

14 April 1985

To: Regular Field Report contributors
From: Tom Kent and Carl Bendorf

We will be compiling the Iowa spring field reports again this year. For sometime we have been thinking that it might be useful to try to gather data a little more systematically, so we have made up a form for gathering data on selected species.

Instead of trying to get input from all of you ahead of time, we decided to make up a form and try it out. After we find out how many are interested in using a standard form, we can get your opinions on modifying it.

We divided the regular species into four groups:

- (1) Common and resident species that are usually only reported if the date, numbers, or location is unusual.
- (2) Species that are fairly common migrants that are variably reported by contributors.
- (3) Species for which we need more information on numbers and distribution, many of which are on the Blue List, but for which citing all observations would be unwieldy.
- (4) Species that are rare or infrequently seen that seem worthy of reporting all observations.

For group (2) species we thought it would be easy to record early, peak and late dates (omitting early dates for some winter residents and late dates for some summer residents) using the following format for each:

number of birds (in one county only and seen by contributor)
date in the form: month/day
county using the first four letters of the county name (see form sheets for exceptions)

Limit the peak numbers to one county in one day and the early and late locations to the first and last sighting even though you saw the species in more than one county on that day.

Unusual dates should also be listed on your regular report sheet. If you want to cite other observers, list records on your regular form, but we believe that these species are of such frequency that it is probably unnecessary to give credit to all who saw them. It would seem worthwhile to continue to give details on dowitcher identification, especially for long-bills after May 10 and short-bills before May 1.

For group (3) species we think numbers and distribution are of more interest than dates, and we presume no one will see many of these. Thus, by listing the counties where you saw the bird and the maximum seen in any one day in each county, we should be able to gather some useful quantitative information on these species.

Use your regular form or the standard form (enclosed) for unusual dates and numbers, species that required details, group (4) species, and all casual and accidental species.

We hope you will give this form a try and let us know what you think of it. Even if you aren't birding a lot, give us the data that you have and we'll see how it all adds up.