

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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Lazuli Bunting

27 May 1997

n. of Glenwood, Mills Co., IA

*T. Kent

IBL 68:86; P-0550, P-0559, IBL 67:91, Kent 1998

Record Number: 97-22

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, P-0550

Reid Allen, P-0559 [IBL 68:67]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:91

Records Committee: IBL 68:86

Kent, T. H. 1998. Lazuli Bunting in Mills County. IBL 68:67-68

Photo: Field Notes 51:878, 1997, P-0550

VOTE: 7 A-P

FLYCATCHERS TO SHRIKES

Extraordinarily high numbers of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher were recorded this spring, as evidenced by counts of 37 in Chicago's Grant Park May 30 (DS), 18 at A. A. Call S.P., IA, May 25 (MK), and 14 along the Indiana lakefront May 29 (JcD et al.). Iowa's 4th **Vermilion Flycatcher** was recorded May 24 at Holstein, Sac (†CR). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher visited Ottawa N.W.R., OH, May 14-15 (SWr, m.ob. ph.), much to the delight of Ohio birders. In keeping with the cold spring, martins and swallows arrived late in most areas. Selected peak counts included 60 Purple Martins at Mermet Lake W.M.A., IL Apr. 14 (KMc); 130 N. Rough-winged Swallows in Union, IL, May 3 (KMc); and 2000 Cliff Swallows at Mark Twain N.W.R., IL, (DBo, VK et al.). Clearly bucking the general spring pattern, one overzealous Barn Swallow arrived at Starved Rock S.P. in n. Illinois Mar. 29 (J&CM). A pair of **Black-billed Magpies**, discovered in the Loess Hills of w.c. Plymouth, IA, in early May, thrilled birders attending the annual Iowa Ornithological Union meeting May 18 (†JFu, †TK). Good Fish Crow numbers appeared within their expanding range, with counts of 50 in Oakwood Bottoms, IL, Apr. 19 (KMc) and eight along the levee at Hickman Bottoms, KY, Apr. 24 (CP). Red-breasted Nuthatches were uniformly scarce, indeed several observers referred to them as "non-existent." Amid this dearth some excitement was generated when an alarmed Red-breasted displayed territorial behavior at Creation Falls, KY, May 22 (FR); further investigation June 2 revealed a family group of six (BPB). A very late Brown Creeper was seen in Boone, IL, May 26 (MRa). A fine count of 49 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was logged Apr. 20 in Union, IL (KMc). Townsend's Solitaires appeared in suburban Kansas City, MO, Mar. 2 (SP) and at L. Ahquabi, IA, Apr. 12-13 (JSi, †AJ). Migrant *Catharus* thrushes were reported in above-normal numbers; high counts included 13 Gray-cheekeds in Jax.P. May 10 (PC), 46 Swainsons' at A. A. Call S.P., IA, May 15 (MK), and 54 Hermits in Jax.P. Apr. 16 (PC et al.). In addition, an extremely late Hermit Thrush (tail damaged) was still in Chicago's Grant Park June 3 (DS). Two very early Gray Catbirds were found at Springville Marsh, OH, Apr. 6 (TBa). American Pipits arrived quite early, with one at Naperville, IL, Feb. 28 (DS), and departed very late; the last report was June 4 in Chicago (KHi). Three-four Sprague Pipits were found at the Rosecrans Airport, Buchanan, MO, Apr. 16, and one

was still present May 1 (MRo). Cedar Waxwing numbers were low across the Region, and were entirely absent in Iowa (fide TK). A tardy N. Shrike was still present in Lippold Park, McHenry, IL, Apr. 15-16 (RBa, DF et al.).



Iowa had fewer than a dozen confirmed records of Lazuli Bunting prior to this spring, when four appeared, all in May. This male was north of Glenwood, Iowa, on May 27, 1997. Photograph/T. H. Kent

VIREOS TO BUNTINGS

A White-eyed Vireo in Moorhead Park, Ida, IA, May 28 (PE) and a Bell's Vireo at the Migrant Trap, IN, May 25 (EH) were both well beyond their normal ranges. Fine daily Philadelphia Vireo counts were logged in Cook, IL, where nine were seen May 26 (DS), and at H.B.S.P., where seven were tallied May 25 (LRO).

