

Red-throated Loon
3 Nov 1977
De Soto NWR, Harrison Co., IA
Andy Saunders
NBR 45:19, IBL 65:82

Record Number: 94-AD
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Nebraska Bird Review 45:19, 1977
Records Committee: IBL 65:82

VOTE: 7 NA

NA, As you know, Andy was chief naturalist at Fontenelle Forest, and was an excellent careful birder. Birds seen at De Soto were probably in both Iowa and Nebraska -- all the bird has to do is cross the center of the lake! I believe this record but cannot vote to accept without details. Babs has Andy's address, he's in Syracuse, NY, I believe.

NA, Presence in Iowa questionable.

NA, No details.

NA, Unable to evaluate with no details.

NA, No description.

NA, Cannot tell if this record was in Iowa from what given, could have been on Nebraska side of De Soto Refuge.

NA, In my opinion, yes [in Iowa]. Spoke to Andy Saunders 11/15/94 -- bird was at southwest corner of De Soto Lake, "almost 2/3 across (to south) near the pilings." If the state line is the center of the lake, the bird was in Iowa. However, no written description exists. Saunders is a naturalist and excellent birder.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLES NESTING IN NEBRASKA

Great-tailed Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus*) were found in two places in Nebraska at almost the same time. They have been extending their range northward, so that their discovery was not unexpected.

On 12 May 1977 Mrs. Ronald Whitaker, who had seen them in the South, noticed some around some blue spruces at the Officers' Club at the old Hastings Ammunition Depot, now the Central Nebraska Technical College campus. Her report was greeted with skepticism, but those who went out to see found several pairs of Great-tailed Grackles around the spruces. Because the females were seen to carry food to the spruces, and then disappear inside in a secretive manner, it is assumed that they had nests and nestlings in the trees, although no nestling calls were heard and no nests were found. Although this seems early for nestlings, young Common Grackles and Robins were seen out of their nests during the Field Day trips at Lincoln 21 May. It maybe these Great-tailed Grackles have been in the area the last one or two years. After they were indentified and talked about some people, who were not experts in bird identification, said they were aware that there were black birds there.

On 14 May B.J. Rose, his wife Sharon, and daughter Tammy, set out to try to break the one-day record for species of birds seen in Nebraska. They failed in that, but they did see Great-tailed Grackles around the lake at Boys' Town - two males and a female. On 16 May Mr. Rose led a group of Omaha birders out to see them, and they had three males in view at one time, and two females at another time. (Later the count was raised to at least four males.) The next day Mr. Rose spotted a nest, in a clump of small willows out in the lake. (The lake had been drained for a couple of years, and just closed this last winter.) He later got out to the nest and found three eggs in it.

This account is limited to information available up to the last week of May. Any important information which becomes available later will be the subject of further notes.

1976 (NINETEENTH) FALL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Two hundred seventy-one species are listed in this report, which covers eleven localities. These figures compare with 267 from 9 localities in 1975, 267 from 13 localities in 1974, and 281 from 12 localities in 1973.

The information is presented in a rough west (left) to east (right) order, with locations of about the same longitude listed with the northern-most first (left). Two dates indicate the first and last records during the period. The symbols used are:

J1, Au, Sp, Oc, No, and De for the months.

S - to indicate a species which arrived before 1 July.

- W to indicate a species which remained after 31 December.

P to indicate a species which is present all the year, although the same individuals may not be present during the whole year, and the numbers may vary greatly between periods. (S

- W) also indicates much the same thing, but is used in cases which are considered special circumstances, rather than a normal pattern).

x where the exact date in a month was not given.

The reporting locations, contributors, and special comments are:

Adams, Hastings, 90 species, Miss Bernice Welch, reporter.

Boone, Albion, 58 species, Wayne J. Mollhoff, reporter. Several of the records are from TV tower kills. The Pelican record was of a flock of 97 seen in the late afternoon.

Cherry, Valentine, 82 species, Douglas L. Ballard, reporter. The Snow Buntings, a flock of 23, were seen at Merritt Reservoir. The Reservoir had open water later than usual this fall, and it attracted a number of Bald Eagles, presumably from those that winter along the Snake and

Niobrara rivers. He was told that there were 16 there at one time, but his highest count was 15 - 11 adults and 4 immatures - on 11 December. The day before he had seen 13 - 9 Adults and 4 immatures. This contrasts with the 1 or 2 at a time seen occasionally on the Reservoir in past winters.

