

Red Knot
22 May 1973
Des Moines, Polk Co., IA
Bill Criswell
Brown 1973

Record Number: 93-EG
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Brown, W.H. 1973. Shorebirds at Des Moines. IBL 43:77.

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, No description. Secondhand. Likely that Criswell saw one,
but unsubstantiated. /thk

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Shorebirds at Des Moines -- Waders were found in unprecedented numbers in late spring and early summer in the Red Rock flood pool which backed up to within a very few miles of the city. By dint of wading out in deep mud during almost daily visits to the area, Bill Criswell of Des Moines turned up every species in the plover and sandpiper groups in the Iowa checklist with the exception of Woodcock and Western Sandpiper. In addition, Knots were found on 22 May, and Cattle Egrets on 17 May. Some of the rarer species found in the area were: Whimbrel on 21 and 23 May, Black Duck on 30 June and 11 July, Cinnamon Teal on 3 and 4 July, Buff-breasted Sandpiper from 3 to 27 August, and Marbled Godwit on 26 April. As word got around, practically all of these species were seen by numerous observers. While the numbers of both species and individuals were extraordinary, another aspect of these observations is noteworthy. Many shorebirds on their way north are last seen here from late May to early June, and begin to reappear in early or mid-July. This year we had Solitary Sandpiper on 30 June, Willet on 3 July, Lesser Yellow-legs from 26 June to 1 July, Least Sandpiper on 3 July, and American Avocet on 6 July. American Golden Plovers were seen as late as 28 June and as early as 3 August, and Black-bellied Plovers on the unusual dates 26 and 27 June.

This fortunate (for birders) situation was due to the unusually heavy spring and summer rainfall which, by the end of July, exceeded the Des Moines normal year-to-date total by 10.5 inches. Much of the Red Rock flood pool would have been impounded north of Des Moines had the Saylorville Dam been operative, and the completion of this dam together with the improbability of rainfall comparable to this year's make a similar shorebird invasion unlikely. -- WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.