

Burns

I will try & simplify this report next time & setup a system using abbreviations
Gene Burns

FIELD REPORT * SPRING * April 1 thru May 31, 1977

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

Area Covered: My regular Christmas Bird Count Census Area in Guthrie, Dallas and Greene Counties, plus McCords Pond west of Bayard, Iowa (Guthrie Co) and Riverside Park at Coon Rapids, Iowa (Carroll Co). A few observations were made on a 2 day run through Audubon and Carroll Counties for Pete Peterson's Iowa Birding Area's articles.

Weather: Throughout the period much drier and windier than usual. Rainfall amounts down considerably.

Habitat Conditions: Lakin Slough, Long Pond and several small streams completely dried up. Farmers have done considerable tiling. Many fences removed and several groves of trees and many single trees removed. Telephone lines buried in several places. Habitat areas for several species have diminished considerably. (Goose Lake in Greene County is out of the area I cover regularly, but it is completely dry).

General Trend of Species Population: Most usual species population seemed to be about the same as a year ago, with a few up in numbers, and one alarmingly down in numbers.

Extraordinary Sightings: White-faced Ibis and Golden-crowned Sparrow. (Documentations have already been mailed to you on these 2 species). Cinnamon Teal observed for 4 days in creek 1 mile West of Bayard.

(1) Loon thru Cormorants: No Common Loons or Double-crested Cormorants observed at Lake Panorama area this year. Pied-billed Grebes in good numbers.

(2) Herons thru Geese:
Great Blue Herons down in numbers.
Green Heron holding steady.
Great Egret - Only 1 observed this spring and that was at McCords Pond.
Black-crowned Night Heron: Only 1 observed at Bays Branch.
Canada Geese and Snow Geese holding steady.
White-fronted Geese have increased in numbers.

(3) Ducks:
Canvasback ducks holding steady.
Common Goldeneye Duck down in numbers.
Ruddy Ducks may have increased.
All other species holding steady.
No observations made of Black Duck, Oldsquaw or Hooded Merganser this year.

(4) Vultures, Hawks:
Turkey Vultures have increased.
Red-tailed Hawks holding steady.
Marsh Hawk Down in numbers
Osprey holding steady.
American Kestrel alarmingly down in numbers. Very few

observations made during this 2 month reporting period. This is the lowest number of Kestrels that I have ever seen.

- (5) Turkeys thru Coots: 1 Wild Turkey observed at Ledges State Park Area on May 18th when I went there to try and observe both Waterthrushes and the Cerulean Warblers. Coots holding steady.
- (6) Shorebirds: All shore birds holding steady. The Upland Sandpipers came back to their regular area. Of course the Upland's use to be near Herndon every year until the past 3 years when their habitat was removed, but they are still in the Northeast corner of my census area. More Hudsonian Godwits observed this year than in the past.
- (7) Gulls, Terns: Holding steady.
- (8) Doves thru Woodpeckers: Mourning Doves may have increased some. Owls common to this area holding steady. I have been trying to locate a Long-eared Owl nest at Bays Branch, but have been unsuccessful so far. I have observed him in this area for 3 years. Whip-poor-will's plentiful at Springbrook State Park. All others common to this area holding steady. All woodpeckers including Hairry holding steady, but no observations made of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.
- (9) Flycatchers thru Crows: All Flycatchers holding steady. Willow Flycatcher may have increased in numbers. Larks and Swallows holding steady. Cliff Swallows have increased. Purple Martins down in numbers, and perhaps more so than I realize. Jays and Crows steady.
- (10) Titmice thru Wrens: Titmice may have increased somewhat in this area.
Mimics
- (11) Thrushes thru Shrikes: 1 Mockingbird observed May 13 southwest of Bayard 3 miles. Wood Thrushes have ~~14/14/14/14~~ increased in my area. Loggerhead Shrikes holding steady and seem in good supply especially in the central part of my area, near Bays Branch.
- (12) Vireos, Warblers: All Vireos observed except the ~~White-eyed~~ White-eyed and are holding steady. Warbling Vireo may have increased. Warbler observations greatly less than last year. Apparently they passed through quite quickly. Golden-winged Warbler observed at Springbrook State Park on May 18. Both the Northern and Louisiana Waterthrush observed at Riverside Park at Coon Rapids. (I had been observing a Louisiana Waterthrush during my noon hour for about 10 days and I located her nest with 3 eggs and 1 baby on Friday ~~the~~ June 3 but I will report that officially in my Summer report).

- (13) Blackbirds, Tanagers: Yellow-headed Blackbirds all gone from Lakin Slough area, account dry, however they have increased considerably at McCords Pond near Bayard. Orchard Orioles near Coon Rapids and at McCords Pond. Other species holding steady.
- (14) Finches, Sparrows: Dickcissels, Purple Finches, Goldfinches, Grasshopper Sparrows, Harris' Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and Swamp Sparrows in good numbers this year. Vesper sparrows have ~~increased~~ increased in this area. Other species holding steady.

Jamaica, Iowa
April 6, 1977

Dr. N.S.Halmi
Route #6
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Dear Fellow "Birder":

The following is my "Field Report" for the period Feb. 14, 1977 through March 31, 1977. You already have my report from Dec. 1, 1976 through Feb. 13, 1977.

(1) Loon through Cormorants: 1 Common Loon observed at the Dale Maffitt Reservoir Sunday 3/27/77 (I was with the Des Moines Audubon Society on the Spring Waterfowl Trip, so it will undoubtedly be reported by them.)

1 Pied-billed Grebe observed on Little Wall Lake north of Ames. (I was with the Ames Audubon Society on their Spring Waterfowl Trip so all observations of mine on 3/12/77 Saturday may be duplicated by their reporter.

