

Rock Wren Record Number: 93-16
25 Apr 1993 Classification: A-P
957 Fillmore, Indianola, Warren Co., IA
*Ann Johnson
IBL 63:77, 64:68, Johnson 1994

DOCUMENTATION

Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk 50211 [12/10/93]

PHOTOGRASPHS

Ann Johnson, P-0392

Reid I. Allen, P-0383

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 63:77

Records Committee: IBL 64:68 (record number wrong)

Johnson, A. 1994. Rock Wren in Warren County. Iowa Bird Life 64:81-82.

American Birds 47:419, 1993, P-0383

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Another nice spring record.



Brown Pelican at Rathbun Reservoir, Iowa, on May 31, 1993. Photograph/Reid I. Allen.

ing Plovers consisted of a pair at a Woodbury, IA, power plant May 13 (BH) and three at the Iowa Power and Lights ponds May 9 (B & LP). The Regional trend of increased Black-necked Stilt reports continued this spring, with four at Horseshoe L., MO, Apr. 27 (DE), two in Carrol, IL, May 8 (LJ), and two at Amana L., IA, May 20 (†TS, †TK, †RPi, ph. et al.). Am. Avocets were reported in good numbers; notable sightings included four in Jefferson, KY, Apr. 14 (MM et al.), 17 at L. Spfld., Apr. 20 (DBo), a winter-plumaged bird at Headlands Beach S.P., OH, Apr. 25 (LR, JW), and one at the Delaware W.M.A., OH, May 4 (KA). Whimbrels are rarely seen away from the Great Lakes; consequently, the four in Fulton, KY, May 22 (PB, JBe, BBC), and 13 at Horseshoe L., MO, May 23 (†LK) were extraordinary. The only Marbled Godwit reported e. of the Mississippi R. appeared in Allen, IN, Apr. 17 (EPo), to establish a new early arrival date for that state. The Least Sandpiper flight was sparse; peak counts were only 60 at L. Cal., May 15 (WM) and 56 at Colo Ponds, IA, May 19 (HZ). White-rumped Sandpipers were reported in every state; the highest count was 2000+ in n.w. MO, May 25 (DE). Pectoral Sandpiper numbers were disturbingly low; few reports exceeded 100 birds, and several active observers found none. Stilt Sandpipers were also scarce; the highest count was 20-25 near Bondurant, KY, May 11 (CP). A Ruff appeared April 7 in Delaware W.M.A., OH, (†KA) and a bird believed to be a female was at the Woodburn sewage ponds, IN, May 2 (†Haw). Counts of both dowitchers were extremely low across the Region; the only concentration consisted of 200 Short-billeds at Ottawa N.W.R., OH, May 9 (fide LR). Indiana's first confirmed Com. Snipe nesting since 1934 was made May 17 when an adult and two chicks were observed in Orange (JCt ph.). For the first time this century, Wilson's Phalaropes nested in Missouri; a nest was observed May 22-27 in Holt, MO (†DE, ph.).

GULLS, TERNS

Inland Laughing Gull sightings included singletons in Gibson, IN, Apr. 18 (GB), at Eagle Cr. Park, IN, Apr. 25 (†CK), at Kentucky Dam May 8 (MM et al.), and at Falls of the Ohio, KY, May 23 (BM et al.). A Franklin's Gull seen flying over the Mississippi R. in

Fulton, KY, May 22 (PB, JBe, BBC) was noteworthy for that location. A breeding-plumaged Mew Gull at L. Decatur, IL, Mar. 5 (†MD) was unexpected. The Ring-billed and Herring gull colony at L. Cal. was estimated to contain 20,000-25,000 birds (JL). Indiana's first Slaty-backed Gull, a winter adult, was seen at Michigan City harbor Mar. 13 (†KB, †SBa, †JCa, †LH et al.). A first-year Iceland Gull lingered at Waukegan and the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, IL, until May 3 (JN). Noteworthy among numerous Lesser Black-backed Gull reports were an adult that wandered W to L. Macbride, IA, where it was seen Apr. 16 (†JF) and two adults at R.E.D.A., Mar. 12 (JZ). Glaucous Gulls peaked at L. Cal., Mar. 21, when seven were counted (DM), and a second-summer bird remained at Waukegan until May 29 (JN). An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake appeared irregularly along the shoreline of s. L. Michigan. It was first seen at Johnson Beach, IN, Apr. 24 (JMc), then reappeared May 8 and June 3 at Waukegan, IL (RHu, ASi, JN) and May 28 at Chicago (RHu).

