

Van Dyk

May 21, 1978

Dr. John Van Dyk  
736 E. 1st Street  
Sioux Center, Iowa 51250

Dr. N. S. Halmi  
R. no. 6  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Dear Dr. Halmi:

Since tomorrow we will be leaving Iowa for the summer, I am at this time writing the spring report for this area. I will not be able to send a summer report, as I will be in New York until early September (doing research at Cornell University in Ithaca).

On the whole, spring migrations were slow, but in many cases looked better than last year. The weather was abnormally wet and cool.

#### Waterfowl

- Geese and ducks were moving well through north-west Iowa in the second half of March. On May 27, with the temperature in the low 70's and strong southerly winds, the skies were filled with flocks of Canada Geese and Snow Geese. No unusual species of ducks were observed.
- Wood Duck: seems especially plentiful this spring.
- On April 21 a single female Red-breasted Merganser appeared on the Rock River in western Sioux County.

#### Diurnal Raptors

- Turkey Vulture: as usual, very scarce in this area. One came over Sioux Center on May 1.
- Northern Harrier: noticeably fewer than last year. The majority appeared in late March and early April. A rather poor migration, in my judgment.
- Red-tailed Hawk: good numbers appeared and are present.
- Broad-winged Hawk: good numbers, much better than in previous years. From April 29 to May 2 four individuals continued circling over Sioux Center and were seen by a number of observers. I saw a number of others since then, in various parts of Sioux County.
- American Kestrel: average numbers appeared, noticeably fewer than the large numbers migrating through this area last year.

#### Shorebirds

- Obviously very late, since up to now practically no shorebirds (other than Killdeer and Spotted Sandpiper) have appeared.

Gulls through Doves

- Franklin Gulls arrived in late March. During the first week of May (exact date not available) a live male Franklin's Gull with a wing torn off was found in a ditch west of Sioux Center. It ended up on the farm of Daryl Vander Kooi, who at this time is still uncertain what to do with it.
- Forster's Tern: one observation, over the Sioux/Rock access in western Sioux County, May 13.
- Mourning Dove: appeared quite late.

Owls through Woodpeckers

- Long-eared Owl: one observed by Daryl Vander Kooi in Sioux Center, April 28.
- no sign of Short-eared Owls.
- Red-headed Woodpecker: arrived in week of May 8, and again, appear to be abundant.

Flycatchers and Swallows

- an excellent year for Empidonax flycatchers. They literally appear everywhere in astonishing numbers.
- Cliff Swallow: unusually large numbers migrated along Rock River area in western Sioux County on May 13, together with Tree, Bank, and Rough-winged Swallows. All these swallows were swarming over recently plowed fields near the Rock River.
- Purple Martin: as usual, goodly numbers present in Sioux Center.

Thrushes

- Wood Thrush: goodly numbers singing in wooded areas near Sioux and Rock River areas in western Sioux County.
- Swainson's Thrush: fewer than usual.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush: more common than usual.

Gnatcatchers through Vireos

- no Golden-crowned Kinglets observed. Their numbers seem to be decreasing.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet: not nearly as plentiful as usual.
- no Loggerhead Shrikes observed.
- Vireos observed: Solitary, Red-eyed, Philadelphia, Warbling. Later than normal.

Warblers

- A late migration, but a pretty good one, especially compared with last year's poor showing. Species observed between May 10 and the present: Black and White, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's, American Redstart. This represents a greater variety than last year's, and much larger numbers of the various species.

John Van Dyk

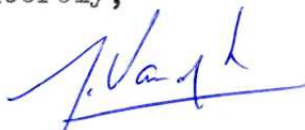
- 3 -

- Note:
- Yellow Warbler: very common.
- W. H. Brown's Annotated List describes the Blackburnian and Wilson's Warblers as uncommon or rare in western Iowa. I think this is wrong. Both species are regular, if not common spring and fall migrants.
- Ovenbirds are generally uncommon here, so it was unusual to see several on May 13.
- For the first time in a number of years I did not see a Northern Water-thrush.
- American Redstarts were very common this spring.

Sparrows

- Vesper Sparrow: common, as usual.
- Clay-colored Sparrow: common ( and singing), as usual.
- White-throated Sparrow: not as common as usual.
- Lincoln's Sparrow: common, as usual.

Sincerely,



John Van Dyk