

FROM THE IOWA BIRDLINE (September-November)

Two of the best rare bird reports to the Iowa Birdline during the past three months came from out-of-staters. Sam Dunkle, an Oregonian visiting his mother in Cedar Rapids, discovered a COMMON GROUND DOVE on October 19th, which is a potential first state record. Richard Peiser, of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, took lady luck and his binoculars with him on the President floating casino at Davenport October 13th. He made good use of both of them, when he spotted adult and juvenile SABINE'S GULLS. The adult disappeared after a week (maybe it wasn't old enough to gamble), but the adult stayed on an additional week. These were both great birds that were seen by many.

The GROOVE-BILLED ANI found by Chuck Fuller near Burlington was seen only on October 5th. Mark Proescholdt discovered a RED PHALAROPE at Saylorville Reservoir on September 25th, and it hung around for almost a week. Interestingly, the same, or another bird, reappeared for two days at the exact location almost a month later. A WESTERN WOOD PEWEE at Bery Engebretson's residence west of Des Moines was seen and heard on September 8th.

Also in September, a PRARIE WARBLER was seen at the Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest on the 8th, and up to two YELLOW RAILS were at Snake Creek Marsh, and one was in Cerro Gordo County.

An unusually high number of WESTERN GREBE reports (7) began on October 12th. A VARIED THRUSH at Robins in Linn County on October 5th was an early sighting, and was followed by reports in November from Marshalltown and Sioux City. Two MUTE SWANS were seen on the Mississippi north of Burlington on October 16th.

This should be the peak year of a ten year cycle for NORTHERN GOSHAWK, and there were five reports of that species, starting with a bird at the Saylorville Reservoir on September 21st.

In November, Pleasant Creek Lake State Park had an outstanding mix of rarities from the 9th-17th, with PACIFIC LOON, WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, SURF SCOTER, and two BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKES. SURF SCOTER was reported from four other locations and WHITE-WINGED SCOTER from three, but evidently no BLACK SCOTERS were seen. Other November reports included SNOWY OWL in Palo Alto County, GLAUCOUS GULL and OLDSQUAW at Saylorville, THAYER'S GULLS and OLDSQUAW at Red Rock, and a single EVENING GROSBEAK at the Felsing's feeder near the Red Rock dam. PRARIE FALCON was reported from two locations.

During the next month or two, look for raptors. There has been an unprecedented number of HAWK OWL reports from Minnesota this fall, and this may be the year one gets to Iowa. (The last and only hawk owl in Iowa was at Waterloo in 1978-9)

Gyr Falcon is another raptor being seen in the northern states more often than usual this fall. And look those feeder birds over carefully for rarities.