

W. N. Dyk

## Fall Report -- 1985

### Weather for the Period --

August was unusually cool with rainfall somewhat above normal. Towards the end of the month and in early September we experienced much hot and humid weather with abundant thunderstorms. In Mid-September the weather turned much cooler. First frost (32 degrees) occurred on September 24. Weather remained cool and rainy until mid-October, when Indian Summer with above normal temperatures occurred. On November 8 a sudden change in the weather brought in a five-inch snowfall along with much colder weather. Winter pretty well began on that day: the snow stayed on the ground through the end of the month. In the third week of November temperatures dropped to just above zero, and the rivers and ponds began to freeze up. Around Thanksgiving we experienced record-breaking low temperatures between 5 and 7 below zero.

### Observations --

- American White Pelican: a flock of about 175 individuals was moving south through extreme western Sioux Co. on September 8. On this same day Gordon Brand observed another 250 in Orange City. On September 21 a flock of about 200 birds was present at Doon (Sioux Co.).
- Double-crested Cormorant: a late immature was present at Rock Valley on November 20.
- Northern Pintail: a pair was still present at Wintersfeld in Rock Valley on November 20.
- Osprey: one individual was present at the extensive gravel pit ponds about 4 miles south of Sioux Center from September 7 to 20.
- Bald Eagle: one adult was migrating near Rock Valley on November 20.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk: Gordon Brand observed several migrants along the Iowa-South Dakota border in mid-September.
- Broad-winged Hawk: steady migration throughout second half of September. On September 27 a flock of 36 birds was observed.
- Rough-legged Hawk: one was just north of Sioux Center on November 27.

- Merlin: one individual appeared in our yard on September 6, then flew off to perch in a neighbor's tree. Soon it was pestered by Blue Jays and swallows. The bird allowed me to approach quite closely, so that I had leisurely opportunity to observe all the field marks: streaked underparts, slaty upperparts. Had I been a photographer, I would have been able to take superb pictures, since the light and the bird's position were just right!  
Another individual was carefully observed and identified by my colleague in the Dordt College biology department, Del Vander Zee, along with two students, in Oak Grove State Park on September 6 as well.
- American Coot: one individual still present at Rock Valley on November 20.
- Greater Yellowlegs: two were still present near Sioux Center on November 7. In this area the latest migrant Yellowlegs are invariably Greater.
- Dunlin: three were present in Sioux Center on October 17. The next day some dim-witted hunters entered the area and shot several shorebirds, including one Dunlin.
- Stilt Sandpiper: a dozen or so were present at Sioux Center on August 24. Gordon Brand judged this species to be a much less common than usual migrant in Sioux County this fall.
- Long-billed Dowitcher: four individuals were in Sioux Center on October 17. Gordon Brand has studied the Dowitchers in this area for several years. The Long-bill is regular in both spring and fall. He (nor I) have ever observed a Short-billed Dowitcher in Sioux County.
- Common Snipe: a flock of 25 birds was present at Sioux Center on November 7.
- Red-necked Phalarope: two individuals were together with a single Wilson's Phalarope on the lagoons near Sioux Center on August 25.
- Caspian Tern: a flock of fifteen individuals was fishing in gravel pits, about 4 miles south of Sioux Center on September 7.
- Common Nighthawk: as usual, good migration in September, with at times as many as 20 individuals visible at one time.
- Chimney Swift: still migrating in goodly numbers on September 23.



- Ruby-throated Hummingbird: exceptionally large numbers (at times as many as a dozen at a time) were migrating by Sioux Center feeders during the first three weeks of September. Many individuals were still present into October. The last one was observed on October 18.
- Yellow-breasted Sapsucker: several were migrating through Sioux Center on September 21.
- Northern Flicker: judging by their abundance, must have had a productive nesting season.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher: migrants were in Sioux Center on September 5, 6, and 7.
- Empidonax: excellent migration.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch: the individual summering in Sioux Center was observed again on August 10 and 26, and regularly from early September on.
- Winter Wren: one was in our yard on October 25.
- Sedge Wren: Gordon Brand observed one in Orange City on October 2.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet: first migrants arrived in Sioux Center on October 1.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet: excellent migration. In mid-October literally hundreds of them came through Sioux Center.
- Eastern Bluebird: a flock of about 12 birds was observed at Sandy Hollow near Sioux Center in late August (exact date not available).
- Veery: several Veeries were in Sioux Center on September 3.
- Hermit Thrush: a migrant was observed in Sioux Center on October 9 and 14.
- Water Pipit: one was at Sioux Center on October 25.
- Vireos and warblers: excellent migration throughout the appropriate period. On September 21, the day after a cold front moved through, Sioux Center was inundated with warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and kinglets. Trees and shrubs in my yard and in many places in Sioux Center were alive with birds. Our common to abundant migrant warblers are the following: Tennessee Warbler; Orange-crowned Warbler; Nash-

ville Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Magnolia Warbler; Yellow-rumped Warbler; Blackpoll Warbler; Black-and-White Warbler; American Redstart; Ovenbird; Common Yellowthroat; and Wilson's Warbler. Regular but much less common are Chestnut-sided Warbler; Black-throated Green Warbler; Blackburnian Warbler; Palm Warbler (erratic -- in some years absent; in other years very common); Bay-breasted Warbler (sometimes more common); Northern Waterthrush; and Mourning Warbler. Some additional notes:

- Northern Parula: Tina Van Dyke (no relation) observed (and convincingly described) one at close range in Sioux Center on September 23. The Parula is rare in NW Iowa.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler: exceptionally abundant. On September 21 at one point I counted a dozen of these warblers just in my yard alone.
- Yellow-rumped Warbler: on October 11 Gordon Brand observed a flock of 50 individuals along a fence row (between pasture and corn field) in open country, behaving very much like sparrows.
- Black-throated Green Warbler: unusually common this fall.
- Bay-breasted Warbler: uncommon migrant, one observed on September 4.
- Canada Warbler: uncommon, one in Sioux Center on September 4.
- Scarlet Tanager: a small flock of four was present in Sioux Center on September 22.
- Sparrow migration: appeared normal. Note:
  - Harris' Sparrow: Gordon Brand judged this species to be exceptionally common this fall.
- Dark-eyed Junco: arrived in Sioux Center somewhat earlier than usual on October 6. (Gordon Brand observed one at Elk Point in south-eastern South Dakota on September 28).
- Lapland Longspur: present among Horned Larks on November 29.
- Snow Bunting: one individual was present at Sioux Center on the early date of November 7. They were commonly present in flocks of Horned Larks just north of Sioux Center on November 27.



- Purple Finch: arrived October 12. In late October and early November they were quite common, visiting feeders in small flocks of up to a half dozen.
- Pine Siskin: arrived in Sioux Center on November 16.
- Evening Grosbeak: individuals arrived in Sioux Center on November 10. They were not plentiful and disappeared a few days after arrival.

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