

Van Dyke

Spring 1982 Report

Weather for the Period: March and April generally below normal temperatures (e.g., 11 degrees on April 2, record low of 7 degrees on April 5) and late snows (9" of snow accumulated by April 5). The spring warm-up began in mid-April. May: generally cool and precipitation much above normal (only about 10 days in the month without some rain). The cool weather helped us to steer clear of severe weather.

Species account:

- ✓ - Eared Grebe: moved through in normal numbers. Small flocks still present on May 22.
- ✓ - White Pelican: one flock of about 15 birds observed flying over Sioux Center (heading south!) on May 22.
- Double-crested Cormorant: number of migrants sharply down from previous years.
- Herons: very scarce this spring.
- ✓ - Great Egret: we observed one individual in western Sioux Co. on April 10.
- Canada Goose: a pair is breeding at Winterfeld in Rock Valley.
- White-fronted and Snow Goose: normal migration.
- Ducks: normal migration. No unusual observations to report.
- ✓ - Red-breasted Merganser: a female was present at Winterfeld in Rock Valley on May 8.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk: we found a dead female in a shrubby area close to our home. There are hidden wires and fences in the area. The bird showed no visible wounds, and may have hit a wire in pursuit of birds.
- Red-tailed Hawk: excellent numbers present throughout the period.
- Broad-winged Hawk: migrated in normal numbers. Large flocks moved through on May 4.
- ✓ - Swainson's Hawk: we identified and clearly observed one individual in western Sioux Co. on April 10.
- Bald Eagle: Mr. A. Boersma (long-time birdwatcher in Sioux Center) observed two adults in extreme north-west Sioux Co. on March 24.
- ✓ - Merlin: one individual was present in our yard on April 13.

- ✓ - Kestrel: fantastic migration. In the first two weeks of April they were abundant throughout Sioux Co.
- Gallinaceous birds: Pheasant and Gray Partridge survived the cold winter without apparent difficulties, but Bobwhite numbers are sharply down.
- Shore birds: better than average migration, due to abundant moisture
- Killdeer: arrived on schedule in mid-March.
- ✓ - Upland Sandpiper: two individuals were present in western Sioux Co. on May 1. They are rare in this area.
- Wilson's Phalarope: good-sized flocks present in first week of May.
- ✓ - Woodcock: Gordon Brand observed one individual near Orange City, Sioux Co., on March 17.
- 87 - Long-billed Dowitcher: one individual observed on May 8.
- ✓ - Long-eared Owl: Gordon Brand found one in Oak Grove Park on May 14.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker: numbers increasing.
- Red-headed Woodpecker: abundant since the beginning of May.
- Empidonax: spectacular migration. In the last two weeks of May they were literally all over the place.
- ✓ - Purple Martin: they arrived early. The first ones were present on April 1. Early April snow storms undoubtedly hurt them (on April 8 I saw one fly in a heavy snow storm).
- Brown Creeper; abnormally scarce this spring.
- Carolina Wren: on May 20 my 12-year old son John Kevin, who is becoming a very good birder, reported observing a Carolina Wren (noting the important field marks). I went out with him to find the bird. I observed a bird in the area which, though I could not observe it clearly, was not incompatible with the Carolina Wren. What is its recent status in the northern tiers of counties in Iowa?
- Wood Thrush: arrived in the third week of May.
- ✓ - Hermit Thrush: one individual observed on May 1.
- Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush: migrated through the area in their usual large numbers.

- ✓ - Veery: one observed on May 2.
- Bluebirds: none observed.
- ✓ - Water Pipit: one individual observed near Hawarden, Sioux Co., on May 8.
- Vireo-Warbler migration: about two weeks late. Once they arrived they came through in large numbers, with all regular species present (including Blackburnian and Wilson's Warblers). No unusual observations to report (other than below).
- ✓ - Black + White Warbler: an early migrant was present in Sioux Center on April 17.
- Mourning Warbler: unusually common this spring.
- ✓ - Orchard Oriole: observed three males in immature plumage (yellow with black face and chin) and one female in western Sioux Co. on May 22.
- Scarlet Tanager: unusually common this spring. Normally the species is scarce to absent in extreme north-west Iowa.
- Cardinal: appears to have survived the winter without difficulty.
- ✓ - Common Redpoll: still present on March 23.
- ✓ - Pine Siskin: unusually common throughout most of the month of May. I have not experienced such a prolonged and plentiful migration of Pine Siskins in north-west Iowa before.
- Grasshopper Sparrow: very plentiful in this area beginning May 1.
- Vesper Sparrow: normal numbers present since April 10.
- Clay-colored Sparrow: very scarce this spring. Normally they move through in goodly numbers.
- Harris' Sparrow: good migration; still moving through in first week of May.
- White-crowned Sparrow: migrated in uncommonly large numbers through Sioux Co.
- Fox Sparrow: observed several individuals in western Sioux Co. on April 2.

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