

Route 1, Box 41
Hastings, Iowa 51540
10 November 1991

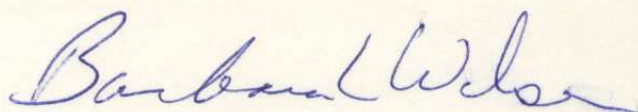
Dear Tom,

I haven't contributed much to field reports in recent years, partly because I haven't been out much but partly because I keep forgetting at the appropriate time. Therefore, I've decided to write up the current sightings, few though they are, plus some earlier sightings I never sent, and mail them off to you now. You'll get another note if something more shows up that's interesting.

Fall was unseasonably warm until the ice storm of Oct. 31. I measured some very thin twigs encased in 1.5" of ice (diameter of a cylinder of ice) but a bit less was more common; 5/8" built up on one side of a branch. Siberian Elms, a brittle species anyway, still had leaves. They broke up so badly our windbreak looks like it's been shelled. While other species (except Silver Maples) withstood the ice better, all species suffered some losses of limbs. An open-growth Bur Oak in our neighborhood split right to the ground. Immediate losses of birds may not have been high, but ice encased food sources, so birds had to visit dangerous places -- see Longspurs in the report.

Loss of tree cavities may have long-term consequences. I know a dazed squirrel in our yard survived its thick branch splitting right through its cavity home, and many other branches probably broke right at such weakened spots. Of course, brush piles are now abundant, a partial compensation at least as far as winter roosting goes.

Have a good season!



Barbara L. Wilson

Fall bird sightings; 1991; Iowa

Barbara L. Wilson
Route 1, Box 41
Hastings, Iowa 51540

Species	#	Date	Where, comments
Cooper's Hawk	1	6 Nov	North of Silver City, Mills County. Adult.
Marsh Hawk	1	3 Nov	West of Silver City, Mills County. Adult male.
Mockingbird	1	26 Oct	Wilson Farm, north of Hastings, Mills County. ✓

As I drove out the driveway yesterday on the way to Offutt to teach class, I saw a Robin take off from the brush pile across the road and fly north. I absent-mindedly watched it. Silhouetted against clouds, it seemed to have a pale bar through the wing. I pondered that pale bar thrushes often have underneath, formed by pale underwing coverts. This looked about perpendicular to what that should be, though, and appeared to be on the top of the wing. When the bird dipped to fly in front of the darker background of Lees's timber, I could see that it actually had prominent white patches in the wings and long white patches up the sides of the tail. The gray, small-headed, thin-billed bird was a **Mockingbird!** Landed in a hedgerow; definitely this species.

Horned lark	5 dead	2 Nov.	with Lapland Longspurs; see below
Lapland Longspur	69 dead on road	2 Nov	In about 1.25 mile, just east of Hastings, Mills County, on Highway 34. Fed on the roadside and flew low when flushed by traffic; repeated mortality. (35 are at UNO now.) ✓

Driving around southwest Iowa November 8, I found more pockets of dead Longspurs, though not as large as this one. It seems quite a few open country birds must have died of vehicles as a consequence of the ice storm, as they fed on the roadsides.

Past bird reports from Iowa, information that should have been reported long ago.

Barbara L. Wilson
Route 1, Box 41
Hastings, Iowa 51540

Species	#	Date	Where, comments
WINTER 1990			
Common Snipe	2	27 Jan	Sec. 12, Anderson Township, Mills County
SPRING 1990			
Snowy Egret	1	8 May	Lake Manawa, according to Dr. Roger Sharpe, who took his ornithology class there
Bonaparte's Gull	800	20 April	Lake Manawa, Pottawattamie County
Mockingbird	1	30 April	West of Clarinda, Page County
House Finch	2	13 Mar	Glenwood, Mills County -- male and female in the square
House Finch	1	Mar 17	Wilson Farm
House Finch	3	Mar 17	George Franek residence south of Red Oak, Montgomery County. Regular feeder visitors
SUMMER 1990			
Swainson's Hawk	1	about 12 June	Hacklebarney Woods Park, Montgomery County, according to Jay Maher, who studied raptors in the Dakotas.
Mockingbird	1	28 June	Breeding Bird Atlas block 738, Adams County -- singing male
Mockingbird	1	5 July	Breeding Bird Atlas block 688, Pottawattamie County
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1	26 July	Waubonsie State Par, Fremont County. Singing male. Details provided before.
FALL 1990			

Ibis sp.	1	22 October	Willow Slough, Mills County; reported by Dan Cain. Black, like a shadow flying over. Size as Green Heron or larger. Green highlights when seen through binoculars. Bill very decurved.
Common Snipe	lots	22 October	Willow Slough. Reported by Dan Cain. Flying over in flocks of 30 or more.
SPRING 1991			
White Pelican	86	12 Apr	Willow Slough
Wild Turkey	10+	Mar 9	Wilson Farm, north of Hastings, Mills County; flushed from switchgrass field
Turkey Vulture	1	1 Apr	North of Silver City, Mills County
Cooper's Hawk	1	14 Apr	Wilson farm; adult (Larger than a crow. Gray above, barred warm pale brown below. Crown blackish. Long tail. Short raptor bill. Fairly long legs.)
Golden Plover	flock	29 May	West edge of Grundy County ofn Highway 175. they fly up and parallel the car, above it, staying with it at 60 mph. Good-sized shorebirds, not long-billed, wings too long and narrow for pigeons, tail too long. Heavy bodied for shorbirds.
White-breasted Nuthatch		20 Apr	Nodaway Valley Park, Page County. Male feeds female in nest cavity in oak. Seen with Sue Stroyles
Sedge Wren	1	9 May, 13 May	Wilson Farm -- song "Chuck, chuck, churrrrrrrrrr"
Spotted Rufous-sided Towhee	1	13 Apr	Wilson Farm
Harris Sparrow		9 May	Wilson Farm
SUMMER 1991			
Pied-billed Grebe	2	27 July	Willow Slough, Mills County. On exposed nests in Potamogeton. (One nest later failed, uneaten eggs rolled into the water.)

Mississippi Kite	1	21 July	Des Moines, Iowa, in the place they are known. See documentation.
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	21 July	Red Rock Reservoir. Said "Tu" sometimes doubling the call note. Cinnamon below but not dark. Barring by tail with equal light and dark bars. With Tanya Bray and Ross Silcock.
Laughing Gull	1	21 July	Red Rock Reservoir. See documentation.
Caspian Tern		21 July	Red Rock Reservoir. With Tanya Bray and Ross Silcock
Marsh Wren	lots	27 July	Willow Slough