Hawks scarce except for 1 pair Red-tailed in Oskaloosa, (KL); Red-tailed and Red-shouldered down, (PP). Broad-wings numbering 90 went over Big Wall Lake on 25 April, (Dick K). Two favorable reports: Swainson's unusually abundant from 11 April to 15 May, alighting on the ground and approaching within 40 feet of a tractor, (DG); more Swainson's than ever seen, at least 15 from 20 April on, compared to a normal 1 to 3, (DR). Rough-legged Hawk reports are good: 3 times as many this spring as last fall with 3 melanistic in 1 square mile on 27 March, (EB); numerous around Cedar Falls, (PP). The last week in March and first week in April found Red-tailed, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks abundant, (DG). Buteos thought to be doing well around Goldfield, (DR); but numbers of large hawks greatly reduced, (RM). The only Golden Eagle report refers to 1 seen at Goose Lake on 11 March, (Dick K). Bald Eagle reports were widely scattered: 20 at Gavin's Point Dam, (RM); 5 on 14 March, (FK); 2 near Pleasantville, 17 March, (GB); 1 near Decorah, 18 April, (DP); 2 immatures

24

near Cedar Falls by Albert Berkowitz en route to the Decorah meeting; 6 at Lock & Dam 9 on 30 March, (DK). A Peregrine was sighted at Cardinal Marsh 10 May, (DK), and one was seen at Rock-Sioux Access, (RM). Marsh Hawks: none seen since 5 January, (RM); and a similar situation in Polk Co.

Sparrow Hawks: were very common earlier, (RM); but, scarce, (GB); (KL); and around Des Moines; and still down in numbers, (DK). The only reference to Red-shouldered Hawks was that of Petersen, above.

Quails, Pheasants. A tremendous winter survival of Gray Partridge and Ring-necked Pheasant, (EB). An increase in Gray Partridge in Wright Co., (DR). Bobwhites came through the winter well, (GB), but Pheasants and Quail fewer than a couple of years ago, (KL).

Rails, Gallinules, Coots, Plovers. Very few rails other than Sora, (FK); very poor shorebird year, (DR). One King Rail reported, (JK). A Purple Gallinule photographed on 7 May, (FK). Hundreds of American Coots at Lake Keomah 3 April and for several days, (KL); a heavy concentration earlier, (RM). A flock of 11 Semi-palmated Plover was seen on 13 May, (JK); a small flock remained in Des Moines Waterworks Park for several weeks; 20 were at Cardinal Marsh 10 May, (DK); with a few remaining on the 17th. A Mountain Plover was on Credit Island 25 March, and seen by Elton Fawks the next day, (PP). Killdeer reports varied greatly: definitely down, (EB); not many seen in Polk Co.; seem fewer, (GB); scarce, (DG); but, in numbers, (JK); plentiful after 12 March, (KL); and, abundant, (RM). Golden Plovers were: near Jefferson 17 May, (JF); 30 near Castalia 27 April, and 100 on 2 May, (DK); 9 on 25 April, (EB); 30 on 3 May, (RH), while several were at Cardinal Marsh in company with some Black-bellied on 17 May.

Sandpipers, etc. This group was thought to have had a poor migration: few shorebirds, disappointing, (EG); few except snipe and yellowlegs, (GB); a few Spotted only, (KL). A number of reports of American Woodcock: 18 March, (FK); 20 March in the yard of Dr. Peasley in Des Moines which was six weeks earlier than any previous Polk Co. record; 15 March in

Oakdale Cemetery, Davenport, for three weeks with a maximum of 6 birds; a pair may be nesting in Wildcat Den State Park, (PP); 12 April (RH); and 26 April, (DR). Common Snipe: a good migration, (GB); very scarce, saw but 1, (DG). The very rare Whimbrel was seen by a number of observers at Cardinal Marsh on the Sunday field trip. Upland Plovers seem plentiful only at Cresco where 30 were seen 17 April, (DP); they failed to appear, (JK); first arrived on 17 April, but scarce, (DG); and none seen so far in former nesting areas in Polk Co. Willet were seen at Beed's Lake, (AH); and in Des Moines 1 May. Lesser Yellow-legs were numerous: seen by the dozens, (JK); many in Goose Lake, (Dick K); and as many as 90 to 100 in Waterworks Park in Des Moines the last week in April and the first 10 days in May. Hudsonian Godwits were seen; 9 May, (JK); and 2 on 10 May, (DK). There was only one reference to the ^{American} Avocet, one was seen (no date given) (RM). There were two records of numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes: 15 on 9 May, (JK); and 24 on 10 May with 1 Northern, (DK). One concentration of shorebirds was in a field near Jefferson and was estimated to total 1,500, mostly Pectorals, but including Dunlins, Wilson's Phalaropes and Dowitchers, (JF).

