

(16)  
FIELD REPORTS

Brown  
Jan

October temperatures were normal, but it was a dry month with almost no precipitation until the last two days. November, for the first three weeks has been rainy, with a 4-inch snow on the 13th in the central part.

Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Cormorants. The only Common Loons reported were at the Des Moines Res. on 24 October (RM); Lake McBride on 16 and 17 November (NH); and 2 at Lock 13 on 26 October (PP). Few grebes, other than Pied-billed, were reported: 7 Horned on 19 October and 1 on 16 November (IH); 10 on 26 October at <sup>Lock 13 and</sup> Sabula (PP); and 17 November on Cedar L. (LS). A flight of White Pelicans on 18 October was only 10 days prior to the latest record (EG). With the exception of a flock of 30 Cormorants in the last week of September at Red Rock dam (GB), few were mentioned; Swan L. 22 September (NH); Des Moines on 24 October (RM); and 2 at Sabula on 26 October (PP).

Hérons. A few single Great Blues were reported. The only mention of <sup>re</sup> Great Egrets was of 1 on 22 September and 14 on 29 September (IH). The only Black-crowned Night Herons were in the Red Rock area with 5 at Bunnells on 23 September and 3 in the Refuge in that month (GB).

Geese, Ducks. Red Rock had 250 of the Hutchin's variety of Canada at one time, but the peaks of 3500 Snows and 500 Canadas were very low (GB). Mallards seemed way down (HD). The peak of 12,000 the week of 10 November compares with the aerial counts of 37,000 and 70,000 in '70 and '72 (GB). An influx of unspecified numbers occurred on 11 November (RP). Several Buffleheads were noted on 17 November (RM, MB). A pair of Hooded Mergansers were on Cedar L. on 17 November (LS), and 75 Common at Lock 13 on 16 November (PP).

Vultures, Hawks. There were thought more hawks than usual this year with 15 buteos, including at least 2 Rough-legged, seen on 22 October (HD). There was a good population of Turkey Vultures (RJ). An adult Goshawk was seen on 16 November (NH). Several Sharp-shinned were seen (NH, RJ), but only 2 banded (PP). A Cooper's was seen on 21 <sup>September</sup> ~~November~~ (PP), and early in November (EA).

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Red-tailed seemed few (RJ). There were few Broad-winged (NH), and none seen (RJ). Occasional Rough-legged have been seen (RP); one was at Lake Keomah on 3 November (RJ); a dark phased one was seen on 9 and 16 November (NH). Only 3 Bald Eagles on 20 October, and 1 on 10 November compare with the 10-20 usually seen each fall (GB). Two were seen on 9 November at Mark Twain NWR, 1 at Lock 14, and 1 at Princeton on the 16th (PP). From 1 to 5 Marsh Hawks were seen in different areas during September and October. Ospreys were seen at Coralville on 12 October (NH); 4 November at Rock Creek and on the 7th at Red Rock (HD) and on 21 October at L. Keomah (RJ). There is no pattern discernable in the reports of Kestrels, but Geo. Cox, Refuge Mgr. saw 50, most on the roads north of the Refuge (GB). ~~Peterson saw 10 and banded 5 on 2 October.~~

Grouse, Quail, Pheasants. A Sharp-tailed Grouse hen seen on 13 November near Hamburg must have been an escape (EG). It has not been recorded in the state for many years. Pheasants are few (NH), and both Bobwhites and Pheasants are down perhaps 60% due to wet weather during the nesting period (Geo. Cox, fide GB).

Turkeys, Cranes. A flock of 16 or more turkeys, some half grown, was seen near Shimek State Forest in September (HD). On 3 October 6 Sandhill Cranes were in the Riverton Refuge (Don Priebe, fide RP).

Shorebirds. The migration was considered good, but smaller than 1973 (GB). Two reports of rails, identified as the Yellow, were received. On 27 September one was watched feeding at 10 ft. in the Conesville Marsh. Evidently, the bird did not flush as no mention was made of the white wing patches which are prominent (MG). On 30 September a rail was flushed from an alfalfa field near Booneville, showing the wing patches in flight. (EA). Gulls and Killdeers have been plentiful. Semipalmated, Golden and Black-bellied Plovers were in fair numbers in September and October (GB). Twelve Golden Plovers were seen in late September and early October, and as many as 3 Blackbellied from 5 to 20 October (NH). Four Woodcock were seen in October and November

while one was netted on 6 November (PP). Snipe were late but easily seen feeding in the open with 12 or more seen from 22 September to 2 November (IH). On 19 October 4 Willet were seen at Coralville (LS). Dunlin were first seen on 2 October with 50 present on 2 November (NH). A Hudsonian Godwit, rare in fall, was on Cedar L. on 5 October (LS). As many as 12 Sanderlings were present between 5 and 20 October; one was shot by a hunter who referred to it as "that there snipe" (NH).

Gulls, Terns. Ring-billed Gulls were common through October and still present on 17 November (IH). There were from 150 to 200 at Red Rock Dam during the same period (HD,GB). Five hundred Franklin's moved through in the week of 20 October (GB). Bonaparte's seen were <sup>one</sup> 1 at Swan L. on 20 October (NH), and 15 at Sabula on 26 October (PP). There were 6 Caspian <sup>terns</sup> at Coralville from 29 September to 15 October (NH), and 25 at Red Rock in September.

