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Low Bird Life
33137-41, 1963

GENERAL NOTES REPORTS

March was warm with precipitation varying from a little less than normal in the east, to slightly more than usual in the center of the state. The first half of April was warm with cool weather prevailing during the last eight or nine days. May has ranged from warm to cold with frost threatened in the north around the 20th. What began as an early spring turned out to be a rather late one. As usual, appraisals of the spring migration vary from section to section; Kent describes it as normal, and by dint of hard work and a long day was able to find 120 species on 5 May. Youngworth feels there has been a scarcity of some of the usually common species, and the consensus at Des Moines is that there has been no real wave of either shorebirds or passerines.

On 21 May 131 migrant passerines were netted at Davenport, the first wave of good proportion.

Pelicans, Cormorants. White Pelicans were at Brenton's Slough on 20 April in a flock of 150, and a similar flock was at Goose Lake, Hamilton Co. on 21 April. (HP). There was one at Ogden on the latter date, (JK), 40 at Lamoni on 24 April, (DG), and two at Sweet Marsh on the 28th. (RH). There was a "large concentration" at Forney's Lake on the 14th. (EG). Double-crested Cormorants were "above average." (DR).

Hérons. Great Blue Herons have been few, (DR), and almost none seen at Des Moines, with Green Herons equally scarce. One Cattle Egret was seen just north of Elm Lake, Wright Co. on May 10 (MG) Common Egrets have been rather widely seen, principally in the eastern and central sections. One was at Credit Island on 17 March, an early date, (PP), 12 at Decorah on 1 April, (FL), 12 at Lansing seen on 28 April by Annette Haffner and Pat Lake, (RH), several at Marble Rock on 8 May, (PK), one at Lamoni on 13 May, (DG), one at Ogden on 15 May, (JK), and one near Salix in mid-May, (RN).

A Yellow-crowned Night Heron near Des Moines on 3 April was four weeks early, and *two were Black Hawk Park Cedar Falls 16 April (MG), and another was reported from Black Hawk Creek on 8 May, (RH).*

Ibis. The very rare White-faced Ibis was found on 19 May by Bob Nickolson in a marsh south of the ^{SALIX} exit on Interstate 29. Five other Sioux City birders saw this on the same and following day. Two of the

species were at the marsh on the second morning.

Swans, Geese, Ducks. Six Whistling Swans were found by Bob Nickolson at Badger Lake, Monona Co, on 24 April, and these were later seen by Youngworth. A flock of 40 was at Harper's Ferry on 28 March. (FL). There were "excellent duck and geese arrivals through the last part of March" with 1,000 Canada Geese on 15 March, and 200 Blue and Snow Geese and 12 White-fronted Geese on 24 March. (FK). The Blue and Snow Geese at Forney's Lake on 17 March were estimated at 320,000, with numerous Mallards and Pintails. There were several flocks of Snow Geese ranging upwards to 200 at Lamoni on 25 March, (DG), and hundreds of Blue and Snow Geese at Forney's Lake on 14 April. (EG). Dean Roosa's reports of ducks are very good: Gadwall, "most ever seen"; American Widgeon, "definitely up", Shoveler, "more than any previous year at Goldfield", Bufflehead, "excellent numbers each trip from 6 to 24 April", Red-breasted Merganser, "more than ever before." The peak of the Lesser Scaup migration was 24 March when 9,000 were at Davenport. (PP). There were more than 5,000 Mallards and a similar number of Lesser Scaups at Sioux City on 25 May. (WY). There were not many ducks other than Blue-winged Teal at Lamoni. (DG). There was a good flight at Brenton's Slough on 24 March, with large numbers of the four species of geese and the ducks except Redheads, which were few, and Canvasbacks, of which none was seen.

