

FIELD REPORT - SUMMER - JUNE 1 Through JULY 31, 1977

Reporter: Gene Burns, P.O.Box 32, Jamaica, Iowa 50128 (Reporting initials - GeB).

Area Covered: My regular census area for my Christmas Bird Count in Guthrie, Dallas and Greene Counties, plus McCerds Pond west of Bayard (Guthrie Co), Riverside Park at Ceon Rapids, and various back roads from Jamaica to Templeton. A few observations were made while surveying 11 counties for Pete Peterson for "Birding Areas of Iowa" articles for the Iowa Bird Life magazine.

Weather: Throughout the period the conditions were much drier than usual. July had some very hot dry weather which lasted for quite sometime. Rainfall in the Jamaica area was June - 1.6 inches, July - 3.4 inches. However Springbrook State Park did receive a 6 inch rainfall on Thursday, July 28th.

Habitat Conditions: Lakin Slough, Long Pond and several small streams completely dried up and have been this way for quite some time. The Bays Branch area received a 3 inch rain on Thursday, July 28th, and some water did accumulate in the middle and on the lower end of the "Branch", but not enough to do much good. It will take a lot of water to get this area filled back up again like it used to be and until then the Conservation Commission will be unable to get their program started on raising ~~Canada~~ Canadian Geese at the "Branch".

Species Observed: June - 88, July - 76.

Specific Comments: Great Blue Heron: They seem to be almost absent from my area this summer.

American Kestrel: Only a few observations made this summer season. Their numbers seem to be down considerably.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: I have had many observations this season, and they seem more numerous than last year.

Cliff Swallows: I have located several more nesting areas and this species seems to be doing quite well in my area.

! [ Common Crow: Their numbers seem to be down considerably not only in my area, but everywhere in Iowa that I have been driving on the county surveys for Pete Peterson.

[ Loggerhead Shrike: I seem to have a pocket of Loggerheads in my census area and they seem more plentiful there than elsewhere during my driving throughout the state. Gladys Black has suggested that I do a study on them when I receive my banding permit.

[ Vesper Sparrow: I have noted more Vespers this year in my area and also elsewhere in the state. They seemed to have increased over last year.

Extraordinary Sightings: None.

Uncommon Sightings: Western Kingbird: 14 of this species observed on July 2nd and ~~3~~ 3rd in western Monona and Harrison counties while checking this area for Pete Peterson.

Blue Grosbeak: 12 of this species observed on July 2nd and 3rd in western Monona and Harrison counties while checking this area for Pete Peterson. I also observed ~~1~~ 2 adults (1 male & 1 female) and 2 fledged young ~~3 1/2~~ miles northwest of Coon Rapids July 14th thru July 22nd. Nest found, young captured and photographed. (I also observed another adult male at the west edge of Templeton on Aug. 1st, but I will officially report that on my next Field Report).

Nest Records: Louisiana Waterthrush: June 3rd, Riverside Park at Coon Rapids, 3 eggs and 1 young. ~~Picture taken~~ Picturestkn. Outcome: Failure due to predation on June 8th.

Common Yellowthroat: Early June, Springbrook State Park, 4 young. Outcome: Failure due to human activities (Tractor mower cut nest down). Pictures taken.

Red-winged Blackbird: Early July, McCord's Pond, 4 eggs. Outcome: These 4 eggs were hatched successfully. I checked nest from time to time and the young were doing quite nicely. Then on my next to the last time at the nest, only one fledged young was found. I checked the nest 2 days later and found this young dead and rotting in the nest. Cause unknown, but the weather was extremely hot at this time. Pictures taken.

Blue Grosbeak: July 14 1st observation, nest discovered July 18th. Two heavily feathered young nearby. Outcome: Successful. I was able to capture the young even though they could fly for a considerable distance. I waited until they flew back into the nest site area and then used a hemp weed to camouflage myself and reached around it and grabbed them. I have used this method very successfully for quite a long time now. Pictures taken. (I have also observed another Male Adult Blue Grosbeak at the west edge of Templeton, but have not had the time to spend observing it to try and locate its nest site. My wife and I are leaving for Washing State Friday Aug. 5 and will be returning Aug. 18th. If the bird is still hanging around where I observed it before, I will ~~attempt~~ attempt to locate its nest also, as it will probably be a second brood and perhaps I will be able to record the nest record for Cornell on this nest too. I will report any success on the next Field Report.)

Of course there are other nest records, but I thought perhaps you might be interested in these above. I am now observing a Yellow-billed

Cuckoos nest that I located on Aug. 1st. It has 2 eggs and I will officially report in on my next Field Report. I am having a competent Bird Watcher observe this nest for me while I am in Washington State. It is located 4 miles west of Coon Rapids.

