

(43) 14 pt
FIELD REPORTS

1626 B. B. C. H.
37:20-22, 1967

The winter of 1966-67, up to 1 February, has been one of extremes of weather with periods of spring-like temperatures alternating with severe cold spells. Little or no snow fell in many areas until the end of December, and it was then unevenly distributed over the state with some parts experiencing blizzards and others having relatively little precipitation. The season might well be described as a winter of few northern visitors other than Snowy Owls.

Geese, Ducks. Reports of late Canada Geese mentioned 65 flying north near Ames on 10 December, (DP), 5 on 10 January at Cedar Rapids with a number of ducks, (CH), and 12 at Pleasant Valley on 17 December, (PP). The Mallard situation at Sioux City is described as a "population explosion". Warren Jensen reported 500,000 on the river at Elk Point on 13 December, and Mr. and Mrs. Hanna estimated 100,000 at De Soto Bend where there is a new National Wildlife Refuge. Several reports of late Redheads: 2 at Wyth Park 19 January, (KV); 1 at Goose Lake until 26 December, (JF); 2 at Cedar Rapids with a sprinkling of a number of other species, (CH).

Hawks. Reports of this group are mixed: none all winter, (GB); most of those seen have been Red-tailed and not too many of these, (DH); Red-tailed almost non-existent, (JK); but, some December trips showed more Red-tailed than any other year, (PL); seen rather frequently since 1 November, (DG); and population quite good, (PP). A Red-shouldered was seen on 10 December at Cedar Falls by Annette Haffner, (RH), and 2 on 27 January were the first in six months, (HM), though they are down even more and not seen all winter at Credit Island, (PP). Rough-legged: only 3 this winter, (JK); 2 on 20 January, (HM); and seem to have increased, (JF); with both phases seen rather frequently, (DG). Most of the Bald Eagles were seen along the Missouri or Mississippi

A (Hawla's Hawk) was seen

North of
Donahue,
Scott Co. Ia
2 December
by
Lewis Blewins
(PP).

(CFC)

with 25 said to have been at De Soto Bend the last week in December, (DH), and 30-40, which is more than last year, at Keokuk, (MS). Burlington had more than any other year, (PL), and at Davenport the population was holding at 35-50 with immatures sharply up, (PP). At Bellevue on 25 January there were 5 adults and an immature was seen at Sweet Marsh in November, (RH). From Madrid near the Des Moines River L. M. Lanning reports 2 adults and an immature on 19 November. Marsh Hawks: several on 23 January were the first since fall, (HM), and they, and Sparrow Hawks, were thought not as abundant as in other winters, (DG).

Bobwhites, Pheasants, Snipe. Two good reports are that Bobwhite are most abundant in 20 years, (DG), and the population is up in southern Iowa, (MS). Pheasant reports were divided geographically: average, but down a bit from two excellent seasons, (EB); numbers reduced greatly, (DH); a little farther south; came through in good shape, (JK); more numerous than last year, (RK); and more than usual with 30 hens in one flock, (DG). Using a snowmobile, Paul Ferguson counted 1500-2000 in the standing corn at Union Slough on 21 January. A Snipe was at Ames on 12 January, (RK), and 2 at Grundy Center on the 2nd were seen by Glenn Bloomfield, (RH).

Gulls, Doves. A Glaucous Gull was present for a week in mid-December, (PP). The usual reports of wintering Mourning Doves were received.

Cwls. A dead Barn Owl found in the barn on 8 January was possibly the owl seen flying the previous evening, (DG). (Snowy Owls were mentioned by seven contributors: (DH, CH, HL, DG, RH, KV, JF)). The 3 in the Cedar Falls area may include the one in the Hewitt report. The owl at Goose Lake near Jefferson was seen to capture a Coot. Long-eared were mentioned but once, (JF). Short-eared were seen daily from 26 October on, with as many as 8 at one time, (DG), and Mrs. Barlow saw 11 on 11 December, (RH), but they were thought scarce or only a few

45

seen according to others. One explanation, Reservoir floods probably eliminated the rodents, (FK). A Saw-whet was wintering north of the Ames campus for the fourth consecutive year, (MS), and 1 was found the last week in January, (FK).

Woodpeckers. Wintering Flickers were mentioned, (GB, RH), and some have remained in Des Moines. Red-headed have been unusually numerous: never before in winter, (CW); first time in years and common, (JF). Other reports from (DP, RK, DG, MS). They are seen in Polk Co. also.

Horned Larks, Jays, Crows. Horned Larks: not many, (EB); very few, (DH), but, present in good numbers, (PP), and abundant everywhere, (DG). Only a few Jays and Crows seen, (DH).

Nuthatches, Creepers, Wrens. Red-breasted Nuthatches have been very scarce: none, (DH, JK), only 1 at Jefferson in addition to the 3 on census day, (JF), 1 for a few days in December, only, (PL), singles at two different feeder locations, (DG), and few at Des Moines. The only comment on Brown Creepers said "none", (JF). Reports of Winter Wrens were limited to 1 each, (HM, PL). A Carolina Wren is wintering, (PL).

