

HEARD ON THE BIRDLINE
Summer 1997
June 15-September 15
by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

All sightings reported to the Iowa Birdline will be considered hypothetical until submitted and approved by the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union.

Iowa's first EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES were discovered on August 30 by Fritz Brock, a Pennsylvania birder who was visiting family at Grinnell. Up to five birds were seen at the north edge of the Grinnell Country Club golf course, and have been easy to locate since. Interestingly, a WHITE-WINGED DOVE was spotted on the same date at the Riverton Area in Fremont County. The other outstanding bird was the state's second ROSEATE SPOONBILL found by Steve Dinsmore on August 4 at a large heron roost at the Waubonsie Wildlife Area east of Nebraska City. It delighted birders by remaining for another ten days. In late June and July, this area also produced reports of a cooperative KING RAIL, numerous SNOWY EGRETS, and LITTLE BLUE HERONS, as well as both BLACK and YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS.

Rare gulls are not normally summer denizens in the state, but this year was the exception with reports of LAUGHING GULL at Blackhawk Lake June 16-19, two COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULLS which roamed Dickinson County from mid-June to mid-July, and SABINE'S GULLS in Dickinson County on July 8, and at the Saylorville Reservoir on August 11.

During the traditionally quiet latter part of June, a MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD was sighted north of Perry on the 28th, three juvenile BLACK-BILLED MAGPIES were found at the earlier detected nest site in Plymouth County, a WESTERN GREBE was at Little Spirit Lake on the 30th, and BARN OWLS were once again nesting in Zelbert Freemyer's barn near Bedford. June reports of warblers of note included WORM-EATING WARBLER in Lee County at Croton unit of Shimek State Forest, and PRAIRIE WARBLER at Lake MacBride State Park, and HOODED WARBLER at Lake Ahquabi State Park.

The highlight of July was a SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER observed by Sharon Laub along a fence line on her farm near Rippey on the 12th. SNOWY EGRETS appeared at four other locations in Carroll, Des Moines, Dickinson, and Lee Counties. Likewise, LITTLE BLUE HERONS showed up at two locations along the Mississippi River in Lee County. July reports of unusual birds that were probable nesters were SWAINSON'S HAWKS near Mason City and Waterloo, and LEAST TERNS and PIPING PLOVERS along the western border at power plant settling ponds in Woodbury and Pottawattamie Counties. MISSISSIPPI KITE sightings came from four central Iowa locations, Greenwood Park in Des Moines, the Voas Wildlife Area in Dallas County, Lake Ahquabi State Park, and the Ledges State Park, where a known nest was lost in a windstorm.

To usher in August, a PACIFIC LOON frequented Big Spirit Lake from August 2-11, while a BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK appeared briefly at the Riverton Area in Fremont County on the 9th. Other August events saw A WHITE-FACED IBIS sit down at Harrier Marsh in Boone County, but only briefly, on the 15th, and three SANDHILL CRANES were present at Walnut Creek NWR on the 19th.

The only unusual early September reports both came from Johnson County, where two MARBLED GODWITS were at the Hawkeye Wildlife Area on the 4th, and a

male BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER showed up at the MacBride Raptor Center
on the 7th.