

6/4/80

SILCOCK

RR2, Malvern, Iowa

51551

May 31, 1980

Dear Tom,

Here is my spring report: (Many of the observations will be duplicated by yours in southwest Iowa, of course).

- ✓ Horned Grebe One in breeding plumage at Riverton May 9-13. Uncommon and rather late for this area.
- ✓ Little Blue Heron A white bird with blue feathers scattered through plumage at Folsom Lake May 13. Uncommon but regular migrant here.
- ✓ Cattle Egret One landed for a couple of hours in a cattle feedlot sickpen next to busy handling facilities May 10.
- ✓ Snowy Egret One at Riverton May 2. With Common Egrets (2), smaller, black bill and legs, but feet not seen.
- ✓ Least Bittern One flushed at Forney Lake May 13. Breeds there when conditions suitable. Uncommon but regular in spring and summer.
- ✓ American Bittern None seen in usual places this spring (Riverton, Forney Lake)
- ✓ Greater White-fronted Goose: Two rather late at Forney Lake May 2, one still present May 9; one at Riverton May 13. These birds are late.
- Bufflehead Pair at Forney Lake May 13, late.
- ✓ Hooded Merganser Pair at Forney Lake May 13. This species is casual in summer here, and only uncommon in migration. As well, this is a late date for migration.
- ✓ Red-breasted Merganser Two females at Forney Lake May 9, identified by small size and dusky throats. Uncommon in migration here, although not unexpected in spring. Rather late.
- ✓ Swainson's Hawk One Apr 19, the usually expected time. Also one, probably two, apparent migrants May 13. Identified by pale wing lining contrasting with dark flight feathers, longish narrow tail, wings held in slight dihedral, narrow wings with pointed tips and swept-back from the wrists. Rather late, but two were seen May 17, 1979 also, one identified as an immature by B.J. Rose (one of the coauthors of "Birds of South Dakota," raising the possibility of breeding in the area. (i.e. 1-year bird)
- ✓ Wild Turkey Now common in and north of Waubonsie State Park in the loess hills forest. Population derives from birds moving north from northwest Missouri and from planted birds.
- ✓ American Avocet 12 in breeding plumage at Forney Lake May 2.
- ✓ Am. Golden Plover 150 at Riverton April 26.
- ✓ Upland Sandpiper Three in suitable breeding habitat at borrow pit beside I-29 near Forney Lake. Seen in same habitat in June 1979 also, but at another borrow pit further south on I-29. Habitat consists of weedy wasteland and tall grass.

Willet One at Riverton May 2. Flock of 14 at Willow Slough May 9 and a single same day at Riverton. Has become somewhat more regular as north-central Nebraska breeding population has increased. *in migration*

✓ Ruddy Turnstone Four seen (flock of 8 present - Kent) at Forney Lake May 13.

✓ American Woodcock Apparently breeds rather commonly at Riverton in riparian woods. Up to three heard each visit in early May from one spot. Total population should be rather higher as only a small fraction of total area was sampled. One was seen feeding there June 3, 1978 by me (IBL 49:49).

✓ Short-billed Dowitcher One near Council Bluffs May 9 and another at Folsom Lake May 13. Both identified by overall more orangy and less extensive coloration compared with Long-billed Dowitcher. Also spotted flanks and pale, almost white belly and undertail area was seen on both birds. Calls were not heard in either case, however. This species is much less common in spring in this area than the Long-billed.

✓ Sanderling Thirteen seen at Riverton (7) and at Cooling Ponds in Pottawattamie County (6) May 13. Both breeding-plumaged and basic-plumaged birds were present. This is a large number for this area, but see the report of 150 at Squaw Creek NWR in northwest Missouri May 13, 1979 (AB 33:777).

✓ Banaparte's Gull Two immatures at Willow Slough, Mills County May 9. A flock of 14 at Forney Lake and a single at Riverton May 13, all in breeding plumage. This is a large number for this area, especially at this late date. The flock was flushed and the pale forewing pattern was seen on all birds.

✓ Barn Owl One heard at my house May 2. May have been one of the adults that bred successfully there in 1979, as it was later flushed from ~~it~~ the barn where it roosted last year, and was seen to be unbanded. The two young fledged in 1979 were handed.

✓ Ruby-throated Hummingbird This bird is very hard to find here; indeed, none were seen this spring.

Belted Kingfisher Seemingly more common this year, up to three being seen in a day (May 9), where one per day was good in 1979.

✓ Eastern Phoebe Also more easily encountered this year.

✓ Western Tanager A male seen at Forney Lake in budding cottonwoods Apr 26. In company of Yellow-rumped Warblers, almost all the latter being males.. See attached documentation. Apparently the fourth Iowa report: May 8, 1969 Buena Vista Co., June 22, 1969 DeSoto NWR (possible pair); and Nov 4, 1971 Des Moines.

✓ Blue Grosbeak Two early birds: May 9 in Mills County and May 13 at Forney Lake.

✓ Clay-colored Sparrow One May 9 in multiflora hedge at Riverton, and several May 13, some singing, in Fremont County.

✓ Harris Sparrow Last seen May 13 (2) in Fremont County.

~~White-crowned Sparrow~~

[PTO]

White-crowned Sparrow Three late birds May 9 in Fremont County.

White-throated Sparrow Seven late birds May 13 in Fremont County.

Regards, *Ross* Ross.

Hope this is in time. Ross