

Carolina Parakeet

< 1873

Decatur Co., IA

fide Trippe

Trippe 1873. Anderson 1907

Record Number: 81-MZ  
Classification: NA

REFERENCES

Trippe, T.M. 1873. Notes on the birds of southern Iowa. Proc.  
Boston Nat. Hist. Soc. 15:229-242.

Anderson 1907

DuMont

Bent 1940

VOTE (1981): 2-III, 2-IV, 2-V, 1-?

V, hearsay.

III, easy bird to id.

?, ?

III, ditto -- see 4.

Trippe, T. M., 1873, Notes on the birds of southern Iowa.  
Proc Boston Natural History Soc 15:229-242

17. *Conurus carolinensis*. A resident of Decatur County told me that he had several times seen a flock of Parrots in the southern part of the county, on a tall, dead cottonwood tree, known by the neighboring people as the "Parrot-tree," from its having been frequented at intervals by the same flock for several years, and that he had shot one of them on one occasion.

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## Order PSITTACIFORMES

## Family Psittacidae

*Conuropsis carolinensis ludovicianus* (Gmelin). Louisiana Paroquet

Extinct. Anderson (1907) has summarized the observations on this bird as contained in the reports of the early explorers up the Missouri River. Thomas Say stated that it was seen several times during the winter of 1819-20 at Engineer Cantonment, near the present site of Ft. Calhoun, Washington County, Nebraska. Prince Maximilian recorded an Iowa observation on May 14, 1834 a little below "Weeping-water River." Audubon and Bell had several observations during May, 1843. The last authentic record is given by T. Martin Trippe (1872): "A resident of Decatur County told me that he had several times seen a flock of Parrots in the southern part of the county on a tall, dead cottonwood tree, known to the neighboring inhabitants as the 'parrot tree,' from its having been frequented at intervals by the same flock for several years . . . and that he had shot one of them on one occasion." There are no Iowa specimens.

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DuMont 1933  
p 81

Bent, A. C.: Life Histories of North American Cuckoos, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds and Their Allies. Bull 176 US Nat Museum, Washington, 1940. pp 10-11

*Range*.—Southeastern United States; probably extinct.

The range of the Carolina parakeet extended north to casually northeastern Colorado (Little Thompson River); eastern Nebraska (Omaha and Brownville); casually Iowa (Spirit Lake and Decatur County); casually northern Wisconsin (Lake Koshkonong and Waubesa County); Ohio (Columbus and Summit County); and Pennsylvania (Juniata River and Shermans Valley). East to Pennsylvania (Shermans Valley); casually the District of Columbia (Washington); casually West Virginia (White Sulphur Springs); South Carolina (Pine Barrens and Edding Island); Georgia; and Florida (Oklawaha River, Wekiva River, and Micco); south to Florida (Micco, Lake Okechobee, Tampa, Tarpon Springs, Old Town, and Tallahassee); southern Louisiana (Bayou Sara and St. Mary); and central Texas (Brownwood). West to central Texas (Brownwood); eastern Oklahoma (Caddo and Fort Gibson); and casually eastern Colorado (Fort Lyon, Denver, and the Little Thompson River).

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Keyes and Williams 1889  
p 131

81-MZ

[B 63, R 392, C 460, U 382.]

*Conurus carolinensis* (Linn.). Carolina Paroquet. Formerly occurred in the southern part of the State, but has not been observed recently. Mr. Tripp gives it as having occurred in Decatur County, but it must now be excluded from Iowa's *avi-fauna*.

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Osborn 1892

\**Conurus carolinensis* (L.),<sup>Δ</sup>

<sup>Δ</sup>—No longer found in the State.

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Osborn, H. 1905. The recently extinct and vanishing animals of Iowa.  
Annals of Iowa 6 (3rd series):561-570. p 568

CAROLINA PAROQUET.

This bird (*Conurus carolinensis* L.) is listed as a former resident of Iowa, but here, as in most portions of the United States, it has now become extinct. At just what time this disappearance occurred it is now impossible to say. Its

Carolina Paroquet

172. (382). *Conurus carolinensis* (Linn.). Carolina Paroquet.

The beautiful Carolina Paroquet formerly ranged in flocks as far as the northern part of the state, but has not been observed in the state for at least thirty years and has practically been exterminated throughout the United States. Frank M. Chapman gives four reasons for its disappearance: "First, it was destructive to fruit orchards, and for this reason was killed by agriculturists; second, it has been trapped and bagged in enormous numbers by professional bird-catchers; third, it has been killed in myriads for its plumage; and fourth, it has been wantonly slaughtered by so-called sportsmen" (Birds East. N. A., p. 222).

Anderson 1907  
pp 269-271

Thomas Say states that the "Carolina parroquet" was seen several times during the winter of 1819-20 at Engineers' Cantonment (Long's Exp., 1, pp. 265-270). Prince Maximilian on May 14, 1834 (a little below "Wheeping-water River"), records: "Auch Papageien wurden gesehen, deren Gardner schon oben an l'eau qui court [Niobrara River] bemerkt hatte," etc. (Reise 11, 345). Audubon noted the species several times along the Missouri (Journals 1, 476); (May 8, 1843), "we saw Parrakeets and many small birds but nothing new or very rare" (southwest corner of Iowa), (Ibid, 477, Bellevue, Sarpy county, Neb., May 9, 1843); (Ibid, 481, near Council Bluffs, May 10, 1843), "Parrakeets and Wild Turkeys plentiful;" they were also heard by Bell between Ft. George and the Great Bend of the Missouri September 15, 1843 (Ibid, 11, p. 165). As late as 1863, F. V. Hayden noted the Paroquet as "very abundant in the Mississippi Valley along the thickly wooded bottoms as far up the Missouri as Fort Leavenworth, possibly as high as the mouth of the Platte, but never seen above that point" (Trans. Am. Philos. Soc., xii, 1863, p. 154).

