

November 29, 1990

Wilson

Dear Carl,

MRI Box 41
Hastings, IA
51540

I have hardly been birding at all, but other people have told me of interesting sightings, so I have a few things to report. Included in the uneven table below are my own sightings and ones I heard about throughout the year. Hope you find some useful for your report.

Species	#	Date	Location	Observer
White Pelican	300	Aug. 29 and early Sept.	Ross Park, Page Co.	Jerry Abma
Ibis, sp.	1	Oct. 22	Willow Slough	Dan Cain
<p>Dan, our game warden and a decent birder with regards to water and game birds, was duck hunting. He reports the bird flew over and was black, like a shadow. The bill was very decurved. The bird was the size of a Green Heron, or maybe a bit larger. It landed and Dan saw it through binoculars. With binocs, it had green highlights. It would fly very tamely from one place to another at the slough, and feed. Dan thought it a Glossy Ibis, since he saw no white, couldn't really tell that.</p>				
Cooper's Hawk	1	Sept. 12	Page County	Jerry Abma
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1st half of September	Page County	Jerry Abma
<p>Jerry has seen many, but they arrived about a week later than normal, <i>this year</i></p>				
Osprey	1	Oct 16	Nodaway Valley Park, Page County	Jerry Abma
<p>An Osprey flying along the Nodaway River flew into a block of blackbirds, a serious mistake. The blackbirds flew around the hawk, dived at it, harassed it, and overwhelmed it. It tried evasive action, but they remained with it for several minutes.</p>				
Merlin	1	about Sept. 12	Page County	Jerry Abma
Peregrine Falcon		August 25-26	Mills & Pott. Counties	Barbara Wilson

Peregrine

this is the least

The young birds released in Omaha were active along the Missouri River valley. The one hunting at the power plant south of Council Bluffs gave an impressive performance the 26th, chasing pigeons, harassing shorebirds, and even diving at a Great Blue Heron. The bird was resident at the plant this summer, and after seeing it in action I'm sure it drove away the Least Terns breeding at the plant, even if it didn't eat any. There's no way the colony could succeed in the face of that harassment!

Gray Partridge	11 in	Nov. 30	5 miles east of Silver City, Mills County	Barbara Wilson
Ruffed Grouse		fall, several times	South of Clarinda	John Greenwood
This species has been reported here for years. Dave Carlisle (naturalist recently moved here from Missouri) reports that Grouse live nearby in Missouri, and finds the report credible.				
Sandhill Crane	1	June 12	Riverton	Carl Priebe
Black Rail	1	Sept. 13	Page County	Jerry Abma
Jerry reports he flushed a rail while mowing a marsh area along the Waubash Trace Nature Trail. The bird was dark. He saw it mostly from above, saw some of the underparts, too. It was not a yellow rail. It was smaller than a Sora. He judged it to be a rail by the way it flew with dangling legs.				
Piping Plover	1	August 25-26	IPL power plant, Council Bluffs	Barbara Wilson
				We watched a plover at the IPL settling ponds as we watched the hunting Peregrine. Then the falcon dived through the fleeing shorebirds a couple times and landed on the sand with something white. For several minutes we believed the Peregrine had eaten this young plover, but finally we decided its "prey" might be trash of some kind, and we did see a plover (the same one?) again.
Common Snipe		Oct. 22	Willow Slough	Dan Cain

good trip

<i>Snipe</i>			Lots of snipe, more than Dan had ever seen, flying about in flocks of 30 and more.	
Barn Owl	1	fall	resident on a farm east of Shenandoah	Dave Tackett
Snowy Owl	1	Nov. 27	5 miles east and 1 mile north of Shenandoah (Fremont Co.)	Don Priebe
			<p><i>Don's or good bird</i></p> <p>Don saw the owl about 9:00 in the morning. It was sitting on a telephone pole and flushed when Don drove his car by it. The bird was blotched with brown, presumably young. It flew to a fence post about 50 yards away, and Don watched it through binoculars. It had bright yellow eyes. Since it lacked ear tufts, it could not be an Arctic Great Horned Owl. Don, game warden for Page and Fremont Counties, has seen many Snowy Owls in the past, though never so early in the fall.</p>	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1	July 26	Waubonsie State Park	Barbara Wilson

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Black-throated Blue Warbler

After 4:00 pm. Something was singing at the campground with a buzzy voice, a couple notes, a rising note, and a trill or something. The bird was foraging actively in leafy branches, in a fashion typical of warblers. I never got more than a glimpse of it at a time, though I got several glimpses. The bird had blue on it, not just blue-gray. The belly was white, sharply contrasting with dark sides. It foraged in that tree maybe five minutes, then headed down the slope deeper in the woods, but I could still ^{hear} ~~see~~ it nearby.

I noticed the unfamiliar song and tried to see the bird, hoping to get something new for the Breeding Bird Atlas. The bird was only 40 or 50 feet away and I was using 8x binoculars. Since I was on top a hill and its tree was growing on a slope, the bird was eye level to 20 feet above me. The bird was east to southeast of me. I took field notes while the bird was still nearby, though I didn't have much to say about it.

No warblers but Black-throated Blue and the more expected Cerulean have blue, and Cerulean is striped and does not have dark sides. The bird's solid blue would suggest Indigo Bunting or Blue Grosbeak, but neither has a neat white belly, though the bunting may have smudgy white on the belly. Though Black-throated Blue Warbler is not something I expected, I can't think of anything else it could be.

House Finch	4 pair	Jan 13 and earlier	Red Oak	Joe Worthington
Purple Finch	1	Jan 13 and earlier	Red Oak	Joe Worthington
Evening Grosbeak	2	Jan 13	Red Oak	Joe Worthington

Fall has been warm and dry, abnormally and wonderfully pleasant, as far as weather goes.

Have fun on the Christmas Bird Counts.

House Finches feed in
Clouds, Red Oak, Atlantic,
& Glenwood.

Burt Wilson