Mimics, Thrushes. Mockingbirds were seen: on 14 November, (WM); 1 for a couple of months, (KV); and found sparingly near multiflora hedges, (DG). A Brown Thrasher is wintering, (GB), 1 was present for three weeks, (DG), and another was seen the last week of January by Ruth Holliday, (RH). Robins were numerous in November and December, (DP), and were thought scarce in Des Moines until January when 23 were seen eating crabapples in a yard near the home of Mrs. Ruth Binsfeld. Others are 1 at Jefferson, (JF), and 5 at Lamoni. One which appeared on 25 January was, from its appearance, thought possibly to be a migrant, (GB). A Hermit Thrush in Cedar Falls early in December might have been injured, (KV).

Waxwings, Shrikes, Starlings. Only 2 Bohemian Waxwings were mentioned; (GB, CW). Cedar Waxwings were thought definitely down, (RK). ~~A~~

(46)

A Northern Shrike was seen on 8 January, (JF). Starlings were thought down a bit, (EB).

House Sparrows, Icterids. An interesting report says that in Sioux City they are still noticing the effects of a Salmonella outbreak which took so many House Sparrows last year. A number of people have few at feeders, (DH). Fred Kent commented that he had only 1 or 2 although there seemed plenty around the farms. Meadowlarks: were numerous in November and December, (DP); there seem to be a few more, (DH); and, in good numbers all winter, (DC). There were lots of Red-winged during the warm spell, (HM). A large flock of blackbirds on 26 December appeared to be 50/50 Rusties and Brewer's, which ^{while} admittedly unusual, was arrived at by careful study, (DH). Rusty quite common with one flock of 25 and others seen along the river, (JF); 6 seen on 22 January and subsequently found feeding in sorghum, (HM); and 2 strays, (CW). A Brewer's on 27 January was thought very unusual, (EB), but 175 were near Ames on 16 December, (DP). A large flock of Grackles was seen at Brower's Lake on 8 January by the Davisons, (DH); they were numerous in November and December, (DP); a few wintering, (RK), while an observation on 21 January was a first winter record, (RM).

Finches. A rather late Dickcissel was seen on 27 September, (DH). A few Evening Grosbeaks appeared after a heavy snow on 27 December, (DH); Annette Haffner saw 1 in Iowa Falls on 15 January, (RH); a female has been feeding on crabapples in the Dwight Brooke's yard in Des Moines. Purple Finches: only one report of 2, (DH); fewer at Burlington, (PL); not seen until 15 December and fewer than last year, (HM); but, common all winter, (JF). In contrast to the invasion last winter, there has been but one report of Redpolls, that a flock on 26 December seen by Mrs. Miller, (RH). Pine Siskins likewise are scarce: very few, (DH); 1 at Annette Haffner's home, (RH); and 2 at Al Buchanan's feeder in Algona, (PF). All other reports say none seen. Goldfinches seem

47

fewer than several years ago, (DH), but have been thought numerous by Des Moines observers. Red Crossbills were seen 26 October and 17 November, (WM); 10 were on the Ames campus through October and November, (DP); and 2 were seen north of Davenport on 12 November, (PP, PL). Vesper Sparrows were seen on 8 and 22 January, (JF). Juncos were in good numbers, (DH); the population down from the peak three years ago, (GB); and scarce, (PK). Tree Sparrows: numerous, (DH, JK); not quite as numerous this year, (PK, GB); few, but many last year, (CW). Harris' Sparrows: a few, (EB); fewer than last year, (JF); not too many, (DH); numerous in early fall while seldom seen in other years, (CW); common in Ames area, (DP). White-throated Sparrows, 1 wintering, (CW). Song Sparrows, numerous, (JF). Lapland Longspurs: With blizzard conditions on 7 January there were flocks of 200, 75, and 35, (CH); very common, with an estimated 1000 seen on a 60-mile trip on 8 January, (JF); at least 500 seen late in November, but not observed since December first, (DG). A mixed flock of 1-200 Horned Larks and Longspurs observed ^{ON 8 JANUARY} by Albert Berkowitz. Snow Bunting: 1 was noticed in each of the Longspur flocks (CH), and 1 on 16 December near Backbone by Mrs. Barlow, (RH).

Contributors: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; John Faaborg, Jefferson; Paul Ferguson, Titonka; J. D. Gillaspey, Lamoni; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo, Clarisse Hewitt, Jesup; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Richard Knight, Ames; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock, Mrs. B. A. LaDoux, Spirit Lake; Peter Lowther, Burlington; Mrs. Wilma Mayberry, Wyoming; Howard McKinley, Russell; Ron Muilenburg, Webster City; Don Peterson, Ames; Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport; Myron Swenson, Ames; Mrs. K. A. Velie, Cedar Falls; C. F. Wolden, Wallingford. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa, 50312.

Audubon Field Notes
Winter 1966-67

Weather

A mild winter with very little snow for the second consecutive year in Des Moines.

Mallards - a few wintered for the first time in several years.

Doves - 1 very few with the exception of perhaps a few scattered flocks.

Flickers - good numbers wintered. Redheaded - unusually large numbers.

Jays - more than usual.

Red-breasted Nuthatches, Creepers, Kinglets - fewer than usual

Robins - fewer.

Meadowlarks - very local, few in most fields.

Evening Grosbeak - 1 female coming to a feeder all winter.

Redpolls - none reported.

Pine Siskin - saw but 1, no other reports.

Goldfinches - came to many feeders for the first time.

Juncos - at least as many as usual.

Tree Sparrows - more numerous than other years.

Longspurs - 1 small and 1 good sized flock reported which is more than in other years.

A flock of 30 Pied-billed Grebes at the Reservoir on 27 March; first time I've ever seen this number at any one time.