

June 29, 1985

Dear Jim,

I understand you wanted these early this time, so here you are.

Regarding the two inclusions for possible use in the General Notes section of Iowa Bird Life.... The one on the Worm-eating Warblers and the Kentucky Warblers was at the suggestion of Jim Sandrock who thought the high counts for these species was worthy of mention. I kind of thought the nesting evidence of the Worm-eating Warblers was more important, hence the length of this combined effort. If the length of this is a problem, I assume someone will let me know.

Regarding the Worm-eating Warbler write-up.... I didn't know if this was sufficiently important for General Notes inclusion--it seems that about everyone I talk to has ~~xxx~~ an Iowa Prairie Warbler or two despite the dearth of accepted records. Anyway, here it is. I didn't know the protocol of submitting these, so I will also send ~~x~~ copys to Pete Peterson.

Finally on this subject.... If you feel there are inaccuracies in the proposed General Notes, or changes should be made, or if one or both should not be used, please feel free to tell me or Pete. My skin is pretty thick. I will certainly respect your opinion.

In other matters, Croton Unit of Shimek Forest yielded 11 species of Warblers this summer--2 better than last. They included Common Yellowthroat, Cerulean, Parula, Chat, Blue-winged, L. Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Kentucky, Worm-eating, Black and White, and Prairie.

Also, I assume Mark Proescholdt will report a Blue Grosbeak from C.U.S.F. this summer. This was precisely the same location I saw one almost exactly 1 year before. Both birds were seen only once.

Have a great vacation!!!

SINCERELY -
Bob (Bob)

Season: Summer Year: 1985 Name and address Robert Cecil (RCe)
 Other observers (name, city): (print or type) 327 S. 6th
Francis Moore (FLM) Waterloo; Steve Dins- Keokuk, Iowa 52632

Use first few lines to give weather and habitat conditions. Use line(s) below species data to give additional details, if needed. Mail to: T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City IA 52240 by 1 Mar, 1 Jun, 1 Aug, or 1 Dec.

SPECIES	NO.	DATE	LOCATION - COMMENT - OTHER OBSERVERS
Am White Pelican	16	July 13, 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /SD, WRS on 14th. FLM
Great Blue Heron	100+	July 13, 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /SD, WRS on 14th. FLM
Great Egret	14	July 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /SD, WRS, FLM
Snowy Egret	**	**	**See Documentation**
Gr. White Fronted Goose	1	July 13	Willow Slough, Mills Co. /FLM
" "	1	July 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /SD, FLM, WRS
Lesser Scaup	4 ♂	Until June 17	Lingered on Miss. R., Montrose, Lee County
Common Merganser	1	June 10	Lingered on Miss. R. Keokuk
N. Harrier	1	July 14	Wayne County (S. Central Iowa)
Cooper's Hawk	1	June 12	Saw well as this bird flew overhead, near Ft. Madison, Lee Co. Twice length of pursuing Red ^{WRS}
" "	1	June 16	C.U.S.F. Watched for 3 to 5 minutes as bird circled overhead, gaining height.
Wild Turkey	31	July 11	C.U.S.F. Watched two adult females shepherding 29 half grown young.
Semipalmated Plover	1	July 13	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. with FLM
Greater Yellowlegs	1	July 13	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /FLM
Wilson's Phalarope	1	July 13	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /FLM
Franklin's Gull	1	July 13	Willow Slough, Mills Co. /FLM
Ring-billed Gull	5	July 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /FLM, SD, WRS
" "	30	Summered	Miss. River Pool 19 between Keokuk and Montrose (Lee Co.) Annual event, I think
" "	100	July 25	Evidently early migrants--not here before this. Birds stay behind Keokuk dam but on Ill. side.
Caspian Tern	3	July 14	I.P.L. Ponds, /SD, WRS
Forester's Tern	4	July 14	I.P.L. Ponds, Pot. Co. /WRS, SD, FLM
" "	6	July 14	Forney Lake, Fremont Co. /WRS, SD, FLM
Least Tern	3	July 13, 14	I.P.L. Ponds /FLM (13th), FLM, SD, WRS, (14th)

NOTE: C.U.S.F. Means Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest, 2 1/2 miles west of Argyle, Lee County. Also, the slash mark "/" preceding observer initials means "with"

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use initials of obsv. on species line

SPECIES	NO.	DATE	LOCATION - COMMENT - OTHER OBSERVERS
Black Tern	113	July 25	This large flock on Miss. R. at Montrose(Lee Co.)
Chuck-will's Widow	3	July 12	N. of Waubonsie S.P.(Fremont Co.)
Acadian Flycatcher	8	summered	C.U.S.F. I presume there are many more in area.
Western Kingbird	4	July 13	Fremont Co. / FLM
Purple Martin	4500	July 28	This annual event located at riverfront, Keokuk. Made estimate of #s last night with Zelma Williams a venerable old Ill. Auduboner--estimate conservative. #s appear to be ahead of last year, but don't quote. This is a spectacular sight in the evening.
Carolina Wren	1	July 20	Lacey Keosauqua S.P.(VanBuren Co.) / James Sandrock (JPS)
N. Mockingbird	2	July 12	Davis Co. (2 locations)
White-eyed Vireo	4	summered	C.U.S.F. Count is of singing birds (males?)
Solitary Vireo	1	July 13	Waubonsie S.P.(Fremont Co.). FLM first heard call and said "Solitary Vireo!" (I don't know call). We quickly found bird above us. The bird was unmistakable ix with gray cap, white spectacles, wing bars, vireo size. We had excellent view for several seconds. Distance, perhaps 30 feet.
Northern Parula	7+	summer	I found singing males in 3 locations in Lee Co. FLM found yet another for total of 4 Lee Co. sites
Prairie Warbler	**	**	**See Documentation**
Cerulean Warbler	1	June 29	C.U.S.F. Feeding Cowbird
Black and White Warbler	1	June 16	Female. CUSF
" "	2	June 20	1 female, 1 male, singing, C.U.S.F.
" "	1	June 22	1 male, singing. C.U.S.F. /James P. Sandrock
" "	1	July 2	1 male, not heard singing, C.U.S.F.
Prothonotary Warbler	5	June 30	Miss. River bottoms, Lee Co.
Warbler			

Title suggestion: Summer Warbler Observations, Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest??

