

FIELD REPORTS

The species marked with \* are on the Blue List of the AOU (Am. Birds 29:1067, 1976), on the Iowa Blue List (IBL XLV:95, 1975), and/or on Dean Roosa's list of endangered, threatened or declining species in Iowa (IBL XLVI:40, 1976). <sup>else-where</sup>

The weather in June and July was warmer than average and quite dry until mid-July, when the SE portion of the state received substantial relief, while the drought continued elsewhere. The Coralville Reservoir (CoR) was maintained at a steady level, and isolated ponds dried up, so suitable habitat for migrating shorebirds was much reduced.

Old Business. The sighting of 2 ibises on April 19 S of Lake View was belatedly reported. Two similar birds were seen in the same location in May 1975 (fide GJ). Documentation is convincing for Plegadis sp., but assignment to the species White-faced Ibis is only inferential. A male Greater Scaup was seen under ideal conditions on the CoR March 20 (NH). Is this species as rare in Iowa as the records suggest (IBL XLII:59, 1972), or (which seems more likely) does it occur with some regularity but is overlooked amidst the legions of Lesser Scaups traversing the state?

Pelicans, Cormorants. An\* Am. White Pelican was seen at L. Easter, 2 near Rockwell City (no date, fide WB), and 4 were at L. Red Rock (RR) from July 20 on (GB). The bird which overwintered on the Mississippi stayed on through the summer (PP). The only \*Double-crested Cormorant reported was seen by Jean Braley at Riverton on August 15 (fide RP).

Hérons, Bitterns. Great Blue Herons were on the CoR until mid-June and from July 10 on, with a maximum of 53 on August 8 (MN). No nesting occurred at RR; the peak number in the 3rd week of July was 37 (98) At L. Rathbun, 28 nests contained over 100 young, and another active rookery was evidently present (CS). Flocks of Great Egrets (13-15) were on June 24 and July 26 near Lansing (DK), 4 birds at Davenport August 4, and singles at the CoR June 5 and at Cone Marsh July 18 (NH). Two Snowy Egrets were observed on the Coralville Refuge May 22 (LS). \*Black-crowned night Herons were reported only from Rush and Trumbull Lakes, where they were "fairly common" (JD). No Yellow-crowned Night Herons were found at Des Moines (WB). Least Bitterns were reported from Cone Marsh, June 26 (MN, RD), Cardinal Marsh June 22, July 2 (DK), and Forney L. (RS), but no \*Am. Bitterns were seen.

Vern: you have ~~this~~, but August 1976  
I am underlining some reports for August that are not routine and not recorded elsewhere



Ducks. "Ducks unlimited" was not the motto for the season. Breeding Mallards were few statewide. Blue-winged Teal were also down. Wood Ducks were numerous at RR, but young were few (GB); their paucity at the CoR contrasted with their abundance in 1975. Scattered individuals of other common species were seen, but no \*Canvasback.

Raptors. No evidence of any major comeback. Turkey Vultures (25-30) had two roosts at RR and a nest with 2 young (GB). No reports of \*accipiter sightings were received. Most observers saw few Red-tails; 2 nests were at RR (GB) and 3 at Ankeny (DM). The beleaguered \*Red-shoulder is apparently making his last stand as a breeding bird in NE Iowa. Koenig saw a total of 4 immatures and 1 adult in his area. Broad-winged Hawks nested near Webster City (RM); 2 were seen in Yellow River Forest (YRF) June-July (DK). A fall migrant appeared in Iowa City August 27 (NH). The only Bald Eagle seen was an adult at Lock and Dam 9 on August 8 (DK). \*N. Harriers were scarce: 1 (date?) at Webster City (RM) and another August 22 on the CoR (NH). The lone \*Osprey observed was on June 16 at Cardinal Marsh (DK). \*Am. Kestrels were seen in small numbers by several observers, Koenig leading the pack with 7; nesting was considered probable in Davenport (PP), and 2 pairs fledged young in Ankeny (DM).

Gallinaceous Birds. Good numbers of Ring-necked Pheasants in the NW sections of the State (RM) are encouraging, in view of the devastation of this population by the 1975 blizzard. Two broods of Wild Turkeys were discovered in YRF on August 2 (DK).

Rails, Shorebirds. The generally lackluster early fall migration reflected habitat restrictions. Except as noted, numbers were relatively small and species routine. Several summer sightings of Am. Woodcock were reported. Com. Snipe were late in departing at Hayden Prairie (2 on June 13, DK) and early in returning (1 on August 5 at Cardinal Marsh, DK; 1 on August 21 at Davenport, PP). The \*Upland Sandpiper staged a mini-Renaissance of sorts: 2 near Delmar, June 10 (PP); 2 outside W. Liberty June 10 on (MN, RD et al.), 4 different locations in the NE in June (DK), in NW counties (date?) (RM), several at Booneville (G. Armstrong fide WB), 3 near Toddville, June 12 (LS), and, above all, a congregation of nesting birds, adults and young numbering 20, on July 4, in a pasture terrorized by a mean bull, near Seymour (CS). Baird's Sandpipers were seen: 4 on July 17 on the CoR (MN) and 2 at Davenport (PP). Both dowitchers occurred at the CoR from July 15 on, with Short-billed (calling) predominant (NH).