~~XXXX~~, ^{Gulls} ~~Toms~~. Franklin's Gulls were seen on three dates, (JK); there was one sighting of a small flock at the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir on 9 May; and there were 2 on the 11th and 40 on the 30th of April, (DG); but numbers were thought greatly reduced this year, (RM).

Doves, Cuckoos. Not as many Mourning Doves as last year, (GB); and numbers in Des Moines may be less also. Both cuckoos seem fewer in Des Moines than last year when there was heavy infestation of worms.

Indent - Owls, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds. A Snowy Owl was on the ice at Little Wall Lake on 14 March, (Dick K). Great Horned had a good nesting season with at least 7 successful nests near Goldfield, (DR). Short-eared were very abundant, 13 and 14 being seen at one time late in March, (DG).

A Whip-poor-will was found by Wm. Felton on 16 May, (DH); and one banded

(26)

on 17 April in Oakdale Cemetery, (PP). A Chuck-wills-widow was found by Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Frink on 9 May in Wildcat Den State Park, and heard on 19 May by Peter Petersen. ^(see separate note) An early Ruby-throated Hummingbird was found 27 April, (DH).

Woodpeckers. Yellow-shafted Flickers: everywhere, with 80 to 90 seen on 11 and 12 April, (RH); in good numbers, (GB); excellent numbers, many nests, (DR). Pileateds are becoming more common and often seen on Credit Island, ^{where they are apparently nesting} (PP). Red-headed seem numerous, (GB); and found on all back roads in Polk Co.

Flycatchers, Swallows. Eastern Kingbirds appeared in Polk Co. on the early date 6 April when 2 were seen; 50 were observed 9 May, (DG); and a similar number on 13 May, (DR). At Hamburg a Western Kingbird arrived on 21 April before the Eastern, (EG). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on 15 April found by Mrs. John Barlow at Cedar Falls was noteworthy. Say's Phoebe has returned to all locations checked and appears firmly established, (EB). The Eastern Phoebe is found under every bridge and most culverts, (GB). The ~~first~~ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher appeared 19 May and 3 were banded, (PP). "Small flycatchers" have been common, (JK), but the number of flycatchers has been small, (RM). A flock of 300 Tree Swallows was seen over a lake on 26 and 27 April, (DG), and 200 were feeding over the basins in Waterworks in Des Moines 30 March. Barn Swallows are at every farm, (GB). A flock of Cliff Swallows which were evidently nesting in a barn ^{near McGregor} were seen 19 May by Albert Berkowitz. All Purple Martin houses are filled, (GB); they ^{early} arrived 23 March, (DG); but the arrivals in Des Moines must have perished in the cold weather which ensued.

Chickadees, Nuthatches, Wrens. Black-capped Chickadees numerous but White-breasted Nuthatches greatly reduced, (RM). Bewick's Wren came on 23 March but disappeared coincidentally with the arrival of the House Wren, (GB).

Mimies, Thrushes.

(27)

Mimics, Thrushes. A Mockingbird at Cedar Falls was banded by Robert Paulsen, (AH); they have returned to former nesting location, (GB); Catbirds and Brown Thrashers are in good numbers, (GB). Only 4 Robins' nests where there were 15 last year, (GB), but, common, (JK); and numerous in Des Moines. There were few Hermit Thrush reports in Des Moines. Swainson's Thrushes in very reduced numbers, (RM); but have been in at least normal numbers in Des Moines with more Gray-cheeked than usual. Only 2 Eastern Bluebirds on 11 and 12 April seemed low, (RH); more plentiful with satisfactory occupancy of boxes, (KL). Thrushes in general are down with no Hermit, Veery or Bluebird, (RM).

Kinglets, Pipits. A good migration of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, (GB); a small wave in mid-April, (JK). Water Pipits were widely reported; 15 March 30 at Goose Lake, (JF); 15 or 20 on the same date at Brenton's Slough; 22 March by Mrs. Osness, (RH); 25 April at Beed's Lake, (AH); and from 3 to 20 in a plowed field from 9 April to 9 May, (DG). A Sprague's Pipit was observed (nodate) (RM).

Waxwings, Shrikes. On 28 March 6 Bohemian Waxwings were seen, (RH); while at Gavin's Point Dam there were 100 with 200 Cedar Waxwings, (RM). There are a number of Loggerhead Shrike nests, (GB); only 1 observation on 26 April, (KL); and very scarce in Des Moines.

Vireos, Warblers. Some comments on this group: warblers generally good, (GB); big wave 2 May with good variety everywhere, another smaller 7 May, (FK); pretty good concentration on 7 May, but in general considered poor migration, (DK); a wave 5 and 6 May with Tennessee, Nashville, Black-and-white, and Northern Waterthrush, but banded only half as many of all warblers as last year in Oakdale Cemetery, (PF); very poor warbler migration, early wave of Palm and Myrtle, then practically nothing, (DR). A normal flight of vireos and warblers, (EB). A White-eyed Vireo was seen on 2 May, (DR). A Black-and-white seen on 15 April was two weeks early. Lawrence's Warblers were seen on 2 May by Mr. and Mrs. Milliken and by Dean Roosa in their respective areas.