For: GENERAL NOTES

At approximately 7:15 a.m. on 20 June 1985 in the Croton Unit of Shimek Forest, Lee County, ^(Cecil) I observed two adult Worm-eating Warblers (Helmitheros vermivorus) engaged in apparent nest-building and breeding activities. ^{He} I first saw one of the birds carrying what appeared to be a small moth. ~~About one minute after spotting the bird, it flew about 20 feet to a tree and gave the insect to a brown~~ ^{which it gave} ~~juv~~ ^{juvenile} bird that was slightly larger than the adult warbler. The ^{young} ~~juv~~ bird sat almost motionless in the tree, but frequently made "begging" sounds typical of a Brown-headed Cowbird (Molothrus ater). The ^{juvenile} ~~juv~~ Cowbird was identified by its gray-brown plumage, faint streaking on the breast, dark legs, and size. During the entire period of observation, the adult warblers were active and ^{gave} ~~vocal,~~ ^{gave} ~~mostly by~~ repeated chip notes.

A few minutes later and some 300 yards from the ^{above} ~~sighting,~~ ^(Cecil) ^{Saw} I (observed) another pair of Worm-eating Warblers actively foraging near the ground, ~~within a small area.~~ One of the birds carried a small caterpillar to a ^{juvenile} ~~juv~~ Worm-eating Warbler which was uniformly brown, with slightly lighter underparts. I ^{He} saw no crown stripes, but I did observe a faint, dusky eye streak, an indistinct malar streak, and pink legs. The ^{juvenile} ~~juv~~ was approximately the size of the adult bird and it flitted about quite actively, more so when the parent was near. It remained close to the ground and made no sounds.

At the same time and location, ^(Cecil) ^{Saw} I observed another Worm-eating Warbler carrying in its bill small wisps of what appeared to be fine, dry grass, with which the bird flitted about and then made its way to the ground by descending a small branch. The warbler

disappeared from view as it dropped to the ground. Approximately three minutes later, it emerged from precisely the place of its disappearance. ^{It} I did not attempt to approach the site more closely for fear of disturbing the bird if, indeed, nest construction was taking place. Follow-up was not possible as the area was bulldozed the next day by the Iowa Conservation Commission.

Although these observations would be sufficient for confirmation of nesting by Worm-eating Warbler by criteria established by the Breeding Bird Survey, these sightings would constitute evidence of "inferred nesting" according to the more stringent standards adopted by the authors of Iowa Birds (Dinsmore, et al.). The last accepted Iowa nesting of this species occurred prior to 1900.

On 22 June 1985, ~~the co-author~~ ^{we} and I birded this same area. The juvenal Towbird, still being fed by the Worm-eating Warblers, was in the same place. At the location of the possible nest construction (see above), we observed at least 6 Worm-eating Warblers, all in adult plumage. These birds were in a small area, perhaps 25 yards square, and were seen at all levels--from near the ground to high in the overstory. At one time, at least 5 birds of this ~~one~~ species were all very high on one limb of a large oak tree. More than one male was singing, and other birds produced the chip note. We counted an additional 5 or 6 Worm-eating Warblers at this same time, all in locations sufficiently distant to eliminate the possibility of duplication.

On this same day, at least 6 very active Kentucky Warblers (Oporornis formicivorus) were seen and heard in a small (5 yards square) opening in the dense deciduous forest. (This concentration of Kentucky Warblers was located only 25 yards from the group of Worm-eating Warblers described above.) Two adult Kentucky Warblers were seen feeding

a ^{juvenile} ~~juvenile~~ of this species in the low branches of shrubs and saplings. Other adults were in the immediate vicinity. At least 15 Kentucky Warblers were seen and/or heard in a relatively small area--perhaps 200 yards square--in approximately one hour.

The high number of individuals of both warbler species (not in migration) active within a small area appears to be unique behavior. ~~It is possible~~ ^{It is possible} that these unusual concentrations of these shy, ground-nesting species were caused either by the recent and extensive bulldozing activity in the area, sometime between the afternoon of 20 June and the morning of 22 June, or by the extremely heavy rains which occurred in this area during the night of 21-22 June. Each of these events--or a combination of the two--could have caused habitat alteration and/or nest destruction.

} Not clear

A survey of Iowa Bird Life from 1931 to the present revealed no reports of such warbler concentrations. In fact, there have been few, if any, years that as many as 12 individual Worm-eating Warblers have been reported throughout the state. Nor does Bent ⁽¹⁹⁶³⁾ comment on such "flocking" behavior. ~~These and other works consulted are listed below.~~

ROBERT CECIL, 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, IA 52632.

JAMES P. SANDROCK, 1634 Morningside Dr. Iowa City, Iowa 52240

References

Bent, A. C., 1963. The Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers (Parts I and II), Dover Publications: Philadelphia.

Dinsmore, J. J., T. H. Kent, D. Koenig, P. C. Petersen, and D. M. Roosa, 1984. Iowa Birds. Iowa State University Press, Ames, p. 270.

Iowa Bird Life 1-55, No. 1.

{ Welty, J. C., 1982. The Life of Birds, 3rd ed. CBS College Publishing: Philadelphia.

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needed?