

Hoary Redpoll
12 Feb 1978
Davenport, Scott Co., IA
*P. C. Petersen
IBL 48:50-51

Record Number: 81-KQ
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Peter C. Petersen

REFERENCE

Anon. [P.C. Petersen]. 1978. Editor's note. IBL 48:54.
Field Reports: IBL 48:50-51
VOTE (1981): 5-III, 1-?, 1-pass
?, white rump?
III, satisfactory details.

Hoary Redpoll

Halmi, N. S. 1978. Field reports. Iowa Bird Life 48:47-52

Finches, Sparrows. Northern Cardinals were scarce in Sioux Center (JV). Evening Grosbeaks staged a massive invasion, reaching s.c. Texas. Only in some places in Iowa did they linger: 5-7 daily at Ruth Phipps' feeder, one for 3 weeks until January 4 (DM), and 4-12 at Davenport area feeders (PP). Good numbers, possibly birds in transit, were recorded in YRF (December 2, 24 on December 24, DK, JS). Late observations (2 on February 10 at Seymour, ChS, 1 at Central City, February 11, LS) may signal the start of a retreat to the north. Purple Finches were widely seen, but not in large numbers, and with apparent hiatuses. The highest count seems to have been about 30 in HHP in mid-January (MN). One of the glories of the season was an invasion of Pine Grosbeaks. At least 14 were seen January 7 - February 10 at St. Lucas and West Union (JS), 10 on December 22 in YRF (DK), 2 east of Larabee (MB), one at a Des Moines feeder in mid-January (fide RM), 3 in Glendale Cemetery, January 24 (RM, WB et al.; documented), and 5 in HHP and the adjacent cemeteries January 12 - February 11 (RD, TK, Tst, TSh; documented), for a new area record. The birds seen on the CBC in Cedar Rapids were probably those that kept showing up on January 27 in a yard not far from Cedar Memorial Cemetery (EO) with such regularity that they could be viewed by virtually all active birders in Cedar Rapids and 2 from Iowa City (TSh, NiH) (up to 7 birds). With a slight departure from the checklist order, let me write first about Common Redpolls. Having appeared in the northeast in November, they swept across the state, reaching Shenandoah in mid-January (IG, RP). There were a few flocks of 75-100 birds in weedy fields (west of Des Moines, WB; CoR, MN, RD), but for the most part the birds came to feeders in towns, in moderate numbers. In Davenport, 59 were banded January 18 - February 1 (PP). A relatively large urban group was 50 in HHP and nearby cemeteries on February 5 (RD). Strangely, Common Redpolls did not appear in northwest Iowa (Cherokee, Spencer) until well into February (DB, CoS). Perhaps because of the affinity of the redpolls for feeders, the stage was set for the addition of Hoary Redpoll to the state list. See the longer note on the sighting of a female in Marion on January 22 (FT), subsequent confirmation by others, netting and photography. As of February 15, this bird has been seen by numerous observers from the Cedar Rapids area (Weir Nelson, LS), Iowa City (TK, TSh, NiH) and Davenport (PP). Its presence lends plausibility to an earlier sighting under much less favorable conditions (S-SB, see longer note) and several subsequent ones (1 from 20 yards with a 20x scope in Pocahontas Co., February 5, and 2-5 with white rumps or light appearance in a flock of some 80 Common Redpolls, February 12, Buffalo Creek Conservation Area) (RC). More convincing is a second documented sight record at a feeder, of a male (February 12, PP). Even though the Hoary Redpoll is now a solid addition to the Iowa list, only extremely detailed observations will be considered corroborated, for I.B.L. or American Birds! Pine Siskins were also common in the southern part of the state, all the way to Hamburg (IG) and Seymour (ChS). Petersen banded 152 January 18 - February 1. But few were left in the N.E. (5 on December 18, JS). While some northern finches brought glamour to an otherwise tiresome Iowa winter, Red Crossbills were not reported at all. White-winged Crossbills were "common" in the N.E. in early December, but not thereafter (DK) (one on December 24 at YRF, JS); 4 were at Eagle Point in Clinton on December 3, and one at a nearby feeder February 6 (PP); a single female has been a regular at a Cedar Rapids feeder since December 28 (LS). A Rufous-sided Towhee at Hamburg on January 22 was, atypically, of the eastern race; later, a member of the western race appeared (IG). "Many" Harris' Sparrows were at Riverton on January 22 (RP); the 70+

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Hoary Redpoll

Halmi, N. S. 1978.
Hoary Redpoll
(*Carduelis hornemanni*)
in Iowa.
Iowa Bird Life
48:53-54

Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*) in Iowa. - Since Hoary Redpolls have been seen in several states as far as or farther south than Iowa, and since redpolls this winter were apparently widespread in the state, it was perhaps to be hoped that Hoary Redpoll will be added to the state list in 1978. On January 8, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Burns saw 2 light birds with apparently white rumps in a flock of Com. Redpolls at Maffit Reservoir, Des Moines. They took them to be Hoarys, but lost faith in the diagnosis when they subsequently realized that this species had never been reported from Iowa before. Since the birds had not been seen from closer than 70 ft., the skepticism expressed in Mr. Burns' documentation form appeared justified. On February 3, through the good offices of Mr. Weir Nelson, I was put in touch with Mr. Fred Thompson of 2830 McGowan Blvd., Marion, who gave an excellent description of an apparent female Hoary Redpoll he had been seeing every morning for over 2 weeks at his feeders. He was eager to have the identification confirmed by other observers. Fortunately, on January 28 Drs. Thomas Kent and Thomas Shires and I had been to Duluth, and had an excellent opportunity to study both redpolls from 5 feet at the feeder of Kim Eckert, one of Minnesota's leading birders. On February 4, before daybreak, the 3 of us therefore drove to Marion, and soon picked out a "frosty" looking female among the 20-25 Com. Redpolls flitting around in Mr. Thompson's yard. When he joined us, he pointed out that the light-colored female had a buffy tinge around her face, which facilitated her identification. The birds were quite restless, but finally the "suspect" alighted on a thistle feeder, along with several Com. Redpolls; and subsequently sat relatively still on a branch of a tree, some 10 feet off the ground and not more than 18 feet from the observers. In addition to the overall lighter coloration and the buffy facial tinge, it had several features clearly seen by all 4 of us that set it apart from Common Redpolls: a) its black chin spot was smaller than that of most other birds. b) It had only 2-3 thin, interrupted longitudinal black streaks on each side of the breast. c) The streaks of the back were very narrow. d) When the bird flipped its wings, it was clear, as Mr. Thompson had observed on many occasions, that these

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Hoary Redpoll, Marion, Iowa Photos by Peter C. Petersen

streaks came to an abrupt halt at the upper end of the pure white rump. e) The crissum, which could be studied at leisure because the bird perched above eye level, was entirely white. In contrast, all Common Redpolls studied had a distinctly streaked rump and a crissum flecked with black. The observations were made between 8:00 and 8:20 a.m. The sky was overcast, light snow was falling, and the bird was west or northwest from the observers, so illumination was excellent. Although Tom Kent had a camera along, he did not feel that critical field marks could be well shown in a photograph because of the viewing angle and skittishness of the birds, which made it inadvisable to attempt a closer approach. Separate verbal documentations were prepared by the individual observers, and these have been submitted to the IOU Checklist Committee and the Regional Editor of Am. Birds in support of this first state record for Hoary Redpoll that was obtained under the "ideal conditions" Robbins considers necessary for reliable separation of Hoary from Common Redpoll in the field. N. S. HALMI, R No. 6, IOWA CITY.

Petersen, P. C. 1978.
Editor's note. Iowa
Bird Life 48:54

Editor's note -- On February 11 Mary Lou and I netted and photographed this bird. The diagnostic photos are reproduced here. The bird was seen by Lillian Serbousek, Weir Nelson, Dr. Peter Wickham and Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. A male Hoary appeared at our feeder in Davenport on February 12. The following description was taken from the documentation sheet filed by Fred Thompson: Size 4 1/2 - 5 1/2 Finch shape - feet dark - crown, pale red cap - chin black - beak yellowish - Auriculars light buffy - nape, throat light buffy - breast, belly and under tail coverts ash white, no streaks - side, flank broken grey streak - mantle, back dark grey and silvery white streaks no buff - rump ash white no streaks or spots - wing bars silvery white no buff - secondaries, primaries, wing coverts and tail feather edges silvery white no buff. Beak short and stubby compared with other redpolls seen. Bird much lighter than other redpolls seen. Complete lack of buff below nape. As described by Arthur Bent, "frosty appearance". The I.O.U. Checklist Committee has accepted this species to the Iowa List.

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Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species: Hummer 2. Number: 1-2

3. Location: 235 W. Chellam Blvd, Des Moines, Iowa

4. Date: 2/12/78 5. Time Bird seen: 7:30 to 7:40 A.M.

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Size of Common. Smaller which was not seen, same general shape.
Legs dark, bright red cap, yellow bill, shorter than that of Common.
black on tip. Breast pink, striking on sides lighter than that
of Common. Wings dark blue black Common, unusually marked.
Dark area above and below bill, below it was less extensive than on
the Common, head a bit paler than Common.

7. Description of voice, if heard: obs. from house, not heard

8. Description of behavior: foraged under the table feeding with Common
Old feather, dropped more than Common.

9. Habitat - general: oak forest near established residential area.
specific: wooded hill, much underbrush, below the table feeding.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

see under 6.

11. Distance (how measured)? 12' - estimated

12. Optical equipment: 7x35 binoculars

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): light O.C. - sun
behind bird, low in sky

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: seen 2/4/78 Des Moines,
+ 2/11/78 at Wagon - landed + feeding captured a ♀.

15. Other observers: none.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none yet.

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? one hour.

Signature: [Handwritten Signature] Address: 235 W. Chellam Blvd

Date: 2/12/78 City, State: Des Moines, Iowa 50303