Stilt Sandpipers were fairly regular at the CoR after July 11, up to 6 at a time. Small groups of W. Sandpiper were first seen by Newlon on July 25. An Am. Avocet appeared on the CoR, July 29 (NH), and 2 were encountered near Belle Plaine August 11 (TSt). Small groups of Wilson's Phalarope (up to 4) were seen at the CoR since July 15 (MN, NH). Allan Mueller (fide PP) found a N. Phalarope at Davenport on August 15.

Gulls, Terns. Twelve Ring-billed Gulls spent all summer at RR<sup>(GB)</sup> their number was 40-60 at LeClaire by August 15 (PP). Three Forster's Terns were seen on the CoR July 11 (MN), and were "scarce" in Des Moines (WB). A \*Little Tern on July 10 at the CoR (NH) was surprising in view of the early date and the 250-mile distance from its nearest known breeding sites. Two Caspian Terns at RR on July 20 (GB) were early. South-bound Black Terns at RR, Des Moines and the CoR, not exceeding 10 per groups, still outnumbered the few spring migrants.

Cuckoos. Both species were reported in small to moderate numbers from numerous locations: the ratio of \*Yellow-billed to \*Black-billed was estimated as 4:1 in Fremont Co. (RS) and closer to even near Iowa City; the Black-billed, however, was not at all seen by several observers.

Owls to Kingfishers. Three Screech-owls fledged in Pleasantville; nearby, 3 Whip-poor-wills were heard (GB). The drift of the reports on \*Com. Nighthawks suggests that their low number in Iowa City was not an isolated phenomenon; after August 20, however, migrating flocks of fair size appeared (NH). Chimney Swifts were scarce in some places, matching the decline in chimneys (GB). Most correspondents deplored the paucity or even lack of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds; since August 20, however, migrants have invaded Iowa City (RD, NH). The consensus is that Belted Kingfishers summer in Iowa in much reduced numbers.

Woodpeckers. Mated Pileated Woodpeckers were noted June 5-6 NW of Decorah (GJ), and 1 was seen at the W end of the CoR August 8 (MN). \*Red-headed Woodpeckers were generally considered plentiful, but a marked shortage of immatures (NH, MN) throws doubt on their nesting success. Nine Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, including a pair feeding young in June, were located during the summer in NE counties (DK). The reports throw no light on the status of the \*Hairy Woodpecker in Iowa.

Flycatchers. W. Kingbirds nested in W. Des Moines (WB), and were considered "fairly common breeders" in the SW (RS). The scattered reports of E. Phoebes suggest marked reduction or disappearance as a breeding bird. Four Yellow-



bellied Flycatchers were banded August 15-21 (PP). Acadian Flycatchers sang into early June in Palisades-Kepler S.P. (MN et al.) and were common in suitable habitat in the NE, where Least Flycatchers also occurred in 6 locations during June and July (DK). The status of the Traill's complex in Iowa calls for study: a bird seen and heard at Cone Marsh June 26 (MN, RD) was an Alder, not the expected breeder, the Willow. An Olive-sided Flycatcher at YRF on August 6 was early (DK).

Swallows. Nothing suggests that the \*Cliff Swallow is in trouble in Iowa: nests were active in known breeding sites at Iowa City and RR, and migration over the CoR was massive after the third week of July. This seems to have been a good year for \*Purple Martins too, with many young seen near Iowa City (NH).

Titmice to Wrens. Reports on \*Tufted Titmouse were too few to illuminate its status. Red-breasted Nuthatches showed up early: August 16 in YRF (DK) and at Davenport (PP). A Winter Wren sang in YRF June 30 and July 1 (DK). The mild winter favored the Carolina Wren, which was reported from as far north as Allamakee Co. (DK). Fred Kent no longer has a monopoly on them in Iowa City! Sedge Wrens abounded in the tall grass around the CoR in late July-early August (MN, NH).

