

Nashville Warbler
19 Dec 1993
Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA
*Fuller, *Scheib
IBL 64:50, 68, Fuller 1994

Record Number: 93-35
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [7/26/94]
James Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 64:50
Records Committee: IBL 64:68
Fuller, J. 1994. A winter record for Nashville Warbler. Iowa Bird Life 64:116-117.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Document sounds good but winter plumage would be difficult.
A-D, Interesting to note that Omaha CBC also had a Nashville Warbler in 1993.

became apparent that this bird was larger, flew with effortless power and grace, and did not have any of the field marks associated with that species. Indeed, this bird was simply overall gray, with no plumage features mentioned by any of the observers. It traversed the area from west to east, harassing waterfowl, turned south, and departed. The entire observation lasted a maximum of about 20 seconds at a minimum of about 100 yards.

Documentations submitted by Clark, Jackson, Schantz, Silcock and Sinclair all noted the lack of features characteristic of Peregrine such as a blackish "helmet" and facial markings, paler underparts, as well as the sheer size of this bird relative to waterfowl present, especially Canada Geese, and its manner of flight, which was not the powerful but slashing flight of a Peregrine, but instead the bird had "a slower and deeper wingbeat" (Clark) and its flight was "not fluttery" (Jackson). It was described as "an absolutely awesome large falcon" (Silcock), and most observers mentioned a long tailed appearance. Clark and Jackson had extensive recent experience with hatched Peregrines in flight and in hand. The bird was gray, not brown, eliminating Prairie, as did the lack of pale underparts and dark axillars, as well as the bird's size.

The I.O.U. Records Committee accepted this record (Kent, *Iowa Bird Life* 64:68, 1994; note that the date of the sighting is incorrect), with slight reservations about the early date of the sighting and the possibility of an escaped falconer's bird. The earliest Minnesota record is 22 September (Schantz). Most falconers would have put a jess on a bird as valuable as a Gyrfalcon.

P. O. Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653

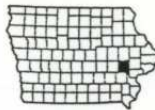
A WINTER RECORD FOR NASHVILLE WARBLER

JIM FULLER

There was a great deal of anticipation on this 19 December 1993, Iowa City Christmas Bird Count as Jim Scheib, John McClure, and I began to search the evergreen trees that border the Hancher Auditorium Parking Lot on the University of Iowa campus. It was at this location that we had discovered two Pine Warblers on the previous year's count. Almost immediately we observed a small bird fly into the top of a Norway Pine. The first impression was a kinglet, but in the binoculars the bird was much too yellow. It was soon apparent that for the second year in a row we had a warbler, this one a Nashville.

This warbler-sized bird had unstreaked lemon-yellow underparts from throat to vent, except for a whitish area between the legs. The side of the face, crown, and nape were all gray. The dark eye was surrounded by a faint white eye ring. The back was brownish-green, as were the wings, and there were no wingbars. The bill was gray, thin, and pointed. The legs were dark. The three warblers with which this species might be confused are Mourning, Connecticut, and MacGillivray's. All three have much more extensive gray on the head and upper breast, including the throat where this bird was yellow. All three also have light legs, whereas this bird's legs were dark.

During mid-morning we watched for some time as the warbler gleaned the evergreen needles as it moved from tree to tree. Others observed it later in the afternoon, but it was not seen on any subsequent day.



This is a first winter record for Nashville Warbler in the state. It is interesting to note that the previous day, no fewer than three birds of this species were found in a single tree on the Omaha, Nebraska, count. Chicago has its "magic hedge" along Lake Michigan where rarities appear with regularity. Maybe Iowa City has its own magic conifers. What will turn up there in 1994?

6 Longview Knoll, RR 6, Iowa City, IA 52240

RING-BILLED GULLS NESTING IN DICKINSON COUNTY

TIM J. WALTZ

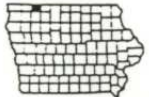
On 16 May 1994, Brian Hellyer and I were seeding some new dikes on the Meinking Wildlife Management Area just east of East Lake Okobojo in Dickinson County. While working, we noticed a large number of Ring-billed Gulls on the far end of the dike across the lower end of one of the smaller wetlands north of the large restored wetland that dominates the complex. When we approached these birds, we discovered 13 nests, 11 in the alfalfa planting adjacent to the dike and 2 among the rocks on the top of the spillway on the dike. We returned to this area on 18 May and checked it more closely. We counted 18 Ring-billed Gull nests; most of them contained two or three eggs but three contained only one egg. All of the nests were on the ground and consisted of a simple cup of dead vegetation (Figure 1). Most of them were in the alfalfa but a few were on the rock that made up the spillway. There were also what appeared to be several new nests that contained no eggs. I remained in the colony only briefly during which time the gulls hovered overhead or perched on the ground nearby. I returned to the area again on 20 May and noticed that one of the nests that previously had contained three eggs was now empty. There was no sign of any egg fragments in that nest. That was the last time that I visited the colony.