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not included as Iowa record TK

The last Iowa record is that given by Dr. Coues in his "Birds of the Northwest," (1874 p. 296). "In Iowa, according to Mr. Trippe, the Parrot still occurs. 'A resident of Decatur county told me that he had several times seen a flock of Parrots in the southern part of the county on a tall, dead cottonwood tree, known to the neighboring inhabitants as the "parrot tree," from its having been frequented at intervals by the same flock for several years . . . and that he had shot one of them on one occasion' (Pr. Bost. Soc., xv, 1872, p. 233)."

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Paul Bartsch, in an article on "Birds Extinct in Iowa and Those Becoming So" (Iowa Orn., 11, 1895, pp. 2-3), states that the Paroquet formally ranged as far north as Spirit Lake, where it would frequently remain until the cold snow would drive it southward. Its food in winter consisted chiefly of the seeds of the cocklebur. Its nature was so peculiar that when one of the number was killed or wounded, the others would gather around it with shrill cries and in this way the entire flock could easily be annihilated.

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Dr. Rich states that many years ago the Paroquets were noticed just across the river from Sioux City, in Nebraska. Some were captured and kept as cage pets. A series of about a dozen specimens in the University museum were taken by D. H. Talbot's collectors at the mouth of the Arkansas River in 1882.

Carolina Parakeet

## IOWA

D. McKinley  
Auk 82:221-222 1965  
Carolina Parakeet in  
the Northwest

I looked at Nebraska  
part of article and  
can't see any specific  
references relevant  
to Iowa records. TK

Inasmuch as Iowa is bounded on the west by the Missouri River, almost all that I have written in connection with Nebraska applies to Iowa and I shall not repeat it. Wherever riverbank forest conditions allowed, there can be no doubt that both sides of the river were equally inhabited by parakeets. For Iowa itself, Anderson (1907: 269-271) gave a good account gathered from many sources.

Working entirely from secondary evidence, Paul Bartsch (1895: 2) wrote that in former times the parakeet, "always gathered in flocks, would range as far north as Spirit Lake [Dickinson County] where it would frequently remain until the cold snows and stormy blizzards from the north would drive it southward." He implied that there was an Iowa specimen at the State University of Iowa, but this appears not to have been true, those there being in Talbot's collection from Oklahoma. 6

Notes of the late T. C. Stephens indicate that he knew of sight records of the parakeet in five Iowa counties (J. H. Ennis, letter of 23 November 1962). Of these, Fremont and Woodbury are on the Missouri River and my Nebraska account applies to them. Decatur County is included because of Trippe's (1873: 233) secondhand report of the species appearing in flocks there as late, perhaps, as the early 1870's. I am not sure of the origin of the Sac County record, but it may stem from J. A. Spurrell's rather negative statement (1919: 117) that he had found "only rumors" of the parakeet among the pioneers, nothing tangible. It appears that Stephens did not credit Bartsch's record for Dickinson County, mentioned above; reminiscences of F. W. Calkins of the period of 1865-1880, (Stephens, 1943) indicate that the parakeet was never seen in Clay County, just south of Dickinson County. 5

The fifth county mentioned in Stephens's notes is Scott, and I have no definite data to validate the claim. It is possible that the somewhat recon-

dite account of T. H. Macbride (1928: 100-101), vaguely referable to the period of 1846-1860, may be the basis of the record. Macbride's fictional but basically true story seems to refer to southeastern Iowa; there is little doubt that he actually saw "lone trees," usually cottonwoods, on the prairies that were visited by flocks of parakeets. At any rate, it is the nearest that I can come to a Mississippi Valley record for Iowa.

Although J. A. Allen (1868) did not find any reports of the parakeet in central and western Iowa in 1867, this may mean merely that parakeets were already forgotten. I. N. Gabrielson reported to me (conversation 13 June 1959) that his grandfather had described the species convincingly as having been seen in Webster County in the late 1850's or early 1860's. 4

Little new information on the parakeet has been added in the many lists of Iowa birds that have appeared over three-quarters of a century. Keyes and Williams (1889: 131) noted that although it was gone, it once occurred in the southern part of the state; Osborn (1891: 7) listed it, even though no specimen was present in the collection that he was describing, and he later (1905: 568-569) mentioned the species rather perfunctorily. Ridgway (1916: 148, 149) cited the reports of Maximilian, Audubon, and Trippe only. W. W. Bennett (1931: 9), in a list of the birds of Sioux City, referred to Audubon's trip of 1843 (but see above: Audubon did not specifically report parakeets from the Sioux City area) and referred to specimens that *are not* of Iowa origin.

The last careful treatments of the parakeet in Iowa were those of DuMont (1933: 81; 1935: 206). Bent (1940: 10) summarized the affair: "casually Iowa (Spirit Lake and Decatur County)."