

5/23/81

BROOKE

May 20, 1981
126-51st Street
Des Moines, Iowa
50312

Dear Tom Kent: I want to thank you again for the good get together at your house and for the fine meeting of the I.O.U. I was so glad to be in some of your fine birding areas. Our shorebird areas are pretty limited around Des Moines in this dry season. Last evening ✓ a number of us saw one Avocet in some backwaters of Saylorville Lake which I had never known about before. I think Dick Mooney will probably send that dope in. The Mooneys and I also had two Avocets ✓ at the north end of Big Creek Lake on May 6.

✓ It has occurred to me that I probably should have reported a Worm-eating Warbler that I had on May 5, 1980. I know it is long past reporting time but I thought you might possibly want the record for permanent records. So I shall try to document it properly (I have never done a full documentation before!) If you want it you can use it and if not just throw it out and I shall have had the practise.

✓ The Ceruleans are back at Jester Park. We had three singing males on our May 9th Spring Census. Our party had 97 species. I hope you had a fine day and a big count!

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Brooke
Margaret Brooke

P.S. If you have the chance, please tell Tom Shires how much we enjoyed his leadership at the I.O.U.

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1. Worm-eating Warbler
2. One singing male
3. Seen on path along north bank of Raccoon River in Waterworks Park, Des Moines. Approximately 100 yards east of the river bridge which is now closed to vehicular traffic.
4. May 5, 1980
5. Around 10 a.m. We encountered him three times in about 15 minutes.
6. He appeared to be a fairly large warbler though there were no birds to compare him with. We noticed his prominently striped head. I would say the stripes were nearly black and a sort of beige. The breast was tan and perfectly clear. The back was an olive brown with no wing bars. Warbler bill but color not noted. I did not make notes as I had no doubt of the identification.
7. We heard his unmusical trill before we spotted him and he sang repeatedly. It sounded a bit like a Chipping Sparrow.
8. He worked around plucking bugs in a rather sluggish manner. The trees were small and at times he was not much above our eye level. We had close views front and back.
9. The growth here near the river was rather scrubby with quite a lot of undergrowth among the small deciduous trees. Farther from the river the trees were tall.
10. Apart the only thing one could mistake this Warbler for would be a stripe-headed sparrow. But we had no doubt of his being a warbler even though he was much less active than the ordinary warbler. He was very easy to keep in view because of his deliberate movements and his low elevation.
11. We were probably not more than 10 feet from him at times. We did not try to measure the distance but it was sometimes too close for binoculars. He did not appear to notice us.
12. I carried 8X40 Leitz Trinovid binoculars.
13. It was sunny and the sun was at our backs most of the time so the light was excellent.
14. I had previously observed only one other Worm-eating Warbler. This was in a ravine just north of the swimming pool in Ashworth Park in Des Moines on the mornings of May 15 and 16, 1958. It sang for us on the 16th and was confirmed by Mary Ellen Warters. Woody reported this in his Annotated Checklist.
15. Charlotte Scott of Seymour was with me.
16. It was a life bird for her and she agreed with the identification.
17. Dick Mooney and Gene Armstrong went to search for it that afternoon but it was not found again.

(over)

18. Our consultation of Peterson and Robbins on the spot only served to confirm our identification.

19. Unfortunately, this report is made one year and 15 days after the fact

Margaret Brooke

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