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### Fall 1988 Report

#### Weather for the Period:

August: Very hot and dry during the first three weeks. On the night of the 20th a heavy storm dumped a little over 6 inches of rain (see under House Sparrow below). The remainder of the month was cool.

September: Mostly normal for temperatures and precipitation. Rainfall increased towards the last part of the month. An extensive low pressure system on September 28-30 provided good birding.

October: Mostly seasonal temperatures and precipitation. A quiet fall month.

November: First brief, local snowfall on November 11. A strong storm on November 15/16 left 4 inches of snow. Remainder of the month cool with intermittent snow flurries and partly cloudy skies. Lowest temperature was 7 above during last week of the month.

- American White Pelican: Somehow they seem to have skirted our area. I saw only one flock (of about 100 individuals). Over the Sioux Center area, September 20.
- Waterfowl: No unusual observations.
- Bald Eagle: One adult was over Sioux Center on November 21.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk: Excellent migration this fall. Individuals were sighted in a number of locations in Sioux Co. from mid-September to early October.
- Cooper's Hawk: None observed.
- Rough-legged Hawk: Much in evidence this fall. First one observed on October 25. On November 12 I saw three of them just west of Sioux Center, one of them a very dark-phased individual. On November 19 I observed another three individuals.
- Merlin: Two individuals observed in Sioux Center area, one on September 17 (documentation enclosed) and another one over my yard on September 29. I see Merlins in our area just about every spring and fall. Documentation seems a bit superfluous.

- Northern Bob-white: To my surprise I found a single individual in my yard on November 19. Evidence, perhaps, that our efforts to turn our yard into a bird sanctuary are succeeding! The relatively scarce Bob-white generally occurs mainly in the hills of western Sioux Co., some 10-15 miles west of Sioux Center.
- Shorebirds: Other than Golden Plover (see next item), no unusual observations.
- Lesser Golden Plover: A small flock of some ten birds were in a grazed pasture together with Killdeer in western Sioux Co. on September 14. Their status is listed (Dinsmore e.a.) as "rare fall migrant."
- American Woodcock: A dead individual was found in a Sioux Center yard on November 2.
- Burrowing Owl: A pair nested at the fairgrounds at the north edge of Sioux Center. They raised at least three young.
- Red-headed Woodpecker: A banner year for this species. In late August and early September this woodpecker was positively abundant.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Migrants appeared at their expected time in late September. There were three in my yard on September 30.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher: Two individuals were together in a dead tree in a farmyard at the edge of Sioux Center on September 4.
- Eastern Phoebe: One observed in Sioux Center on September 29.
- Brown Creeper: The first fall migrants appeared in our yard on September 30.
- Winter Wren: An early migrant was in our yard on September 30.
- Marsh Wren: a flock estimated to consist of at least a dozen individuals were migrating through a weed patch in western Sioux Co. on September 14.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Large numbers (flocks of 50+) were moving through Sioux Center September 28 - October 2.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet: Common in Sioux Center throughout November.
- Swainson's Thrush: One observed in Sioux Center on August 28.
- American Robin: Individuals lingered until end of the period.



- Warblers: Generally a lacklustre season. Individuals trickled through. Some waves occurred in early September. The best days were September 29-30, when large numbers of warblers (mostly Orange-crowned and Nashville) moved through Sioux Center.
- Ovenbird: Plentiful at the end of September. On September 30 I observed half a dozen at one time in my yard.
- Canada Warbler: Two were observed in Sioux Center: one on August 18, and one on August 22.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak: The last one observed was in our yard on September 30.
- Blue Grosbeak: None observed.
- Lincoln's Sparrow: A singing bird was present at a brush pile near my home in Sioux Center on the very early date of August 28 (a record early date?). By September 8 this species had arrived in full force, with many individuals present. This bird is very common in our area in fall.
- Dark-eyed Junco: Arrived early this fall. First one arrived in Sioux Center on September 26, and thereafter numbers quickly increased.
- Common Grackle: Because of relatively mild fall, individuals lingered till end of the period.
- Purple Finch: The first one arrived in Sioux Center on November 13. Sporadic appearance during remainder of the period.
- Lapland Longspur: The first flock observed in Sioux Co. on November 12.
- House Sparrow: During the night of August 20 a powerful storm with heavy rains (over six inches) killed large numbers of House Sparrows along the north side of Dordt College. The birds had been roosting in young Norway maples. Conservatively estimated, at least 3000 birds -- many of them immatures -- died. Maintenance crews raked the dead birds in large heaps. This event was picked up by the news media (reported on Sioux City TV stations).

Reported by John Van Dyk

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