

Vem:

The ✓ items are of potential interest to AB and covered in the appended notes; the underlined items are also of possible interest and not recorded elsewhere (personal observations or editorial comments).
doc. means that documentation is enclosed.

Nick

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).

Abbreviations used: CoR, Coralville Reservoir; RRR, Red Rock Lake, Reservoir and Refuge; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; HHP, Hickory Hill Park (Iowa City); m.ob., many observers.

Weather. The weather throughout the period was colder than average, and characterized by a drought of increasing severity: November was the driest in over 100 years.

Dec. 11 paper: the coldest in the century statewide!

General trends. Good shorebird habitat was present at RRR and along the receding Mississippi, but not at Des Moines or the CoR. The record cold after Thanksgiving caused most lakes, reservoirs and rivers, low because of the drought, to freeze over, thus forcing waterfowl and other piscivorous birds to move out before the end of the period. An intriguing possibility that patterns of passerine migration in the state are changing, with an eastward shift of central migrants, deserves mention. For the second year, the Alleman TV tower kill has been substantially down (1976:301; 1975:~200; 1973-74:1500-1600, DM), and contributors from the central portions of the state reported a much more lackluster migration of vireos, warblers and sparrows than those from the eastern third.

Loons through Cormorants. Com. Loons were seen on the CoR and L. Macbride from October 20 to November 13, with a high count of 7 on October 31 (m.ob.). There were ~~8~~ ^{Loon 13} at Sabula on October 31 (PP). A Red-necked Grebe near Des Moines was observed on September 23 (WB, RM). Horned Grebes, with the exception of 2 at Sabula on October 31 (PP), were all seen on the CoR, September 21-November 4, with a maximum of 40+ on October 27 (NH). While most *Am. White Pelicans moved along their ancestral flyways (40 in early October at Hamburg, IG; 4 until September 13 at RRR, GB, and 6 briefly at the CoR on October 4, NH), the famous squatter at Princeton, present in the area since December 1975, became "a bird for all seasons". Only RRR ran up a respectable count of *Double-crested Cormorants (30 on October 1, GB); elsewhere, one was seen on L. Macbride October 4 (MN) and 2 at Sabula on October 3 (PP).

Hérons through Geese. The usual fall concentrations of Great Blue Herons were observed, with the high count (250) from the Ruthven-Trumbull lake region (JD); the peak count at RRR was, at 200, down from 300+ last year (GB). An imm. Little Blue Heron was spotted on September 23 at Brenton's Slough near Des Moines (RM, WB). A Cattle Egret was reported from Dewey's Pasture, Palo Alto Co. (September 3, JD). Five Great Egrets were seen on September 1 and October 1 at RRR (GB), and 20 roosted between September 25 and October 6 in trees on the CoR (MN, NH). The only reports of Black-crowned Night Herons (5 on August 31), Yellow-crowned Night Herons (6 on August 30) and Am. Bitterns (4 on August 31) came from RRR (GB). A remarkable number of Whistling Swans (121) was observed at Lock and Dam #9 of the Mississippi on November 18 (DK). The maximum count of Canada Geese at RRR was low (200, GB); there were 2000 + at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 (PP). Eleven Gr. White-fronted Geese at RRR in October (Carl Priebe fide GB) were east of their main flyway. Snow Geese appeared at Hamburg on September 23 (IG); 200 were at RRR for a brief time (GB), and 500 at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 (PP).

Ducks. Migration was poor at Ankeny (DM), dull at Des Moines ("mostly Mallards", WB), and unspectacular along the Mississippi, but all regularly occurring species were seen at RRR and the CoR (GB, NH), albeit several of them only in small numbers. At RRR, Carl Priebe recorded a peak count of 20-25,000 Mallards from an airplane (fide GB). Two Black Ducks at DeSoto NWR on October 23 were W of their usual range (JD). *Canvas-backs were reported from RRR (GB), Mark Twain NWR (PP) and the CoR, where the highest count (23 pairs) was tallied (NH) on November 2.

Diurnal Raptors. The largest concentration of Turkey Vultures seen was over RRR, where about 150 were on September 19. *Sharp-shinned Hawks made an encouraging showing in several places: Petersen netted 9 between September 6 and October 20. The frequency of sightings impressed observers in the Iowa City area; DeCoster saw 22 between August 29 and October 5, with 12 occurring over the Macbride Field Campus between 11AM and noon on October 4! *Cooper's Hawk is a different story: only one was seen, one November 28 near Decorah (DK) (Note: In my opinion, the "Cooper's Hawk" observed on the September 18 IOU field trip near Palo was a Sharp-shinned.) Red-tailed-Hawks were ubiquitous, but in every unimpressive numbers. The 2 *Red-shouldered seen were in Iowa City on September 23 (MN) and October 15 (RD). The largest kettles of *Broad-winged Hawks reported contained about 200 (September 18, HHP, MN), 80 (September 22, ibid., RD) and 100+ individuals (September 15, RRR,