(28)

Tennessees were thought to be in reduced numbers, (RM). Orange-crowned were described as a good flight, (EB). An unusual number of Parulas were seen, one which arrived on 22 April was two weeks early and was seen in Mrs. Margaret Brooke's yard for a week or more; one on 28 April and 3 on 7 May, (RH); another 3 May at Oskaloosa, (KL). Yellow Warblers were seen in large numbers from 25 April on, (EG); but, few seen, (KL); and, in reduced numbers, (RM). Cape Mays were thought more numerous than usual at Waterloo, (RH), and were also seen at other points. This was a good Myrtle year; a wave 22 April, (EG); and 30 April in Des Moines; good migration, (GB); plentiful everywhere, (KL); and, the only abundant warbler but seen for only a week, (RM). A Pine Warbler was seen 7 May, (FK). There was a wave of Palm 2 May, (MJ); 30 April with the Myrtles at Des Moines; and abundant during April, (Dick K). A Yellow-breasted Chat on 7 May was early, (RH). A Connecticut was banded 22 May, (PP). Northern Waterthrushes were considered common in April, (Dick K).

Blackbirds. Bobolinks: most ever seen, (EB); plentiful in Des Moines, and many seen en route to Decorah and Mc Gregor; good numbers, (JK); more than usual, (DR); but, small numbers from 1 to 20 May, (DG). Eastern Meadowlarks are moving into the Goldfield area formerly occupied by the Western, (DR). Yellow-headed Blackbirds: quite a few, (DH); 10 seen 20 April and 6 females 10 May, (DG); 30 near Readlyn on 17 May were surprising, (RH); best year yet in Wright Co., especially Morse Lake near Belmond, (DR). Redwinged Blackbirds seem everywhere; large flights seen 22 March, (DH). Orchard Orioles, more than in the previous six years combined, (RM). Rusty Blackbirds; good numbers around, (FK). Brewer's; seen on several occasions, (JK); had 6 following the plow on 14 April, (DG). Seven Common Grackles on 1 February were very early, (GB).

Sparrows, Finches. An Evening Grosbeak was in Des Moines from 10 to 15 April, (HP). This was evidently a migrant and not a winter resident as was the case with the flock which was fed by Dr. Vane into April.

(29)

There must be more Dickcissels than usual; too many from 16 May on, (KL); a dime a dozen, (RM). Common Redpolls were in the Waterloo area; seen 27 March, Mrs. Holliday, 2 on 1 April, Mrs. Hewitt at Jesup, 2 on 3 April, Nick Osness, (RH). Red Crossbill was seen 5 April, (RH), and the last of those wintering in Ames was seen 7 May, (DP). Rufous-sided Towhees are again scarce around Des Moines. Another coincidence was the finding of the rare Lark Bunting on 24 May by Dean Roosa at Goldfield, and by Elizabeth Peck at Granger, not far from Des Moines. There was a good flight of Savannah Sparrows, (EB). Grasshopper Sparrows at Goldfield on 11 April were early, (DR). These are back to normal after a scarcity three years ago, (EB). Le Conte's Sparrows were seen by Robt. Nickolson on 12 April, (DH), and 31 March, (KL). On 13 May 3 Henslow's were seen in good light, (JF); *one banded at Goose Lake near Cedar Falls 31 May, (PP).* Vesper, down considerably, (RM); but around Des Moines in at least usual numbers. Chipping, most ever seen, (EB). Clay-colored were observed *8 May, (DP)* 2 May, (FK); and 3 May, (RH). White-crowned; some increase, (EB); up, (DK); good migration, (DR). White-throated: good flight as usual, a partial albino 21 April with only yellow on cheek to distinguish it from the Snow Bunting, (EB); 150 going through my yard, and 500 seen all day, (FK); very good migration in April and May, (Dick K); but, thought down in numbers, (DK). Lapland Longspurs: 200 on 16 February, (FK); 100 on 3 March, and again 15 March but no big flocks, (DG); 21 March near Ames, (DP). On 3 May a definite identification of a Smith's Longspur although not in breeding plumage, (FK). At Jefferson airport on 21 March, nearly 100 Snow Buntings, (JF).

29 (30)

Contributors: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; John Faaborg, Jefferson; Mrs. Edw. Getscher, Hamburg; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Annette Haffner, Cedar Falls; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Myrle Jones, Bellevue; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Dick Knight, Ames; Darwin Koenig, Castalia; Keith Layton, Oskaloosa; Ron Muilenburg, Hawarden; Mrs. Harold Peasley, Des Moines; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Don Peterson, Ames; Dean Roosa, Goldfield.

WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll, Des Moines, Iowa. 50312.