A remarkably late Orange-crowned Warbler was still in Chicago's Grant Park June 3 (DS). Selected peak warbler counts included: 21 Golden-wingeds in Cook, IL, May 17 (DS); 75 Tennessees in Palos, IL, May 20 (DS); 88 Nashvilles in Cook, IL, May 17 (DS); 17 N. Parulas in Jackson, IL, Apr. 21 (KMc); 120 Yellows at H.B.S.P. May 25 (LRO et al.); 43 Chestnut-sideds in Cook, IL, May 17 (DS); 59 Magolias in Cook, IL, May 17 (DS); 30 Mournings in Chicago's Grant Park May 30 (DS); 58 Wilson's in Chicago's Grant Park May 30 (DS); and 30 Canadas in Lucas, OH, May 24 (RHa, SWa). Cape May Warblers were scarce except in Ohio, where they appeared in good numbers (fide LRO). The latest among many late Yellow-rumped Warblers was a singing male found in Randolph, IL, June 7 (†TD). Iowa's 2nd **Black-throated Gray Warbler**

was discovered near Cedar Bluff May 10 (†JHu, CT, JCo). Among the more interesting warbler reports was a bird displaying the characters of a "Sutton's" hybrid; it was seen at L. Ahquabi, IA, May 5 (†JSi). Ohio birders were treated to two **Kirtland's Warblers**; the first, a singing male, was on Kelly's I. May 14 (†RHn, SWa, m.ob.) and the 2nd was at Magee Marsh, OH, May 15-17 (†JHd, MT, m.ob. ph). A record-early Palm Warbler appeared at Carlyle L., IL, Mar. 29, and, most interestingly, the bird displayed the uniformly yellow underparts of the e. race *D.p. hypochrysea* (†DKa). Four Swainson's Warblers were found in s. Missouri near Van Buren May 31 (PMc). An early Louisiana Waterthrush arrived at Pomona, IL, Mar. 15 (KMc). Connecticut Warblers were more common than normal, with reports from every state except Kentucky. Most notable were four male Connecticuts found in Grindstone Park, Columbia, MO, May 24 (PMc et al.). Hooded Warblers were not reported in Iowa and, according to K. McMullen, numbers were also poor in s. Illinois.

Summer Tanagers pressed northward this spring, yielding multiple Chicago area records and a female at a Burr Oak, IA, feeder, May 6-17 (DCa). Following last spring's W. Tanager invasion, three birds were reported this year. Two males appeared in Iowa: one at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. May 3 (†JFu) and another at Ames May 8-13 (†KHe, †JDi). In addition, a male was seen briefly in Arlington Heights, IL, May 18 (†JB, †CB, †JFa).

An echo flight of Lazuli Buntings occurred in the w. states, with four males and one female reported in Missouri in mid-May (no †), plus four in Iowa (three of which appeared May 18). The Iowa records included single males in Plymouth May 18 (†JSi), at Stone S.P. May 18 (†KK, †AJ), at Mason City May 18-22 (†EM), and at the rural home of Annie and Walter Leich, n. of Glenwood, May 23-29 (†TK, ph.). A male **Painted Bunting** made a colorful appearance at Tiffin, OH, Apr. 17 (VF, LRO, ph.), providing the state's first record.

TOWHEES TO FINCHES

Spotted Towhee reports were restricted to the w. states, with eight in Iowa and one in Missouri. An exceptionally high count of 150 Chipping Sparrows was made along the roads of Fremont, IA, May 15 (TK). It was a great spring for Clay-colored Sparrows, with multiple sightings in all 4 n. states. In describing Clay-colored abundance in Iowa, T. Kent commented "I personally saw

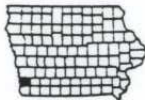
silhouette was distinctive. The skinny, almost pencil-thin neck was held straight in front of the bird, and lacked an obvious head. The tail was noticeably longer than the length of the neck and was fanned as the bird soared. The leading edges of the wings were straight and held perpendicular to the body. The only size comparison was with Broad-winged Hawks. This bird was clearly much larger, roughly twice the length of a Broad-winged Hawk. This bird's wingspan was also at least 50% greater. The identification was based largely on this flight silhouette. I concluded that the bird was a female or immature because of the paler neck and upper breast. This represents the second record of an Anhinga in Iowa. The other record was of a female or immature from 18-31 October 1953 near Riverton in Fremont County (Mrs. W. H. Collins, *Iowa Bird Life* 23:72, 1953).

612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

LAZULI BUNTING IN MILLS COUNTY

THOMAS H. KENT

A male Lazuli Bunting first appeared the feeder of Anna Leich in the Loess Hills of rural Mills County north of Glenwood about 6 p.m. on 23 May 1997. She noticed an unusual bird feeding on the seed that was spread on patio and, with the help of a field guide, identified it. I saw and photographed the bird on 27 May, and Reid Allen photographed it on 26 May.



Over the next week the bunting came to feed regularly and was seen by many visitors. It preferred to feed on the patio rather than at one of the several feeders that were regularly attended by other species. It usually dropped down to the ground from the trees in the back yard and returned at regular intervals during the day. It was easily frightened by movement or camera noise, but this was easily prevented by viewing from inside the house. It was present all day on 29 May but was not seen after that.

The Lazuli Bunting was slightly larger than American Goldfinches and slightly smaller than House Finches that were also present at the ground feeding area. It had a compact body and conical bill. It had a blue hood with sharp demarcation on the upper breast and less sharp demarcation on the nape. There was black around the eye and in the loreal area. The upper mandible was mostly dark and the lower mandible flesh-colored. On the front and below the blue, there was a band of cinnamon that curved from the sides to the center of the breast. It faded to white on the lower breast. The belly and under tail were white. The back, wings, and tail were nondescript brown-black with some blue shading, and the rump was blue. There was a prominent white upper wing bar and thinner brownish lower wing bar. The back was streaked. The legs were dark.