Regionwide, the Com. Tern migration was perhaps typical of recent years. Northwest Indiana, however, experienced the best flight in a decade, with a peak count of 400 at Michigan City harbor May 14 (KB). These may have been birds that normally migrate along L. Michigan's w. shore, as concentrations were very low in Chicago (fide EW). An Arctic Tern discovered near Joliet, May 27 (†JM, †JL, †WS, CA, JO, ph.), provided Illinois' 2nd record and the Region's first spring



Snowy Plover at Headlands Beach State Park, Ohio, on May 13, 1993. First state record. Photograph/Larry Rosche.

record. Least Terns returned to the Gibson, IN, nesting area May 9 (GB). Outstanding among a number of fine late May Black Tern counts in Iowa was an impressive 1100 at L. Amana May 26 (TK), representing one of the highest Regional counts in a decade.

CUCKOOS TO SWALLOWS

Cuckoos were scarce in every state except Ohio, where both species were more prevalent than in recent springs (LR). In Cook, IL, 62 party hours of owl surveys Mar. 5-7, yielded 42 E. Screech-Owls and 25 Great Horned Owls (fide SLe). Snowy Owls lingered later than normal. Three were reported at Miegs Field (Chicago lakefront) Mar. 14 and Apr. 8

(ASc, RHu). Inland records included singles at LuVerne, IA, Mar. 23 (fide MK) and in Douglas, IL, Mar. 30 (fide RCh). The Short-eared Owl migration was not impressive, with singletons reported at only 3 locations in Illinois and Indiana. Nesting was suspected near W. Frankfort, IL, where two Short-eareds remained through early summer (LSt). Notable among a handful of N. Saw-whet Owl records were a very responsive bird at Salamonie Res., IN, Mar. 2 (Haw et al.), one found in dense red cedar in Knox, MO, Mar. 25 (CH, PMc et al.), and one in Huron, OH, Mar. 28 (JVa). Rarely detected except on territory, migrant Chuck-wills-widows were found in a Fort Wayne, IN, city park Apr. 28



Rock Wren in Warren County, Iowa, on April 25, 1993. Photograph/Reid I. Allen.

(DWa) and in a lakefront lilac thicket at Michigan City harbor May 11 (LH). A calling Chuck in Ida, IA, May 17 (PE) was w. of this species' normal range. Thirty to 40 Chimney Swifts were found dead around L. Spfld., where low-flying birds, forced down by cool spring weather, collided with cars (fide DBo). A ♂ Rufous Hummingbird that visited a feeder in rural Boone, IA, May 8 & 9 (†SLa, †JF, †JSc) provided the Region's first spring record. An early April ad. ♂ sapsucker at the Burr Oaks Nature Center, Blue Springs, MO, created a lively debate among local birders. Observers agreed that the bird possessed a red nape and displayed other characteristics inconsistent with a Yellow-bellied but were unable to reach a consensus on the bird's identification. In Chicago, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker lingered until May 23 (RHu). Pileated Woodpeckers continued to expand, with several sightings in previously unoccupied areas within the Chicago metropolitan area.

Outstanding among a number of excellent Chicago area Flycatcher counts recorded May 23 were 40 E. Wood-Pewees and 25 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (RHu). W. Kingbirds appeared at 3 Illinois locations: in Bondville May 5 (RCh), in Tinley Park May 28-29 (PW, †JL, JM, ph., m.ob.), and in DuPage May 31 (DT). The Purple Martin situation is bleak. Several correspondents lamented their scarcity, and the Region's highest count was only 20 at Heidecke L., IL, May 24 (JM). Tree Swallows fared a bit better, with counts of 2500+ flying S along the L. Michigan lakefront at Highland Park, IL, Mar. 14 (WM) and 1500

Reid I. Allen

BKPLJP. Two road-killed birds were found e of Larabee in Cherokee Co. on 29 Apr. one is now at Iowa State Univ. (D. Koenig fide JJD).

Snow Bunting: 20 were in Kossoth Co. on 2 Mar (MCK).

Bobolink: The first on 8 May were singles at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPF) and Hickory Hill P. (DRP).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: The first was on 8 Apr in Monona Co. (PE).

Fusly Blackbird: The first in Warren Co (AMJ). There were 200 in Lyon Co. on 23 Mar (JV). The last was 1 at Otter Creek M. on 17 Apr (DRP).

Brewer's Blackbird: 2 were in Louisa Co. on 7 Apr (PCP), and 1 was in Tama Co. on 9 Apr (AMJ).

