

2004 Summer Field Report

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Snow Goose

2 (1 blue morph and 1 white morph) on 6 June on a wetland near Spencer, Clay County (KLP-photo)

Gadwall

- ✓ 1 on 2 June at the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)
- 1 on 10 June at the northernmost wetland of the Ingham Lake complex in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)
- ✓ 2 (m-f pair) on 12 June at McBreen Marsh in Dickinson County (SSP)
- ✓ 1 on 12 June at Kettleton Hogsback WMA in Dickinson County (SSP)

Northern Shoveler

- ✓ A pair on 3 June at a private wetland in Diamond Lake Twp, Dickinson County (SSP)
- ✓ 1 hen on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex in Story County (SSP)

Canvasback

A lone drake on 10 June at the north end of Ingham Lake in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)

Redhead

- A pair on 10 June at Dewey's Pasture in Clay County (SSP, KLP)
- ✓ A pair on 12 June at McBreen Marsh in Dickinson County (SSP)

Hooded Merganser

Nesting: A hen with 4 young (about 1/2 the size of their mother) on 10 June at a small wetland within Dewey's Pasture in Clay County (SSP, KLP). There were also four other adults present on this same pond.

Ruddy Duck

- ✓ 4 (m-f pair + 2 other drakes) on 2 June at the north segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)
- ✓ 3 (2m, 1f) on 9 June at Crystal Hills WMA in Hancock County (SSP)
- 4 (2 m-f pairs) on 10 June at the northernmost wetland of the Ingham Lake complex in Emmet County (SSP, KLP); this quiet, marshy, secluded lake looked to be suitable for nesting ruddies.
- ✓ 2 drakes on 8 July at Big Wall Lake in Wright County (SSP)
- ✓ 1 hen on 8 July at East Twin Lake in Hancock County (SSP)

Gray Partridge

Singles or pairs were noted during the first half of June in Osceola, Dickinson, Clay, and Kossuth counties (SSP, KLP)

- ✓ Farthest south: a pair on 8 July in southern Webster County (SSP)

Red-necked Grebe

2 (a pair) seen together on 9-10 June at Cheever Lake in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)

Western Grebe

✓ 1 on 8 July at East Twin Lake in Hancock County (SSP)

Pied-billed Grebe

- ✓ 2 (a pair) on 2 June at the north segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)
- 1 on 6 June at a private wetland outside of Spencer in Clay County (KLP)
- ✓ 3 on 9-10 June at Cheever Lake in Emmet County (SSP)
- 3 on 10 June at Dewey's Pasture/Smith's Slough in Clay County (SSP, KLP)
- 1 on 12 June at Lily Lake in Dickinson County (KLP)
- 3 on 12 June at the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (KLP)

American White Pelican

- 35 on 10 June on an island within Swan Lake in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)
- ✓ 89 on 12 June in flight near Hottes Lake in Dickinson County (SSP)
- ✓ 9 on 8 July at East Twin Lake in Hancock County (SSP)

Double-crested Cormorant

- 2 or 3 on 9-10 June at both Cheever Lake and High Lake in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)
- ✓ 5 on 12 June at Kettleton Hogsback WMA in Dickinson County (SSP)
- ✓ 8 on 8 July at East Twin Lake in Hancock County (SSP)
- ✓ 4 on 12 July at Hendrickson Marsh in Story County (SSP)

Green Heron

1 on 5 June along the Little Sioux River at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Turkey Vulture

In the northwest: During the first week of June, 20-25 Turkey Vultures were seen kettling on several different evenings over the town of Cherokee. A roost is probably located somewhere nearby along the Little Sioux River (SSP, KLP).

