

PT 1, Box 41

Hatchin 51540

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Barb Wilson

Dear Jim,

Though we expected serious drought through the ~~to~~ first week in May, south west Iowa then received rain. Lots of rain. Rain that soaked in, rain that replenished depleted subsoil moisture, rain that ran off, and finally rain that caused almost unheard of July floods! Water covered the floodplains by River ~~to~~ and then a dike broke, flooding more of Highway 2. Impressive!

Birds were OK. ~~But~~ I can't make a good report. I'm ~~at~~ at my folks in Oregon + don't have my notes. Just a few quick impressions.

Swainson's Hawk - Jay Maher reported one at Hacklebonney Woods County Park in June, same location he + I saw one last year.

Old Butte - Jerry Abma reports a gray buteo, patterned like Broad-wing but is gray, not reddish brown. Banded tail. Saw it near Birghorn (Page County) during May, then at least twice near Nodaway Valley Park during June (also Page County). Jerry feels it is short-tailed + smaller than a Red tail. Sounds like Gray Hawk, though an abnormal something else ~~sounds~~^{Seems} more likely.

Gray Partridge - Not everywhere in
Southwest Iowa, but nearly everywhere.
~~Brood~~ Partly grown brood 6 miles east of
Silver City (Mills County) in late July, +
Don Priebe reports a newly-hatched brood
near Shevandoah (Page County) in early
Summer.

Upland Sandpiper - East central Adams
County.

Mockingbird - East central Adams County,
2 sites in Page County (one occupied last
year).

House Finch - Jerry Abma had a ~~brood~~^{pair}
raise a combid, then a brood of finches in
Clarinda. Jay Maker saw ~~a~~ a different nest
in Clarinda. Debbie Pearson had a pair raise
two broods in a hanging basket of plants on
a porch in ^{Atlantic}. A Jay comper had a pair raise
young in a hanging basket in Red Oak. The
invasion is complete + ~~only~~ now they need only
consolidate their range.

July 26, 1990

Black-throated Blue Warbler - 1

Waubensie State Park Fremont County, Iowa.

(I took notes ^{right after sighting} but I'm in SD region + they're in Iowa so I'm writing this from memory).

I was in the campground at Waubensie SP + heard a repeated song that I took to be a warbler song. It was short + rather buzzy. Two or 3 ~~two~~ notes, a ~~single~~ rising note, then a couple ~~shorter~~ rising notes that did not go in pitch ~~farther~~ farther up than the top of the first rising note. Being unfamiliar with the song, I ~~took~~ looked for the bird.

The bird was foraging + singing in a walnut tree at the edge of the campground/edge of deciduous woods. It stayed in branch-ends where clusters of leaves hid it. I never saw it well. It descended to eye level, then worked its way up to 30' or so. Eventually it went off ~~away~~ into the woods, still singing.

Bird was small. Head + ~~top~~ back blue - look blue, not gray. No streaks obvious. Belly white + not streaked. Sides + ~~breast~~ breast abruptly black. No wing bars, but I thought I got a flash of white once as it flew - wing stripe or glimpse of belly, I'm not sure. I never saw the bill. I never saw the whole bird at once well - 3 or 4 glimpses of upper parts, one of belly from side + slightly below. No glimpse longer than 2 seconds, + maybe not that long. Bird was in shade.

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Similar species:

① Bird foraged like a warbler. Most warblers would be more or less green or honey yellow, + this one ~~didn't~~ wasn't. Cerulean Warbler would be a lighter, grayer blue, streaked ^{above} with wing bars, more extensively white below, with a "necklace" (in male, + this one song).

② Indigo Bunting is about the same blue. Its belly can be white, but if so is usually mottled white, + not abruptly dark. I wouldn't expect an Indigo Bunting to forage actively in a Walnut at edge of campground in woods, but then I wouldn't expect a Black-throated Blue, either. Song was short, buzzy, not the longer series of paired $\$$ notes (sometimes in threes) I would expect of Indigo Bunting. Of course, Buntings can sing odd short songs at times, but this bird repeated the same song at frequent intervals.

Conditions: Early afternoon. No wind. Bird was in shade. I don't remember angle of sun + me but glare + silhouetting were not problems. Day was ~~sunny~~ sunny. 8x binoculars. I was 30-40 feet from tree, looking level + up.

I never checked a book, + can't check one here - only Western Bird guide here.

I saw the $\$$ bird during a period of 30 minutes or so, + heard it both before + after.