

3/7/81
Van Dyk

Winter 1980-81 Report

Weather for the Period:

We experienced another mild winter, characterized by above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation. Only a few inches of snow fell, most of which blew or melted away shortly after its appearance. Consequently there was no snow cover of any significance. The only cold snap of any length occurred during the first two weeks of February. Low temperatures for the period: -13 F on December 24, -24 on February 10. Highs for the period: 61 on December 17, 70 on January 24. In 60's and 70's (record-breaking) in week of February 15.

Species report:

- ✓ - Mallard: about 300 individuals wintered in Rock Valley, Sioux Co.
- ✓ - Wood Duck: two pairs wintered with the mallards in Rock Valley.
- ✓ - Lesser Scaup: a single individual appeared in Rock Valley on February 20.
- Red-tailed Hawk: common throughout the period, especially in western Sioux Co.
- Rough-legged Hawk: exceedingly scarce; I observed only one, on December 30 in western Sioux Co. (near Oak Grove Park).
- Kestrel: above normal numbers were present everywhere in the area throughout the period.
- Bob-white, Pheasant, Gray Partridge: obviously no problems in a winter like this!
- Mourning Dove: some flocks of 30+ individuals wintered in the Sioux Center area. Normally they move south.
- Snowy Owl: one reported 3 miles west of Sioux Center in mid-December. Unfortunately I did not receive the report until two weeks after the sighting. The report spoke of a "large white owl."
- Common Flicker: above normal numbers remained in the area throughout the period.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker: their numbers appear to be increasing along the Big Sioux and Rock Rivers in western Sioux Co.
- Hairy Woodpecker: continues to do well in this area.
- White-breasted Nuthatch: remarkably abundant throughout the period throughout the area.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch: none observed.
- Brown Creeper: They were very common in western Sioux Co. in December and early January. Thereafter they became scarce. On January 1 they were abundant in Oak Grove State Park.

- ✓ - Golden-crowned Kinglet: small numbers were present in December and early January. Thereafter they became scarce to absent.
- Cedar Waxwing: large flocks appeared in mid-January and remained for the rest of the period (flocks consisted of 50 - 100 individuals).
- ✓ - Northern Shrike: one individual observed (and positively identified) on February 14 in Sioux Co. about 10 miles north-west of Sioux Center.
- Western Meadowlark: virtually absent (or invisible) throughout the period.
- Red-winged Blackbird: first migrating flocks appeared on February 20.
- Common Grackle: several individuals (as many as 5) wintered in the area. They are normally absent.
- Cardinal: doing fine.
- ✓ - Evening Grosbeak: small numbers were present in Sioux Center during the first two weeks of December. Thereafter absent.
- Purple Finch: some individuals present in Sioux Center throughout December. On December 30 I observed a flock of 6 in Oak Grove Park. Not observed since then.
- ✓ - Common Redpoll: small flocks appeared in Sioux Center in late December and early January. After mid-January I did not see them again.
- Tree Sparrow: present throughout the period with exceptionally large concentrations in late December and early January. In the first week of January Oak Grove State Park was literally alive with Tree Sparrows.
- ✓ - Harris' Sparrow: a few individuals remained throughout the period.
- ✓ - Lapland Longspur: on January 2 I observed a flock of some 400 individuals about 2 miles west of Sioux Center. This is the only time I saw them.
- Snow Bunting: none observed.

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