On 22 May, Stephen Dinsmore visited this area and found no sign of any of the nests and no gulls present. I assume that some predator, perhaps a raccoon, had visited the colony and preyed upon the nests.

This is the first report of Ring-billed Gulls nesting in Iowa. The number of Ring-billed Gulls reported summering in Iowa has been increasing steadily over the past decade and in recent years, several hundred have summered in the Spirit Lake area (J. J. Dinsmore, pers. commun.). Many of these gulls regularly feed at the Spirit Lake landfill, located immediately to the northeast of the Meinking area and less than half a mile from the site of this colony. The nearest Ring-billed Gull colony is in eastern South Dakota on Bitter Lake near Watertown. This colony is about 130 miles northwest of the Meinking area. Thus this nesting attempt, although unsuccessful, was a significant extension of this species' nesting range.

I appreciate the help of Stephen J. Dinsmore who provided information from his visit to the colony and also information on Ring-billed Gull nesting sites in South Dakota.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, RR, Box 7244, Spirit Lake, IA 51360



Ring-billed Gull nest, Meinking Marsh, Dickinson Co.

DOCUMENTATION OF UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Nashville Warbler

LOCATION: Hancher Auditorium Parking Lot, University of Iowa Campus, Iowa City (Johnson County).

DATE & TIME: 19 December, 1993 (9:15-30 AM).

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

OTHERS: With me were Jim Scheib and John McLure. Later were Tom Kent and Dick Tetrault.

BACKGROUND: Iowa City CBC. We were searching the evergreens around the Hancher Auditorium Parking Lot where two Pine Warblers had been found the previous year, when a small bird flew into the top branches of a Norway Pine in front of us. First impression was a kinglet, but as soon as I could get my binoculars on it, it was much too yellow. We watched the bird in this tree and others nearby gleaning the evergreen needles. Its motions were very quick.

DESCRIPTION: This small warbler size bird had entirely lemon yellow underparts from throat to vent, except for an area between the legs which was whitish. The side of the face, crown, and nape were all a gray color. The dark eye was surrounded by a faint white eyering (not as bright as usual for this species). The back was a brownish-green color, as were the wings. There were no wingbars. The bill was thin, pointed, and appeared to be gray. The legs were dark. No vocalization was heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The three warblers with which this species might be confused are Mourning, Connecticut, and MacGillivray's. All three have much more extensive gray on the head and upper breast, including the throat. All three also have light colored legs. No one disagreed with the identification.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Overcast sky. Looking east to northeast at 20-30 feet.

OPTICS: Binoculars were 8.5 X 44 Swift Audubon.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Common migrant seen numerous times.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: National Geographic Guide was referred to while watching the bird. Field notes were made on the spot, and this form was typed the following day.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Nashville Warbler *How Many?* one

Location: W. side of Hancher lot, Iowa City

Type of habitat?: Evergreens, Pines bordering lot

When? Date(s): Sun, Dec. 19, 1993 (Xmas count) *time:* 9:20 pm to 9:37 pm

Who? your name and address:

James Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240-9148

Others with you: Jim Fuller and John McClure

Others before or after you: none before; maybe some Xmas counters after.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We were looking for Golden-crowned Kinglet when Jim Fuller spotted a bird he thought could be a kinglet in a pine with two Chickadees. Upon further study it was a warbler with gray face and head, complete white eye ring around black eye, dark gray beak, bright yellow throat and breast to legs, whitish between legs, yellow under tail coverts, olive back, wings and tail, tail slightly notched, no wing bars, and no streaking anywhere.

Similar species and how eliminated: N. Parula has white wing bars and incomplete eye ring; Magnolia has wing bars, yellow rump, and breast streaking; Pine has wing bars, streaking, white undertail coverts; Mourning and Connecticut do not have yellow throat; Canada has breast streaking and white undertail coverts; Common Yellowthroat immature does not have gray head and face.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?

All above named birders agreed on the identification.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Light was diffused by clouds. Bird was seen from east and west side of tree. View was unobstructed from as close as 17-20 feet with Swift Audubon 8.5 x 44 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Common in migration.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic field guide was used on the spot.

How long before field notes made? All characteristics were observed. Mental notes only.

How long before this form completed? Same day.

MAIL TO; T.H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240