

WINTER

Vernon: here is an updates  
- Mike Newton



recent addenda - Iowa City area.

ducks

5-10,000 mallards still present Coralville Reservoir to 12-7.

6 block ducks among the mallards 12-7

2 gadwall 12-7

common goldeneyes moved in late Nov. : 32 11-23;  
1 12-6; 2 12-7

hawks

Buteos

	11-22	11-23	11-30	12-6	12-7
red tail	1	6	1	5	0
rough-leg	1	2	0	0	1

all light-phase

mini-invasion of eagles 12-6,7

! ~~~~~>

eagles (!!)

bald  
golden

1 ad 1 imm 300  
1 imm 6 imm

{ all at Coralville Res. except for 12-6 bucks

marsh hawk

1 0 1 2 0

kestrel

0 0 0 0 10

only 3rd bird since 8/16

Carolina wren

1 heard 12-6; different location from those reported previously

winter finches

siskin 2 11-16 Iowa City

redpoll, c 2 12-6 Kent park

w-w crossbill 5 11-25 Iowa City

evening grosbeak ~12 11-22 Coralville Reservoir;

also numerous reports around Iowa City (FW Kent, T. Shines, N. Halmi)

Peterson

(Field Reports - heading)

October was warm with no rain for three weeks, but a half inch fell on the 31st. November was very warm, especially during the first three weeks. There was a 6-inch snowfall, but subsequent rain quickly cleared it away. The TV tower kill was unusually small. December was a warmer than usual month; mostly cloudy but with little precipitation. January was warm and dry with similar conditions in February until the blizzard hit on the 21st.

The outstanding features of the fall and winter have been the invasion of Evening Grosbeaks, which has been well described, the large numbers of overwintering Am. Robins in many areas, and the relative abundance of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. These notes should be read in connection with the Christmas Census reports. The species whose names are preceded by an asterisk are those on the Blue List.

Fall Season

Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Cormorants. Relatively few Common Loons were reported from late October to early November (NH,LS,PP). Horned Grebes were seen in the Iowa City area (NH,MN) at Ottumwa (GY), and one at Des Moines. The Eared Grebes were 4 at Lock 15 in mid-September (PP). There were 36 American White Pelicans at Red Rock in September (GBL) with only several singles reported from a few other areas. Cormorants were seen on several different dates in the Iowa City area (NH,MN,RDC) with 100 at Red Rock early in October.

Heron. Great Blue Herons at Iowa City in mid-September reached a maximum of 50 (NH) with at least 250 at Red Rock in August and October (GB1). Great Egrets totaling 8 and 5 were reported on 20 September (NH,RDC), with a peak of 20 at Red Rock. Five \*Black-crowned Night Herons were observed at Red Rock in September as were 5 immature sp. Two Yellow-crowned Night Herons were seen on 2 August (WRS).

Swans, Geese, Ducks, Whistling Swans, 2 adult and 4 young, were seen on Goose L., Greene Co. (Elwood Martin fide PP). There seems to have been generally good movements of Canada and Snow Geese. On 18 October 4 Greater White-fronted were seen at Mark Twain Ref. (MN). The more common species of ducks, although somewhat late, appeared in usual numbers. In Des Moines, Mallards predominated as had been the case in earlier years, Lesser Scaups being the more numerous in the past one or two winters. An American Black Duck was seen on 16 November at Forneys L. (WRS). A high of 60 Goldeneyes was unusual (NH). No Buffleheads were seen all year (HD). A pair of White-winged Scoters were at LeClaire on 30 November (Fred Lorenzen fide PP). Black Scoters also appeared with 3 at Lock 14 (one shot, spec. to Putnam Mus. fide PP), 3 reported at Bay's Branch in November (JM). Hooded Mergansers at Red Rock totaled 14 on 23 November (GB1).

