

breeding

22

Iowa Bird Life 39: 38-41, 1969

FIELD REPORTS.

The spring season was generally wet and the very cold March caused foliage to be late in coming out, but when a warm spell did arrive the trees and shrubs leafed out quickly. The rather late spring may be responsible for the scarcity of some species at the cutoff date for Field Reports.

A new wildlife area has been created by the Red Rock Dam on the Des Moines River which will make a permanent pool of 9,000 acres, and a flood control pool covering 65,500 acres, and extending 32 miles. The area may be reached via Pleasantville, Knoxville, Monroe, and Pella. During the migration it accomodated an estimated 20,000 geese and 500,000 ducks with all of the ducks on the Iowa list represented except the scoters and Cinnamon Teal (GB).

As is usually the case, some areas fared better than others as far as the number of observations was concerned. Where waves of migrants were noticed they were spread between 3 and 21 May. Opinions varied from "A great wave of perching birds on 3 May" (LH), to "Generally late but rather regular" (JF), and, "Overall, quite poor" (Jim K), and "Poorest in 10 years, waterfowl especially disappointing with 5-10% of the usual ducks" (RM). The outstanding finds of the season were the Cattle Egret observed by John Faaborg, and the Western Tanager seen by Mrs. Crocker. (See longer note).

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Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Cormorants, Hérons. The only loon mentioned was seen on 10 April (KV, LH, RH). One Red-necked Grebe was at Little Wall Lake on 6 May (JF). Horned and Eared Grebes were scarce. Pelicans were seen: 20 on 23 March (KV, LH, RH), a number at Swan Lake (FK) and Little Wall on 12 April (RM), with a small flock at Okoboji. A flock of 75 Cormorants was sighted on 10 April (KV, LH, RH), and "a number" at Red Rock (GB). There was a good ^{breeding} population of the three common species of herons across from Credit Island on 15 May (LB). Great Blues were seen: 18 on 1 April (DG); 7 at Easter Lake in Polk Co. on 5 April (DM); 7 in Des Moines on 21 April (MB); and good numbers on the 4-5 April week-end (RM). The Cattle Egret observed and photographed at Dunbar Slough on 11 May by John Faaborg appears to be the fifth Iowa record. The only Common Egret reported was seen in Polk Co. on 28 April (DM). There were numerous reports of American

(23)

and Least Bitterns (FK,RH,MB,MEW).

b. Geese, Ducks. Geese arrived at DeSoto Bend early in March, but upon finding it frozen went back to Squaw Creek, returning later (DH). There were no geese or ducks until 18 March, and most left by the 27th (FK). There was a good migration of geese, most of which were Canadas, and ducks (Jim K). There were a surprisingly large number of Pintails in early April (GB). A concentration of divers near Dunbar Slough on 22 March included 40-50 Goldeneyes and 70 Canvasbacks (JF). Other reports of the latter were 1 on 30 March (KV,RH) and 5 on 6 March (LH). Cinnamon Teal were seen on 4 April (RZ) and 20 April (JKB). Buffleheads were more numerous than usual (FK,PCP,WHB). A Surf Scoter was observed south of Webster City on 30 April (RM). Ruddy Ducks were thought unusually numerous (MK), and Common Mergansers also (LH,RH).

Hawks. Red-tailed and Broad-winged were the most frequently seen, but never in numbers (Jim K), and hawks were thought scarce with only a few Red-tailed and a dozen Broad-winged seen between 20 and 26 April (FK). From 1-3 Turkey Vultures were seen daily for weeks with a high of 11 on 21 April (GB). On 11 April an immature Goshawk was watched eating a meadowlark on the Gillaspeys' lawn. One pair of Red-tailed were the only ones seen (GB). They were very few in the migration period (DG), but were thought plentiful (KL). On 26 March, 2 of the rapidly decreasing Red-shouldered were observed (LH). More than 30 Broad-winged were flushed from a roost on 30 April (MS), with others seen (FL,RH,WHB). At least 15 Swainson's were seen on 20 April (EB), and they are again present in northwest Scott Co. and apparently nesting (LB). An immature Golden Eagle was seen on 13 February (GE), and another by Chas. Ayres (no date). Bald Eagles were reported, with a high of 7 (GB); 3 on 27 March and 1 on 30 March (KV,RH); a mature in Des Moines on 16 March (J Kern); and another on 22 March (JF,BB). Marsh Hawks were thought more than usual (EB), and 4 were seen on 30 March (KV,RH). Ospreys were observed 19 and 27 April (RH), and 10 May (DM, J Kern). A Peregrine was watched while eating a duck at Readlyn Ponds on 19 April (LH), with another seen at Dunbar Slough on 11 May (JF). A Pigeon Hawk was seen on 11 May (RM). Sparrow Hawk reports varied from: plentiful (KL); good early migration (RM); several reports of good numbers (DH); to few, and

