

House Finch -- Documentation

On Saturday, March 25, Tina Van Dyke (no relation) called me to report some Purple Finches on her feeders. I went to see them, but as they appeared on the feeder it was quite clear that these were not Purple but House Finches. There were two males and two females. The males were striped along the side and belly, and exhibited a brownish cap. The females lacked the characteristic face striping of the female Purple Finch.

The finches stayed at Tina's feeders until April 20. At one point their numbers swelled to four females and three males at one time. After April 20 we thought they had left; but on May 4 I observed a pair at another location in Sioux Center. However, I have not seen them since.

To my knowledge this is the first record of House Finches in Sioux County. I expect them to be regular from here on in. They already appear to be breeding in the Sioux City area.

I am familiar with both the Purple and House Finch. The House Finch, for example, is common around the farmyard of my father-in-law in central California (I used to live in central California). Since I travel a good deal, I see both species of finch pretty well every year (and very often the Cassin's Finch as well in the mountainous regions). My travels this past spring have brought me to a variety of places in the West, so I have seen House Finches in southern California and Phoenix in February, and both House Finches and Purple Finches in the Seattle area in early May.

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John Van Dyk

736 East 1st Street  
Sioux Center, Iowa 51250