Vultures, Hawks. At least 90 Turkey Vultures occupied three roosts at Red Rock. Reports of \*Sharp-shinned are conflicting, being thought "scarce" (MN), and "seen twice as often" (DM). Petersen netted 13 from early September to late October. One was seen on 9 October (RDC). Newlon also thought the \*Cooper's scarce, and none was seen all year (NH), but DeCoster had three observations. No reports on \*Red-shouldered. Broad-winged were thought fewer this fall (DM), but 25 were seen on 23 September (GB1). Observations of Rough-legged seemed to follow no pattern. Four reports of Golden Eagles seem unusual (HD,PP,MN). Bald Eagles were rather widely observed also, dates ranging from 23 August to 27 November. \*Northern Harrier was thought a common migrant (WRS), but numbers down (DM) and few all fall at Red Rock. Two observations were made (RDC). Only three reports of the \*Osprey. The \*Am. Kestrel received considerable attention. The reports might be summarized as saying the species was fairly common during early migration, then becoming few.

Cranes, Coots, Shorebirds. Five Sandhill Cranes were seen in November at Bay's Branch (JM). At Coralville, the ponds dried but left attractive mudflats. These caused the waders to linger instead of migrating. At Red Rock Ref. the situation was different and few species, other than Lesser Yellowlegs were seen. A Common Gallinule was seen on 14 September (NH). Coots were exceptionally numerous with more than 1,000 in October (NH), and a flock of 700 on L. Easter near Des Moines. Killdeer were plentiful in a number of locations. Neither Lesser Golden or Black-bellied Plover were numerous; one of the former was seen on 1 October (NH) and 3 were on Goose L. in Greene Co. on 3 November (E. Martin, fide PP). The same day there were 12 Black-billed on Goose L. One on 19 November was quite late (GDL). Four were the most seen (NH). Woodcock were seen frequently from late September through early November (PP). Snipe were probably more numerous than usual. Some late departure dates: Greater Yellowlegs, 2 November (WRS) and 16 November (PP); Pectoral Sandpiper 3 November (Martin, fide PP), and 16 November (PP). Latest dates for Northern Phalarope were 31 August (MN) and 13 September (NH).

Gulls, Terns. Ring-billed Gulls at Red Rock totaling 200 were present from September through November (GB1). Four or five Franklin's Gulls were seen on 1 November with one Bonaparte's (NH). Five Bonaparte's were seen earlier on 13 September (NH), and 12 were observed on 2 November (PP). A few Forster's were at Red Rock in late September. Caspian Terns were present on numerous dates at Coralville; 2 were seen on 21 September (PP), and there were 50 at Red Rock in September.

Cuckoos, Owls. \*Yellow-billed were thought common (WRS) but they, and Black-billed remained scarce in Des Moines. A late Black-billed was seen on 25 October (GDL). The Common Screech Owl will respond to tape-recorded calls but is elusive otherwise. Short-eared Owls were reported in late October (WRS) and in November (GA). From 11 October to 5 November Petersen netted 13 Saw-whets. One repeated in 10 days.

Nighthawks, Woodpeckers. Nighthawk migrations were noted at Iowa City on 29 August and 27 September (RDCMN) with several small flocks in late August and September at Red Rock. A hybrid Common Flicker was identified on 1 November (MN), and one of the Red-shafted variety was seen on 27 September (JF). Several reports of immature Sapsuckers were received.

Flycatchers, Swallows. Eastern Phoebe were fewer in Des Moines, and none were seen since the early April storm (GDL), but 5 were observed on 9 October (RDC). A Say's Phoebe at Lake Okoboji on 20 September was unusual (MB). A total of 63 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers netted between 16 August and 26 September, and 65 Least with the latest on 1 October (PP). Six late Tree Swallows were seen on 1 November (PP). The last build-up of Purple Martins was on 14 August with 70 seen (DM).

Nuthatches, Wrens. This was not exactly a Red-breasted Nuthatch year, but scattered reports were received. Winter Wrens were seen on 2 October (RDC) and 23 October (GDL) and Petersen netted 16. Reports of Carolina Wrens increase yearly, particularly in the Iowa City area. Short-billed Marsh Wrens were plentiful (MN).

Mimics, Thrushes, Kinglets, Pipits. The usual lingering Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers were noted. Unusually large flocks of migrating Am. Robins were noted in October (HD). Eastern Bluebirds were generally thought fewer but three waves were noted (GA), and a flock of more than 50 were seen on 24 October near Red Oak (PM). Several small flocks, including one of 25 on 6 October, were seen at Red Rock (GB1). They were "conspicuously absent" at Iowa City (NH). There was thought a good migration of Kinglets with Golden-crowned the more numerous (PP,GDL). Both were present at Red Rock in October (GB1). A Ruby-crowned on 27 November was very late (NH). Water Pipits (5) were present for several weeks beginning in early October (NH).