Cuckoos, Owls. A Black-billed Cuckoo was netted on the rather late date 13 October (PP). Four Short-eared Owls were seen on 26 October where <sup>one</sup> 1 had been seen in August. They had been reported as having been there all summer (NH). None was seen in the Shenandoah area (RP), with one near Booneville (EA). A Saw-whet was seen on 9 November (D. Peterson, fide NH), and 7 were netted from 9 October to 5 November (PP).

Whip-poor-wills, Nighthawks, Swifts, Hummingbirds. Whip-poor-wills remained until early October with 2 netted in mid-September (PP), and Dean Mosman banded one in his yard on 28 September. A large flock of Nighthawks was sighted on 26 September (RP). A large migration of Chimney Swifts was noted on 5 October (RP), and a flock of 500 was observed on 28 September (RJ). Hummingbirds were seen on 13 days between 28 August and 24 September (DM), while 3 were netted and a fourth seen in September (PP).

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers. Red-headed Woodpeckers appear to have left despite the ample supply of acorns in many areas, and are seen only at feeders (IH). The only Sapsucker reports are 21 September (PP), and 15

October (MG), and none seen (RP). Eastern Kingbirds were numerous: an estimated flock of 500 perched on wires like swallows (WmB); many were seen at Pike's Peak on 8 October (HD); an extremely large migration occurred between 8 and 12 September (DM). Eastern Phoebes were banded on the rather late dates 17 and 23 October (RP), and 21 and 25 October (PP).

Swallows. A mixed flock of 1000 Tree, Barn, and Rough-winged was at Rock Creek L. on 3 September, but were gone three days later (HD). On 15 September a flock of Tree Swallows estimated at 1000 birds "caused the wires to sag" (HF). A flock of 500 was present on 22 October (GB). A flock of at least 1000 Barn Swallows was seen on a farm south of Pleasantville on 16 and 17 September (GB). Late Barn and Cliff Swallows were seen on 29 October (RJ).

Titmice, Nuthatches, Wrens. There are very few Titmice (RP), and they appear to be decreasing in Polk Co. Red-breasted Nuthatches were common but none netted (PP). None has been seen in Des Moines. A late House Wren was <sup>netted</sup> ~~banded~~ on 7 November (PP). More Winter Wrens than usual were reported: first seen 28 September and several later (RH); one in the yard on 1 October (HP); 42 netted between the early date 20 September and 7 November with ~~2~~ many others seen (PP); and 1 banded 23 October and another seen 1 November (RP).

Mimics, Thrushes, Kinglets, Pipits. No Mockingbirds were reported.

Robins were generally plentiful. A total of 145 Hermit Thrushes were netted between 30 September and 5 November compared to 20 last year (PP). Swainson's peaked on 12 September with 22 banded, out of a total of <sup>seasonal only</sup> 54. (PP). Both <sup>at end</sup> Kinglets were numerous; a big migration <sup>OF GOLDEN-CROWNED</sup> on 23-24 October (GDeL); abundant, 10 banded on 19 October (RP); 170 netted from 30 September to 8 November (PP). Ruby-crowned were numerous (RP), and 239 netted from 20 September to 5 November (PP). Water Pipits were seen in two areas, Coralville with up to 50 from <sup>(NH)</sup> 28 September to 6 October, and Whitchaqua Ref. with 4 on 16 October (MB) and 23 on the 23rd (DM).

*Insert Bluebirds*

Vireos, Warblers. The first Solitary Vireo was netted on the rather early date 3 September, and the last of 8 on 10 October. A low total of 15 Red-eyed was netted (PP). These made up 50% of the kill at the TV tower at Alleman, just north of Des Moines. ~~(PP)~~. On 12 September 516 were found and 86 on the 13th (DM). The warbler migration was very poor (RP), and there were almost none but Yellow-rumped (GB). The best days were 3 to 5 and 20 September (PP). Only 21 Tennessees were netted, the last on 19 October (PP). They were fewer than usual in Des Moines. A wave of Nashvilles came on 25 October of a total of 115 and 67 were banded (GDeL). The last one was banded on 27 October (PP). There were quite late Magnolias, one each on 2 November in Lemoine and Davenport. There were 6 of the rare Black-throated Blue banded on four dates with two other sightings (PP). Flocks of the Yellow-rumped appeared on 13 and 20 October (GB), but only 49 were netted (PP), and the only good wave was on 25 October (RP). An extremely late Blackburnian was seen on 16 November (DM). On 1 October, a warbler thought to be a Kentucky came to a feeder so briefly that positive identification was not possible (HP). The rather rare Connecticut was banded on 13 September (PP). From 1 September to the late dates 12 and 14 October there were 54 Redstarts netted (PP).

