

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 02/04/94

Long-billed Curlew
< 1889

Record Number: 93-DR
Classification: NA

IA

listed, no definite reference; Keyes and Williams 1889, Anderson 1907

REFERENCES

Keyes and Williams 1889

Anderson 1907

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, No specific record cited. I consider Keyes and Williams the first rather complete and reliable lists for Iowa. /thk

[B 549, R 558, C 643, U 264.]

Numenius longirostris Wils. Long-billed Curlew. Migratory; rather common. A few remain during the summer and nest on the open prairies.

Anderson 1907
pp 225-226

116. (264). *Numenius longirostris* Wils. Long-billed Curlew.
□The Long-billed Curlew is the largest of our species of *Limicola* and is known by its sickle-shaped bill, four to eight inches long. It was formerly a common summer resident in Iowa, but now appears to be only a migrant, having disappeared from its former summer haunts with the breaking up of the original prairie sod.

Thomas Say mentions the arrival of the Long-billed Curlew at Engineers' Cantonment April 1, 1820 (Long's Exp., i, 266-270).

J. A. Allen stated that it was common in spring in western Iowa, and doubtless bred about the marshes (Mem. Bost. Soc., i, 1868, 501). T. M. Trippe says "a few seen in spring in Decatur county, where I was informed that formerly it bred quite commonly" (Proc. Bost. Soc., xv, 1872, 241). In 1884 the species passed through central Iowa April 15, and in 1885, from April 10 to 15, it was noted at Emmetsburg, Iowa, Heron Lake, Minn., etc., (Cooke, Bird Migr. in Miss. Val., 1884-85, 97-8). Keyes and Williams give it as "migratory, rather common. A few remain during the summer and nest on the open prairies" (Birds of Iowa, 1889, 123).

In early May, in the '80's, J. W. Preston found the species nesting in northern Iowa. He says "Lying away to the west were the dim flats of Kossuth county. Not a sound, no shrubs for sighing winds, the wheels rolled muffled in the prairie grass. At one point, where the ground lay more rolling and dryer, were many Long-billed Curlews guarding their nests, and hovering near the wagon, uttering that peculiar mellow whistle so characteristic of the wild free prairie. Soon I was delighted to see an old Curlew flutter from the horses' feet, leaving the four speckled eggs exposed. Further on a mother Curlew led her mottled downy chicks from danger." ("Some Prairie Birds," O. & O., xviii, 1893, 82).

Dr. Trostler reports the Long-billed Curlew as a common migrant in Pottawattamie and Mills counties. A. I. Johnson reports it as a migrant in Sioux county, northwestern Iowa, saying: "I do not know of its nesting since I came to the state in 1890. Have only known of them during migration, and not very many at that." All others who reported list the species as a rare migrant.