

HEARD ON THE BIRDLINE

Fall 1997

September 15-November 15

by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

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

The state's first EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES discovered at Grinnell on August 30 were still present at the country club golf course there throughout the fall. Up to four birds had been seen at one time, but their number decreased by one when a dead dove was found on October 15.

The fall highlight happened at a time in the latter half of September which was otherwise devoid of news. A large flock of LARK BUNTINGS, presumably migrants, was found by Jerry Probst at Bacon Creek Park in Sioux City the morning of September 19. This represents the first occurrence in the state in several years.

Northern visitors were evident throughout the fall. Single EVENING GROSBEAKS were at Iowa City in mid-September, and at Sioux Center on November 3. Up to four RED CROSSBILLS were at Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington the first three weeks of October, and WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL sightings included a female at a Marion feeder on October 28, six at the Yellow River State Forest on November 7-8, and 35 at the Lake Park Cemetery on November 11. A PINE GROSBEAK was seen at Holstein November 5-6, and a BOHEMIAN WAXWING was spotted in Allamakee County on November 8. COMMON REDPOLL reports began with three sightings on November 11-12 in Polk, Clayton, and Dickinson Counties.

Unusual gull reports in October came from the Coralville Reservoir with a second year LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL October 8-27, and a juvenile SABINE'S GULL on the 9th. In November, Big Spirit Lake produced a first year GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL on the 8th, and a first year THAYER'S GULL on the 9th.

Waterfowl rarities were highlighted by a PACIFIC LOON at Lock & Dam #18 on the Mississippi River on October 31. Two RED-NECKED GREBES were at Lake Anita State Park on November 1, and the only WESTERN GREBE was at Big Spirit Lake on November 8. Early November also saw WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS at Rice Lake in Worth County, Blackhawk Lake in Sac County, and at Lock & Dam #18 in Des Moines County. SURF SCOTERS also appeared in early November at Lock & Dam #18 and at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area in Linn County. The only OLDSQUAW was observed at Big Spirit Lake on November 11. Pleasant Creek hosted eight TRUMPETER SWANS on November 10, and pool #9 on the Mississippi in extreme northeast Iowa, saw a thousand TUNDRA SWANS present from the end of October.

A WHITE FACED IBIS was seen at a Plymouth County farm pond on October 8. The only SAW-WHET OWL report came from George Wyth State Park on November 1. A SPOTTED TOWHEE appeared at Cone Marsh in Louisa County on November 6. Unusual raptor sightings included GOLDEN EAGLES and RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS at the Grammer Grove Park hawk watch in Marshall County in late October, while another RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was at Lake MacBride State Park on November 13. Unusual because of its lateness was a RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD at a Burlington feeder on November 10.