

Bl Wilson  
Rt 1 Box 41  
Hastings, Ia 51540

28 Feb. 1983

Dear Mr. Kent

Last fall every one from Woolly Bear caterpillars to the 90-day weather forecast predicted a cold, snowy winter. While ~~some~~ everyone predicted ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> winter, <sup>before,</sup> the real thing turned out mild + open. The ground didn't freeze until into January, there were only two bad storms. An ice storm Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> followed by snow + stressed birds. I doubt there was ~~so~~ much mortality; the birds were in good condition. A second storm Feb. 1 left 6" of snow + was followed by another 2" a couple days later. It drove larks to the roads to feed.

Duck migration is confusing. Mild weather encouraged them to stay. At Iowa Power + Light's Settling ponds at the south edge of Council Bluffs, the water didn't freeze until late January or the start of February. This kept fall ducks very late. (Birders in Bellevue will probably send more records on these ducks). Then in mid-February the thaw began here, + soon the ducks returned. They didn't quite spend all winter here, but you'd hardly notice it. (Feb. 10 the Settling ponds were frozen + no ducks present.)

Omaha birders are hosting many unlikely sparrows - several Lincoln's, White-throats + White-crowns, + a Field + even a couple winter Chippies. (at bird feeders)

Mild weather dominates the reports that follow.

- Barb Wilson



Barbara L. Wilson  
 Rt. 1 Box 41  
 Hastings, Ia. 51540  
 Winter, 1982-1983

~~Wilson~~ farm = Wilson farm, NE Mills County  
 Iowa

Species	Number	Date	Location
✓ Canada Goose	9	Feb. 18	farm first seen
✓ White-fronted Goose	6	Feb. 27	Willow Slough first seen
✓ Snow/Blue Goose		Feb. 19	farm first seen
Mallard		Jan 17	IPL Settling Ponds last winter sighting
"	2	Feb. 17	1 mile N. of Hastings first spring sighting
✓ Gadwall	7	Feb. 20	Willow Slough first sighting
✓ Pintail	1	Jan 17	IPL Settling Ponds last winter one
✓ Black Duck	1	Jan 8	" " "
✓ Pintail	6	Feb 23	Willow Slough first sighting
✓ Am. Wigeon	5	Jan 17	IPL Settling Ponds last sighting
✓ "	29	Feb 20	Willow Slough first sighting
✓ N. Shoveler	3	Feb 20	" "
✓ Wood Duck	3	Feb 23	" "
✓ Redhead	3	Feb 20	" "
✓ Ring-necked Duck	5	Feb 20	" "
Canvasback	✓ 59	Feb 23	" "
"	112	Feb 25	" "
"	147	Feb 27	" "
✓ Greater Scaup	8	Feb 23	" "
✓ Lesser Scaup	3	Feb 25	" "
✓ Common Goldeneye	4	Jan 13	IPL Settling Ponds last winter sighting
✓ " "	2	Feb 20	Willow Slough first sighting
✓ Hooded Merganser	1 ♂	Jan 17	IPL Settling Ponds last winter sighting
✓ " "	1 ♂	Feb 25	Willow Slough first sighting
✓ Common Merganser	5	Feb 20	Willow Slough " "
Bald Eagle	1	Feb 18	farm
Marsh Hawk	1	Feb 19	"
Am. Kestrel	<sup>1.6</sup> birds/trip	all winter. this is the highest rate of sightings in the past 6 winters. (Second highest was 1.25 birds/trip in winter of 1980-1981, another very mild winter.) See extra sheet of data.	
✓ Coot	1	Feb 25	Willow Slough first seen
✓ Killdeer	2	Feb. 19	farm first seen
Mourning Dove	Very few wintered		
✓ Common (Red-shafted) Flicker	1	Jan 19	1 mile N. of Hastings



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Hastings, Ia

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NE Mills County

Iowa

Winter 1982-1983

Species                      Number      Date                      Location

✓ Red-headed Woodpecker      1              Jan 24              Pony Creek area near Glenwood,  
Western Mills County, Iowa. This is the only one I saw all winter.  
Babs Padelford they didn't even stay in Fontnelle Forest in  
Bellevue, Nebraska, where they ~~also~~ always winter.  
Doubtless due to great lack of acorns.

Hairy Woodpecker      Population stable to slightly up. See enclosed  
data sheet. You said one should report Hairy Woodpecker  
sightings as they are Blue-listed. They are uncommon  
permanent residents on the farm. Unless something drastic  
happens to them I may not report them again.

