

Dear Pete,

Here are a few notes for the summer season.

~~Herons have been very scarce all summer.~~ 3 Great Blue's on July 27 were the only ones here. Two adult and one immature yellow-crowned night heron were seen off and on during the period.

Only 2 red tailed hawks were seen all summer, No red-shouldered hawks at all. ~~Broad-winged hawks raised 3 young.~~

4 gadwalls on August 12 were the first summer record for Des Moines

Shorebirds are very scarce even at the sewage plant where numbers have decreased as the season advanced.

3 upland plover were still present on August 9. Also on the 9th there was a large influx of 400 pectoral sandpipers, 50 lesser yellowlegs, 20 stilt sandpipers and a few least. Almost all of these birds were gone two days later.

Doves were less common than last year but still plentiful.

~~Both cuckoos were extremely common~~ with up to 12 yellow-bills in the yard at one time for about a week.

No owls were seen or heard all summer.

No hummingbirds were seen.

~~Blue jays have been extremely common~~ all summer. Many people not interested in birds have commented on this.

Brown thrashers were nesting in several areas they had deserted for the last few years.

Wood thrushes were very scarce with only one bird heard in an area where they are usually common and no birds in other areas.

~~Bluebirds are doing very well.~~ Possible the dead elm trees killed by Dutch Elm Disease are providing additional nesting sites.

Shrikes are very common. 30 birds were seen on 3 trips in the first part of July.

~~No yellow warblers were seen all summer~~ even though it is usually one of the commonest birds in the area.

Ovenbirds are scarce and only one bird was heard singing.

~~Redstarts are very scarce~~ and only one bird was seen in areas where there are usually dozens.

Yellowthroats are common and 3 chats were found.

The blackbird roost that was found last winter was visited on August 11. Possibly 100,000 birds were present including several Brewer's blackbirds for the first time ever in the area during the summer. Several bobolinks were also in the flocks. The bobolink has continued to increase this year and was found in several new areas.

At least three pairs of summer tanagers were present. One nest failed, one had 3 young, and the third pair raised 2 broods of 3.

Towhees are scarce with only a few birds seen.

Grasshopper sparrows have been very common.

The increase in the bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, and possible upland plover can probably be attributed to the soil bank. More land is being put into permanent pasture and now after several years is becoming attractive to these grassland birds.

On August 2, a trip was made to Goose Lake near Jefferson, Twin Lakes at Rockwell City, and the Kalsow Prairie. 3 adult and 1 immature yellow-crowned night herons were at goose lake as were about 15 black crowns. There were about 30 black-crowns at twin lakes. 2 or 3 least bitterns were at goose lake. Goose lake also had both dowitchers, 15 stilt sandpipers, plus good numbers of the other common shorebirds. There were very good numbers of short-billed marsh wrens at the Kalsow Prairie with possibly a dozen birds singing in one corner alone. Cliff swallows were seen for the first time this fall and several swamp sparrows were singing at each lake.

Hope these notes are of help.

Joe Kennedy

ps there is no Jr. on the name