9-Iowa Bird Life - mil) (field reports cont. from galley 8)

Waxwings, Shrikes. Cedar Waxwings were numerous in the Iowa City and Lamoni areas. A flock of 50 was present at Red Rock during September and October. Only a few single \*Loggerhead Shrikes were seen during migration - the last on 25 November (WRS). Three were seen in the Ankeny area on 9 November (DM).

Vireos, Warblers. \*Bell's Vireo, which nested at Forneys Lake was still present last fall (ERS). There appeared few important warbler waves with Yellow-rumped one of the few species seen in numbers. Seven Golden-winged and 1 Blue-winged were banded (PP). \*Yellow Warblers were thought abundant breeders (WRS), but only one observation (RDC) and one netted (PP). The Cape May, with 6 sightings, was more common than usual (NH). More Black-throated Blues (7) were netted (PP). A Black-throated Green was present from 30 October to the very late date 10 November (JF). Petersen netted 2 Connecticut and 1 Hooded, the latter a first fall record. Only one \*American Redstart was reported (WRS) but 5 were seen on 19 September (RDC) and they were relatively abundant where 78 were netted (PP).

Icterids, Tanagers, Finches. No Rusty Blackbirds were seen (MN). A mixed flock of Brewer's Blackbirds and Grackles was seen on 13 September (NH). A Summer Tanager was singing at Waubesa on 3 August where a female had been seen earlier (Wrs). A female was banded on 2 September (PP). THE SPARROW MIGRATION WAS THOUGHT GOOD (DM). Several Blue Grosbeaks were seen on the Missouri River flood plain (WRS). Another was seen in Cedar Rapids on 8 October (LS). A flock of about 100 Indigo Buntings was seen on 18 October (HD). The Evening Grosbeak invasion has been adequately described elsewhere. Purple Finches were relatively scarce. Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins were coming in numbers to feeders supplied with African Thistle seeds. Goldfinches were thought fewer, due perhaps to the open winter. White-winged Crossbills reappeared for the fifth year (NH,MN). Towhees continued scarce; DeCoster with 8 on 3 dates gave the only good report. More were seen during migration than earlier (WRS) and one of the spotted race was seen on the rather early date 5 October. LeConte's Sparrows were thought more numerous (DM), and 1 was seen on 5 October (WRS). Lark Sparrows were completely missed this summer (RM). Northern Junco arrived rather later than usual and in somewhat fewer numbers. American Tree Sparrows were also thought not as numerous (GDL). Harris' Sparrows were fewer (GDL), but abundant (BW). White-throated and Fox Sparrows also were scarce (GDL). Swamp Sparrows were seen more frequently (DM). Lapland Longspurs did not appear numerous, nor did the Snow Bunting.

Winter Season

Loons, Pelicans, Swans. There were 20 Common Loons on Rock Creek L. on 4 December (HD). An American White Pelican stayed in the area of the nuclear power plant near Cordova for several months (PP). One of 2 Whistling Swans on Coralville Res. from 14 to 17 December was shot (NH).

Geese, Ducks. From 12-15000 Snow Geese were seen on 15 February, with one White-fronted among them (WRS). Most of the thousand wintering Canadas left Red Rock by 4 January. Many wintering geese have been seen south of Council Bluffs (EAG), with thousands of Mallards seen there on 17 December. There were 30-40000 ducks at Red Rock in December according to an aerial survey, these were primarily Mallards with a sprinkling of other species. Several hundred also overwintered below the dam there (GBL). Big Creek L. north of Des Moines had 100 Mallards overwintering (DM).

Hawks. Halmi saw several \*Sharp-shinned, but DeCoster reported none at Iowa City, and neither saw any \*Cooper's. Wintering Red-tailed were seen more often (DM). Only one Rough-legged was seen at Red Rock, few at Des Moines, and they appear to have left the Ankeny area (DM). A Golden Eagle was seen near Ely on 14 and 21 December (LS). A Bald Eagle was seen north of Des Moines on 4 December (BB) and their numbers in the Davenport area were thought up (PP). The number of wintering Northern Harriers is gratifying. Several pairs of American Kestrels are wintering (DM) with two reports from Iowa City also.