Horned Lark - the following series of sightings (or lack of sightings)  
on January + February trips is reported to show the effect of snow  
on their sightings:

<u>#</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>date</u>
0	Jan 4	55	Feb. 9
17	Jan 8	102	Feb. 10
0	Jan 9	0	Feb 14 snow has begun to melt.
2	Jan 13		
17	Jan 17		
0	Jan 20		
0	Feb. 1 (morning)		
210	Feb 1 (afternoon, during near-blizzard)		
<del>117</del>	Feb 3		
100 <sup>+</sup>	Feb 4		
200 <sup>+</sup>	Feb 5		

total of 6" of snow.

mild, open weather

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Mills County

Lower

Species	#	date	location
✓ Tufted Titmouse <del>Titmouse</del>	0	all winter	farm
Second year in a row without any!			
✓ Tufted Titmouse	1	Jan 5	Council Bluffs
Brown Creeper	1	Jan 7	farm
"	1	Jan 15	"
"	1	Jan 24	"
✓ Winter Wren	1	Dec. 16	"
For some reason, the kittens accompanied me on a bird walk, + their cries lured the bird out of the brush under a bridge.			
✓ Am. Robin	23	Feb 19	farm first sighting of spring
✓ E. Bluebird	2	Feb 23	" " "
Cedar Waxwing	2	Jan 24	"
✓ Loggerhead Shrike	1	Feb 17	"
Red-winged Blackbird	low numbers probably wintered near the farm		
✓ "	265	Feb 19	farm (many flocks going north)
✓ Rusty Blackbird	15	Feb 19	"
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	Jan 17	North of Glenwood
"	1	Jan 20	farm - my bird feeder
"	6	Jan 22	" "
"	24	Jan 24	" "
"	✓ 32	Jan 26	" "

~~one~~ one is still coming to the feeder. I have had a chance to learn how much bird feed 30+ cowbirds can eat - and it's a lot!

Large numbers remained at the feeder through mid February



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Mills County

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<u>Species</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Purple Finch	1	Jan 18	farm
"	1	Feb 12	"

Am. Goldfinch these birds wintered at my parent's-in-law's feeder. Maybe a dozen were there. Feb. 6 one showed up at my feeder, + on Feb. 18 at least 42 were eating my sunflower seeds. Other people (see below) report unusually large numbers at their feeders.

Harris Sparrow. these have wintered at the farm every winter of the 6 I've been here. In other words, they wintered here this winter, as usual.

✓ Lincoln's Sparrow 1 Jan 5 farm

See documentation

Song Sparrow unusually common on farm this winter

✓ Smith's longspur 1 Feb. 19 farm

See documentation

Report from Eric Nyren,  
of Rural Henderson (NE Mills County).

✓ Red-shafted Flicker 1 wintered, drumming on the barn roof

Am. Gold Finch unusually common - ate over 50 lb. of  
thistle seed this winter.

Report of Allan Patterson, Macedonia

Am. Gold Finch unusually common at his feeder, too

Rate of Kestrel sightings for trips in S.W. Iowa,  
excluding Christmas Bird Counts.

Includes all trips on which I noted any bird sightings, which  
is nearly all the trips I took.

	1977- 1978	1978- 1979	1979- 1980	1980- 1981	1981- 1982	1982- 1983
<u>December</u>						
Trips	1	2	2	2	7	8
Birds	0	1	0	3	8	11
Birds/ trip	0	.5	0	1.5	1.1	1.4
<u>January</u>						
Trips	11	11	2	4	14	7
Birds	6	2	1	9	7	18
Birds/trip	.5	.2	.5	2.2	.5	2.6
<u>February</u>						
Trips	9	9	7	6	16	8
Birds	3	9	6	3	7	6
Birds/trip	.3	1.0	.7	.5	.4	.8
<u>All winter</u>						
Trips	<del>21</del>	22	11	12	37	<del>23</del>
Birds	9	12	7	15	22	<del>35</del>
Birds/ trip	.43	.54	.64	1.25	.59	<del>1.59</del>



SPECIES Hairy Woodpecker

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
January							
Average			0.2	0.8			0.7
n		7	4	6	3	2	3
range			0-1	0-3			0-1
February							
Average	0.3	0.3			1	0.5	0.5
n	7	3		1	1	4	4
range	0-1	0-1				0-1	0-2
March							
Average		0.5	0.3	0.8	0.8		
n	7	4	3	4	4		
range		0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1		
April							
Average	0.2	0.7	0.8			1.2	
n	6	3	4		1	5	
range	0-1	0-1	0-1			1-2	
May							
Average	0.6					1.0	
n	7	3	2		3	3	
range	0-3					0-2	
June							
Average	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.2	1.0		
n	6	3	4	5	6		
range	0-2	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-3		
July							
Average	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.4	1.0		
n	7	5	2	5	5		
range	0-2	0-1	1	0-1	0-2		
August							
Average	0.7	1.6		1.0	1.0	1.0	
n	6	8	3	2	4	6	
range	0-2	0-3		0-2	0-2	0-2	
September							
Average	0.1	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.4	1.5	
n	8	7	4	3	5	6	
range	0-1	0-2	0-2	0-2	0-1	0.2	
October							
Average	0.2	0.8		0.2	1.0	1.8	
n	8	7	2	5	4	5	
range	0-2	0-1		0-1	0-2	1-3	
November							
Average	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.3	1.2	1.0	
n	8	8	2	3	5	5	
range	0-3	0-2	0-1	0-1	0-2	0-2	
December							
Average	1.2	0.8	1			0.2	
n	4	5	1	1	2	4	
range	0-2	0-1	1			0-1	

Results of simple transect censuses - Hairy Woodpecker.

Censuses are run at the same time of day (by the sun), on the farm, on the same route

n = # number of censuses

In months where only the number of censuses # is given, no Hairy Woodpeckers were seen on censuses