Great-tailed Grackle: This species has greatly increased its population. There were 19 reports, all from wetland areas in the western third of the state. Birds also arrived earlier than ever, with 10 at L. Marwa on 5 Mar, and 36 there on 11 Mar (BKPLJP)(record earliest). Also early were 2 at Blue L. on 24 Mar (PE)(3rd earliest). Other large groups were 10 at Goose L. in Greene Co. on 17 May (JD) and 15 at Blue L. on 29 May (SJD). Five nests were at Blue L. (PE), and nest building was noted on 29 May at Dan Green St. (SJD).

Orchard Oriole: The first was 1 on 5 May in Lee Co. (JLF). Eight other reports described 1 or 2 birds throughout the state.

Northern Oriole: The first were 1 or 2 on 24 Apr at the Croton Unit of Shmeck S.F. (THK, RIC, CE).

Purple Finch: The last was 1 at Lamb's Grove in Jasper Co. on 1 May (GJB).

White-winged Crossbill: An imm. male was at a feeder in East Davenport on 27 Apr (Mr. Cheney-photo seen by PCP)

Common Redpoll: Singles were at feeders in Liscomb on 8 Mar (MPF) and Sioux Center on 18 Mar (JV).

Pine Siskin: There were 6 May sightings: 2 were acting territorial on 22 May on the I.S.U. campus at Ames (PCP) and 2 were still at Algona on 24 May (MCK).

Evening Grosbeak: 5 were at the Schoff feeder in Linn Co. s of Mt. Vernon on 12 Mar (JLF, JES). A male was at the John King feeder in Marshalltown on 6 May (Betsy Savage fide MPF).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: 1 that spent the winter at the Geyer feeder near Oxford in Johnson Co. stayed until 15 May (Shirley Geyer fide JLF).

COMMENT

The database totaled 1,557 reports from 45 observers, and 5 others provided documentations only. Most reports were received by the 5th, but a few were up to a week late. Most observers submitted details or documentation for rare birds, and those seen on early and late dates. There were a few that did not, and those records were not included in the report. Only those individuals who contributed to the report were cited, not others who were present. Thanks to Carl Bendorf for providing the weather summary and Tom Kent for his editorial assistance.

CONTRIBUTORS

Pam H. Allen (PHA), West Des Moines; Reid I. Allen (RIA), West Des Moines; Eugene Armstrong (EUA), Booneville; Eloise Armstrong (EIA), Booneville; *Robert R. Benedict (RRB), Spirit Lake; Dick Bierman (DBI), Cherokee; Brad Bolduan (BBO), Fairmont, MN; Gordon J. Brand (GJB), Newton; Martion M. Brewer (MMB), Cherokee; Dennis Carter (DEC), Decorah; Robert I. Cecil (RIC), Des Moines; Jane Clark (JC), Clive; Raymond L. Cummins (RLC), Centerville; David L. Dankert (DLD), Cedar Rapids; James J. Dinsmore (JJD), Ames; Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Ames; Dan C. Dorrance (DCCD), Davenport; Chris Edwards (CE), North Liberty; Peter Erzen (PE), Ida Grove; Carolyn J. Fischer (CJF), Mason City; *Charles R. Fuller (CRF), Burlington; James L. Fuller (JLF), Iowa City; Rita Gortanson (RGO), Mason City; Dennis Henriksson (DH), Estherville; Richard J. Hollis (RJH), Iowa City; Bill F. Huser (BFH), Sioux City; Ann M. Johnson (AMJ), Norwalk; Matthew C. Kenne (MCK), Algon; Thomas H. Kent (THK), Iowa City; Fred Leshar (FL), LaCrosse, WI; *John Mayfield (JM), Ames; *Kelly McKay (KMc), Moline, IL; Babs K. Padelford (BKP), Bellevue, NE; Loren J. Padelford (LJP), Bellevue, NE;

ROCK WREN IN WARREN COUNTY

6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

ANN JOHNSON

On the morning of 25 April 1993 I received a telephone call from David Youngblut of rural Indiana with the news that a Rock Wren was in his flower beds. I immediately went to the Youngblut home where I observed a small bird with a perky tail and chunky build. The bird's posture made it instantly identifiable as a wren, but it appeared larger than the more expected House Wren. It was gray-brown above with fine, dark spotting. The throat and breast were light gray with fine, gray streaks. The belly, flanks, and undertail were washed with bright buff. The undertail coverts were heavily barred. The brown tail was barred with black and had a black sub-terminal band with white to buff corners. The dark bill was long and slightly decurved. There was a light supercilary, but it was not as noticeable as in other wrens with this characteristic. The legs were dark. The bird did not spook easily and was searching for food in the crevices of the railroad ties outlining the flower beds. As it fed it exhibited much bouncing and bobbing behavior. It did not call. A number of Iowa birds were able to see and photograph the bird throughout the day, but it was not seen after the 25th.