Northern Harrier

- 1 adult male on 10 June at a large pasture complex along N26 in southwestern Clay County (SSP, KLP)
- ✓ 1 female on 12 June at Diamond Lake WMA in Dickinson County (SSP)

Cooper's Hawk

✓ A female at an active nest on 12 June in an oak grove at Jemmerson Slough in Dickinson County (SSP); due to the height of the nest placement (~15m high), I could not see the contents; based on the female's behavior, this nest likely still had eggs - or very young nestlings

From Coast to Coast:

- 1 on 02 July near the Big Sioux River in Centennial Twp, Lyon County (SSP, KLP)
- 1 on 18 July 1.5 miles from the Mississippi in Buffalo Twp, Scott County (SSP, KLP)

Sora

1 on 8 June at a private wetland in Meadow Twp, Clay County (KLP)

3 on 10 June at Dewey's Pasture/Smith's Slough in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

American Coot

7 on 10 June at the northernmost wetland of the Ingham Lake complex in Emmet County (SSP, KLP)

5 on 12 June at the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (KLP)

American Golden-Plover

1 (in very early stages of pre-basic molt) on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (KLP)

Semipalmated Plover

First: 1 on 26 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Piping Plover

1 (adult-alternate) on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Killdeer

Most: 95 on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex (SSP)

Greater Yellowlegs

First: 3 on 26 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Most: 11 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Lesser Yellowlegs

First: 17 on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex (SSP)

Solitary Sandpiper

First: 1 on 26 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Spotted Sandpiper

Probable nesting: 1 juvenile (apparently independent – no adults noted in the vicinity) on 2 July along the Maple River in northeastern Ida County (SSP, KLP)

Most migrants: 16 on 26 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Upland Sandpiper

1 on 5 June at a hayfield in Douglas Twp, Clay County (KLP)

1 on 5 June at a hayfield in Barnes Twp, Buena Vista County (SSP)

1 on 6 June at a cattle pasture in Logan Twp, Clay County (KLP)

1 on 8 June at a horse pasture in Westport Twp, Dickinson County (KLP)

1 on 9 June along Hwy 9 in Swea Twp, Kossuth County (SSP)

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Semipalmated Sandpiper

- ✓ 3 on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex (SSP)
- 15 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Least Sandpiper

- ✓ First: 14 on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex (SSP)

White-rumped Sandpiper

- 1 (in juvenile plumage) on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP-details, KLP-details)

Stilt Sandpiper

- Most: 17 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Short-billed Dowitcher

- 5 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Franklin's Gull

- Peak number for early June: 140 on 3 June in Diamond Lake Twp, Dickinson County (SSP, KLP); I saw many of these birds subsequently travel north into Minnesota later on during the same day; we saw no other FRGU in this area during the next two weeks

Ring-billed Gull

- ✓ 25 on 3 June loafing in a flooded field in Lakeville Twp, Dickinson County (SSP)
- ✓ 4 adults on 8 July at Big Wall Lake in Wright County (SSP)
- ✓ 9 (various ages) on 24 July along the Mississippi at Davenport (SSP)

Forster's Tern

- ✓ 3 on 2 June at the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)
- 8 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Black Tern

- ✓ 2 on 2 June at the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)
- ✓ 3 on 9 June at Crystal Hills WMA in Hancock County (SSP)
- 1 on 12 June at Lily Lake in Dickinson County (KLP)
- 10 on 12 June at various locations within the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (KLP)
- ✓ 4 on 8 July at Lower Morse Lake WMA in Grant Twp, Wright County (SSP)
- 14 on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Eastern Screech-Owl

- 1 on 30 July seen well as it flew past our residence at dusk (KLP)

Black-billed Cuckoo

- ✓ 1 seen on 8 July at Lower Morse Lake WMA in Grant Twp, Wright County (SSP)
 - South of I-80: 1 seen on 18 July in Buena Vista Twp, Jasper County (SSP, KLP)
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Yellow-billed Cuckoo

1 singing on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

✓ 1 singing on 14 July at McFarland Park in Story County (SSP)

2 singing on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (KLP)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

3 males on territory on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Belted Kingfisher

✓ Nesting: 1 on 6 June carrying food (a small fish) to a nest site along Mill Creek in northern Cherokee County (SSP)

✓ Nesting (?): 1 on 12 June carrying food (a Northern Leopard Frog) away from a WPA in Diamond Lake Twp, Dickinson County (SSP)

Red-headed Woodpecker

In the first two weeks of June, I noted more individuals and pairs of RHWO in north-central and northwest Iowa than I did during the nesting season of 2003 in these regions (SSP).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

1) A family group (adult male, adult female, and 3 nearly independent juveniles) on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP); by "nearly independent," I'm referring to the fact that, although each of the juveniles begged and followed very closely to the two parents, none were fed by the adults while we observed.

