

HEARD OVER THE IOWA BIRDLINE
Spring 1992

It was a record setting spring for the number of calls and reports of rare birds to the Iowa Birdline. There were two potential first state records reported. Dan Peterson was observing a kettle of Turkey Vultures over the Mississippi River south of Dubuque on March 24, when he picked out a BLACK VULTURE among them. And on May 14, Francis Moore was informed of an AMERICAN SWALLOW-TAILED KITE at the Hartman Reserve in Cedar Falls, and the next day watched it skimming the treetops along the Cedar River for a half hour. While searching for that bird, a contingent from the IOU spring meeting viewed a MISSISSIPPI KITE at the same location.

Southwest Iowa birders had an extraordinary spring. At the Riverton Area in Fremont County, in the three day period of May 10-13, two accidentals, SNOWY PLOVER and BLACK-NECKED STILT, and two casuals, WHIMBREL and RED KNOT were sighted.. At DeSoto NWR, a BROWN PELICAN was seen from April 29-May 10, and B.J. Rose and Babs Padelford found a LITTLE GULL in Pottawattamie County. CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS were conspicuous along the roadsides in the Percival area on April 21-22 following the 14" snowfall as reported by Ross Silcock.

Another WHIMBREL was discovered by Beth Proescholdt near her home in Marshall County on April 24. BLACK RAILS were reported on April 26 at Carney Marsh, Des Moines, by Barb Miller and Dick Kraemer, and near Iowa City by Gladys Black and Beth Brown. EURASIAN WIGEONS were found at two locations; in Cerro Gordo County by Randy Pinkston on March 18, and in Linn County by Jim and Joyce Durbin. The timing for that bird's discovery, a Friday evening, was great as numerous birders benefitted over the ensuing weekend. At the old Polk City cemetery, Paul Hertzell located a TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE among the tombstones on May 17. BEWICK'S WRENS were first reported from Lee County at the junkyard west of Argyle on April 17, and in Van Buren County at the campgrounds of Lacey-Keosauqua State Park on May 9. Both are likely nesters.

News of both GREAT-TAILED GRACKLES and CINNAMON TEAL was surprisingly widespread. Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County produced reports of SANDHILL CRANE (also found at Lilah's Marsh in Howard County), YELLOW RAIL, and IBIS (Sp.). Other rarities called in were SNOWY OWLS in Cerro Gordo County, PRARIE WARBLER in Lee County, HENSLOW'S SPARROWS in Van Buren County, and LITTLE BLUE HERONS in Lee, Des Moines, and Winneshiek Counties.