Turkey Vultures, Hawks. On 7 May there was a flock of 25 Turkey Vultures at The Ledges. (DR). Red-tailed Hawks are "the fewest in five years." (DR). Red-shouldered Hawks are very scarce at Des Moines. There was a small flight of Broad-winged Hawks on 25 and 26 April. (WY). Swainson's Hawks were seen on 7 April at Waterloo, (RH), on the 26th at Lamoni, (DG), and at Ogden, (JK). An immature Golden Eagle was watched for some time on 30 April by Mrs. Margaret Brooke in Des Moines. Bald Eagles were seen on 10 March, (RH), 26 March, (WY), and on 28 March there were two immatures and one adult at Harper's Ferry. (FL). A Prairie Falcon was seen on 27 February. (WY). Russell Hays had a close-up view of a Peregrine Falcon on 10 March and saw a Pigeon Hawk the same day.

The latter were also seen on 24 March, (WY), and 3 May, (PK). Sparrow Hawks are considered "above normal", (DR), but the contrary seems to be the case at Des Moines.

Here
Grouse, Partridge. A Ruffed Grouse was seen at the Yellow River on 28 April by Annette Haffner and Pat Lake. (RH). A pair of Gray Partridges was found in Wright Co. (DR).

Marsh Birds,
Shorebirds. A Yellow Rail at Muskrat Slough was seen on 19 May by Dean Roosa, Bob Trial and Peter Petersen. A Common Gallinule was near Sioux City in mid-May, (RN), another at Muskrat Slough on 17 May. (PP). At Ogden "there have been lots of Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, Baird's Sandpipers, and Common Snipes." (JK). While the number of waders at Des Moines has not been large, there have been some unusually early observations: Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Baird's Sandpiper were seen a week earlier than previously, and a Stilt Sandpiper and some Dowitchers were four weeks early. Three Piping Plovers were found on 5 May. (FK). A Woodcock on Black Hawk Creek on 8 May, (RH), and two found at the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir on 18 May by Dick Mooney were unusual. Snipe are "far more than usual, with six to eight seen each trip" according to Roosa who saw the mating flight and heard the "winnowing." Several Golden Plovers on 24 March were two weeks early at Des Moines, while two in winter plumage were seen on 20 March at Iowa City. A flock of 20 on 14 May were the last seen. (FK). None was seen this spring at Lamoni, due possibly to lack of moisture. (DG). Upland Plovers are reported from Lamoni on 7 April, an early date, (DG), Hamburg on 17 April, (EG), Cardinal Marsh on 6 May, (FL), and three at Ogden. (JK). A near-albino Willet was seen on 29 May, and Pectoral Sandpipers on 28 March were early. (FL). Both Godwits were seen at Sioux City the week following the meeting. (RN). Two Marbled Godwits were seen 12 May, (JK). Fifteen Hudsonian Godwits were ^{observed} near Granger by Dr. and Mrs. Harold Peasley while en route to the Sioux City meeting, and a similar flock (possibly the same) ^{was} ~~were~~ seen near Adel on the same day by A. C. Berkowitz and W. H. Brown.

Three more were at the Coralville Reservoir a week later. (FK). Dr. Peter Laude found two Whimbrels on 17 May, and Kent was able to photograph them. A Northern Phalarope was collected 19 May at Muskrat Slough, (PP), and another was seen near Granger the same day. (HP).

Gulls, Terns. There was flight of 100 Herring Gulls 22 March. (FK). Franklin's Gulls were seen on 2 May, (WY), three on 23 April, (DG), and a small flock near Adel on 10 May. Numerous Black Terns have been seen in the Des Moines area.

Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Swifts. Three Barn Owls were found at Waterloo on 10 March by Mrs. Osness. A Whip-poor-will was located the same day. (RH). Two Whip-poor-wills were heard near Des Moines 18 May. (HP). Chimney Swifts have not been seen in big flocks this year. (DR).

Woodpeckers. "There has been an abundance of Flickers, but Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are hard to find, and Red-headed Woodpeckers seem to be declining. (JK). There seem to be more Red-headed around Des Moines than in other recent years. Six Pileated Woodpeckers have been found in the Decorah area. (DP).

Flycatchers. "There may be an eastward movement of the Western Kingbird." (JK). Eastern Kingbirds are thought to be decreasing at Sioux City, (WY), but they appear numerous around Des Moines. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, an Acadian Flycatcher, and an Olive-sided Flycatcher were banded in May in Oakdale Cemetery. Another Acadian Flycatcher was banded at Muskrat Slough. (PP).

