

May 29, 1974

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Red Rock Reservoir Spring Migration

Early Spring was unusually warm with the first Canada geese moving into the Refuge by Feb 12

May had torrential rains and cliff to cliff water for miles above permanent pool of the Reservoir. Water is now 34.1 feet above permanent pool level. No corn or any other crop will be planted on the thousands of acres of flood plain this year which means fewer waterfowl next fall.

And it's still raining here!
Farmers are furious again as they were only paid "easement" on land that they were told would be flooded no more than once in 25 years. (The easement paid was small 15 years ago when land values were low - Red Rock Reservoir is the only one in Iowa on the easement plan. At all others the land was purchased outright)

So far we have had 3 flood years of the years since Reservoir filled in 1969 - slightly more than 1 year in 25!!!
Soil erosion the worst in my lifetime, so much new sand plowed up, with no terracing or contouring.

Double Crested Cormorant - only 1 seen all spring
Great Blue Herons - very few + they did not return to nest in the old Rookery. However there is a large active Rookery at Lake Rathban in southern Iowa this year.

Great Egrets - 8 on April 12.

Cattle Egret - 1 the week of May 20

Canada geese - peaked at 5000 in March

Snow geese - " " 5,500 " "

White-front Geese - 26 on March 30. (They are fairly rare in central Ia)

Ducks were reported every where on farm ponds

Wood Ducks were numerous on many farm ponds near Red Rock Lake + nesting in dead trees on the Cliffs

1 Cinnamon Teal ^{April 3,} on a farm pond west of Pleasantville, very rare here.

Canvasbacks 51 ♂ + 40 ♀ on a farm pond south edge of Refuge early

Red-breasted Mergansers ^{April,} - 149 on Robert's Creek Lake at north side of Lake Red Rock early April

Common Mergansers - 100+ there in late Feb + first week March

Turkey Vultures - 1st one on March 12. Two summer roasts, 1 on Elk Rock Bluff + 1 on Red Rock Bluff with 30 + 40 in each roost (non-brooders later)

Red-tailed Hawks - a total of 16 nesting pairs in the Pleasant Grove Township + Red Rock area, some incubating on March

Sparrow Hawks - very scarce, possible 1 nesting pair.

Peregrine Falcon - 1 seen on March 21.

Great Horned Owl - 2 pairs nesting Feb - May, 2 young each.

Whip-Poor-Will - Scarce except for a few wooded Bluffs where many were calling.

Chimney Swift - few in town, most chimneys blocked by gas furnace pipes.

Flickers - seen in great numbers in early April

Redheaded Woodpecker - Arrived late, in fair numbers after total absence all winter - failure of acorn crop.

Swallows - Thousands of all species (except Martin) hawking insects over tail waters below Red Rock dam May 7-8.

C Cliff Swallows - Several hundred building nests on face of Red Rock dam, on 2 small bridges, and in

Bewick's Wren - 1 huge culvert under road, only 1 seen - very scarce!

Carolina Wren - 1 pair nesting in residential garage near the dam - spent winter nights in same garage.

Mockingbirds - 2 pairs in old pasture, nesting, near Pleasantville

Bluebirds - very scarce. Only 2 pairs nesting in area in boxes.

L. Shrikes - Scarce in most areas but 5 active nests had fledged young by May 25. Another pair located but nest not found.

Bobolinks - returned May 5; 25 in 1 field where they have nested each year.

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