Felsings fide GB), respectively. Rough-legged Hawks near the CoR made an early appearance on September 29 (NH), but thereafter remained rather scarce. Bald Eagles first appeared on September 26 at RRR, and 8 were still sitting on the ice November 29 (GB); in the Davenport area, they didn't arrive until November 22 (PP). *N. Harriers were regularly found during the period by visitors to the CoR (up to 4); they were "exceptionally scarce" at Sioux Center (JV). Single *Osprey^s were seen from September 19 to October 12 at Credit Island (A. Mueller fide PP), RRR (GB), the Iowa City area (PP, RD, MN, NH), and N of Hamburg (IG). It is possible that all the Iowa City observers ~~saw~~ saw the same wide-ranging bird. An adult *Peregrine Falcon was carefully described by Mike Newlon. The Newlons and Calvin Knights saw the bird on September 26 by the CoR. Next morning, it was still present (RD). A *Merlin in imm.-female type plumage was seen by Swan L. on September 16 (NH). The only favorable report about *Am. Kestrels came from Ankeny, where 24 were banded between September 24 and October 3 (DM); they were very scarce in Sioux Center (JV), and ratios of Sharp-shinned Hawk/Am. Kestrel observations recorded by 3 Iowa City birders (2:1, NH; 3:1, MN; 4:1, RD) were the reverse of what one would expect.

Turkeys through Coots. Six Wild Turkeys at Yellow River Forest on November 18 constitute the only record of this species for the season (DK). Only one Virginia Rail was seen, on September 5 at the CoR (MN), but Soras were common in the weedy fields around it throughout September (MN, NH), and A. Mueller (fide PP) counted 25 at Credit Island on September 4. There ~~are~~ ^{were} several waves of over 1000 Am. Coots 3-4 days apart on the CoR (NH) in early October.

Shorebirds. *Piping Ploves were not reported. The only Lesser Golden Plovers observed were 3 on September 19 by Swan L. in Johnson Co. (IOU convention party; NH). Black-bellied Plovers were in October on RRR (GB), and from September 21 to November 2 on the CoR and at Swan L., where the high count was 20 on September 26 (MN). Petersen netted 2 Am. Woodcocks, and saw "many" between October 11 and 31. A Greater Yellowlegs occurred on the late date of November 6 at DeSoto NWR (JD). One of the many Pectoral Sandpipers on the CoR was still present on November 25 (NH). Up to 10 Baird's Sandpipers were seen at Credit Island August 28 and September 28 (A. Mueller fide PP), and they were continuously present on the mudflats of Swan L. September 2-19, with a peak count of 9 (NH). Both dowitchers were repeatedly observed and distinguished by their call notes at Credit Island (A. Mueller ^{and} fide PP) in the course of September.

Two W. Sandpipers were-seen at RRR on August 28 (J. Bowles fide GB). On September 15, 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers were spotted by Swan L. (NH). One obligingly stayed until the 19th, and thrilled m.ob. from the IOU convention at Cedar Rapids. Few Sanderlings were in evidence: a total of 5 at Credit Island on August 28 and September 28 (A. Mueller fide PP), and 3 on the CoR September 25 (NH). Two flocks of Am. Avocets graced the RRR:10 on September 1 (J. Bowles fide GB) and 14 on October 1 (GB).

Gulls, Terns. The high count of Ring-billed Gulls (1000+) was reported from RRR (GB, HD), where about 5000 Franklin's Gulls also stopped over during September and into October (GB). The latter occurred in much more modest numbers (no more than 3 at a time) at the CoR, September 28-October 2. Bonaparte's Gulls ranged over the state: 2 at Sabula on October 31 (PP), a maximum of 9 on the CoR October 17-November 2 (m.ob.), 7 on the late date of November 13 at RRR (GB, HD), and 12 on October 23 at Cherokee (MB). The season's nonpareil non-passerine was Iowa's third Black-legged Kittiwake, an imm. bird first seen on October 27 over the CoR (NH). Thanks to an impromptu hotline, the bird could be viewed by 6 additional birders, from Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Davenport, although it stayed only for one more day (see separate note). Eight Forster's Terns on September 9 at the CoR were joined by 3 Com. Terns, which stayed for 3 days (NH). Caspian Terns were conspicuous at the CoR between September 9 and October 2, with the high count of 33 on September 20 (NH); on the same day, there were 20 at RRR (GB), and, on September 28, 2 at Credit Island (A. Mueller fide PP). This has been a poor year for Black Terns: a meager 4 at the CoR on September 4 rounded out the fall migration(NH).