Horned Larks, Swallows. Horned Larks have been numerous in Winnishiek Co. (DP). A flock of 400 Cliff Swallows on 13 and 14 May was the biggest concentration noticed. (DG).

Jays, Wrens. On 26 April a flock of about 120 Blue Jays was seen. (JK). A Winter Wren on Black Hawk Creek on 10 May was a late record. (RH).

Mimics, Thrushes. A spring record of the Mockingbird was 7 May. (PK). Catbirds appear unusually numerous at Des Moines. Robins are "plentiful in

wooded areas", (DG), and no decrease in numbers has been noticed in Des Moines.

Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes are "plentiful", (RH), and "in unusual numbers", (DR). ^{while 49 Swainsons and 33 Gray-cheeked were banded at Deavenport, (PP)} ~~Twenty-one Veeries were banded between 6 May and 22 May at Deavenport (PP)~~ No reports of the Veery have been received. Bluebirds "are coming back, more than in the past three years." (DR). There also seem to be more than usual in Polk Co.

P

Pipits, Shrikes. At Lamoni from one to six ^{Water} American Pipits were seen frequently in April and May, (DG), and 24 March was an early date in Des Moines. The only mention of shrikes is Roosa's "poorest year yet."

Vireos. A report of the White-eyed in the Waterloo area comes from Mrs. O'Connell. A Philadelphia was observed on 10 May, (RH), ^{and four were banded 13-15 May at Cedar Falls by David Ross and Martin Gram} Red-eyed were "very few", (DR), and in Des Moines the Solitary was the only vireo seen in customary numbers.

Warblers. There were few peaks, (PP), but 14 May was a big day at Marble Rock with 19 warblers. (PK). It was a very poor migration at Des Moines with Tennessees the only numerous species. A Prothonotary was banded 13 May, and ^{just across the Mississippi in Wisconsin} a Golden-winged on 20 May. (PP). A Worm-eating was seen, at Wyalusing on 13 May. (FL). Tennessees were thought to be scarce in Sioux City, and a small flight of Orange-crowned on 20 April were the earliest ever recorded. (WY). There were the most Parulas in four years at Goldfield. (DR). The rare Pine Warbler was seen on 28 April. (RH). A Northern Waterthrush on 6 April was an early record. (DR). A Kentucky was found by Kent on 5 May, and one was seen and heard three times in eight days in early May in Ashworth Park, Des Moines.

Blackbirds. Yellow-headed were in excellent numbers with 50 in one day at Morse Lake. (DR). One on 17 April ^{along the Mississippi Wisconsin} at La Crosse was early. (DP). Bobolinks were fewer at Lamoni, (DG), but more than usual were seen in Polk Co.

Sparrows, Finches. Pine Siskins were seen daily through February and March, and suspected of remaining to nest. (WY). Five were seen on 9 March, and were seen or heard regularly until mid-May. (RH). There were a few in with large groups of American Goldfinches the last week in April. (FL). A late

one was in Des Moines on 18 May. (Harris', White-throat, and White-crowned Sparrows are "definitely up." (DR). About 100 Lapland Longspurs on 6 March

was the only observation at Lamoni. (DG) Two Common Redpolls were banded 10 March at Pleasantville by Mrs. Gladys Black. Two Henslow's Sparrows were found on 29 March at Brenton's Slough by Joe Kennedy and W. H. Brown, apparently a "first" for the Des Moines area. A ~~Le Conte's~~ Sparrow was collected 9 May at Muskrat Slough, (PP), and another ^{Sharp-tailed} at ^{was seen} Wyth Park, Cedar Falls on 2 May. (MG).

Found at Goose Lake, Black Hawk Co. on 18 April. (MG)

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The closing dates for copy for General Notes will be changed so that each issue may give full coverage to one of the four birding seasons; nesting, fall migration, winter birds, and spring migration. Copy for the September issue covering the nesting season will close 1 August as before, but fall migration notes may be submitted as late as 20 November for inclusion in the December issue. Winter bird notes can be sent in as late as 25 February, and spring migration data until 25 May.

Erratum: line 2, page 19, "Sibley" read "Sidney." Woodward H. Brown, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 12.