

Field Reports

Spring 98

Dennis Thompson
Johnston, IA

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Species	Date	Notes
✓ Common Loon	04/16	High of 5 at Big Creek.
✓ Horned Grebe	04/11	1 at a small woodland pool near Brenton Slough, Dallas was in unusual habitat
✓ Eared Grebe	03/29	High of 5 at Big Creek
✓ American White Pelican	03/29	First 15 at Long's Pond, Guthrie
American Bittern	05/03	1 at Errington Marsh, Polk
	05/10	1 at Snake Creek Marsh, Greene
✓ Great Egret	04/11	3 at Lakin Slough, Guthrie
✓ Snowy Egret	05/12	1 at Saylorville Res, Polk
✓ Greater Scaup	03/29	1 at Big Creek was the only one all spring.
Northern Harrier		Good movement through central Iowa March & April
✓ Merlin	04/26	1 at Saylorville Res.
✓ Greater Prairie Chicken	05/03	Female appeared to be on a nest near Kellerton, Ringgold
✓ Virginia Rail	05/11-12	1 at Errington Marsh, Polk
✓ Black-bellied Plover	05/12	1 at Harrier Marsh, Boone
✓ Willet	05/12	1 at Long's Pond, Guthrie
✓ Short-billed Dowitcher	05/12	28 at Harrier Marsh, Boone was the high.
✓ American Woodcock	05/11	2 still at Red Feather Prairie, Polk
✓ Yellow-billed Cuckoo	05/11	5 in Polk, Boone Cos.
✓ Short-eared Owl	03/29	1 at Dunbar Slough, Greene
✓ Willow Flycatcher	05/31	1 at Red Feather Prairie, Polk was the only one.
✓ Western Kingbird	05/11	1 at State Capitol, Des Moines
Bank Swallow	05/11	Single species flock of 35 at Long's Pond, Guthrie, was the largest
✓ Red-breasted Nuthatch	04/26	Last one at Polk City WA
✓ Carolina Wren	05/17	1 singing in my yard, Johnston, Polk
✓ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	04/19	1 at Saylorville was early.
✓ Veery	05/11	2 at Walnut Woods, Polk
✓ Wood Thrush	05/10	12 at Brown's Woods, Polk

Gray Catbird		One of the few birds that I thought were in higher than normal numbers this spring.
Water Pipit	✓ 03/29 ✓ 04/05	13 at Big Creek 5 at Chichaqua, Polk
✓ Northern Shrike	03/07	1 at Saylorville
✓ Bell's Vireo	05/11	1 returned to its normal Polk City territory.
Palm Warbler	05/10-11	3 at Red Feather Prairie was it. Normally abundant there.
Bay-breasted Warbler	05/11	1 in Walnut Woods, Polk
✓ Cerulean Warbler	05/09	1 at Ledges, Boone
✓ Louisiana Waterthrush	05/02	1 at Ringgold WA, Ringgold, appeared territorial.
✓ Yellow-breasted Chat	05/11	1 at Saylorville
✓ Sharp-tailed Sparrow	05/17	1 at Red Feather Prairie was my first for Polk.
Bobolink		Fairly common at several grasslands in Polk.
✓ Brewer's Blackbird	03/29	Good scope view of male near Dunbar Slough, Greene
✓ Great-tailed Grackle	03/29	First female near Dunbar Slough, Greene.
✓ Orchard Oriole	05/11	Pair at Big Creek.
✓ Purple Finch	04/12	High of 15 at my feeders.
✓ Pine Siskin	04/26	Last 3 at my feeders.

Comments: I thought this was the poorest spring for migrants that I can remember. All groups were poorly represented. After the March blizzard, duck numbers were lousy. Shorebirds were almost non-existent in Polk County, although the reservoirs were high, so habitat wasn't the best. Flycatchers, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows were all poorly represented.