

FIELD REPORTS--FALL 1979

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WEATHER AND HABITAT CONDITIONS

The weather was generally mild throughout the period. Heavy rains in mid-August removed the excellent shorebird habitat at the Coralville Reservoir, but a mild dry September returned some shorebird habitat. Leaves were late to turn. An early October snow downed many green trees in Council Bluffs.

GENERAL TRENDS

The late spring may have extended the nesting season. Nests of Yellow-billed Cuckoo, House Wren and N Cardinal were found in September. Shorebirds were not plentiful except at the Coralville Reservoir. There were a number of late warbler reports perhaps due to the late fall.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Casual species encountered include Red-necked Grebe at Coralville Reservoir, White-winged Scotor at five locations, Sandhill Crane at Otter Creek Marsh, and a summer report of Say's Phoebe in northwest Iowa. Uncommon regular species included Little Blue Herons at three locations, Whistling Swans in western Iowa, N Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon at two locations, Little Tern, Cape May Warbler in southwest Iowa, Red Crossbill at 5 locations, and a Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Com Loon: Earliest at Lock 9 on 11 Oct (DK); latest at Big Spirit L on 17 Nov (DH); others at Hamburg (IG, RP), Lock 13 (PP), Johnson Co (TK, MN).

Red-necked Grebe: A winter plumage bird was seen on the Coralville Res on 28 Oct (*TK) and 30 Oct (*TSh).

Horned Grebe: Earliest at Sunken Cove, Pocahontas Co on 6 Oct (RC); latest at Lock 9 on 24 Nov (TK, CB, DK, JS); others at Big Spirit L (DH), Maffit Res, Dallas Co (HZ, LZ) and Coralville Res (TK, MN, TSh).

Eared Grebe: Only report was from SW Iowa at Willow S on 6 Sep (BW).

W Grebe: Three reports from SW Iowa: Fremont Co early Nov (DP via RP) Riverton NWR on 13 Nov (IG) and L Manawa on 19 Nov (TB, BP, SK).

Pied-billed Grebe: 6 nests were found at Willow S with adult feeding young into September; 87 present on 8 Sep (BW).

Am White Pelican: Large numbers in W Iowa with 2,500 at Riverton NWR on 17 Sep (EK via JD) and an early date of 10 Aug (IG); only report from E Iowa was at Credit Is on 15-16 Oct (CS via PP).

rare
in
Iowa

Double-crested Cormorant: 1 adult was present at Red Rock Res in Jun and Jul and 2 adults and 6 immatures were there on 3 Aug, but no nest was found (GB). A colony of 25-30 with 11 used nests were present above Lock 13 (PP). Fall reports of 1-6 birds from 11 localities across the state from 3 Aug to 18 Nov (m.ob.)

*good
it's*

Green Heron: Latest report from Jester P, Polk Co on 21 Oct (SD via JD)

Little Blue Heron: Three reports of 2 immatures each at Willow S on 1-10 Aug (BW), Council Bluffs on 1-10 Aug (JG, TB, SK, BP) and Coralville Res on 11-18 Aug (MN, m.ob.)

Waco

Cattle Egret: There were five reports of 1 to 7 birds from central to W Iowa all between the 4th and 11th of September: 4 Sep Big M, Butler Co (CP via JD), 5 Sep Ames (KW via JD), 6 Sep Humboldt (WH via JD), 6 and 11 Sep Emmett Co (LM, DG via JD) and 7-8 Sep Willow S (*BW).

*Why
limited
time period?
? migration*

Great Egret: Reported from three locations, last on 4 Nov in Humboldt Co (RC).

Black-crowned Night Heron: 14 nests were found this summer at Beeds L, Franklin Co (CP). Fall reports from Willow S on 3 Sep (BW), Coralville Res on 8 Sep (TSh, TK), Little Clear L, Pocahontas Co on 22 Sep (RC) and Little Wall L, Hamilton Co (HZ).

Yellow-crowned Night Heron: An immature was seen from 23 Jul to 7 Sep (*BW).