Cuckoos through Woodpeckers. A few *Yellow-billed Cuckoos were still heard in HHP in early September, but only one was at RRR (GB); Petersen banded 4 August 22-September 22. Records of *Black-billed Cuckoos are even more meager: occasional sightings by the CoR in early September (NH), one at Newton September 9-12 (HD), and but one banded (September 4, PP). Gladys Black saw a Long-eared Owl on November 7, and saved one from a steel trap (but not from amputation of a leg) on November 9. A total of 18 Saw-whet Owls were banded October 10-November 5, with 7 on October 27 an all-time high for one day (PP). Five Whip-poor-wills were banded September 15-October 3 (PP). On September 8, Newlon witnessed the spectacular descent of some 1500 Chimney Swifts into a downtown Iowa City chimney. Up to 2 Pileated Woodpeckers were seen on Credit Island September 4 and 28 (A. Mueller fide PP). The comment that imm. *Red-headed Woodpeckers were unusually common in late November at Des Moines (WB) deserves

attention because of the paucity of immatures noted in the Iowa City area in the summer report. Petersen netted 25 Sapsuckers between September 21 and October 25. One was still seen daily at Fred Kent's feeder at the end of the period. Information on the status of the *Hairy Woodpecker is regrettably sketchy: only Gladys Black wrote that she had seen none on field trips but had 2 at her feeder.

Flycatchers through Corvids. Many field observers apparently miss Yellow-bellied Flycatchers: the fact that 47 were banded August 15-September 24 seems to belie the rarity of this Empidonax. The count for netted Acadian Flycatchers (4 between August 24 and September 9, PP) is in better keeping with its "rare" status. A Tree Swallow at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 was late indeed (PP). Reports on swallow migrations were generally favorable. In the Iowa City area, only the Rough-winged didn't occur in flights of hundreds to thousands. A Black-billed Magpie consorting with crows was seen on October 24 near Larabee (MB).

Titmice through Wrens. The season's passerine prize goes to Iowa's second Boreal Chickadee, a lucky bird which blundered into Mrs. Warters' avian Land of Cockaigne at Des Moines on November 16 and, predictably, settled down for the duration to wax fat on suet and peanuts (see detailed note by Woody Brown). A black-and-white closeup of this waif from the north was published in the November 25 issue of the Des Moines Register; color photos were taken on November 24 (NH). The reports received give no clear picture of the *Tufted Titmouse's status. Red-breasted Nuthatches arrived early (Iowa City: August 29, MN; Davenport: August 19); the 6 banded between the latter date and November 26 were considered a good count (PP). The Boreal Chickadee's stiffest competition for suet comes from 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches. It was a poor fall for Brown Creepers, with only 32 netted between September 23 and November 6 (PP). A late House Wren was banded on October 14 (PP). Although Single Winter Wrens were reported by several people (MN, GB, RM fide WB), the total of 8 banded between September 15 and October 28 (PP) was considered disappointing. Single Carolina Wrens were observed in NE Polk County on November 1 (DM) and at Effigy Mounds (DK); they were regularly seen and heard by Iowa City birders in HHP and other places; as usual, one is a regular at Fred Kent's feeder. Five Marsh Wrens were on Credit Island on September 4 (A. Mueller fide PP), and several in late September by the CoR (MN) and at Cone Marsh (NH). Sedge Wrens abounded around the CoR in early September, with the last seen on October 10 (MN).

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Thrushes through Shrikes. Fifteen *Wood Thrushes were banded August 28 - September 29. The last of 157 Swainson's was banded, late, on October 30; October 1 was also a late date for the netting of the last of 37 Veeries (PP). Favorable reports on the numbers of E. Bluebirds came from RRR (GB), Marion and Warren Counties (R. McGeogh fide GB), Ankeny (DM) and Iowa City (RD). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are unusual fall migrants: 3 sightings in HHP August 28-31 (MN, TS, NH) may have involved the same bird. One was seen September 11 on Credit Island (A. Mueller fide PP). Water Pipits were at a premium: 2 shuttled between Swan L. and the CoR September 21-October 3 (NH, MN), and one was at RRR on November 13 (GB, HD). Hundreds of Cedar Waxwings roamed downtown Iowa City from mid-October through November. Single N. Shrikes were seen in 3 different locations in and near Iowa City on November 6 (MN, RD), 12 (NH) and 14 (Calvin Knight fide MN). An impressive total of 10 was reported from NE Iowa for November 18-28 (DK). There were "many" *Loggerhead Shrikes in Marion and Warren Counties (actual numbers not given) (G. McGeogh fide GB).