24

not in usual nesting areas (GB); seem to be down (PCP); and only 1 or 2 all spring (FK).

b.F. Bobwhites, Pheasants. Bobwhites are not as plentiful, due probably to winter kill, and Pheasants not like last year (GB). Keenan thought Pheasants plentiful, and a good many were seen between Des Moines and Okoboji (WHB).

b.F. Rails, Plovers, Sandpipers. Shorebirds were almost lacking despite the presence of good areas (FK), and scarce (PCP). Coots were numerous, but others scarce (Jim K,FK,WHB). Killdeers were fewer (LH). Golden Plovers appeared in several areas with an estimated 1,600 in one field near Crane Creek, another flock of 130, and numerous smaller flocks seen during the migration (LH). A flock of 8 was seen on 14 May (FK), and a similar number in Polk Co. on 12 May (MB). Two flocks of 100 or more were reported (RH), and several sightings occurred in the Okoboji area just prior to the meeting. A flock of 8 Black-bellied Plover was at Sweet's Marsh on 12 May (RH). Woodcock reported were: at least 3 near Ames in late April, and 1 on 4 May (JF); 1 on 6 April at Lake Ahquabi (DM); and they were seen for several weeks after 30 March (PCP). Only 2 Snipe were seen all season (RZ and FK). A concentration of 20 Solitary Sandpipers on 20 April was unusual (LB). On 26 April 8 Willets were seen (RM). An early White-rumped Sandpiper appeared on 19 April (KV,GE,RH). A flock of 50 Baird's was in Des Moines Waterworks Park 23 May (MB,WHB). A Marbled Godwit was at Union Slough on 18 May (KV fide RH). A Stilt Sandpiper at Easter Lake on 22 April was early (MB). Three Hudsonian Godwits were seen near Shenandoah (RZ). Another early species date was 4 May when 2 Sanderlings were seen (GE). A Northern Phalarope was seen on 18 May (RH).

b.F. Gulls, Terns. Herring Gulls were numerous at Red Rocks Refuge (GB). An estimated 1,000 Ring-billed were seen 30 April (FK) These were unusually numerous at Des Moines also. Franklin's Gulls were seen: 7 April (WHB); 10 April (FK and DM,J Kern, also RZ), and 15 April (FK). A Bonaparte's Gull was identified on 19 April (RH). A flock of 50 Forster's Terns was at Dunbar Slough on 11 May (JF), and more than 50 were observed 15 April (PCP). Little Wall Lake had 15 Caspian Terns on 10 May (RM). Black Terns were thought few (RM), but were in good numbers on 10 May (PCP).

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b.f.

Doves, Cuckoos, Owls. Doves are down (KL). Cuckoos are either very scarce or very late (DH, KL, WHB). The first Burrowing Owl reported from Akron in several years was seen 19 April (EB).

b.f.

Goatsuckers, etc. Woodpeckers. No Nighthawks have been seen (PK). The call of the Chuck-will's-widow has been recorded (CA). Swifts were thick (KL). Few Hummingbirds have been seen except for a flock of 6 on 18 May (RM). Flickers are numerous, but still fewer than last year (MK), with a good migration at Des Moines. A Red-shafted Flicker has been watched for some time (EG). Red-bellied Woodpeckers have been scarce (KL). Red-headed: lots (KL); more than several years ago (DG); but scarce (MK, LH). A total of 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was seen on 10 April (KV, LH, RH), and there are as many this year as in the previous 5 (RM).

b.f.

Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows. A Western Kingbird was seen 14 May (DG), ^{and another was seen in Scott Co May 23 and 26 (EB)} and another ^{one} was at Vacation Village during the meeting. Only 3 Pairs of Say's Phoebes have been found (EB). Horned Larks are in good numbers (KL). Swallows were seen in huge numbers in early May with the first Tree Swallow on the early date of 23 March (FK), and there were mixed flocks of about 5,000 on two weekends in May with few Tree and many Cliff Swallows (RM).

b.f.

