

Kent

Notes on fall birds seen in Iowa City area 1977 T. H. Kent

- Common loon Oct 16 (1), Oct 30 (1), Nov 5 (2), Nov 6 (3), Nov 20 (1)
- horned grebe Oct 2 (1), Oct 16 (3), Nov 5 (2), Nov 6 (1)
- X Western grebe Oct 29 (3) at Jolly Roger
- dbl crested Cormorant Oct 8 (1)
- great egret Sept 24 (1), Oct 2 (3)
- Am bittern Oct 2 (1)
- X White-winged scoter Oct 22 (2) - Jolly Roger
- Sharp-shinned hawk at Hickory Hill Sept 5 to Oct 22, ^{migrating} seen on Sept 15 + Oct 8
- bald eagle - immature Oct 8 + Oct 9, Nov 24
- X Northern phalarope Sept 5 (1) on farm pond on south side of Iowa City
- practically no shore birds seen Sept - Oct
- ringed billed gulls Oct 2 to Nov 17 (max 50)
- X Bonaparte's gull Oct 8 to Nov 6 (max 9)
- Herring gull Nov 20 to Nov 27 (max 16)
- Caspian tern Sept 16 (1)
- long-eared owl Nov 12 (3) Sugar Bottom
- Saw-whet owl Nov 26 (1) Sugar Bottom
- whip-poor-will Sept 1 (1) in yard on Richards St
- ruby-throated hummingbird Sept 28 to Sept 9
- belted kingfisher Sept 5 (3) - Cone Marsh, Oct 2 (1) + Oct 8 (1) - Sugar Bottom
- pileated woodpecker Oct 29 (1) Jolly Roger
- yellow bellied sapsucker Nov 13 (1)
- X yellow bellied flycatcher Sept 7 - Hickory Hill
- X olive-sided flycatcher Sept 5 Hickory Hill
- Eastern phoebe Oct 2 (1), Oct 15 (2) Hickory Hill
- tree swallows - unusually large numbers (1000's) Sept 5 to Nov 5
- red-breasted nuthatch Oct 2 Hickory Hill
- brown creeper Oct 8 - first arrival
- winter wren Oct 15 yard on Richards St

- X Short billed marsh wren Oct 15 (1) Hickory Hill
long billed marsh wren Sept 5 (2) Cotte Marsh
Carolina wren yep to at least Sept 10
catbird - many at Hickory Hill (25) Aug 28 - Oct 9
Swainson's Thrush Aug 28 (1), Sept 11 (1), Sept 16 (1)
bluebird - regular in many locations Sept 16 (2), Oct 9 (3), Oct 15 (1), Oct 16 (2),
Oct 22 (8), Oct 29 (3), Oct 30 (5), Nov 5 (4), Nov 27 (2)
blue gray gnatcatcher Sept 2 (1) Sept 4 (1) Sept 10 (1) Sept 11 (3) Hickory Hill
ruby crowned kinglet Sept 11 (early) to Oct 30
gilded crowned kinglet Oct 9 first arrival
cedar waxwings large numbers Sept 4 to Nov 5 max 100+
vireos + warblers - see attached
rusty blackbird Oct 29 (30), Nov 6 (1)
rose breasted grosbeak - last seen Oct 2
indigo bunting Oct 2 (1) late
purple finch first seen Oct 15
pine siskin Oct 8 (8), Nov 5 (4), Nov 6 (20)
X grasshopper sparrow - a late record on Oct 29 - see documentation
lapland longspur Oct 29 (1)
snow bunting - first arrival on Oct 29 (9), on Nov 26 (150)
sparrows - large fall migration - see attached
evening grosbeak Nov. 13 (1)
white-winged crossbill Nov 22 (15-20)

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species grasshopper sparrow 2. Number: 1

Location 3 miles west of North Liberty IA between H and Swan Lake roads

Date: 10-29-77 *late* 5. Time Bird seen: approx 11 am to 11.05 am

Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Small sparrow facing me on fence wire. Very flat head, pinstripe over top of head. Faint broad eye stripe below darker upper head. Faint, thin white eye ring. Under parts plain and pale, whiter at throat. Clean looking bird with distinct back pattern and distinct, fine streaks extending just onto the shoulder. Narrow tail with ragged end, otherwise angle not good to define tail well.

Description of voice, if heard: not heard

Description of behavior: sat in same position for 5 min and then suddenly flew off and not seen again.

Habitat - general: open fields with small brushy area near roadside. Flock of savannah sparrows in brushy area.
specific: Bird on fence by combined corn field.

Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Henslow's sparrow-this bird did not have color on wing.
LeConte's sparrow-lacked face pattern and straking.
Vesper sparrow-seen in same area 1 week before-not similar to this bird.

Distance (how measured)? 40 feet (estimate) 12. Optical equipment: 20X B&L eyepiece on Bushnell scope and 8X40 Leitz binocs

Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): clear, sun behind and to right of bird, however back light did not affect detail.

Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: common species, more often heard than seen, but seen many times.

Other observers: none

Did the others agree with your identification?

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Used Robbins et al while viewing the bird.

Bent: Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Buntings, Towhees, Finches Sparrows, and Allies gives Oct 21 as latest date for grasshopper sparrow in Iowa.

Peterson & Fawks: A List of Birds of Quad City Region show bird rare to mid-October.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 2 1/2 hours.

Kent & Kent: Birding in Eastern Iowa show no Sept or Oct records in 25 years.

Address: 211 Richards ST.

Signature T. H. Kent
Date: 10-29-77 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240

Brown: An Annotated List of the Birds of Iowa gives Oct 28 as latest date for the grasshopper sparrow.