Least Bittern: One was seen at Sweet M on 3 Jul (TStJr, TSt).

Am Bittern: Only reports were from Willow S on 3 Sep (BW) and Little Clear L on 20 Oct (RC).

*please
re-evaluate
downward that in
which you
were
not called
before.*

Whistling Swan: Swans were seen in the NW corner in Lyon Co on 12 Nov (JV) and the SW corner in Fremont Co on 12-17 Nov (IG, RP, RSi) and at Viking L SP on 24 Nov (RM). Swans are regularly seen in NE Iowa--a large flock (105) was present on 24 Nov (DK, JS, TK, CB, MM).

*I suspect
these are
immature
in SW Iowa*

Snow Goose: 250,000 were reported to be at DeSoto NWR on 18 Nov (JG).

Canada Goose: 4 were present in Franklin Co as early as 3 Aug (DK) and 3,000 were still present in the Ruthven area on 2 Dec (RC).

Wood Duck: Good concentrations were observed in NW Iowa in late Oct: 150 at Rush L, Palo Alto Co on 27 Oct (RC) and 250 at Cherokee on 29 Oct (DB).

Mallard: Many observers commented on the large numbers; 12,000 were reported at Big Spirit L on 11 Nov (DH) and 150,000 at Rush L on 24 Nov (RC).

Am Black Duck: 2 were seen at Bays Branch, Guthrie Co on 25 Nov (RC) and 1 at Keokuk on the same day (TSh). I did not report the ones I saw because I considered them regular in E. Iowa. Woody Brown tells me they are uncommon in central and W Iowa.

Com Pintail: 10 flying south of Ames were unusual on 5 Aug (TSh, TK).

Blue-winged Teal: Late migrants were 3 Nov at Bradgate A, Humboldt Co (RC) and 10 Nov at Lock 13 (PP).

N Shoveler: A hen with 15 ducklings was found at Little Clear L, Pocahontas Co on 14 Jul (RC). Small numbers of Shovelers are seen in Johnson Co, so I failed to realize that they are uncommon nesters in Iowa.

Canvasback: A hen with 9 young was found at North S, Emmett Co on 5 Jul (DH). Over 5,000 were present at Lock 9 on 24 Nov (TK, CB, DK, JS, MM).

Redhead: Several were at Forney L on 11-12 Jun (TStJr, TSt).

White-wing Scotor: There were reports from five widely scattered areas of the state: 1 was shot at Little Clear L on 20 Oct (RC); 1 was shot at L Odessa on 1 Nov (*RT); 8 were present at Little Wall L from 4-12 Nov and 1 of 2 shot was given to ISU collection (*JD, SD, MD); 1 was at George Wyth SP on 11 Nov (*TStJr, TSt, RH, RM, FM); and 3 were shot at Riverton NWR (RP).

Ruddy Duck: 500 were at Lock 13 on 10 Nov (PP).

many reports

VULTURES THROUGH TURKEYS

Turkey Vulture: 30 were present this summer at Red Rock L (GB); 50-100 filled the sky for the fall meeting of the IOU at Keosauqua on 15 Sep.

Osprey: Reports were from 12 locations from 25 Aug to 11 Nov with most in Sep (m.ob.).

Bald Eagle: An immature observed at close range on several occasions on 4, 13, 16 Aug (*TK *TSh) was in the same area of the Coralville Res as the immature Golden Eagle reported previously by Halmi on 28 Jul. Otherwise, the earliest report was 12 Sep from NE Iowa (DK, JS). There were several reports from central and W Iowa--4 from Story and Polk Counties (JD, J Schaefer via (JD, DM), 1 each from Humboldt and Cherokee Counties (RC, DB) and 2 from SW Iowa (JG, IG).

Goshawk: A well-groomed bird was within a stone's throw at DeSoto NWR on 17 Nov (*JG, MG, AB).

Cooper's Hawk: Reported by 8 observers from 8 Sep to 27 Oct.

Red-tailed Hawk: 49 were seen near Cherokee on 6 Oct (DB).