Bulls, Doves, Ring-billed Gulls left Coralville on 14 December (NH) and only a very few Herring and Ring-billed remained at Red Rock (GB1). Sizeable flocks of Mourning Doves have been seen (NH) and 200 overwintered at Red Rock.

Owls. A Barn Owl was seen early in December near Onawa (EAG). A Long-eared appeared in mid-February (GA), with about 10 near Swan L. (JF), and 4 and 3 respectively in two locations at Red Rock. A Short-eared was seen on 13 February (BW), 7 on 14 January (NH), and 3 are in a pine grove on the shore of Red Rock. Several Saw-whets are wintering near Stone City (LS), with others seen and photographed near Iowa City (NH).

Woodpeckers, Horned Lark. Red-headed were thought to be wintering in larger numbers than usual in Red Rock (GB1) and Hamburg (EAG). Several reports of Sapsuckers have been received, one telling of 2 being banded at Pleasantville (GB1). Horned Larks were thought down by all reporters.

Nuthatches, Wrens. Few Red-breasted Nuthatches have been seen all winter (NH). Winter Wrens, seen during the fall, appear to have left with only 1 reported on 1 January (DM). Carolina Wrens are still present, and should be aided by the open winter now being experienced.

Mimics, Thrushes, Waxwings, Shrikes. A Northern Mockingbird was seen on 31 January (WRS), with another coming to a feeder in Davenport (PP). A Brown Thrasher is wintering (PP). A Hermit Thrush was seen through 5 January (PP). Halmi saw 2 Bluebirds on 2 December. The rare Townsend's Solitaire was seen on Christmas Day (RH). Cedar Waxwings are numerous (NH), and the two reports of a Bohemian, by Rob Vane and DeCoster, may refer to the same individual. \*Shrike sp. are reported from Stone City (LS) and Pleasantville (GB1).

Icterids, Finches. A small flock of Rusty Blackbirds remained through most of February (HP). The Evening Grosbeaks, so numerous earlier, appear to have left early. Few Purple Finches are being reported this winter. The rare Pine Grosbeak is reported from Shelton Cemetery, 8-12 having been seen (M. Pottorff, fide GB1). Common Redpolls, while perhaps not as numerous along roadsides as a few years ago, are coming in numbers to thistle-seed feeders. Flocks of Pine Siskins are likewise coming to the same feeders. Last winter the thistle seeds attracted great numbers of American Goldfinches, but these are fewer in most places this winter. Whether the competition from Redpolls and Siskins is responsible, or the open winter is the cause has not been determined. One exception is the feeders maintained by Helen Peasley where more than 200 Goldfinches were present on 15 January compared to the usual 50. Both Crossbills were present through 1 January with none since (PP), but 2 White-winged were seen at Cedar Rapids on 11 February (LS). The spotted race of the Towhee has been reported in several areas. Longspurs and Snow Buntings are fewer according to reports; the usual explanation being the lack of snow cover which causes these species to pick grit on the roadside shoulders.

Observers: Gene Armstrong, Booneville; Gladys Black, Red Rock and Pleasantville; Beth Brooks, Des Moines; Margaret Brooke, Des Moines; R. G. Crim, Chariton; R. DeCoster, Iowa City; Genevieve DeLong, Lamoni; Herb Dorow, Newton; Jas. Fuller, Iowa City; Mrs. E. A. Getscher, Hamburg; Dr. Nik Halmi, Iowa City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock; Richard Mooney and Pauline Mooney, Des Moines; Dean Mosman, Ankeny; Jack Musgrove, Des Moines; M. C. Newlon, Iowa City; Pearle Osher, Estherville; Helen Peasley, Des Moines; Peter Petersen, Davenport; Ruth Phipps, Shanandoah; Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids; W. Ross Silcock, Tabor-Malvern; Loraine Wallace, Spirit Lake; Betty Walters, Essex; Gary Wymore, Ottumwa. Woodward H. Brown, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines, 50312.

(cont on galley 10)

(NOTE: -- Sharon or anybody some asterisks have to be inserted in these Field Reports and in the Field Reports on the following galley)

(cont on galley 9)