(2) Hérons through Geese: 1 Great Blue Heron observed just north of Springbrook State Park Saturday 3/26/77

(1 Black-crowned Night Heron at Bays Branch Sunday April 3rd, 1977, but I will report this officially in my Spring Field Reports).

Thousands of ~~Swan~~ Geese at McCords Pond west of Bayard, many on Bays Branch and many on Lake Panorama. Arrival dates (or at least my first observation dates as follows:)

3/6 - Canada Geese and Snow Geese.
3/10 - White-fronted Geese.

(3) Ducks:

Same as above with thousands of ducks at McCords Pond west of Bayrd, many on Bays Branch, and many on Lake Panorama. Arrival dates (my first observations) as follows:

3/6 - Mallard (Of course a few hundred wintered at Lake Panorama), Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser.
3/8/77 - Redheads and Canvasbacks.
3/9/77 - American Wigeon.
3/10/77 - American Green-winged Teal and Ring-necked.
3/12/77 - Northern Shoveler.
3/14/77 - Buffelheads.
3/17/77 - Wood ducks.
3/20/77 - Gadwalls, and Red-breasted Mergansers.

Common Mergansers seen at Little Wall Lake 3/12/77

(Cont'd on page #2)

(4) Diurnal Raptors:

2/19/77 (Sat) - My wife and I spent the day with Gladys Black and drove her from Pleasantville to Stephens Forest near Lucas and observed 13 Red-tailed Hawks on the trip. Ate supper at Chariton and tried calling up Owls with my tape-recorder later that evening for Gladys, but did not have any luck.

2/20/77 (Sun) - 1 Bald Eagle observed at Bellevue.

2/21/77 (Mon) - 12 Bald Eagles observed near Cassville, Wisc (This may not be of importance for your ~~fax~~ report, but as my wife and I belong to the Eagle Valley Environmentalists, we thought we would mention the number seen anyway.)

3/13/77 1 Bald Eagle (Immature) observed fishing at Lake Panorama.

George Hemmen, Conservation Officer for ~~Shickler~~ Guthrie and Audubon Counties, advised me he had observed an adult Bald Eagle near McCord's Pond, however I have not seen it there as yet.

Also several American Kestrels seen during this report period.

3/25/77 I observed a Northern Harrier on my way to work. He was a beautiful sight to see on a lovely spring morning. He was just west of Bayard near a little creek that I check daily and was doing his hunting in that area.

(5) Turkeys through Coots:

Our trip with Gladys Black to Stephens Forest was to try and see the Wild Turkeys. We did not see any but being with Gladys was quite enjoyable. We are going to try it with her another time.

And incidently there were 6 more Wild Turkeys released at Elk Grove west of Bayard and there will be more released there in the future,

3/12/77 Coots observed at McCords Pond Bayard Ia.

(6) Shorebirds:

February nothing to report.

March first observations as follows:

3/6/77 American Woodcock in Riverside Park area near Coon Rapids. Have sighted it ~~twice~~ since then.

3/24 Greater Yellow-legs McCord's Pond Bayard Ia

3/25 Common Snipe McCords' Pond.

3/27 Long-billed Noddy north end of Lake Panorama area.

(7) Gulls, Terns:

3/12/77 5 Ring-billed Gulls Little Wall Lake north of Ames. Several observed at Bays Branch and Lake Panorama since this date.

- (8) Cuckoos through Woodpeckers: Great-horned Owls seen occasionally. No other Owls seen or heard during this report period. Many Common Flickers observed last few days, of March. Red-headed Woodpeckers observed regularly on my field trips each week. 2 Hairy Woodpeckers observed regularly at our feeding station in Jamaica, Hairy's also observed occasionally on my weekly field trips.
- (9) Flycatchers through Corvids: Horned Lark population seems down from last year. I have noticed that there are not as many Blue Jays at our feeding station as in the past years.
~~(5 Purple Martins observed at Bayard April 5th, but I will Officially report them on my Spring Field Report).~~
- (10) Titmice through Wrens: White-breasted Nuthatches plentiful. We still have the 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch coming daily to our feeding station. He has been here since Nov. 23, 1976.
- (11) Thrushes through Shrikes: An excellent observation of a Northern Shrike on 3/27 at the north end of Lake Panorama, which I feel is a rather late date for them isn't it? Anyhow I was able to observe him in my scope for nearly 5 minutes. My other observations of Northern Shrikes reported in my previous Winter Field Report letter of 2/13/77. 3/6/77 a Loggerhead Shrike was observed just West of Guthrie Center.
- (12) Vireos, Warblers: Nothing to report.
- (13) Blackbirds, Tanagers: Goodly numbers of Red-wings, Rusty, Brewers, Grackles, and Cowbirds observed from March 6th on.
- (14) Finches, Sparrows: As I review our daily records for our Yard List, , I notice that for some reason, the Cardinals seem to have left our feeding station. We observed it all 28 days during Feby, but only 14 out of 31 days in March. 30 to 35 American Goldfinches feeding daily at our 3 thistle feeders (Just bought another 60 lbs of thistle seed recently). A few Purple finches recently but not every day. 3/27 observed Vesper Sparrow near Bays Branch. Harris' Sparrows (we had 7) have deserted our feeding station as the last observation in our yard being March 1st. (However I did see one again this morning and also 2 Cardinals also this morning 4/6/77). Fox Sparrow seen northeast of Jamaica 3/13 and White-throated Sparrows 3/19.

(***end***)

I realize that perhaps my reports might be a little long and may not contain the information you are needing. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to offer ~~them~~ them as I will receive them as intended.

Best regards & good birding.

Sincerely,

Gene Burns P O Box 32 Jamaica, Iowa 50128