Red-shouldered Hawk: One was seen at Yellow Riv F on 19 Sep (DK).

Broad-winged Hawk: 50-100 were seen near Hiawatha on 15 Sep (RSy via WN).

Swainson's Hawk: Nesting at Hartman's Reserve for third year in a row (TStJr). Several in Lyon Co in late Jul (DH). Five fall records: 16 Aug Hamburg (IG), 18 Aug two in Fayette Co (JS), 5 Sep at Cardinal M (DK) and 9 Sep in Woodbury Co (DK).

Rough-legged Hawk: Earliest reports on 20 Oct in Polk and Cherokee Counties (JD, DB).

Golden Eagle: 3 each were reported from opposite corners of the state on 24-25 Nov at Hamburg (IG) and along the Upper Iowa Riv (*TK, DK, JS, CB, MM).

Peregrine Falcon: Two reports were from George Wyth SP on 28 Sep (TStJr) and south of Cedar Rapids (*MN, CN, WN, BK, CK).

*I suspect
Mick misidentified
this bird.
usually
early.*

note

*apparently regular - have in late Nov
at least
DK + JS
found them
for us.
as promised*

Merlin: 2 were reported at Coralville Res on 15 Sep (FT) and 1 in Hardin Co on 28 Oct (DR via DK).

Am Kestrel: 3 fledglings banded at Davenport on 7 Aug (PP). Fall reports were variable from increased to decreased.

Com Bobwhite: Good numbers were reported in Mills Co (BW).

Gray Partridge: Expansion of range continues with good numbers in NE and NW Iowa (JS, JV).

Wild Turkey: Reports from near Swan L, Johnson Co (TK, TSh) and at Allen's Grove P in north central Scott Co (CR via PP) may be new locations.

CRANES THROUGH TERNS

Sandhill Crane: An injured bird was found at Otter Creek M, Tama Co on 13 Nov. It died in captivity on 24 Nov and is in the ISU collection (JD).

Sora: 1 on 4 Nov in Humboldt Co was late (RC).

Com Gallinule: An adult with 6 young were at Clear L on 5 Jul (CP) and an adult with 3 half grown young were at Green Is on 15 Aug (TK).

Am Avocet: 1 was seen at Coralville Res on 21 Oct (*MN, m.ob.)

Semipalmated Plover: 30 were reported N of Waterloo on 19 Oct (TSt).

Killdeer: 1 in Sioux Co on 10 Nov was late for that area of the state (JV).

Piping Plover: 1 was seen at Coralville Res on 13, 16 Aug (TK).

Lesser Golden Plover: 3 near N Liberty, Johnson Co on 15, 22 Sep (TK, TSh).

Black-bellied Plover: 1 at Coralville Res 15 Sep (TK, TSh); 30 in Harrison Co 2 Nov (JG, RGo).

Hudsonian Godwit: 1 at Coralville Res 4 Aug (TK).

Latent 1A record

Upland Sandpiper: 1 on 15 Sep near N Liberty, Johnson Co was late (TK, TSh).

Greater Yellowlegs: 2 on 9 Nov at Lock 9 were late (DK); 20 at Coralville Res on 20 Oct was a large flock (TK, TSh).

Lesser Yellowlegs: 150 at Rolfe, Pocahontas Co on 2 Sep was a large group (RC).

Willet: Only report from Willow S on 19-20 Aug (BW).

N Phalarope: 1 at Coralville Res on 16 Aug (TK); 1 at Gilmore, Pocahontas Co 20 Sep (*RC).

Am Woodcock: 1 on 27 Oct at Coralville Res (TK, TSh, MM); 1 on 3 Nov in Cedar Co (DK).

Com Snipe: 8 in Sioux Co on 10 Nov were late for that area (JV).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Based on past field reports, information on dowitchers is meager. This may be due to their commonness or uneasiness about reporting species. In order to get more information, I suggest reporting them as short-billed, long billed or Sp. along with comments on the field marks seen or heard. Short-billed were reported from Coralville Res on 17 Aug (MN) and Ames on 23 Sep (HZ).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Reported from Coralville Res on 13, 21 Oct (MN).