Mimics to Shrikes. Mockingbirds were regular in June at Wildcat Den (PP), 3 pairs were found (GB), 1 was seen near Hills on June 13, and 2 near Williamsburg June 20 (MN, RD). The Wood Thrush, which retreated years ago to the deep woods, sang all summer in the backyard (FK). Singing Veeries were heard June 13 at Palisades-Kepler S.P. (TSh), and 1 was banded August 16 (PP). Young E. Bluebirds were seen in several locations, Dean Mosman taking the honors with a count of 55. Koenig saw numerous Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and located 2 nests. The decline of the \*Loggerhead Shrike was (temporarily?) reversed: 4 of 3 nestings were successful (GB); it was called a "fairly common breeder" in Fremont Co. (RS); 3 different individuals were seen miles apart in the Iowa City vicinity during June 13-July 8 (MN, TSh, NH); and "many" in Taylor Co. (RP).

Vireos. Two White-eyed Vireos were seen along L. Rathbun early in June (CS), and an immature with brown eyes but yellow eyering and lores in Iowa City on August 27 (NH). Reports of \*Bell's Vireos came from all over the state: 3 on June 5 in Fremont Co., 2 on July 4 at Kent Park, 5 at Williams Prairie, August 1,



with young begging for food (MN), 2 singing vigorously August 26-27 in Iowa City (NH), 1 in June-July at YRF (DK), and singing in Chichaqua S.P. (DM). Several people commented that other vireos were down. A Philadelphia banded on August 16 (PP) was the earliest ever.

Warblers. The humdrum spring migration ended on an upbeat when several uncommon or rare species showed up late in May. Unaided by cold fronts, the fall migrants arrived in the NE counties around August 6, in Davenport by August 15, and Iowa City after August 20. A pair of Prothonotary Warblers apparently nested near Cou Falls (Tom Kent et al.). At L. Rathbun, 9 singing males were counted and 2 nests found (CS). A nest of the Blue-winged Warbler was seen in YRF on June 21; their number was believed reduced (DK). There were many reports of \*Yellow Warblers, all referring to small numbers. This species certainly is no longer an "abundant breeding bird" in Iowa, and even the adjective "common" may no longer apply. Cape Mays was seen May 12 and 23 (MN). Ceruleans sang well into June at Palisades-Kepler S.P. (Tom Kent et al.), and more than 12 were counted during the summer in Allamakee Co. (DK). The accidental Yellow-throated was seen on May 31 at Ledges S.P. by a former Floridian (JD). A Pine Warbler occurred in Iowa City on August 27 (NH). Louisiana Waterthrushes were heard and seen at Palisades-Kepler S.P. on May 22 (MN) and on June 5 at Waubonsie S.P. (RS). Kentucky Warblers in the NE were thought down from 1975 (DK). Newlon saw a Connecticut in Palisades on May 22, and one was banded August 23 (PP). Four Mourning Warblers one morning (May 22) were exceptional (MN). Several \*Chats were seen in May in and around Iowa City; 1 was still around on June 12, but responded poorly to its taped song; 1 stayed in YRF during June and July (DK). The rare Hooded Warbler was near Cou Falls on May 27 (MN), and seen and heard in YRF on July 6-7; a pair was observed at Effigy Mounds on August 7 (DK). Unusual numbers of Canadas occurred in August: Petersen banded 7 between the 15th and 23rd, and De Coster saw 6. One observer thought \*Am. Redstarts were down (PK); they were the commonest warbler at Palisades in late May and into early June, and also common in the NE(DK).

Icterids to Sparrows. Yellow-headed Blackbirds had colonies near Ankeny (DM) and at Cone Marsh, where they were re-established last year. The colony just outside Iowa City first observed in 1975 was doomed as the cattails yielded to corn. Orchard Orioles were reported by several observers, the 15 in Fremont Co. on June 5 being the largest number (RS). A male in early July sang (NH), but the only nesting documented was for Pleasantville, and some felt that even some of the



July birds were early migrants (GB). There were no positive and some negative reports on Scarlet Tanagers. Summer Tanagers were seen: 1 in Cedar Rapids on May 18 (LS), and 2 at Waubonsie S.P. June 5 (RS). Eight Blue Grosbeaks in W Iowa (date, location not given, RM) were unexpected only as to number, and "only 1" was seen by Ruth Phipps, but the male found on June 5 near Iowa City (NH) was apparently a first for the area, and one of a handful on record for E Iowa. Pine Siskins visited a feeder as late as July 5 (JF), and it was believed that nesting may have occurred at Cherokee, where 2 adults and 3 immatures frequented a bird bath June 10-30 (DB). The reports throw no clear light on the status of the \*Rufous-sided Towhee. Savannah Sparrows were abundant in late July and August around the CoR. No clear picture was obtained concerning the \*Grasshopper Sparrow. No \*Henslow's Sparrows were reported: repeated search of a field S of the CoR in which they sang in 1974 and 1975 proved futile. Observers from SW Iowa (RS, MS) considered Vesper Sparrows, with evidence of breeding, newsworthy. Lark Sparrows were unusually numerous around Iowa City and drew similar comments from other localities too. Five Swamp Sparrows in Cardinal Marsh during June-July (DK) may have been breeding.

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