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IOWA, SUMMER OF 1989

Cattle Egret -- 2 surprize a herd of cattle by joining them at Pierce Creek Park in Page County on June 7.

Turkey Vulture nests in Page County; Jay Maher found one in hollow tree east of Clarinda on the Nodaway River (June 9, adult on egg); a farmer reported one from an unused house in Section 5, Pierce Township. (He described it as a white hairball with a dark beak, with silky hair, hissing like a snake, not obvious nest where he saw it, with some black on the wings, so big he thought it was a baby eagle.) Vultures are more common nesters than the book on Iowa birds suggests. *I have no way of knowing if this was a young of*

Swainson's Hawk -- 1 immature at Hacklebarney Woods, June 27. Bird had a partial hood (light in center), and its back and shoulders were all dark. Jay Maher and I saw it while driving Day Campers to a pond, and we couldn't stop to look at it well. When we got there, though, we found we'd independently come to the same conclusion about the bird's identity. *the year or a year old, hence no reason to believe they nested in the area.*

Kestrels fledged from roof of the courthouse at Clarinda for at least fourth year in a row

Gray Partridge -- a pair showed up on our farm in northeast Mills County in July. This is the first time one has been seen right here.

Woodcock -- Ken Crouch and I flushed one from a creek bottom in Section 35, Harlan Township, Page County, on June 23.

Y-b Cuckoo -- During a sleepless night camping at Pioneer Park, Page County, I heard a cuckoo sing a couple of times at 3:45 a.m. (The next bird was a Cardinal at 4:16)

Sedge Wren -- I heard few, compared to last couple of years.

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Mockingbird -- Two birds on territory in the north east part of Section 10, Nebraska Township, Page County. (Found by Jay Maher; I saw them on July 17.)

Singing male June 17 in the east side of Section 25, Polk Township, Taylor County

L. Shrikes were reasonably common, as usual.

Black-headed Grosbeak -- Jay Maher saw a singing male June 9 at the Nodaway River east of Clarinda. He's familiar with them from his previous teaching post in central Iowa. The next day he told me he didn't think much of it at the time, beyond noting that it was the first he'd seen here, but then began wondering just how common they really were here. He got a good look at it and I believe the identification. He was going to write down a description. I'll call and see if I can get something sent to you.

Red-winged Blackbird -- Don't get excited, but I feel that Red-winged Blackbirds were not so overwhelmingly abundant as usual. You might check some Breeding Bird Survey data to see if this is true. If this is true, it is probably a consequence of last year's drought. I believe it has been reported that Red-wings in upland sites aren't as productive as those in marshes, and last year everything was an upland site.

House Finch -- Reeva Marsh of Villisca (Montgomery County) had a pair of House Finches nesting on her house. Their first nest was parasitized by Cowbirds (or House Sparrows). Though she threw out the alien eggs, the finches fledged only one young. They reused the same nest for a second nesting and fledged four young. I went and saw them. Young were dingy gray-brown, with not strong face pattern, more streaked below than above. The male was sparrow-sized, with a bright red cap and extensive red bib. It was red from the chin to the upper belly. Otherwise it was brown, with a light belly. There was a brown line through the eye area, separating cap and bib. The alarmed male's call note was surprisingly loud.