W Sandpiper: 2 were reported from Coralville Res on 13 Aug (TK) and 5 from Waterloo on 9-12 Sep (TStJr).

White-rumped Sandpiper: The data on the June reports which I omitted is:

2 at Willow S, Mills Co 1 Jun; 3 at Coralville Res on 3 Jun; 30 near Ft. Madison 3 Jun; and 2 at Rock Creek SP, Jasper Co on 10 Jun.

Baird's Sandpiper: All reports of 1-2 birds at Coralville Res on 3, 16, 18 Aug, 22 Sep, 21 Oct (TK, MN, TSh).

Dunlin: 15-18 on Coralville Res on 20, 21 Oct (TK, TSh, MN).

large flock
Stilt Sandpiper: Common at Coralville Res up to mid Aug with maximum of 56 on 17 Aug (MN, m.ob.). Only other report from Cone M on 29 Sep (TK, TSh).

Franklin's Gull: 30 were seen at Coralville Res on 3 Nov (TK, T Sh) and 4 at Cherokee on 10 Nov (DB).

Bonaparte's Gull: 5 at Saylorville on 20 Oct (JD), 20 at L Macbride on 28 Oct (TK, TSh).

maximum
Com Tern: 2 in winter and summer plumages were observed on 6 Aug at Willow S, Mills Co (*BW).

one
Little Tern: 1 was at Willow S on 2 Aug (*BW).

Summer records seem unusual
Caspian Tern: Early records were from S of Ames on 5 Aug (TK et al, not much compensation for missing the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher) and 13 Aug at Bettendorf (PP). Mid-September records were from Lock 9 (DK, JS) and Polk Co (DiM via WB) on 12 Sep and Coralville Res on 16, 22 Sep (TK, TSh). The summer data which I omitted is: 3 on 3 Jun N of Ft. Madison (JS, DK, PP); 1 on 14 Jun at Dewey's Pasture, Clay Co (JD); 1 on 29 Jun N of Ames JD; and 2 on 10 Jul at Council Bluffs (JG, TB, SK, BP).

Black Tern: These were present all summer at Willow S (BW).

PIGEONS THROUGH KINGFISHERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Young were still in a nest on 8 Sep in Pocahontas Co (RC).

One reported on 20 Oct from Fremont Co was late (BW).

Barn Owl: One was seen at Hamburg on 22 Sep (IG).

Long-eared Owl: A nest with 2 young was found in Lucas Co (GB).

An early fall report was 11 Oct in south Story Co; other reports were in late Nov from northern Polk Co (DM, DiM via WB), Sweet M (TStJr, TSt, RH), and Cedar Falls (RM).

Short-eared Owl: Reports were from Hamburg on 11 Aug (IG), Sioux Center on 22 Sep (JV) and Osceola Co on 11 Nov (RSp via DH).

Saw-whet Owl: The first netting date was late at Davenport on 24 Oct (PP);
2 appeared at Hartman's Reserve on 11 Nov and at George Wyth SP on 17 Nov
(TStJr, TSt, RM).

me
Chuck-will's-widow: Reported from Mills Co in July (RG via JG).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Com Flicker: Red-shafted Flickers were seen in Sioux Co on 10 Nov (JV) and
Shenandoah on 2 Dec (RP).

E Kingbird: 45 were found in a 10 mile stretch near Cone M on 31 Aug (MN).

W Kingbird: 1 was seen in Marion Co on 22 Jun (GB).

Say's Phoebe: 1 was seen in NW Iowa near Akron on 6 Jun (TStJr, TSt, EB).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: No one reported one in the field but 42 were
netted at Davenport from 17 Aug to 22 Sep (PP).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: A relatively heavy migration was reported from
SW Iowa (BW).

JAYS THROUGH STARLINGS

Blue Jay: Flocks of 50-100 were observed in late Sep at Pocahontas (RC).

