

May 12, 1992

Dear Mr. Kent;

I would like to report the sighting of 75+ Lesser Golden Plover on my 80 acre farm (Alden Township, Hardin County).

My farm consists of three acres restored prairie and a windbreak, with the rest of the farmland rented out. I first noticed the birds on Monday May 11th. At the time I was mowing weeds when I noticed at least a dozen plover-like birds with a black breast and a prominent white stripe running above the eye and down. At the time I didn't have my binoculars, but I had read in Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie by John Madson all about the Spring migration of Lesser Golden Plover and others. So I had a hunch.

Today, May 12, I returned early in the morning to find the birds still there. Through my binoculars, I verified the bird as being identical to the Lesser Golden Plover, portrayed in Peterson's, Audubon's, and National Geographic's field guide. I ruled out Black-Bellied since the plovers I saw had golden speckled backs, not whitish. My estimate of 75+ is based on counting all I could see. The farmland rolls and I could not see over the hills. I tried to walk over these hills to get a better count, but as I did I spooked the birds so I stopped.

The farmland ~~they~~ are feeding on is currently planted with corn which is about 2 inches tall. One odd thing I noticed was that all of these birds seemed to prefer these conditions. I could not find any others in pastures or land planted to soybeans ! Perhaps they were after cutworms.

I had the opportunity to see some courtship behavior as the birds extended their wings and seemed to bow to each other.

Sincerely,

Matt Baumann
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