

Red Phalarope
17 May 1940
Amana Lake, Iowa Co., IA
Serbousek
Serbousek 1940, letter

Record Number: 81-A0
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Serbousek, L. 1940. Shore birds at Amana Lake. IBL 10:27.

LETTERS

Thomas H. Kent to Lillian Serbousek, 23 June 1981

Lillian E. Serbousek to Tom Kent, 1 July 1981

VOTE (1981): 2-III, 3-IV, 2-V

IV, no description, not even plumage; competent observer.

III, Obvious lack of details, but good observer and species is distinctive in breeding plumage.

IV, a good observer, but no details of plumage given.

Time/place consistent with observation.

III, Excellent observer -- very distinctive bird. Ck with L. S. for plumage details.

V, sight observation only -- 4 observers -- no description of birds.

V, Absolutely no description. My hunch is that this should be a category VI.

NOTE: A letter was received from Lillian Serbousek regarding this record in response to an inquiry from the secretary. The Records Committee discussed the letter and reviewed the record on 5 Sep 1981 and unanimously agreed on a classification of IV.

Red Phalarope

Serbousek, L. 1940. Shorebirds at Amana Lake. IBL 10:27.

Shore Birds at Amana Lake.—On May 17, 1940, I was fortunate to observe some rare and unusual shore birds on Amana Lake in Iowa County, Iowa. (This is the place where the field trip terminated when the Iowa Ornithologists' Union convention was held at Cedar Rapids two years ago.) The water level of the lake was much lower than it has ever been at this time of year. The lake bed was exposed from 10 to 15 feet all the way around the edge of the lake, and even more at one end. Hundreds of shore birds were feeding on this space.

The more common species of sandpipers—Spotted, Solitary, Pectoral, Least, Semipalmated, and Lesser Yellow-legs—were present in large numbers. Other observations included 5 Killdeers, 2 Black-bellied Plovers, 6 Red-backed Sandpipers, 7 Long-billed Dowitchers, 2 Stilt Sandpipers, 6 Sanderlings, many Semipalmated Plovers, about 25 Wilson's Phalaropes, and 3 Red Phalaropes. About 150 Franklin's Gulls were feeding on a plowed field bordering the lake.

DuMont, in his 'Revised List of the Birds of Iowa' (1933), places the Red Phalarope on the hypothetical list. I feel certain regarding my observations of this species as the light was very good and I was on the bank only a few feet from them. My walking along the bank did not disturb them. I should like to know if they have been observed in other parts of Iowa in recent years. The observations of the Red Phalarope, Stilt Sandpiper and Sanderling make the first record of these birds for this locality; and we rarely see Franklin's Gulls in as large numbers.

On May 18, 1940, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Miss Myra Willis and I visited the lake. All the species of the preceding day, except both kinds of phalaropes, were observed, but they were in much smaller numbers due to the fact that the water had risen to almost its normal level. This was caused by water from the adjacent dike running into the lake and covering most of the feeding area. We did, however, add a Hudsonian Godwit. I went back again next day, May 19, and observed 13 Marbled Godwits and one Ruddy Turnstone, but practically all the other birds had left. On May 20, 8 Greater Yellow-legs had come in.

Seldom do we experience a large shore bird migration because water is usually high in the spring season; but the low water level of the lake made it an ideal stopping place in May of this year.—LILLIAN SERBOUSEK, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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PUBLISHERS OF
Iowa Bird Life
A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

EDITOR
PETER C. PETERSEN
235 McClellan Blvd.
Davenport, Iowa 52803

FIELD REPORTS EDITOR
DR. THOMAS H. KENT
2 // ~~302~~ Richards Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

June 23, 1981

Lillian Serbousek
1226 Second Ave. S. W.
Cedar Rapids IA 52404

Dear Lillian,

The newly formed Records Committee of the IOU is in the process of evaluating all old records of accidental species that have been reported in Iowa and developing a new list of Iowa birds. The committee has decided to base the inclusion of species on specimens, photographs, or written accounts of sight records that demonstrate diagnostic features.

In this regard, we would hope to obtain more information on your sighting of a Red Phalarope at Amana Lake on 17 May 1940 (Iowa Bird Life 10:27, 1940). This is the only record of this species. Do you have any notes on the sighting? If not, can you recall what it looked like? Was it in winter or breeding plumage? Male or female?

Our research into the past has uncovered many fond memories of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club and encounters at Swan Lake.

My dad is still doing well at 87 and manages to take care of himself and get around a bit in his car.

Thank you for your help.

Best regards,

Thomas H. Kent, M. D.
Secretary, Records Committee, IOU

81-A0

LILLIAN E. SERBOUSEK
1226 - 2ND STREET S. W.
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52404

July 1, 1981

Dear Tom:

In regard to the sighting of the Red Phalarope at Amana Lake, I cannot give any additional information than that in the IBL. The birds were the females in their breeding plumage which helped to make identification certain.

I realize that today's standards of including birds on Iowa lists are more thorough and exacting than in 1940 but I feel that I made correct identification.

However, since I can't add anything further than what is in the IBL and that this is the only record in Iowa, and that, a sight record, I can understand that the Records Committee question the advisability of including the Red Phalarope in the new list of Iowa birds. I'm sorry I can't give you more detailed information.

Greetings to your father - hope I'm doing as well at 87.

I, too, have many pleasant memories of birding at Swan and Amana Lakes with Kents and Laudes.

It's good to see you continuing your interest in birds and your good work as Field Reports Editor for IBL.

Most Sincerely,

Lillian