Am Crow: Large flocks of 400-1000 in Story and Hamilton Counties with 400
at Blairsburg as early as Aug (JD, J Schaefer).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Only report was 27 Sep at Coralville Res (TSh).

House Wren: Young fledged from a nest in Iowa City on 10 Sep (HO).

me
Marsh Wren: Reports from 5 Aug to 25 Nov from 7 locations (m.ob.); the
late record was from Guthrie Co (RC).

Sedge Wren: Many in SW Iowa on 28-29 Sep (JG); 5 other reports from E Iowa in Aug and Sep.

N Mockingbird: None reported.

Gray Catbird: Late on 21 Oct in Iowa City (TSh).

Am Robin: 500 were migrating S into a strong wind on 20 Oct (TSh, TK).

Hermit Thrush: Many were migrating in Ames on 18 Oct (HZ).

Swainson's Thrush: 1 at L Macbride 16 Sep (TK) and Iowa City on 3 Oct (MN) and 21 Oct (TSh).

good!
#5
Golden-crowned Kinglet: Numbers seem to be back to normal with reports from many areas.

Water Pipit: Reports from Sioux Co on 15 Sep (JV), Coralville Res on 15, 21, 22 Sep (TK, TSh, MN) and NE Iowa on 6-28 Oct (JS).

N Shrike: 5 reported in NE Iowa 11, 17, 25, 29, 30 Nov (DK, DR via DK).

Loggerhead Shrike: 1 in Lyon Co on 4 Nov (DH).

VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS

White-eyed Vireo: 1 at George Wyth SP 2-9 Sep (TStJr, TSt).

Bell's Vireo: Aug reports from Iowa City (MN), Cone M (MN, TK), and Willow S (BW).

Philadelphia Vireo: Found at Iowa City on 9 Sep (TK) and 22 Sep (TSh) and at Pocahontas on 13 Sep (RC). Four netted at Davenport 14-25 Sep (PP).

Blue-winged Warbler: These are uncommon in the fall. One was seen at Iowa City on 17 Aug (MN) and one netted in Davenport on 16 Sep (PP). A Brewster's hybrid was reported from Waterloo on 20 Oct (TStJr).

Tennessee Warbler: Late migrants occurred at Iowa City on 22 Oct (TSh) and Davenport on 23 Oct (netted, PP).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Late observations were at Coralville Res on 21 Oct (MN) and Pinicon Ridge, Linn Co on 27 Oct (TK, TSh, MM).

Nashville Warbler: Late at Iowa City on 22 Oct (TSh).

rare S.W. IA
Cape May Warbler: 1 at Hamburg on 4 Oct was unusual (IG); another seen at Davenport on 15 Sep (PP).

rare - Black-throated Blue Warbler: 2 were netted at Davenport on 16 Sep and 22 Oct (PP).

Bay-breasted Warbler: Two late reports: one netted at Davenport 8 Oct (PP) and one seen at Coralville Res on 20 Oct (*TK, TSh).

rare Pine Warbler: There were 3 sightings in Iowa City on 9, 10, 15 Sep (*TK, TSh) and one at Cone M on 25 Sep (TK).

rare Connecticut Warbler: One was netted at Davenport on 14 Sep (PP). and one seen at Iowa City on 22 Sep (TSh).

Canada Warbler: One netted at Davenport 3 Oct (PP).

Am Redstart: A late one netted at Davenport on 23 Oct (PP).

MEADOWLARKS THROUGH BUNTINGS

late Yellow-headed Blackbird: A late record at Rush L, Palo Alto Co on 27 Oct (RC).

Orchard Oriole: A nest was found near Pleasantville (GB) and several were seen in Blackhawk Co in late Jun and early July (TStJr, TSt).

common NE IA.
Brewer's Blackbird: 1 at Decorah on 9 Nov (DK) and several at Riverton NWR on 23 Nov (RP).

Com Grackle: A flock of about 3,000 at Coralville Res on 17 Nov (TK, TSh).

late Scarlet Tanager: Late reports were from Davenport on 22 Oct (netted, PP) and Ames on 28 Oct (HZ).