Blackbirds, Finches. Only 1 Rusty Blackbird was mentioned, that on 8 November (RP). Grackles continue to increase. This was thought the poorest fall ever for sparrows due to lack of weedy fields (GB), but October was a good month (GDeL). Indigo Buntings were missed (PP). A late Dickcissel appeared on 24 September (RP). Purple Finches came on 19 October and were in numbers by 3 November (NH). In Des Moines there have been only 3 or 4 reports of 1 each. Goldfinches were abundant (RP). The spotted variety of the Towhee was banded on 12 October, his first ever, (PP), and on the following day by Marie Spears (fide RP). The eastern variety was at a feeder from 9 to 11 November (HP). A LeConte's Sparrow was seen at close range on 26 October (NH), and "many others" were seen on 2 October by D. Peterson and James Taylor (fide NH). <sup>insert Howslows</sup> The former also reported a Sharp-

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tailed Sparrow on 28 September (fide NH). Harris' Sparrows appear to have been largely in the south where they were the "most ever" (DeL), and numerous (RP).

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→ (The rare Henslow's was banded on 24 October (PP).)

Juncos were late in appearing but there were many (GdeL,RP), and more than 500 banded (PP). Tree Sparrows were abundant (RP). ~~AXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ White-throated were very numerous (DeL), but fewer than usual (RP). Fox Sparrows were fewer (RP), but the 14 banded were more than usual (DeL), and 66 were banded between 21 September and November (PP). Lincoln's were unusually common (NH) and more than ever banded (DeL), but thought fewer (RP). A flock of Lapland Longspurs was seen in mid November with 1 road-killed (EA).

Contributors: Eugene Armstrong, Booneville; Gladys Black, Polasantville and Red Rock; Wm. Boller, Des Moines; Margaret Brooke, Des Moines, Genevieve deLong, Lamoni; Herb Dorow, Newton; Mrs. E. Getscher, Hamburg; Marlyn Glasson, Coralville; Nicholas Halmi, Iowa City; Robt. Jesson, Oskaloosa; Richard Mooney, Des Moines; Dean Mosman, Ankeny; Helen Peasley, Des Moines; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Ruth Phipps, Shenandoah; Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids; Kevin Zimmer, Fargo, ND.

The number of reports this time is disappointing and coverage of the state is woefully inadequate. E.g. There is no information from ~~none~~ residing north of Hwy. 30, and except for the Shenandoah-Hamburg area, nothing from west of Hwy. 69.

The compiler for this department of IBL expects to be away most of February, and all items for the March issue should be sent to Peter Petersen by the 20 February deadline. Woodward H. Brown, 432 Anawanda Dr. Des Moines, 50312

Reports of Bluebirds are conflicting: none all fall (NH); only two small flocks (GB); but 13 in Allamakee Co. on 24 September (KZ); many at Pike's Peak on 8 October, and 30-40 in Roberts Creek Park on 26 October (HD); and abundant on 23 October with 5 banded (RP).

Sight record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper near Iowa City

On October 3, 1974, after two record-breaking cold fronts had moved through Iowa, I was examining a flock of mixed shorebirds between 2:10 and 2:35 P.M., off county road 0 in Johnson County, with 7 x 35 Leitz Trinovid binoculars and a 20-45 x Bushnell zoom scope. It was a sunny day, and my position due west of the birds made for excellent lighting. The flock consisted of 9 Long-billed Dowitchers (identified by voice), 12 Snipe, 1 Dunlin, 1 Semipalmated Sandpiper, 2 Killdeers, and a typical Pectoral Sandpiper. Foraging in a leisurely manner along with the Pectoral was a very similar bird, some 1/4" longer, essentially identical in shape, movements, behavior, bill (black, about the length of the head) and legs (yellowish). This bird differed from the Pectoral by having a bright rufous crown with fine black longitudinal streaking, offset by a prominent white superciliary line becoming less distinct and fusing behind the crown, and by lacking an abruptly ending "bib" of dark markings on the chest, instead having a buffy, in places almost orange, chest blending gradually with the white belly, with fine lateral streakings merging only in a narrow band just below the white throat. Other field marks noted were the scaly back and buffy edgings on the primaries and some of the median wing coverts. The bird did not call, nor could it be flushed to show the tail pattern. The tail extended slightly beyond the tip of the wing. The bird was observed at leisure while it moved from 25 to 60 ft. After consideration of species somewhat similar (Pectoral Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper), I had to conclude that the field marks fitted only one species, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (Calidris acuminata). This Siberian breeder has been regularly observed on the West Coast, and as an accidental in other US coastal locations. The only inland observation was apparently in Arizona in October 1972 (Am. Birds 27:98, 1973). As pointed in "A Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand" by Falla et al. (p. 142), the breeding area of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Siberia is enclosed by that of the Pectoral, so their joint migration might not be unexpected. The bird observed matched the picture in Robbins et al., p. 123, so far as the head is concerned. The breast of the bird depicted there is, however, that of one in breeding plumage. The description in Falla et al. strengthened my faith in the identification. "Crown, chestnut streaked black," "superciliary stripe whitish", "breast gray or buffish with irregular streaks, fading to white on the abdomen, but with no sharp line of demarcation" (emphasis theirs), "young birds---look tawny and have bright chestnut crowns".

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