

6/2/91

Dear Carl—

Here's an attempted summary of my birding this last spring--hope it's intelligible, even if tiny and cramped! I thought the warbler migration was disappointing, but maybe I was out on the wrong days-- Our attempt at a Big Day netted only 16 warbler species -- I usually think of 20 as a minimum -- and 129 in all (.May 11). Shorebirds were also disappointing, since the Coralville Reservoir stayed high throughout migration. It did appear that farther upstream in the Iowa R. valley-- toward Marengo -- might have been pretty good at times, but that's private land and at least 45 minutes from here. Ken Lowder and I did see about 200 shorebirds in one area down there on 5/18 before a Merlin came zooming through, scattering them all ~~to~~ every which way! It was neat to see the Merlin, but it might have waited until we'd identified them all! Later, we saw 10 Dowitcher (Long-b.) in the same area, and in another area about 15 Caspian Terns and 5 Forster's Terns.

I didn't list people who were out with me on various trips -- if this is important in any regard, let me know. I did lead C.R. Audubon trips on 3/30 (Cone Marsh), 4/20 (Palisades-Dows Preserve) and 5/4 (Squaw Creek Park). Big Day on 5/11 was with John Daniel and Ken Lowder. Give me a call if you need any additional info. →

I'll be in C.R. until ~~the~~ Saturday, June
8. Good luck working on your report and in
future birding!!

Best,

Pete

PCR = Pleasant Creek Reservoir
 CM = Cone Marsh

Field Check List

Mar-May 31, 1991

Date _____ Time _____
 Weather _____ Locality _____

Observers PETE WICKHAM

Total Species _____

LOONS

Common

GREBS

first 3-30, Cone M.
 max 20, 4/11
 (Cedar L.)
 Horned max 20, 4/11
 Eared
 Western 3, cedar L. 5/6
 Pied-billed throughout

PELICANS

White max 8, 4-28, Swan Lake

CORMORANTS

Double-crested first 4/8 (15) Pleasant Creek

HERONS, BITTERNS

Great Blue
 Green first 4-27, Cone Marsh
 Little Blue
 Cattle Egret
 Great Egret first 4-3, Palo Alto
 Snowy Egret max 10, 4-27, Cone M.
 Black-crowned Night first 5-11, Other Creek Marsh
 Yellow-crowned Night
 Least Bittern
 American Bittern 5-11(2) Other Cr. Marsh

SWANS

Whistling

GEES

Canada throughout - common.
 White-fronted 3-16 (50), Red Rock
 Snow

DUCKS

Mallard abundant
 Black
 Gadwall last 5-11, Swan L.
 Pintail only a few
 Amer. Green-winged Teal last 10⁺ 5-11, Swan L.
 Blue-winged Teal
 Cinnamon Teal throughout
 American Wigeon last 5-11, Swan L.
 Northern Shoveler
 Wood
 Redhead max 30, Cone M. 13-25
 Ring-necked max 300, 3-25, Cone M.
 Canvasback still 10⁺ of Swan L. late May
 Lesser Scaup
 Common Goldeneye
 Bufflehead
 Oldsquaw
 Ruddy max 56 on 4/2, PCR
 Hooded Merganser none seen
 Common Merganser seen early
 Red-breasted Merganser first 3/16 (Red Rock)

see reverse

see reverse

VULTURES, HAWKS

Turkey Vulture
 Goshawk
 Sharp-shinned
 Cooper's last 5/11, Matsell Br.
 Red-tailed common
 Red-shouldered
 Broad-winged only 1, 4/21, Iowa City.
 Swainson's
 Rough-legged
 Golden Eagle
 Bald Eagle a few
 Marsh
 Osprey 4/20 (3)
 Peregrine Falcon 4/21: 1 adult, Coralville Res.
 Merlin
 American Kestrel

over

BOBWHITE, QUAIL, PHEASANTS

Ruffed Grouse
 Bobwhite common
 Ring-necked Pheasant abundant
 Gray Partridge becoming quite common in E-central IA.
 Turkey widespread in woods along streams

TURKEYS

CRANES, RAILS, COOTI

King Rail
 Virginia Rail
 Sora first 4/27
 Common Gallinule
 American Coot common after mid-march

POULES

Semipalmated first 5/9
 Piping
 Killdeer
 American Golden a few seen, 5/9-5/14
 Black-billed
 Ruddy Turnstone 5/18(3), near PCR

SANDPIPERS, etc.