Wrens, Mimics, Thrushes. Winter Wrens were seen at Clinton on 19 April (FL), and 2 were found on 27 April (RH). Also at Clinton were 4 Carolina Wrens (FL). Another has been at Hamburg for some months (EG). There are 2 pairs of Mockingbirds present (GB). Catbirds are numerous (KL), but thought few (DH). Brown Thrashers: thick (GB), and lots (KL). Robins are very plentiful (KL, WHB). Swainson's Thrushes: numerous (Jim K); many (RH); but, few (MK). Gray-cheeked Thrushes; numerous (Jim K, MK). There were two good waves of both at Des Moines, but they were thought following a two-~~for~~ three-year trend and fewer (DH). Three of the usually uncommon Veeries were seen on 12 May (MB, WHB); Mrs. DeLong banded 3 (RZ), and they were still present on 25 May (PCP). The Bluebird population is low (GB), but thought good (KL).

b.f.

Kinglets, Pipits, Waxwings, Shrikes. Golden-crowned Kinglets seemed few with Ruby-crowned rather plentiful (MK, WHB), but only half the number of usual Ruby-crowned were banded (PCP). Water Pipits are reported; 5 on 22 March (LH);

3 on 27 April (MEW); and 1 on 3 May (Jim K). Two Bohemian Waxwings were seen at Jefferson on 4 March (JF). A Northern Shrike was banded on 6 December, and another was seen on 29 January, both just over the state line in Missouri (FD). Loggerhead Shrikes were very scarce (FK,EB,RM), but started 5 nests (GB).

b-f

Vireos, warblers. Vireos were generally thought fewer. White-eyed Vireos were seen: 5 May (FK); 10 May (GC); 18 May at Okoboji (JF,PCP); and 1 was banded 23 May (PCP). A Philadelphia Vireo was seen and heard on 25 May (MEW) and 6 were banded (PCP). Some comments on the warblers: good waves occurred on 3 and 10 May (PCP); 3 and 9 May (JF); and 3 May (LH). As good as most any year (RM); smaller numbers, but good variety (FK); not spectacular (GB); few warblers (Jim K); no good wave (PK); particularly disappointing (MK). There had been no numbers seen until 19 May when a great wave occurred at Hottes, Sunken and Prairie Lakes, and another at Sioux City on the 26th following a thunderstorm (DH). Tennessee, Orange-crowned, and Nashville were plentiful (KL). Several Golden-winged were seen at Ledges State Park and Ames (JF); with 1 at Des moines (MB). Yellow Warblers were in better numbers than in the past few years (PCP). Myrtles were generally fewer, but 80-100 were seen on 27 April (RH), with a good late movement (PCP). A total of 8 Black-throated Green were seen on 10 May (RH). Blackpolls have been in unprecedented numbers (DH,RH). Thirty Palm Warblers were in one field on 27 April (RH). Northern Waterthrushes were more than usual (KL). A Connecticut was seen on 10 May (KV fide RH). The first Redstart in several years in Sioux City (DH), and good numbers in Des Moines.

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Icterids, Tanagers, Finches. Bobolinks are common (Jim K), with many in Polk Co., but small numbers (RM). Fifteen Yellow-headed Blackbirds in his area was unusual (Jim K). Baltimore Orioles are in good numbers (GB, ^{RH, WHB}), but only a few (DH). The only mention of the Rusty Blackbird is of 1 seen on 4 March (KV fide RH). Several flocks of Brewer's Blackbirds were noted near Farragut this spring (RZ). Grackles continue to increase. There are 2 pairs of Summer Tanagers coming to a feeder in Des Moines (CG). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are numerous, but Indigo Buntings seem down (GB,WHB). Dickcissels, a high population (GB,PK). Evening Grosbeaks

wintering in a number of areas stayed rather late: until 19 April (JF); 20 April (FK); and 2 May (HJ,DR). A rather late Purple Finch was seen on 11 May (RH). Some ^{Common} Redpolls, of which 400 were present on 14 January, were seen at intervals until 14 March (DG). Pine Siskins were still at Ames on 12 May (JF) and at Des Moines on the 13th (MB). A small flock of Red Crossbills was seen on 16 March (WmB). Harris' and White-crowned Sparrows were seen in numbers on 11 and 13 May (JF), while one of the former wintered (FO). Longspurs were very abundant and peaked at several thousand at Jefferson (JF), and Hays counted 150 on 4 March. Snow Buntings were seen in numbers in February and March (JF, Jim K, EB).

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