

6-7-88

Report of sighting at  
Lake Manawa on the south  
edge of Council Bluffs, Ia  
on apr 5, 1988

2 large gulls with  
herring gulls about 30 to  
35 yards from us.

Heavy bodied, pink legs  
translucent windows at base  
of primaries.

Adult pale gray wings and  
mantle, bill yellow with  
red dot. Yellow eyes

Younger bird some buff  
or light brown in plumage  
pink legs, dark spot at  
tip of bill, pale eyes.

Both birds wings about  
even with tail when  
at rest.

88-9-J

Used 7X35 binoculars  
at first & when in flight  
also used 25 Power Bushnell  
scope while on the ground  
& water.

Hope this is sufficient

Robert E. Starr

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*[Faint, illegible handwriting, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*



# Notes from NATURE

BY RUTH C. GREEN

## WHOOPEERS AT MINDEN

Reading about them in the newspapers, seeing them on TV, or studying the pictures in the field guides is just not the same! Mere words cannot describe the overwhelming awe of seeing real, live whooping cranes in the flesh. Watching these magnificent birds fanning their seven-foot wings or doing a courtship dance in the shallow waters of Nebraska's Platte River is a memorable sight that is indelibly imprinted on the mind's eye. On March 26, about 25 members of the Fontenelle Forest Camera Naturalist Club set out for Grand Island to see sandhill cranes, never dreaming we would see the most wanted species on a birder's list. We had spent the morning photographing some of the thousands of sandhill cranes as they circled overhead, then had gone to a local restaurant for lunch. As we left the restaurant, we struck pay dirt! Gary Lingle, Assistant Director of the Platte River Crane Trust, was on his way in, and after the usual greetings, he asked, "Have you seen the two whoopers about 30 miles from here?"

It took only minutes to get the directions to the exact location and we were on our way. In less than an hour we were looking at 2 of the world's population of 130 whooping cranes. What a stroke of luck, and what a fantastic day!

## SUPER SIGHTINGS AT MANAWA

Bob and Rosie Starr had one of those fantastic days at Lake Manawa recently. On April 5, they were looking at the usual herring, ringed-bill, and Franklin's gulls when they noticed two very large gulls that definitely were not any of

these three. Fortunately they were close enough that every field mark could be observed and it did not take Bob long to conclude the pale-gray mantled one with pure-white primaries could only be a glaucous -- the other bird was probably a second-year glaucous as it still had a considerable amount of brown in its plumage. This is not the first time this coastal species has been sighted at Lake Manawa, but it has been about 10 years since the last report.

Barb Wilson and her UNO class had a good sighting at Manawa on April 14. They saw a beautiful spring-plumaged red-necked grebe on the north end of the lake. This is possibly the second sighting this spring of one. Gregg Hartel, of Bellevue, and his class were almost sure they had seen one about 3 weeks earlier in the same place. This is 2 years in a row for this second largest of the grebes to be at Lake Manawa. It too is a coastal species which is not expected this far inland.

## THEY'RE HERE TO STAY

On April 16, I was visiting a friend north of Mission Street in Bellevue. As I stopped my car I heard the song of a house finch about a half-block away so I jumped out and ran to a tree to confirm what I had heard. The bright red male was singing up a storm and while I was watching him a brown bird of the same size and silhouette flew in. I was almost sure it was a female but back to the car I ran for binoculars to make sure. Indeed it was a female, and what's more, they both flew to a nearby yard and began picking up grass and twigs. Then they flew another half-block, with me right behind them, to a tall spruce tree. They carried the nesting material to an almost completed nest and began working on it. This is a first-ever nesting record for Sarpy County and I will be watching to see if this attempt is successful.

called for doc. 6-5-88

superstar's tree

Howe

1-712-322-4723

Bob Starr, 1506 Fairmont, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

## Platte River

Deer Creek Dam - Wyoming, \$48 M

Twin Forks Dam - Denver, \$500 M

Will impede flow of water downstream resulting in damage to wildlife along the Platte. Especially to sandhill cranes, the endangered whooping crane, piping plover, least turn, eskimo curlew. Thousands of wildfowl migrate through the Platte Valley in the spring, especially critical for the white fronted goose.

Kingsley - McConaughy Dam - FIRC license is sought.

The 50 year license to the power company expires this year. Many are not pleased with the management of the power company, as it has had a detrimental impact on fish and wildlife in the Big Bend Area of the Platte (roughly between Grand Island and west of Kearney) between Overton and Chapman. The mismanagement has affected detrimentally the recreational uses

of McConaughy and its fisheries, flooding (vs. too little water) on Platte downstream when least turn is nesting and too little when the cranes and waterfowl are in the area. The fishing in Ogallala has also been affected.

## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

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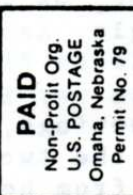
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