

SILCOCK

6/8/81

RR2, Malvern, Iowa  
51551  
June 5, 1981

full  
entered ✓

Dear Tom,

Just got back from Foray at Sioux City- not much happening, but hybrid Indigo Bunting and pair of Sapsuckers were best finds (see below).

Received a mysterious letter from Budget Bird Tours Inc yesterday: almost went into File 13, but Iowa City address intrigued me. I'm investigating menus with and ~~with~~ without pork for ~~our~~ our trip.

The note on the ibes (ibi?) looks fine: my name doesn't have to be on it, though- maybe just mentioned in the text as a fellow observer (witness?).

Here are my spring notes:

Also enclosed Thayer's full photo  
from R.S. Rose

- ✓ Common Loon: One in breeding plumage Taylor County on small farm pond May 12 (with TK).
- ✓ Double-crested Cormorant: largest flock 150 at Riverton April 25.
- ✓ Yellow-crowned Night Heron: Three adults at Riverton May 13 (with TK).
- American Bittern: Second consecutive spring without a sighting. Dry conditions this year may have contributed, but not so last year. Problems?
- ✓ White-faced Ibis: Invasion year! 14 at Lake Manawa (see note), also two at Taylor Lake May 20-21, and two at Willow Slough (date? see Barb Wilson). Taylor Lake birds both showing clear white feathering around red skin of facial area.
- ✓ Black Duck: One at Riverton May 20 with about 20 Mallards. Expected with Mallard flocks in winter, but first record in late spring.
- ✓ Swainson's Hawk: Third consecutive <sup>year for</sup> mid-May sighting: one Mills County May 13 (with T.K.). This species must be breeding in the vicinity.
- ✓ Wild Turkey: Explosive increase in Fremont and Mills Counties, spreading across Missouri River to Fontenelle Forest and also along Nishnabotna River in Fremont County.
- ✓ Piping Plover: One with Semipalmated Plovers at Keg Lake May 13 (with T.K.).
- ✓ Marbled Godwit: One at Taylor Lake May 9: cinnamon underwing linings and totally barred tail (no white tail band) clearly seen at leisure as bird circled around me calling vociferously.
- ✓ Northern Phalarope: Two females and one male Taylor Lake May 20.
- ✓ American Woodcock: Apparently breeds in good numbers along entire western edge of Iowa in suitable habitat. At least two caught in mist net set up for bats in Stone Park, Sioux City, May 31.
- ✓ Sanderling: Flock of 14 at Riverton Apr 26.
- ✓ Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Five, possibly nine, at Taylor Lake May 12 (with TK). During courtship display behaviour showed underwings which were whitish with black wrist-marks. Eye-ring and overall buffy plumage well seen.
- ✓ Common Tern: One bird, not conclusively identified as this species, but very probably so, at Taylor Lake May 12 (with TK). Primaries very dark, with outer three or four totally black. Outer tail feather pattern not seen.
- Caspian Tern: Flock of 18 at Keg Lake May 13 (with TK).
- Barn Owl: Not seen this year, despite placement of nest box in favored roost area.
- ✓ Chuck-will's-widow: Again common (5-10) in area north of Waubonsie SP where present last year. Seem to favor lower elevations around base of wooded areas in loess bluffs, while Whip-poor-wills breed in higher (drier) woods.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird: None seen this spring in southwest Iowa: this bird has problems. Why?
- ✓ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A male located at Stone Park by Armstrongs May 30. I found a female with the male May 31 and watched them in hopes of locating a nest site. Despite obvious territorial behavior by the male, I was unsuccessful. The territory was large (about 40 acres). Does not breed in South Dakota until mid-June. (Whitney et al).

Swallows: All species again breeding in Fremont County.

✓ Brown Creeper: One calling loudly in suitable breeding habitat at Waubonsie SP Apr 26 (my latest locality date), but not found May 13.

✓ Northern Mockingbird: One near Riverton Apr 26.

Loggerhead Shrike: Breeding in normal numbers in Fremont County, with traditional sites occupied.

Bell's Vireo: Habitat somewhat reduced due to dry conditions, but numbers appear normal relative to habitat.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Not seen this spring; at western edge of range in western Iowa and rather sporadic.

Prothonotary Warbler: About 2-5 at Riverton during May; about normal.

Golden-winged, Blue-winged Warblers: Very rare in western Iowa, in strong contrast to the eastern Iowa situation. None seen in southwest Iowa this year.

Yellow Warbler: Normal numbers for this common species in southwest Iowa.

Cerulean Warbler: Again not found at Waubonsie SP, even though seen each year at least in May in Fontenelle Forest.

✓ Bay-breasted Warbler: Singing male seen at Manti Woods May 21. Rare in southwest Iowa.

Louisiana Waterthrush: As usual, 1-3 pairs breeding at Waubonsie SP.

✓ Kentucky Warbler: One at Manti Woods May 21.

Bobolink: Numbers reduced in normal locations due to dry conditions in Fremont County.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Also reduced due to dryness. Forney Lake dried up.

Common Grackle: The effects of this species on species such as Robin, House Wren, Purple Martin, ~~Wren~~ and Catbird are marked. A yard with numerous trees had these species breeding commonly until this year when large numbers of Grackles began breeding in a pine hedgerow at the edge of the yard. A control program removed some 60 grackles, upon which the above-mentioned species returned and are now breeding commonly, as of the end of May.

Scarlet Tanager: Was easier to find at Stone Park than at Waubonsie Park in May.

Indigo Bunting: A male with about half its underparts white was at Stone Park May 31, most likely a hybrid (introgressant?) with Lazuli Bunting.

Dickcissel: Males present in southwest Iowa in good numbers, possibly aided by increased area of pasture and alfalfa, although conditions in wintering areas probably are more important to success for this species.

Grasshopper Sparrow: No problem with this species in southwest Iowa. Very common.

Vesper Sparrow: Also doing very well in southwest Iowa.

Lark Sparrow: Dry conditions have expanded the area suitable for this species in southwest Iowa this year from the usual sandy or dry areas in the loess bluffs and along the Missouri River to normally too damp farm fields.

Best regards  
Rov