

ANNUAL REPORT 1990 IOWA BIRDLINE

The Iowa Birdline, sponsored by the Iowa Ornithologist's Union, functioned very efficiently in 1990. The equipment is in good shape, and there were only three minor malfunctions during the year.

Use of the service showed a significant increase over the previous year. Efforts were made toward this increase. About 150 letters were sent to Iowa birders. The Birdline number was added to the feeder survey form for the first time, and several calls were directly tracable to that source. The DNR non-game news featured an article I wrote about the Birdline, as did the IOU newsletter. Almost all new or infrequent contributors received followup calls and/or notes. More frequent updates also were a factor in the increase.

The Birdline is a source of new membership for the IOU, as a number of requests for information about the IOU were fielded. It is also a source of information to the general public, since several calls a month regarding some aspect of birds and birding are answered, or referred for an answer. Questions from a Fort Madison newspaper, and a Carroll radio station received a response. Larry Stone of the Des Moines Register is not only a contributor, but a regular monitor of the Birdline, and he wrote several articles about Iowa Birds. At least some of the information he learned about first from this source.

At my office, I transcribe the Iowa Birdline for the National Birding Hotline Cooperative on the computer, and in return receive rare bird alerts from all over the US and Canada. These reports have been printed and sent to birders planning trips to other parts of the country.

The highlights of the statistics listed below include an increase of mean calls per week from 92 to 103, and the mean number of reports received increased from 6 to 10 per week. The message was updated 149 times, so that along with the 52 regular messages, this meant that an update occurred an average of every 1.8 days during the year. The largest number of calls (211), as well as the largest number of reports (28) occurred when the ivory gull was at Red Rock the last week of the year. The record number of calls was 239 when the slaty backed gull was at the Quad Cities in February, 1989.

	1990	1989
Total Calls	5364	4767
Mean calls/week	103	92
Range	65-211	49-239
 Total Reports	 524	 320
Mean reports/week	10	6
Range	3-28	1-19
 Regular Messages	 52	 52
Updates	149	NA

Message changed an average of every 1.8 days during 1990.

Jim Fuller