

Carlson

February 9, 1977
Boone, Iowa

Dear Mr. Halmi,

I note by the Annotated List of the Birds of Iowa that at one time White-crowned Sparrows were thought to be uncommon migrants and that the Harris' Sparrows are rare winter residents.

We have always had numerous Juncos with us during the winter months, but this year the number has dwindled to a mere half-dozen. I wonder if other bird observers have noted a decline in the Junco population this year?

It is with the above in mind that I am sending you some of my bird observations.

Marie Carlson
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Field Report

Through the years our winter bird feeders have given us a great deal of pleasure and this winter has not been an exception. By October, our feathered friends had begun to seriously frequent the suet chunks and sunflower heads we had distributed in our yard. Migrants of sparrows, the White-throats, the White-crowned and Harris', relished the cracked corn scattered on the ground. During the month of December, our bird family had consolidated and we began to recognize individuals. The members consisted of five Blue Jays, two White-breasted Nuthatches, two Black-capped Chickadees, a pair of Downy Woodpeckers, one male Yellow-shafted Flicker, one female Hairy Woodpecker, five Harris' Sparrows, one tree Sparrow and a small flock of Slate-colored Guncos.

Our January days had been progressively cold but little snow had fallen until the night of January 27, when a severe blizzard enveloped us.

We worried about our bird family and anxiously waited for morning to see if all family members would return. With the exception of two Harris Sparrows, all individual birds returned to the feeders.

To our sorrow, due to the storm we had lost two friends; but to our surprise we had gained twenty new ones. On the morning of January 28, a flock of tree Sparrows had joined their comrade and were scratching and pecking amid small drifts of cracked corn. (Do you suppose the comrade had called them in?)

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