2) An adult (not from the pair above) carrying food on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Pileated Woodpecker

In the northwest: 1 seen twice and 1 or 2 heard drumming and calling 10+ times on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Alder Flycatcher

Late migrant: 1 singing on 12 June at the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (KLP)

Willow Flycatcher

2 singing on 5-6 June in Douglas Twp, Clay County (KLP)

2 singing on 9 June in Twelve Mile Lake Twp, Emmet County (KLP)

1 calling on 10 June at Berringer Slough in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

✓ 1 singing on 12 June at a WPA in Diamond Lake Twp, Dickinson County (SSP)

2 singing on 12 June at the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (KLP)

Least Flycatcher

2 seen and heard giving *pwit* calls on 9-10 June along the woods at Cheever Lake Preserve in Emmet County (SSP-details, KLP); based on their behavior, my guess is that these birds were simply very late migrants

Eastern Phoebe

In the northwest: A pair on 5 June around the old stone lodge at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Western Kingbird

A pair on 2 July along Cherry Ave in Centennial Twp, Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Eastern Kingbird

No

Nesting: a pair guarding a nest with 3 or 4 nestlings on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County; the nest was positioned about 2 meters high in a clump of stunted American Plum (SSP, KLP)

Loggerhead Shrike

1 on 10 June at Freda Haffner Kettlehole Preserve in Dickinson County (SSP)

1 on 25 July near the intersection of Hwy 69 and Ballard Creek in Story County (SSP)

Bell's Vireo

1 singing on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Yellow-throated Vireo

3 singing on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Red-eyed Vireo

Nesting: 1 carrying nest material on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Purple Martin

Nesting: A colony of about 12 pairs in the tiny village of Lost Island in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

No

Other: 4 in flight on 26 July over Ada Hayden Park (SSP)

Cliff Swallow

Most for early in the season: ~75 on 2 June in the air above the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough (SSP)

Tufted Titmouse

1 singing repeatedly on 8 July in the southwest corner of Rutland in Humboldt County (SSP); apparently, the Des Moines River is serving as a handy corridor for this species

Sedge Wren

Most by far: On 2 June, about 10 days before this species went into the mud, I made a conservative count of 80 SEWR at the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP). I accomplished this count by basically canvassing the entire area. This site consists of a couple of restored wetlands surrounded by a grassland composed of tall, thick Switchgrass and Smooth Brome, with Reed Canary Grass and various sedges dominating in the wetter areas. In other words, this location has lots of suitable Sedge

Wren habitat, and lots of Sedge Wrens are apparently using it. Also, this species was common or fairly common in much of my study region, and up to 10 were found at sites in Dickinson, Hancock, Buena Vista, Cherokee, O'Brien, Clay, Palo Alto and Emmet counties in the month of June (SSP, KLP). Several were also singing on 12 July at the Colo Ponds complex (SSP), and 2 were singing on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (KLP).

Marsh Wren

Most by far: 36 on 10 June at the Dewey's Pasture/Smith's Slough complex in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

1 calling and singing on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (KLP)

1 calling on 14 July at McFarland Park in Story County (SSP, KLP)

2 or 3 calling repeatedly on 29 July at Ada Hayden Park (SSP, KLP)

Wood Thrush

2 singing on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Cedar Waxwing

Most: A flock of 11 on 5 June in Waterman Twp, O'Brien County (KLP)

Singles, pairs, and small groups were found in Story, Wright, Clay, Emmet, Lyon, and Plymouth counties (SSP, KLP).