Through 1982, there was only one acceptable record of Rock Wren for Iowa (Dinsmore et al. 1984). That observation was in Woodbury County on 1 April 1910.

Early undocumented reports from the late 1890s to early 1900s suggest they may have nested in the loess hills near Sioux City.

Later unsubstantiated reports came from the same general area. On 21 May 1984, Tom Kent and Ross Silcock obtained the first photographic evidence of Rock Wren in Iowa when they discovered one in a rock cut in Woodbury County (Kent and Silcock 1984).

The dry, rocky areas of the loess hills certainly seemed to be the most likely place for a Rock Wren appearance, both in habit and proximity to its usual range.



Rock Wren, Warren County
25 Apr 1993
Photograph by Ann Johnson

Since that 1984 sighting, there have been five observations of Rock Wren in Iowa. None of these have come from northwestern Iowa, although the habitat where they were found is somewhat similar to the rocky areas of the West where they are commonly found. On 30 October 1986 one was observed hopping around a rocky embankment in Cedar Rapids (Fye and Fye 1987). That same year another was seen in the rip-rap along the face of Saylorville Dam from 22 November through 8

L. Walter (JLW), Mason City; Hank Zalatel (HZ), Nevada.

Carroll; Dennis Thompson (DT), Johnston; John Van Dyk (JV), Sioux Center; Jan

Dale Stone (DS), Lake City; Ed Thelen (ET), Spirit Lake; *Rob Thelen (RT),

(JES), Iowa City; Lee A. Schoenewe (LAS), Spencer; Jim Sinclair (JSI), Indiana;

Proescholdt (BP), Liscomb Mark Proescholdt (MPF), Liscomb; James E. Scheib

Randall Pinkston (DRP), Iowa City; Diane C. Porter (DCP), Fairfield; Beth

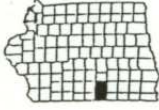
Peter C. Petersen (PCP), Davenport; Marceta A. Peterson (MAP), Walnut; D.

The size, eye color, bill shape and coloration, and mantle color clearly identified this bird as a winter-plumaged adult California Gull. The bird remained in the area until 23 November 1993, was seen by many observers, and was photographed by B. J. Rose (see cover). Carter Lake is an enclave of Iowa enclosed by Nebraska. The center of the lake is the eastern side of the lake in Nebraska, and the first to be confirmed by photographic evidence. Previous records are an adult seen at Credit Island on 23 November 1989 (Peterson, *Iowa Bird Life* 61:121-122, 1991), an adult at Saylorville Reservoir on 8, 14-23 September, 11 October 1990 (Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 62:24-25, 1992), and a first-year bird at Coralville Reservoir on 27-28 October 1990 (Kent, *Iowa Bird Life* 61:123-124, 1991). This species is becoming increasingly common in western Nebraska and is to be expected more frequently in Iowa in the future.

1107 Ironwood Court, #186, Bellevue, NE 68005

GLOSSY IBIS IN KOSSUTH COUNTY

MATTHEW KENNE



Both the Glossy Ibis of the Gulf and southeastern Atlantic Coasts and the White-faced Ibis of the West wander extensively; there are reports of Glossy Ibis from many locations in the West, and there is a White-faced Ibis breeding record from Iowa (Dinsmore and Dinsmore 1986). This tendency, coupled with the fact that the two species are very difficult to identify outside the breeding season, make any ibis seen in Iowa a challenge to identify. Several purported Glossy Ibis sightings have been considered by the I.O.U. Records Committee, but none have been accepted.

On 6 May 1992, I received a report that two ibis had been photographed the previous day at Union Slough N.W.R. in Kossuth County. I combed the area on 7 May but could not find the birds, nor were they seen there again. I then checked with the refuge headquarters, where I learned that Assistant Refuge Manager Bobbi Webber had photographed two ibis at the same location on 4 May. She had assumed the birds to be White-faced Ibis, rare birds on the refuge, but didn't document the sighting. I left a message asking if I could examine her slides when they were developed.

I then contacted David Bunkofsky, an amateur nature photographer from Burt, Iowa about the photographs that he had taken on 5 May. He had recognized the birds as ibis, but had not identified them as to species. He agreed to show me the prints as soon as possible.