American Woodcock - see over
 Common Snipe 3/30(20), Cone Marsh.
 Whimbrel
 Upland none
 Spotted first 5/6, PCR
 Solitary first 4/27, Cone M. (7)
 Willet last 5/11
 Greater Yellowlegs a few
 Lesser Yellowlegs also a few
 Pectoral really very few seen
 White-rumped 5/24(2) near PCR
 Baird's 5/11(6) PCR
 Least 5/11

Dunlin 5/14(10), near PCR
 Long-billed Dowitcher OVER
 Sift 5/18(4) near PCR
 Semipalmated
 Western
 Buff-breasted
 Marbled Godwit - over
 Hudsonian Godwit 5/14(1), near PCR
 Sanderling over 5/18(1)
 American Avocet
 Wilson's Phalarope
 Northern Phalarope

GULLS

Herring
 Ring-billed
 Franklin's } didn't see in period
 Bonaparte's }
 Terns
 Forster's first 5/6, max 5/18 (4)
 Common
 Least
 Caspian only on 5/18 (15)
 Black no large flocks, seen 5/18 - 6/11

DOVES

Rock Dove
 Mourning

CUCKOOS

Yellow-billed first 5/11
 Black-billed first 5/11

OWLS

Barn
 Screech
 Great Horned
 Screech
 Barred
 Long-eared
 Short-eared
 Saw-whet

GOATSUCKERS, etc.

Chuck-will's-widow
 Whip-poor-will at least 6, 5/11
 Common Nighthawk Matsell
 Chimney Swift - first 5/11
 Ruby-thr. Hummingbird
 Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS

Common Flicker common
 Pileated only one 5/11
 Red-bellied
 Red-headed major movement, take Apr.
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
 Hairy
 Downy

FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Kingbird first 5/6
 Western Kingbird 10/5 by 5/11
 Great Crested first 5-1
 Eastern Phoebe first 4-20
 Yellow-bellied
 Audubon first 5-11
 Willow first 5-27
 Least
 Eastern Wood Pewee major in flocks, 5/18
 Olive-sided only one, 5/21, Matsell Br.

LARKS, SWALLOWS

Horned Lark
 Tree first 4/2, PCR
 Bank first 5/18 (several places)
 Rough-winged first 4/20
 Barn first 4/27 - late
 Cliff first 5/6 - late
 Purple Martin very uncommon

JAYS, CROWS

Blue Jay
 Common Crow

TITMICE

Black-capped Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse

NUTHATCHES, CREEPERS

White-breasted Nuthatch
 Red-breasted Nuthatch none in period
 Brown Creeper max 3 on 4/19

WRENS

House first 4/25
 Winter
 Bewick's
 Carolina several in C.R. area
 Long-billed Marsh first 5/11
 Short-billed Marsh first 5/11

MINNIS

Mockingbird
 Gray Catbird first 5/1, Matsell
 Brown Thrasher first 4/25

THRUSHERS

American Robin
 Wood first 5/9 (over)
 Hermit only ones 3 on 4/17
 Swainson's Saw lots, 5/11-5/25
 Gray checked 1 on 5/18 only
 Veery first 5/6, PCR
 Eastern Bluebird seen frequently

GNATCATCHERS, KINGLETS

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 5/4 on
 Golden-crowned Kinglet only 1
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 4/17
 PIPITS, WAXWINGS (from 4/6 on)

Water Pipit
 Bohemian Waxwing
 Cedar Waxwing seen throughout.

SHREKES

Northern
 Loggerhead one nr PCR
 seen occasionally, APRIL-May

STARLINGS

Starling

VIREOS

White-eyed early 4/27, Cone M.
 Bell's first 5/11, Matsell
 Yellow-throated 5/9 on
 Solitary seen 5/11-5/11
 Red-eyed seen 5/9 on
 Philadelphia
 Warbling first 4/28, Swan Lake

WARBLERS

Black-and-white 5/4-5/18
 Prothonotary
 Worm-eating
 Golden-winged
 Blue-winged 5/4 on
 Tennessee 5/4-5/25
 Orange-crowned 5/1-5/4
 Nashville 5/1-5/18 max 8
 Northern Parula
 Yellow 5/4 on, 5/11-5/11
 Magnolia 5/11-5/18
 Cape May
 Black-throated Blue
 Yellow-rumped 4/17-5/11
 Black-throated Green
 Cervian 5/11 5/4-5/18
 Blackburnian 5/4(1), 5/11(2)
 Chestnut-sided 5/11-5/25
 Bay-breasted
 Blackpoll 5/4(1), 5/9(1)
 Pine
 Palm 4/27-5/9 max 6
 Ovenbird 5/9 on
 Northern Waterthrush
 Louisiana Waterthrush
 Kentucky
 Connecticut
 Mourning only 1, 5/18
 Common Yellowthroat 4/27
 Yellow-breasted Chat over
 Hooded
 Wilson's 5/11(1)
 Canada
 American Redstart 5/4 on

WEAVER FINCHES

House Sparrow
 BLACKBIRDS
 Bobolink first 5/11 (late)
 Eastern Meadowlark
 Western Meadowlark
 Yellow-headed first 5/9
 Red-winged
 Orchard Oriole one 5/7, N. Liberty
 Northern Oriole
 Rusty few seen first 5/4
 Brewer's (over)
 Common Grackle
 Brown-headed Cowbird first 3/25, Cone M.

