ORTS FORM for submitting seasonal observations of Iowa birds

Summer Year: 1993

Name and address (print or type): Douglas Harr
PO Box 65
Larchwood, Iowa 51241

servers (name, city):

Use first few lines to give weather and habitat conditions. Use line(s) below species data to give additional details, if needed. Mail to: T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City IA 52240 by 1 Mar, 1 Jun, 1 Aug, or 1 Dec.

use initials of obsv. on species line

SPECIES	NO.	DATE	LOCATION - COMMENT - OTHER OBSERVERS
Comments on season: as with most of Iowa, the northwestern part of the state was extremely wet during the months of June and July, with many areas receiving between 10 and 20 inches of rain for the two-month period. Personal observation and conversations with others indicate that rain probably caused much nest destruction, especially of ground-dwelling birds. Waterfowl, however, appear to have thrived, with perhaps the best wetland habitat for ducks in at least a couple of decades. Late July saw a letting-up of the rains and possibility of renewed late nest attempts by some species.			
Season's observations of note:			
Cattle Egret	6	7/7-7/9	Little Sioux River floodplain wetlands, 6 mi. west of Spirit Lake (the same area in which they have been seen periodically in past years)
Hooded Merganser	1	6/11	adult female on gravel pit pond, 7 mi. SW of Sioux Center, Sioux County. (Injured?)
Barn Owl	1	7/27	1/2 mi. S. of Larchwood, Lyon County. I received call from retired farmer to come and identify a "large bird" sitting on his silo at dusk. When I arrived, I could see the silhouette against the almost dark sky, but was too dark to get positive visual ID with binoculars. Bird called about a half-dozen times (typical harsh screech of Barn Owl--compared with taped calls later), then flew off to perch on distant windmill on neighboring farm. The farmer who called me said the birds had been in his old barn for two months, and examining the building by flashlight, I found some cast pellets on the floor. I returned to farm on 7/28 & 7/29 at dusk--the time the farmer usually spots the owls (he says there are normally two), but I have not seen them again. I did hear a distant call on 7/29, however, but due to nearby traffic, could not discern location of sound. I'm reporting this as a sighting for the summer season, but will attempt to more positively verify species in August. (Owner would prefer that I not check the barn during daytime, as he does not want the birds frightened away.)