Tennessee Warbler

Late migrant: 1 female on 5 June at Wanata SP in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

American Redstart

2 singing on 5 June at Buena Vista County Park (SSP, KLP)

Common Yellowthroat

Most: Dozens on 2 June at the northern segment of Hanlontown Slough in Worth County (SSP)

Scarlet Tanager

2 (including one orange-morph adult male) singing on 5 June at Wanata SP (SSP, KLP)

1 singing on 5 June at Buena Vista County Park (SSP, KLP)

1 singing on 6 June along Willow Creek in southern Clay County (KLP)

Eastern Towhee

3 on 5 June at Buena Vista County Park (SSP, KLP)

3 on 2 July in Plymouth County (SSP, KLP)

Lark Sparrow

2 on 2 July at Broken Kettle Preserve in Plymouth County (SSP, KLP)

Grasshopper Sparrow

Most: 16 on 4 June in the hilly pasture lands of Cherokee County (SSP, KLP)

Additionally, up to 7 were detected at various sites in Dickinson, Hancock, Emmet, O'Brien, Buena Vista, Worth, Lyon, Plymouth, Clay, and Palo Alto counties (SSP, KLP).

***Baird's Sparrow**

1 male documented on 4 June - singing repeatedly at a dry, hilly grassland in northern Cherokee Twp, Cherokee County (*KLP)

*Based on her experience with and knowledge of this and all other *Ammodramus* species, KLP was immediately aware of the significance of this sighting. She therefore took down extensive field notes on this bird, and she is filling out a full documentation.

***Le Conte's Sparrow**

3 males on 5-6 June singing at an expansive brome field in Clay County (SSP-details, KLP-details)

Comments: All three birds sang repeatedly - morning and evening - on the 5th and 6th, and two of them were countersinging with one another on the morning of the 5th. Having encountered hundreds of LCSPs in ND and northwest MN over the last five years, we are both quite familiar with this species' song and habits. Also, from conducting hundreds of point counts throughout the grassland regions of MN, we are well aware of the usual southern extent (Wilkin and Otter Tail counties) of the species' summer range and, therefore, how far "out of range" these individuals were. However, these were (apparently) territorial birds that sang repeatedly during each of our visits to the site on the 5th and the 6th. Their behavior was far more reminiscent of Le Conte's Sparrow males that we have observed within the nesting range than it was of migrants. Therefore, as unprecedented as this encounter may be, I still suspect that these LCSPs had intentions of remaining through the summer - or at least until this brome field was mowed for hay.

Clay-colored Sparrow

1 singing (and seen) on 10 June at Freda Haffner Kettlehole Preserve in Dickinson County (SSP). I carefully searched his territory (a patch of short American Plum and Prairie Rose), but I did not find a nest.

Song Sparrow

Nesting: A female flushed off of a nest with eggs on 10 June at the Spring Run complex in Dickinson County (SSP)

Swamp Sparrow

Outside of the Prairie Pothole Region: 1 singing on 6 June on private land in Elk Twp, Buena Vista County (SSP)

High count: 15 on 10 June at the Smith's Slough/Dewey's Pasture complex in Clay County (SSP, KLP)

Singing Swamp Sparrows were also detected at various locations in Worth, Hancock, Emmet, and Dickinson counties during June (SSP, KLP).

Blue Grosbeak

2 singing on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Dickcissel

Throughout central, north-central, west-central, and northwest Iowa, this species was again common to abundant in tall, weedy grassland habitats with high singing perches (tall forbs, shrubs, fences, utility lines, etc.). Compared to 2003, Dickcissel numbers were either about the same or only slightly lower in most counties of these regions (SSP, KLP).

Bobolink

✓ Nesting: A female flushed off of a nest with eggs on 10 June at Cayler Prairie State Preserve in Dickinson County (SSP).
Overall, this species was fairly common in much of north-central and northwestern Iowa (SSP, KLP).

Great-tailed Grackle

✓ 2 males on 3 June at a pond near the intersection of the Ocheyedan River and L58 in Osceola County (SSP)

Brown-headed Cowbird & Chipping Sparrow

On 26 July, we observed a Chipping Sparrow feeding two voracious BHCO juveniles at Ada Hayden Park in Story County (SSP, KLP).

Orchard Oriole

Most: 6 (3 m-f pairs) on 2 July at Gitchie-Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (SSP, KLP)

Nesting: Katy and I observed an adult male feeding newly emerged mayflies to three fledglings near the parking area at McFarland Park on the evening of 14 July.