Custer, Merna, 63 species, Mrs. Eva Mae Kieborz, reporter.

Douglas (and Sarpy), Omaha and Bellevue, 209 species, R.G. Cortelyou, Ruth Green, Loren and Babs Padelford, Melba Wigg (reporters), Dale Becker, Tanya Bray, Evelyn Conrad, Dot Duda, Janet Greet, Ann Hodgson, Fr. T.J. Hoffman, Cathy Nelson, Andy Saunders, Warren Tatro, Gerturde Woods. The Red-throated Loon was seen by Ruth Green on Base Lake, under favorable conditions, late in the day. There was just a small ice-free area on the lake, and the next morning the lake was completely frozen and the bird had left. Andy Saunders had seen a Red-throated Loon at De Soto Refuge, near Blair, on 3 November. The Red-necked Grebe was also found on Base Lake by Mrs. Green, but it stayed long enough to be seen by many others. A spring Shoveler was seen as late as 3 July. The Jaeger was reported in *NBR* 44:58. A Hermit Thrush was seen on 18 December, on the Christmas Count. They have been reported on previous Christmas Counts. A Rufous-sided Towhee was also seen on the Christmas Count. Mrs. Green saw the Pine Warblers on the Walking Club Trail in Fontenelle Forest. She is familiar with them from seeing them in Mississippi. There were at least 10 sightings of Woodcocks in the Forest reported. This unusually high number probably is due to the drought conditions which forced the birds to concentrate along the streams and made them more likely to be flushed.

Hall, see Howard.

Howard (and Hall), St. Libory and Grand Island, 88 species, Bill Schleicher, reporter, George Stoppkotte. The Mourning Doves were wintering in an abandoned barn near St. Libory. The hayloft was full of hay and there was plenty of wheat and corn on the lower level floor. The last eastern race Towhee was seen 3 September, but a western race Towhee was seen 19 and 20 October.

Lancaster, Lincoln, 180 Species, Shirley L. Doole, Dr. Norma Johnson, Mabel B. Ott, Cliff Toews, reporters. The Rough-legged Hawk was a light phase one. The Carolina Wren and the Blue Grosbeak were seen in Wilderness Park; the Bobolink and the Swamp Sparrow were seen at Branched Oak Lake.

Lincoln, North Platte and Hershey, 135 species and the possibility that the "Herring/Ring-billed Gull" was a Herring Gull and that the "Meadowlark sp." was an Eastern Meadowlark, Mrs. E.C. Logan for the Tout Bird Club, and Mrs. M.A. Cox, reporters.

McPherson, Tryon, 64 species, Mrs. Oona S. Bassett, reporter. Mrs. Bassett left for the winter on 12 October so the winter birds are not represented. She reported that it was the driest summer they have had in 31 years she lived on the ranch. They had a hailstorm 5 August, with large hail and considerable wind, and from that time on there were very few birds anywhere.

Sarpy, see Douglas.

Scotts Bluff, Scottsbluff, 153 species, Mrs. Roy J. Witschy, reporter, Mrs. Harry Banghart, Mrs. J.J. Brashear, Mrs. Lee Kenitz.

Sioux, Mitchell, 92 species, Helen (reporter) and David Hughson. The Varied Thrush was seen about 4:15 PM on a lower branch of the tree directly in front of their house. After it flew Mrs. Hughson decided to walk around their wood lot and creek area and she saw the Thrush three more times.

After the above report and tables were in type the March 1977 issue of American Birds published some items which would change the tables: White-winged Crossbills in Douglas/Sarpy 11 and 23 November, which increases both the county and state totals of species reported; and for Lancaster County Daryl Giblin's record of a Red-necked Grebe 17 October, which increases the county species total, and Snow Buntings 7 November, to increase the length of time they were observed. They also commented that Ground Doves frequently wander north in the fall, and gave some examples, and then continued: "But one at Lincoln, Nebraska, November 13 and 15 seems incredible although excellent details were presented." (By Craig Corder). This is apparently the first report of Ground Doves for Nebraska, although the A.O.U. Check-list (Fifth Edition) does include Iowa (and New York) in its list of "casual or accidental" locations.