*Lazuli Bunting, Mills Co.,
26 May 1997, Reid Allen.*

The location in the Loess Hill north of Glenwood has mixed open and wooded habitat with conifers present in the neighbor's yard to the north. Many species of

birds frequent the Leich's feeders. At this time there were about six Red Crossbills and several Pine Siskins. Mrs. Leich picked up and released a recently fledged Pine Siskin on 25 May.

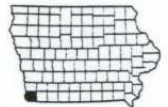
Prior to 1997 there were eight confirmed records of Lazuli Bunting for Iowa with seven from northwestern and one from southwestern Iowa and all from spring/early summer. This species has been found each year since 1994 and there are three other records from 1997. Also, four of the recent records have been at feeders. Does this represent an increased vagrancy of this species or just an increased awareness on the part of observers in western Iowa?

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS IN FREMONT COUNTY

BABS AND LOREN PADEFORD

On 12 April 1997, after a heavy snowfall on 11 April, we were in southern Fremont County looking for Chestnut-collared Longspurs. In late morning we encountered a flock of about 45 longspurs about one half mile north of Highway 2 on the Percival Road. The flock was foraging along the side of the road. In the flock of Lapland Longspurs, we identified two male Chestnut-collared in breeding plumage.



The birds were the size of the Lapland Longspurs with sparrow-like conical bills. The top of their heads was black. There was white above the eye and a black stripe through the eye. The throat was yellow. The nape of the neck was chestnut-colored. The belly and breast were black. The back was brown with brown streaks. The black tails showed more white along the sides than the Lapland Longspurs.

The two birds were feeding together on the road. Eventually the Lapland Longspurs flew, but the two Chestnut-collared Longspurs returned to feed for several minutes at a distance of about 30 to 50 feet from our car.

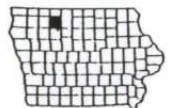
It is interesting to note that Tom Kent found Chestnut-collared Longspurs on the same date, 12 April, in 1995 in Sioux and Lyon counties in northwestern Iowa (IBL 66:61-63). We had previously found Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the same area in Fremont County on 22 and 23 April 1992 (IBL 62:81). All sightings occurred after heavy snowfall had concentrated migrating birds along the roads.

1405 Little John Rd. Bellevue, NE 68005

LAZULI BUNTINGS TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN CLAY COUNTY

LEE A. SCHOENEWE

On 29 May 1995, I had spent the day birding with Harold White and after arriving home in the late afternoon, I received a phone call from Harold. He had received a phone message that a Lazuli Bunting was visiting a feeder just south of Spencer. The feeder was located on the acreage of Russ and Ellen Heine, a beautifully landscaped farmstead with a variety of trees, shrubs, and plants. They have a small man-made pond with water pumped up and cascading over rocks into a





Lazuli Bunting P-0559
Mills, IA
26 May 1997 Reid Allen 97-22

71+00 NNNNN -2RU 2061

Lazuli Bunting P-0550
n. of Glenwood, Mills Co., IA
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5011 41+01 NNNNN+Q1RU 102

Lazuli Bunting P-0550
n. of Glenwood, Mills Co., IA
27 May 1997 T. H. Kent 97-22

5019 41+01 NNNNN+Q1RU 102

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Lazuli Bunting; **Number:** 1 male

Location: 54452 Highway 275, north of Glenwood, Mills Co., IA

Date: 27 May 1997; **Time:** 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: Discovered at feeders by Anna Leich on 23 May about 6:00 p.m. Seen by a number of birders since then.

Habitat and circumstances: Rural home in Loess Hills with multiple feeders and ground feed.

Description of bird: About the size of an Indigo Bunting (none present) with compact body and conical bill. The bird came to trees and then dropped down to the mixed feed on the concrete patio. It was easily frightened by movement inside the house and shutter noise from my camera. It had a blue hood with sharp demarcation on the upper breast and less sharp demarcation on the nape. There was black around the eye and in the loreal area. The upper mandible was mostly dark and the lower mandible flesh-colored. On the front and below the blue, there was a band of cinnamon that curved from the sides to the center of the breast. It faded to white on the lower breast. The belly and under tail were white. The back, wings, and tail were nondescript brown-black with some blue shading, and the rump was blue. There was a prominent white upper wing bar and thinner brownish lower wing bar. The back was streaked. I did not note the leg color.

Voice: Anna Leich said that she had heard the bird sing on previous days.

Similar species: none.

Any one have reservations?: no

Light: overcast to light rain; **Distance:** 20 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular, 540 and 400 mm lens.

Previous experience: have seen in west

References before/after viewing: We looked at Golden Guide while viewing. I looked at several other references after typing the above description to compare the wing bars, black on face, bill color, and location of color on breast.

Time of notes: during observation period; **Final typing:** 1 day.