

4 Jan. 1967

Dear Fred:

I enjoyed your blow-by-blow story on your count but thought I'd not acknowledge it until after I had your report. Our count wasn't until the 31st so we had the snow to contend with but I guess we didn't do too badly considering that Mallards were the only waterfowl. The bright spot was a little flock of Longspurs which is a species I've only seen 3 times, and then only from 1 to 5 or 6. One party found 14 and they were still in the same place the following two days and I got to see them.

There are few winter visitors. Peasleys have at least 17 Purple Finches at their feeders but that is nothing for them. I've had one or two several times. Red-breasted Nuthatches are also few. Juncos and Tree Sparrows are numerous, and Redheads with some Flickers are staying. No Redpolls any place. Usually we have a junco or two if there is snow, but this year there have been 5 or 6 all winter. Occasionally one will get up on the top of the feeder where I have a mixture of waste kitchen fat and rolled oats which the Starlings like, but usually they are on the ground eating the scratch for the sparrows or gleaning under the sunflower feeder.

Our Oregon Junco has been in Peasley's yard all fall. Fred Pierce never would allow an Oregon as they are probably just hybrids, but Pete has made such an issue of those they've had that I include them. If it is possible to identify the species I'm sure Helen Peasley is competent to do so.

I've been wondering about the Savannahs. The first time they ever showed up on an Iowa count was in 1955, Davenport, Hodges. Then in 1961, Davenport, Fawks, and in 1962 at Estherville. I notice in AFN these all show in black-face type with no details and no snide remarks by the editor. The latest Polk Co. record heretofore has been middle of Nov. but I'm wondering if we may not be missing these and calling them Song Sparrows. Mary Ellen Warters is a good conservative birder and saw one bird she felt was a Savannah but wasn't sure enough to call it. At the time she had no knowledge of the ones subsequently reported from another area. I've decided to include these in my report to AFN but don't intend to include the Osprey. This was seen by but one person and was a "had to be" by elimination.

I'm surprised Bob can't separate the E and W Meadowlarks in winter. Doesn't he know that ~~Magna~~ says "chert", and ~~Meglecta~~ says "chut"? I haven't details yet for our count but suspect our meadowlarks will be sp. in IBL and AFN.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wood