*nest
nest*
N Cardinal: A nest with young was destroyed by a Blue Jay on 19 Sep in Iowa City (AK).

Blue Grosbeak: Two summer reports from NW Iowa: 1 near Akron, Plymouth Co on 12 Jun (TStJr, TSt, EB) and 1 in Osceola Co (DH). Doug Harr reports that they have been breeding in SW Minnesota for the last three years.

Dickcissel: 1 in Harrison Co on 2 Nov was late (JG, RGo).

Pine Siskin: 4 reports from late Sep to mid-Oct (DM, JS, DB, PP).

*many,
none last
year*
Red Crossbill: 10-20 at Sioux Center on 20, 23, 24 Sep (JV); 2 at Coralville Res on 27 Oct (TSh, TK, MM); 1 at Iowa City on 6 Nov (CN); 4 at Cambridge, Story Co on 10 Nov (GF via JD); and 12 at Rock Valley on 10 Nov (JV).

Rufous-sided Towhee: One was present at Ames on 26-27 Oct (TRM, TM via HZ); 1 of western race was in Iowa City on 28, 30 Nov (TK).

Savannah Sparrow: The latest record was 11 Nov at Lock 9 (JS, DK).

LeConte's Sparrow: 5 in Sioux Co on 11 Oct (DB); 2 at Coralville Res on 18, 20 Oct (TSh, TK, FT); *20 in Montgomery Co, SW IA on 13 Oct (RM)*

rare
Sharp-tailed Sparrow: One was seen at Cone M on 23 Sep (TSh).

N Junco: The earliest report was 1 Oct at Pocahontas (RC).

Fox Sparrow: 40 were seen at the Coralville Res on 28 Oct (MN).

Lapland Longspur: Many were seen in NE Iowa in early Nov (JS); earliest date was 7 Oct (JS).

Snow Bunting: The earliest report was in Chickasaw Co on 10 Nov (DK).

*documented

COMMENTS

Many contributors commented favorably on the change in format and several brought oversights to my attention. Several late summer reports were received, some due to slow mail and the change over in field editors. I have decided to include the late reports under the species accounts so that they can be easily found for later retrieval. Only the more significant findings from late reports will be included, but all reports will be kept on file.

In spite of a rather dull season, the number and quality of contributions were excellent. Twenty-four contributors sent 76 pages of information including 20 documentations of unusual sightings. Only 13 pages were on less than 8½ x 11 inch pages. There were 8 late reports comprising 22 pages and 3 documentations.

One of the obvious problems contributors face is what to report. Over the next few seasons I would like to approach this problem in a series of comments. The most obvious species to report are those classified as casual or accidental, ie those species not on the Iowa Ornithologists Union Field Check List. I think all sightings of these species should be documented. Even if they are easy to identify, the information on the documentation form will be useful for long-term study of these species in Iowa. I heard of at least two sightings of casual species which were not reported and two that were reported are not included because of insufficient documentation. Regular but rare species should also be reported and documented if they are difficult to identify. I would be interested in your opinion of which species on the check list should always be documented. Also consider which species on the field check list should always be reported and let me know your views.

Another problem that makes for considerable judgement on my part is the handling of secondhand reports. I am not sure whether they have been evaluated by the contributor or just passed on because they are of interest. It would be easier, and I think better, if contributors would only pass on information they are willing to have their name associated with. Observers who are not contributors are of two categories: those who have accompanied contributors on field trips, and those who have reported to the contributor. For lack of a better word, I have indicated the latter situation by using the word "via" between observer and contributor. For persons who bird together, combined reports are more convenient, but I recommend that all individuals document rare sightings.

The reporting dates for 1980 will be the same as previous years: Winter = Dec, Jan, Feb; Spring = Mar, Apr, May; Summer = Jun, Jul; Fall = Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov. Please mail reports on or before 1 March, 1 June, 1 Aug and 1 December. Include comments on any unusual weather or habitat conditions that have affected birding in your area.