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- (1) Loons thru Cormorants: Nothing to report.
- (2) Hérons thru Geese: Great Blue Herons are almost entirely absent in my area this year.  
Green Herons: Observed regularly in my area.
- (3) Ducks: Wood ducks observed on several occasions. 1 young found in town of Jamaica by children was brought to me and I turned it over to the Gamewarden's wife at Guthrie Center to raise.  
Blue-winged Teal: Seen regularly at McCords pond.
- (4) Vultures, Hawks: Turkey Vultures: Observed regularly  
Red-tailed Hawks: " "  
American Kestrel: Very few observations. Their numbers are definitely down in my area.
- (5) Turkeys thru Coots: American Coot: A few observations made.
- (6) Shorebirds: American Woodcock: Observed on many occasions in the Riverside Park area at Coon Rapids.  
Upland Sandpiper: 4 frequently observed just West of Jamaica in July.  
Spotted Sandpiper: Observations in both June & July.
- (7) Gulls, Terns: A Caspian Tern observed June 12th at Meadowlake in Adair County.  
Black Tern: Several observed at Prairie Rose Lake State Park in Shelby County on July 2nd.
- (8) Doves thru Woodpeckers: Yellow-billed Cuckoo: They seem more plentiful this year. I sighted 6 on my Federal Bird Breeding route in June and there seems to be quite a few in my census area. I have noticed them elsewhere in the state quite often.  
Black-billed Cuckoo: I have only observed 1 all season and ~~that~~ that was at the east edge of Earling in Shelby County.  
Sight or sound observations of the Screech, Great-horned, and Barred Owls both June and July.  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 8 Ruby-throats arrived June 2nd at my brother-in-law's farm East of Greenfield and have come to their feeders numerous times daily since then. This is the second year for them at this farm. I have not seen any at our feeders all season. (Picture taken)  
Hairy Woodpecker: I have only observed 1 Hairy this season.  
Red-headed Woodpeckers: They are in good numbers everywhere I go in my census area and through my part of the state.

(9) Flycatchers thru Crows:

Western Kingbird: 14 observed in Western Monona and Harrison Counties July 2nd and 3rd.

Great-Crested Flycatcher: They are in good numbers in my area this year.

Cliff Swallows: They seem to be doing quite well in my area and I have located several more nesting sites which now makes about 30 locations and some of these contain between 100 and 300 nests each. When I get my banding permit, I am going to continue the study started by Dr. John Faaberg now of Columbia University in Missouri, and Jim Rod, now of the National Audubon. I feel that I should be able to band several hundred of this species each year if they keep returning to this area as they have been.

Purple Martin: They are ~~still~~ sadly lacking in my area and also everywhere else that I have driven during the past 2 months in the 11 county survey that I was doing.

Common Crow: Crows are really scarce in my ~~area~~ area and also everywhere else that I have been. On 2 different days while driving the bird survey counties, I travelled 250 miles the first day before seeing any Crows, and then I only sighted 1. On the second day I travelled nearly 300 miles ~~and~~ before seeing my first crow. This time there were 4 in this flock. Only 5 crows in 2 days and nearly 900 miles of driving. What has happened to them.

~~ix~~(10) Titmice thru Wrens: No Titmice observed in my area but on June 12, I observed 2 in Pammel State Park in Madison County near Winterset.

(11) Mimics thru Shrikes:

Wood Thrush: Several heard and a few observed while I was conducting several bird walks in June near Springbrook State Park.

Eastern Bluebird: Observed both months.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One observed June 18 at Springbrook State Park.

Cedar Waxwing: Observed both months.

Loggerhead Shrike: Many observations made in June and July in my census area and only 4 sighted during my 11 county trip. I feel that I definitely have a pocket of Loggerheads in the middle of my census area.

(12) Vireos, Warblers: Red-eyed Vireo: Observed in Audubon Co in June.

Warbling Vireo: Observed both months.

Yellow Warbler: Observed both months in my census area.

Ovenbird: 3 heard in timber near Earlham on June 12.

Louisiana Waterthrush: 2 observed at Riverside Park Coon Rapids June 3rd thru June 8th. Nest found: 3 eggs 1 young. Nest failure due to predation.

Mourning Warbler: Observed at McCords Pond June 2nd.

American Redstart: Several observations at Springbrook State Park during June.

(13) Blackbirds, Tanagers:

Bobolinks: Many observed at North end of Bays Branch and West of Bagley during June. None observed in July.

Eastern Meadowlark: Several seen and heard both months.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds: A good number of them nested at McCords pond again this season. The last part of July their numbers diminished considerably in this area. None this year at Lakin Slough account dry.

Orchard Oriole: I had observations of this species in ~~my~~ many places throughout my travels in Iowa. They seem more numerous than last year.

Northern Oriole: Many nests located in various areas. 3 bathe regularly in my back yard at Jamaica.

*True for many areas with*

(14) Finches, Sparrows: Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Many observations in my census area.

Blue Grosbeak: ~~12~~ 12 observed in western Monona and Harrison counties on July 2nd and 3rd. Also 2 observed 3½ miles northwest of Coon Rapids July 14th thru July 22nd. Nest found 2 fledged young. 1 captured and picture taken.

(Another Blue Grosbeak observed at Templeton on Aug 1st, but I will officially report that on my next field report).

Dickcissel: Quite numerous this year.

American Goldfinch: 10 to 15 are feeding daily at our thistle feeder.

Rufus-sided Towhee: 1 observed at Springbrook State Park July 29.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Many good close observations on this species in my census area this past two months.

Vesper Sparrow: Many sightings of this ~~px~~ species in my area and also in various other places throughout my travels.

Lark Sparrow: I had several close observations of this species in northeastern Dallas county between Woodward and Granger on June 25. This is the only place I have seen them this year. I did not have any sightings at all last year.

Chipping Sparrow: Frequently seen.

Field Sparrow: Heard and observed many times.

Song Sparrow: In good numbers in my area.

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*Gene Burns*  
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8/3-77