

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/24/00

Western Tanager

3 May 1997

Lacey-Keosauqua S.P., Van Buren Co., IA

*Jim Fuller

IBL 67:91, 68:86, Fuller 1998

Record Number: 97-16

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Fuller, 6 Long View Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [*10/1/97]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:91

Records Committee: IBL 68:86

Fuller, J. 1998. Western Tanager at Lacey-Keosauqua State
Park. IBL 68:69.

VOTE: 7 A-D

pool that attracts warblers and other songbirds in migration. The bunting, a male in resplendent breeding plumage, was visiting a sunflower feeder. A number of people were able to see the bird which was coming to the feeder for the second day in a row.

One year later, on 1 June 1996, my wife Nancy and I were hiking a trail along the Little Sioux River approximately five miles east of the Heine acreage. At a spot where a small creek flowed through the wooded floodplain and into the river, a small bird popped up from the forest floor. It had a turquoise blue head, rusty colored breast, and a white belly. The tail and back were dark, and the wings were dark with white wingbars. There was turquoise on the rump also. The bird sang from an exposed perch at eye level, and the song was faster and more like a goldfinch when compared to that of an Indigo Bunting.

These sightings were the sixth and eighth accepted Lazuli Bunting records respectively in the state. To have them in consecutive years and located so close together makes it easy to speculate that the same bird was coming back to a stretch of Little Sioux River valley. Although the male in 1996 was found singing in appropriate open riparian woodland habitat, no evidence of nesting was confirmed.

518 West 4th Street, Spencer, IA 51301

PACIFIC LOON IN DICKINSON COUNTY

ED THELEN

On the morning of 15 April 1997 I saw a Pacific Loon at the north end of West Okoboji in Dickinson County. I was approximately 20 yards from the loon in my boat when it first appeared. It soon dove and reappeared about 20 yards away on the other side of the boat. It then stayed on top swimming without diving for approximately 20 minutes.



Pacific Loon, Dickinson Co.,
15 April 1997. Ed Thelen.

During this time I noted the following characteristics: small straight bill, rounded light-colored head, and prominent chinstrap. It had a dark back with some light flecks which were visible only when viewed at close range. Its eyes were in the dark part of the loon's head. The lower part of the loon's head, chin (except the chinstrap), throat, and chest were white or light colored. It had a dark forehead with a lighter colored nape and back of neck. The loon appeared somewhat smaller overall when compared to some nearby Common Loons. The loon was observed off and on by many people and was last seen on 26 May 1997. Only once did I see the loon in flight.

On 2 August 1997 I observed another Pacific Loon on Spirit Lake which I believe was the same bird seen the previous spring on West Okoboji. This bird was in the company of two Common Loons and observed approximately 100 yards off the west shore at the area known as Buffalo Run. Its plumage was identical to the bird found on West Okoboji. Perhaps it was pushed off West Okoboji by the high boat traffic after Memorial Day and found refuge during the summer on Spirit Lake. Spirit Lake

is the largest lake in Dickinson County with less shoreline development and less boating activity than West Okoboji. I also saw this bird on the morning of 5 August 1997 near the swimming beach off the south shore of Spirit Lake at the town of Orleans. This loon was also seen off Crandall's beach at the northwest corner of Spirit Lake on 11 August 1997 by Lee Schoenewe. As far as I know this was the last sighting of this loon.

According to *Birds in Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore, 1996) this is the 19th record of Pacific Loon in the state and only the second spring record. It is also the first record for Dickinson County.

15362 250th Ave., Spirit Lake, IA 51360

WESTERN Tanager AT LACEY-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK ✓

JIM FULLER

May 3, 1997 was planned as a morel mushroom hunt to Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. For most normal people, success in such a venture is contingent on keeping your eyes on the ground. But birders are by no means normal, and so it was that I spotted a bright yellow bird amongst the pink of a blooming redbud tree. For the next five minutes, I kept my eyes and binoculars up as I focused on a male Western Tanager just 30 feet away gleaning bugs from the blossoms.



No other bird was nearby so as to compare size, but I judged it to be a little larger than a House Sparrow. The bird had entirely yellow underparts with black back, wings and tail. It had not acquired a complete red head, as only the crown was bright red, and the sides of the face and throat showed a red blush. The eye was dark, and the short and stout bill was gray. The black wing exhibited two yellow wing bars, of which the top one was larger in size. The legs were dark. I did not hear the bird sing or call.

Western Tanager winters mainly from Mexico to Panama, and breeds in the western United States and Canada from southeastern Alaska to western Texas, with the closest area to Iowa being the Black Hills. It ranges widely as a vagrant, with records from virtually all states and provinces. In Iowa, it is considered casual, with the first record in 1969. Since that time, there have been eleven documented sightings, of which eight occurred in the spring from late April to mid-May. The other records were from June, October, and November. All records save one were of males, and all records were from different counties which were scattered throughout the state.

6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

I.O.U. BUSINESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ames, 16 May 1998, 4:05-4:10 p.m.

Mark Proescholdt, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

Present: Dan Dorrance, Rick Hollis, Maridel Jackson, Ann Johnson, Mary Kuhiman, Curt Nelson, Mark Proescholdt, Jim Scheib, Carol Thompson.

97-16

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Western Tanager (Male)

LOCATION: Lacey-Keosauqua State Park Near Ely Ford (Van Buren County)

DATE & TIME: 3 May, 1997 (11:40-45 AM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240

OTHERS: Karole Fuller

DESCRIPTION: I spotted a yellow bird rather low in a blooming Redbud tree, and watched as it gleaned bugs from the blossoms for about five minutes, until it flew off and couldn't be relocated. No other bird was nearby to compare general size, but it was estimated to be a little larger than a House Sparrow. The bird had entirely yellow underparts, and black back, wings, and tail. It had not acquired a complete red head, as only the top of the head was a bright red, and the sides of the face and throat showed only a red blush. The eye was dark, and the short and stout bill was gray. The black wing exhibited two yellow wing bars, of which the top one was a little larger. The legs were dark. I did not hear the bird sing or call.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The two yellow wing bars and red on head eliminate any other tanager.

OPTICS & VIEWING CONDITIONS: It was late morning of a mostly sunny day, and I used Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars to view the bird toward the west at distances of 30-40 feet.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen a number of these birds in the western US, and have seen two previous birds in Iowa.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: Field notes were prepared in the car five minutes after the sighting, and no references were consulted. This form was typed on 5 May.