TANAGERS

Scarlet first 5/9, Matsell Br.
 Summer

FINCHES, SPARROWS

Cardinal
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak 3/2 on
 Indigo Bunting 5/9 on
 Dickcissel 5/9 on
 Evening Grosbeak
 Purple Finch
 Common Redpoll
 Pine Siskin
 American Goldfinch
 Red Crossbill
 White-winged Crossbill
 Rufous-sided Towhee first 4/26
 Savannah 5/11 on
 Grasshopper 5/11 on
 LeConte's over
 Henslow's
 Sharp-tailed
 Vesper first 4/8
 Lark first 4/27, CM
 Dark-eyed Junco
 Tree
 Chipping first 4/20
 Clay-colored
 Field first 3/30
 Harris
 White-crowned first 5/11
 White-throated first 4/25
 Fox Scaup 3/30(4) only
 Lincoln's 5/9(2) over
 Swamp 5/11(1)
 Song
 Lapland Longspur
 Snow Bunting
 Smith's Longspur (over)

General notes: Warbler migration generally disappointing - small numbers of most species (except Yellow-rumped & Palm) seen. Sudden change in weather to warm and humid starting on 5/9 may account for this. Birds did not seem to "pile up". Most shorebirds were seen at a large flooded field near Pleasant Creek Reservoir... they ignored other nearby flooded fields (!)

Lesser Scaup: seen from Mar. 7 on.

Peak 250 Apr. 2, Pleasant Creek Res. (PCR); then 220 on 4/3;

106 on 4-8; 120 on 4-24; 3 on 5-6; 1 on 5-9, all at PCR.

Greater Scaup:

3 (2 males, 1 ♀) seen well on 4-8 at PCR, only ~100 ft. offshore through 20X scope - rounded head shape, greenish reflections off head, big nail on bill observed.

Bufflehead:

seemed unusually common this spring; seen 3-16 on, with

9 on 3-30, Cone Marsh; 20 on 4-2, PCR; 40 on 4-3, PCR; only 2 on

4-8, PCR; 8 on 4-24, PCR; 35 on 4-28, Swan L.; still present on 5-11, Swan L.

Red-br. Merganser: max 9 on 4/24, Cedar Lake; 6 ♀ at PCR, 5/9 (last).

Turkey Vulture: appears to be increasing locally. Actually saw birds low over C.R., well within the city, on two occasions during April.

Merlin: one observed, flying rapidly ^{over} a mudflat area and chasing the shorebirds there on 5/18 (Iowa River valley near Marengo)

Woodcock: several seen, early April - May 11. One on May 11 was observed at Wakpicada Natural Area near Central City. It was flushed and then engaged in a distraction display, fluttering its wings -- very agitated behavior - near the edge of a pond surrounded by second growth

Short-b. Dowitcher: 2 observed on 5/9 near PCR; paler pinkish-buff underparts, white under tail coverts, spotting (no streaking) on flanks.

Long-b. Dowitcher: observed 5/11 - 5/18, max 12 on 5/18

Marbled Godwit: Keith Carris reported seeing 6 on 5/13 in flooded field near PCR. They were not there the morning of 5/14, but a Hudsonian Godwit was!

Sanderling: one observed 5/9 on sandy beach at PCR together with several Spotted Sandpipers.

Wood Thrush: reported to be declining in some areas nationally - however, on May 21, at Matsell Bridge, on a humid, very hazy morning, I heard at least 12 singing.

No. Water-thrush: 4/28 (Swan L.) - 5/20 (Wakpicada Nat. Area) ... a few

La. Water-thrush: 5/1 on in local areas where it nests.

Yellow-br. Chat: only one, 5/11, Matsell Bridge

Brewer's Blackbird: flock of about 25, near Cone Marsh in a cornfield on 3/30

LeConte's Sparrow: 1 seen at Cone Marsh on 3/30. We flushed this bird several times until it lit in a bush where we had excellent views from about 15 ft.

Smith's Longspur: small flock of about 30 flushed out of grassy patch near Cone Marsh on 3/25. Birds have appeared repeatedly in this area in late Mar and April in the last few years. They were not there on Mar. 30.