

Dear Nick,

It's good to have to send only one report for both Am Birds and IBL. I'm sorry I didn't send a fall report - I thought I had until I checked, and then it was too late.

I don't know if you have seen a copy of my CBC report - I should have sent you one - I noted the record numbers of half-hardy species in Iowa this winter, and this was also noticeable here in Fremont Co. - larger than usual numbers of Robins, Blackbirds, and Sparrows. The other significant thing here was the number of Bald Eagles wintering - usually we have about three at Riverton with the Mallards, and they move on when the Mallards do as the ice freezes. This year however the Mallards moved out into the fields when the ice froze (there was no snow cover) and the eagles stayed with them. I counted 8 one day with a flock of about 3500 Mallards.

I was glad to see your comment about Cooper's - Sharpshin identification on the IOU field trip near Palo. The article in Birding on hawk ID was very interesting.

Species notes:

Mallard: See notes above.

Common Merganser: Female at Riverton with Mallards Dec 26.

Hooded Merganser: Male at Riverton with Mallards Dec 26.

Swainson's Hawk: I saw two birds this winter which I tentatively identified as Swainson's. One, possibly an immature, was seen Dec 11, and the other, almost in adult-appearing plumage, on Jan 8. However I did not see either long enough to get a detailed study of their plumages. Both had long narrow wings and longish tails, and this plus their manner of flight eliminated Redtails. They reminded me more of Red-shoulders more than anything, but the 'adult' had no reddish tinge on its underparts and ~~the~~ neither bird had the well-marked Red-shoulder tail nor the wing-windows. The 'adult' had the appearance of a dark throat area reminiscent of an adult Swainson's. Any comments? (I would call this a tentative ID only). In this area I believe a winter Swainson's would be more likely than a Red-shoulder.

Bald Eagle: 8 seen (6 adults) Jan 22 with 3500 Mallards (see above), but only 4 found Feb 5 (all adults) when only 75 Mallards were seen.

Bobwhite: Possibly affected by the severe winter: only one covey seen.

Screech Owl: One present in Dec in a farm shed. This is the only record I have in 2 years, despite playing tapes on several occasions. Great Horned Owls are abundant here - I heard 19 in two hours on the CBC (without using a tape) - perhaps they are crowding out the Screech Owls.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Common this winter, but not as much so as last winter.

Brown Creeper: Seen Jan 29 and Feb 5 - the tough winter has not forced them all south!

Robin: Flock of 33 in a cemetery Feb 5. Usually hard to find in winter, but when present, are often in cemeteries among evergreens.

Northern Shrike: One found at Riverton on the CBC Dec 18. Large size, notably pale appearance, especially around the forehead led to the ID.

2  
unincubated  
at best

- Loggerhead Shrike: One found on CBC Dec 18. Also one seen Jan 16.
- Winter finches: Nary a one, despite several intensive tree by tree searches of conifers. No crossbills, grosbeaks, or siskins this winter. Also no redpolls.
- Red-winged Blackbird: Large flocks seen Jan 22: about 6000 birds total. Also about 1000 Feb 5. Often hard to find in winter here.
- Rusty Blackbird: Present all winter to date: several flocks seen from 1 - 250 birds.
- Common Grackle: Also more common than usual this winter: 15 seen Feb 5.
- Savannah Sparrow: Three birds seen feeding on bare roadside patch with W. Meadowlarks Jan 22. Closely observed (60') with scope. Streaked breast (no central spot), notched tail, and weak, lisping calls clinched ID. Very uncommon here in winter.
- White-crowned Sparrow: Has been wintering more regularly here in recent years. Seen Dec 11 (30); Jan 8 (8); and Jan 22 (3). Can usually be found in suitable habitat.
- Swamp sparrow: Also easy to find this winter: surprising in view of the weather. 8 found at small spring Dec 6. and 4 Jan 22 at different location.
- Lapland Longspur: Common this winter. Usually heard or seen with Horned Larks, but some flocks may have been pure: a rather crude censusing technique was used to ascertain this last fact (driving a pickup through a flock of roadside birds yielded three specimens - all Lapland Longspurs!).

*Regan, Ken.*