When I saw Bunkofsky's photographs a week later, I was surprised to see two different looking adult ibis. In the best photo, one bird was obviously a White-faced Ibis; it had a red eye and face, a wide band of white feathers around the face (encircling the back of the eye), and bright red legs. The other bird was very interesting. What appeared to be a narrow band of light blue surrounded a facial area without red coloring. This bird looked like a Glossy Ibis.

I thought that the second bird was a Glossy Ibis but I first had some problems that needed to be addressed, not the least of which was my total lack of experience with Glossy Ibis. The photographs also presented a few problems. The bird's face was slightly in a shadow, and the bird itself was moving and slightly blurred in the

December (Padelford and Padelford 1987). Two years later a Rock Wren was again observed by many from 8 to 28 November 1988 in the rip-rap along the Cherry Glen boat ramp at Saylorville Lake (Dinsmore 1989). On 17 September 1991 a surprised David Carlisle found two Rock Wrens in Red Oak. Although the birds were in his garage, he noted that suitable rocky habitat was nearby (Carlisle 1992). The Warren County bird was somewhat of an enigma since the Youngblut residence is on an acreage surrounded by some timber and heavily cultivated land. Perhaps the extensive railroads ties in their yard stimulated the rocky areas typically used by Rock Wrens.

LITERATURE CITED

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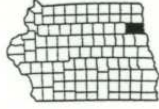
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532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211

CALIFORNIA GULL AT CARTER LAKE, POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

TANYA E. BRAY

On the morning of 21 November 1993, Jerry Toll called to inform me that he had seen a California Gull at Carter Lake near the Omaha airport. When I arrived, Jerry had the gull in view in his scope. It was swimming on the lake about 200 feet from us in company with approximately a dozen Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls. At this distance, we could see that the California Gull was slightly larger than a Ring-billed Gull, definitely smaller than a Herring Gull, and with a mantle a shade darker than both. The bird swam and preened until a Bald Eagle flew over, and all the gulls lifted off the water. The California Gull flew toward us, and circled along the shoreline no more than 25 feet away. The wings and mantle were medium gray colored. The outer two primaries were black with fairly large square white spots near the tip. Both the inner and outer primaries had small white spots on the tips of the feathers. The head was white with some thin dark brown streaking on the crown, hindneck, and nape. This streaking was heavier and much more noticeable on the hindneck. Most importantly, the eye was dark, and the bill was very different from a Ring-billed Gull. It was long, more slender than a Herring Gull's bill, and was dull gray-yellow with a bright yellow tip. The lower mandible had a red spot near the gonyx with a black rectangular-shaped spot on front of the red. A narrow strip of black extended from the black spot onto the upper mandible. Proximal to the black spot was a smudgy area of red-black. Toll described the legs as grayish in color. The bird flew up the shoreline, caught a fish, and ate it. It then flew behind an island in the lake and out of sight.



93-19



Rock Wren P-0383
Indianola, Warren Co., IA
25 Apr 1993 Reid I. Allen

93-16

warren, IA
25 Apr 1993 Ann Johnson

Rock Wren P-0392
Warren, IA
25 Apr 1993 Ann Johnson

93-16

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Unusual Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Rock Wren

Location: Home of David Youngblut, 957 Fillmore, Indianola, Warren Co., IA

Habitat: Residential acreage with flower beds constructed of railroad ties

Date: 25 April 1993

Time: 8:30 to 9:00

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211

Other Observers: David Youngblut discovered the bird shortly before my arrival, others were able to see it later

Description of bird: This small bird with a perky tail and chunky build was instantly identifiable as a large wren. It was gray/brown above with fine dark spotting. The throat and breast were light gray with fine, gray streaks. The belly, flanks, and undertail were washed with bright buff. The undertail coverts were heavily barred. The brown tail was barred with black and had a black sub-terminal band with white to buff corners. The bill was long and slightly decurved. There was a light superciliary, but it was not as noticeable as with other wrens with this characteristic. The legs were dark. As it searched for food in the crevices of the ties, it exhibited a lot of bouncing and bobbing. The bird did not call.

Similar species and how eliminated: This bird was larger and grayer than the usual Iowa wrens. The western sub-species of Bewick's Wren is gray but is also much smaller with a strong superciliary. Canyon Wren would be browner with white, unstreaked throat and breast.

Viewing conditions (light, distance, optics): The sky was partly sunny and as I was looking down on the bird from the house, the sun was not a problem. Estimated distances were as close as 15 feet. Observation was through 7X26 binoculars.

Previous experience: I have seen a number of Rock Wrens in the west.

References consulted during observation: None

References consulted before completing documentation: National Geographic guide

Field notes made: On return home

Documentation completed: Following day