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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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To: Breeding Bird Atlas Committee Members

From: John Fleckenstein

Date: 4 September 1991

Subject: Revised draft of sample breeding bird atlas species accounts.

DNR
SEP 11 1991
GEOL. SURVEY

Enclosed are revised drafts of the two BBA accounts which I have written. I included a little more information on habitat and tried to arrange the information a little more systematically. Look these over and comment on them. We can discuss them when we meet.

We can not meet at the IOU meeting. Carol and Laura will be at the BBA meeting in Colorado that weekend. Can we meet on 27 September? Otherwise, we'll have to go into October. Anytime from 7-25 October is ok with me. Laura would like to meet on a week day. Who cannot make a weekday meeting? Bring your calendars to the IOU meeting and we'll try to schedule something then.

Breeding Bird Atlas
Sample Species Accounts

Bald eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Number of blocks

Occurred	2	Number of eggs	2 (1-3)
Possible	0	Description	Dull white, unmarked
Probable	0	Nesting period	1 March - 30 June
<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>4</u>		
Total	6		

In the mid 1800's, the bald eagle nested at numerous locations across the state. From 1905 to 1979, however, no nests were found. In 1979, a single nest was found in Allamakee County. Since then, the number of eagle nests has increased. Four nests were located on atlas blocks. A total of eight nests, producing 13 young were known in 1990. Most locations were along the Mississippi River in northeast Iowa. Others were located in southeast and southwest Iowa. The Iowa population is expected to grow as the species continues to recover from exposure to DDT and other pesticides which are now banned.

In other parts of the country, nests are sometimes on cliffs. In Iowa, all recent nests have been in large trees, generally in floodplain woodland, near open water. Proximity to open water is selected because fish are the primary food for bald eagles. Large tracts of woodland are often chosen because they provide the isolation which eagles prefer. Sites may be visible from a busy road and therefore, be conspicuous, but they are usually isolated from foot traffic and crowds of people.

Nests are often built in a fork near the crown of the tallest tree in a stand. They consist of branches up to three inches in diameter and are lined with grass, moss, and other vegetation. More material is added each year until the nest may reach 10 feet in diameter. Two or three nests may be used in rotation.

Male and female both incubate the eggs and tend the young.

Canada goose

Branta canadensis

Number of blocks

Occurred	17	Number of eggs	5-6 (4-7)
Possible	15	Description	Creamy to dirty white, unmarked
Probably	20	Nesting period	20 March - 15 May
<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>33</u>		
Total	85		

Before general settlement of the state, the Canada goose was locally common in many areas. Hunting, egg collecting, and habitat destruction eliminated them in the state by 1910. In the early 1960's, a reintroduction program was started in the Iowa Great Lakes area. The program has been very successful. Birds have now been reintroduced at many of the large lakes and reservoirs. These flocks have expanded, birds have spread to smaller lakes, and are now found even on many farm ponds.

Canada geese are most abundant in the Great Lakes area. They are found on most reservoirs in the state, along the Mississippi River, and in scattered areas across the state where small introductions took place.

Canada geese are found in most habitats types where open water is present. Dense cattail marshes and sedge meadows are not satisfactory habitat, but open water marshes, ponds, small and large lakes, and rivers are used.

Nests are located near water. They are usually on the ground, on a muskrat house, or other small elevation. Raised artificial nest structures are also used. In developed areas, nests may be built on lawns. The nest is made up of sticks, cattails, rushes, or other vegetation gathered nearby. Outside diameter is 15 to 36 inches; inside diameter is 6 to 12 inches. Once the female begins laying eggs, she lines the nest with down.

The female incubates the eggs. The male stays near and helps guard the nest. Both parents rear the young.

History
Range
Population trends

Current range

Habitat

Nest
Location
Description

Nesting behavior

*I worked up
this outline for
the text.*