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### Fall 1992 Report

Question: Where were all the songbirds in September? On the 4th of September I arrived home from a six-month research leave in Australia. I expected northwest Iowa to be alive with warblers, vireos, and everything else! But there was (virtually) nothing. The place appeared to have turned into (with apologies to Rachel Carson) a "silent fall"! It was eerie. Between September 4 and September 23 I did not see a single warbler! But later in the month things perked up a bit, as I report below.

#### Weather for the Period:

I was not here in August, but from all reports it was a cold and wet month. September saw a good improvement, with above normal temperatures. Lowest temperature in September was 32 degrees, on September 28 and 29, occasioning only a light, harmless frost in spots. On September 30 it was 83 degrees. In the second week of October we had three days of steady rain. We received over 4 inches of rain. But then it dried up and warmed up. We had our first really killing frost (25 degrees) on October 17. The remainder of the month and all of November saw normal temperatures and normal precipitation. No below-zero weather at all during the period. The snowstorm tracking through Iowa just before Thanksgiving missed us completely.

- Pied-billed Grebe: Lingered till end of period.
- Double-crested Cormorant: Migrants arrived on September 22 and were present throughout Sioux County until the end of the period.
- Great Blue Heron: Latest observation: November 11 at Hawarden.
- Ducks: No unusual observations.
- Hooded Merganser: One female was at Rock Valley on November 27.
- Osprey: One was at Hawarden on September 23.
- Bald Eagle: The first migrant (an immature) was in western Sioux County on October 10. Two adults were six miles west of Sioux Center on November 27.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk: Very conspicuous this fall. Observed this hawk in western Sioux County on September 23 and September 30, at Rock Valley on October 1, in Sioux Center on October 3, and at least three in the Oak Grove Park area on October 10.

- Cooper's Hawk: A large adult was at Oak Grove Park (in western Sioux Co.) on September 5. A large immature made a brief visit to my yard on September 25.
- Rough-legged Hawk: None observed.
- American Kestrel: Good migration in the second half of September. Numbers declined by the middle of October.
- American Coot: Still present at Rock valley by the end of the period.
- Franklin's Gull: Good migration. Flocks of 50 or more crossed over Sioux County on September 22 and September 29.
- Chimney Swift: Last flock observed on September 23.
- Common Nighthawk: Very poor migration. Last ones observed on September 5.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee: A pair was still present (and singing) in western Sioux County on September 25.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Good migration. One was along the Rock River on September 25. In Sioux Center they were observed on September 29 and October 4.
- Eastern Phoebe: One was in Sioux Center in early October. Another one at Hawarden on October 16.
- Swallow Migration: Excellent. On September some of the flocks of Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows and Bank Swallows consisted of over 200 individuals. Last Barn Swallows observed on the relatively late date of October 10.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Last one observed in Sioux Center on September 5
- Blue Jay: This fall the migrating flocks appeared to be larger than normal. On September 30 a flock of some 60 Blue Jays was moving across western Sioux County, and on October 1 I observed a flock of 50+ individuals near Rock Valley.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch: The first one appeared in Sioux Center on October 11. On October 18 there were three of them in our yard. They remained throughout the remainder of the period.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet: Appeared at the tail-end of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet migration. In mid-November they were quite plentiful in Sioux Center. Any walk through town would reveal their thin calls.

- Brown Creeper: Good migration in October and throughout November. They were observed both at Oak Grove Park (where some of them winter) and in Sioux Center.
- Hermit Thrush: Three were in our yard from October 9 through 12.
- Eastern Bluebird: Flocks of a dozen or more were migrating through Sioux County in mid-September.
- American Robin: Individuals lingered until November 27.
- Northern Shrike: An immature was at Oak Grove State Park on November 27.
- Warblers: An incredibly poor season. There were no warblers to be seen during the first three weeks of September. On September 23 some kind of migration of Yellow-rumped Warblers and Orange-crowned Warblers commenced, and continued, though in lacklustre fashion through mid-October. On October 1, however, there were sizable flocks of Yellow-rumps and Orange-crowns along the Rock River by Rock Valley. Last Yellow-rumped Warbler observed on October 16.
- Black+White Warbler: A lone individual was at Hawarden on the very late date of October 16. Considering our northern location, and checking late dates in Iowa Birds (Dinsmore e.a.), this was a very late bird indeed.
- Rufous-sided Towhee: Very scarce. One was in Sioux Center on October 20.
- Northern Cardinal: The males frequenting feeders in Sioux Center last year disappeared. None were observed in town. They remain common along the major rivers in western Sioux County.
- Sparrow migration: Excellent. The following species appeared in goodly numbers: Field Sparrow; Vesper Sparrow; Savannah Sparrow; Grasshopper Sparrow; Fox Sparrow; Lincoln's Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; and Harris' Sparrow.
- Bobolink: A migrating flock of about 25 was in western Sioux County on September 25.
- Common Grackle: Lingered until the end of the period.
- House Finch: Remains common, now as permanent resident.
- Common Redpoll: First arrived at Sioux Center feeders on November 29.

- Pine Siskin: First appeared on our feeders on November 5. They soon became exceptionally abundant. By at least one feeder, flocks numbering up to 27 were seen. They remained common throughout the remainder of the period.
- Dark-eyed Junco: Arrived fairly early, on September 30.
- Purple Finch: First observed in Sioux County on October 10. Several were present from that time through the period. They were certainly not abundant!

Reported by John Van Dyk

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