Vireos, Warblers. Up to 4 White-eyed Vireos, including an immature, were seen and heard in HHP August 28-September 11 (MN, RD, NH), and one still sang vigorously as late as September 25 (TS). In the same location, up to 3 *Bell's Vireos were heard singing until August 31 by the same observers. Also, several Philadelphia Vireos occurred there between August 28 and September 6; 8 were banded September 4-24 in Davenport (PP). The warbler migration through HHP was early and outstanding in its variety. During the last 10 days of August, 4 observers (RD, NH, MN and TS), working independently and mostly between 8 and 10 AM, recorded 20 species. For comparison, note that only 3 of these had been seen in August from 1949 through 1973 (Kents, "Birding in Eastern Iowa"). Petersen banded 24 warbler species this fall. Golden-winged Warblers, rare in the fall, were seen in HHP by 3 (RD, NH, MN), August 28-September 6; at Davenport, Mrs. Petersen saw one on September 4, and 3 were banded September 1-10 (PP). The Nashville Warbler had a poor migration, but the last one was netted on the late date of October 30 (PP). News about the *Yellow Warbler is discouraging: none were seen at HHP, and only 2 banded on September 4 and 7 (PP). The female Black-throated Blue Warblers seen, respectively, on September 19 (NH) and 23 (MN) in HHP may have been the same bird; Petersen banded 8 between September 1 and 10. He caught and banded a late Bay-breasted on October 22 and recaptured it on the 30th. Blackpoll Warblers were scarce: none in HHP and only 2 netted in Davenport (PP). The rare Connecticut Warbler had a good migration: 3 observers saw one each in HHP August 28-31 (RD, MN, TS), 3 were banded in late August (PP), and one shared Fred Kent's bird bath

other warblers on October 2. Three Mourning Warblers were netted September 1-16 (PP), and one was a window casualty in Iowa City on September 6 (MN). The only *Yellow-breasted Chat recorded was one banded by Petersen on August 30. A Wilson's Warbler on August 22 and a Canada on August 29 in Sioux Center (JV) were deemed remarkable that far W.

Blackbirds, Tanagers. A female-plumaged Orchard Oriole seen in HHP on September 9 (RD) was exceptionally late. The only Brewer's Blackbird in the notes was a female seen in the company of several Rusty Blackbirds S of L. Macbride on October 3 (NH). Eight Scarlet Tanagers were netted this fall (PP).

Finches, Sparrows. The Evening Grosbeak seen September 19 on the IOU field trip (see September issue of IBL) has apparently been the only one of the season. Purple Finches appeared early (August 29 at Davenport, PP), but there was a hiatus after the birds seen August to early October - not until November 11 did they appear again in good numbers (PP), and they have been missing from feeders elsewhere in the state. The only report of Pine Siskins also refers to birds banded near the Petersens' house after November 11. There have been no crossbills yet this fall. De Coster saw 11 *Rufous-sided Towhees between October 26-October 30 (PP). Savannah Sparrows were abundant around the CoR through September and into early October. There were few observations of *Grasshopper Sparrows: 2 seen on September 19 at the CoR, and one banded at Pine Hill Cemetery on September 27 (only the sixth netted in that site, PP). Le Conte's Sparrows staged an extravaganza in the Iowa City area. On September 26, the Newlons loc. and the Knights discovered between 10 and 20 members of this species in a weedy field near the CoR. Next morning, in the same approximate area, 22 were counted (RD), and their concentration was estimated at 20 birds/100 sq. meters, with 80% immatures (NH). The birds were easily found on September 28 by Tom Shires, and on the next day by Tom Kent. In the same general vicinity 8-10 birds were seen up to October 10 (RD, MN). Since only very limited portions of the many acres covered with hostile, burry weeds along the CoR were explored, it is not far-fetched to assume that the total number of LeConte's Sparrows there in late September-early October could have been in the hundreds. On October 15, 2 were encountered in Kent Park (MN et al.); on the 31st, one N of the CoR (NH), and on November 7, one in HHP (RD). On November 12, one flew to its doom and was elevated to specimen status in the Putnam Museum (PP). All parties seeing the LeConte's Sparrows by the CoR also found one or 2 Sharp-tailed loc. Sparrows along with them, so a total number of 5 for this rare migrant must be a

conservative estimate. N. Juncos arrived early (September 11) in Decorah (DK). Many Clay-colored Sparrows traversed the Hamburg area in September (IG). The only reference to Harris' Sparrow is in Newlon's report (2 in Kent Park, October 15). On the same occasion, 3 White-crowned Sparrows were also seen; none were netted all fall (PP). The total count for Song Sparrows banded between September 10 and October 5 was a low 40 (PP). About 20-25 Lapland Longspurs were seen flying overhead S of the CoR on November 25 (NH). Snow Buntings arrived rather early, on October 31, at Sabula (flock of 14, PP) and the CoR (flock of 25, m.ob.). The high count thus far has been about 70 at the Sugar Bottom area of the CoR (MN, RD) on November 14.

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