

Spring - 1968

AFN notes

IOWA

11 June, 1968

A. F. N. Spring 1968 Des Moines

April was warm and May cool. Last half of April was rather wet.
June has been excessively warm, and no rain until the downpour on
the 10th which brought cooler weather.

The duck migration was generally good; Redhead, most in years,
many Ring-necked and some Canvasbacks which were practically absent
last year. Buffleheads were unusually numerous for that sp. A Cinnamon
Teal just outside Des Moines on 21 April.

No reports of hawk migrations and Red-shouldered still missing.

Shorebirds found in few places due to lack of suitable areas. Coots
found in large flocks and stayed longer than usual. Willets seen on
several occasions. Dowitchers - as many as 28 in a flock, seen a few
times. Hudsonian Godwits were more than usual with several reports.
Phalaropes also more than usual with 15-20 Northerns in one flock with
Wilson's.

Cuckoos were almost non-existent until several seen and heard on 9 June.

Empidonax were numerous, but Crested were late and few.

Almost no Blue Jays seen until 1 May.

Swainson's Thrushes were very late, but unusually numerous and stayed
much later than usual. Not many Gray-cheeked or Hermit and few, if any, Veery.

Vireos were thought down.

About the only warbler wave was on 18-19 May when visibility was poor.

Bobolinks seem up. Grackles continue to increase.

1 Summer Tanager is the only report.

Dickcissels seemed late, but probably in usual numbers now.

Towhees continue very scarce.

Woody Brown

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FIELD REPORTS. — use heading

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March and April were warm with May cooler than normal. Precipitation was sub-normal with no flooding and a lack of mudflats for waders. Oaks leafed out early, with elms later and the warblers seemingly waited for the latter. Unusually windy weather prevailed, with some severe wind- and hailstorms. Some of the comments: "No really noticeable waves, best days were 7, 15, 22, and 23 May." (P, P.). ^{and 26 - the final week of May equaled the entire earlier portion of that month.} "No large variety, no real big waves." (PL). "Generally poor weather responsible for a low count." (RM). "Dry weather may have had an effect." (DG). Still, on a chilly and overcast 9 May, Fred Kent had 21 warblers in a list of 119 species, and a list of 110 on the following day. There were several reports of partial albinism: ^{SWAMPSON'S TITMICE (P), APP Common} a Coot (RH); Robins (EG, RH); Grackle (PL); and a Red-winged Blackbird (RM).

GREBES, PELICANS. Eared Grebes were reported at Lake Manawa on 5 May (DH); four were seen at Webster City (RM); with several sightings at Des Moines. A flock of 50 White Pelicans had an extended stay on Lake McBride in May (FK), and 25 were on Big Wall Lake on 4 May (RM).

HERONS. Great Blues were thought scarce (FK; DH, RM, WHB), but 40 were seen at Harper's Ferry on 30 March by Glen Bloomfield (RH). One of the few Green Heron reports is of an early one seen 26 March by Don Prebie (RH). Common Egrets were: 17 April (DG); 21st, 2 (RH), and 28th, 2 by Larry Fabian (RH).

GEESE. About on schedule with a very large flight on 23 March (DH); good numbers in a fine migration with 100 White-fronted near Pocahontas on 7 April (RM); 2-4,000 at Princeton Marsh from 10 to 15 March (P, P).

^{Ducks} DUCKS. Not as many, but good variety (RM); plentiful from mid-March through April (MK); migration disappointing (PK); but thought generally good (WHB). An estimated 20,000 were seen at Sweet's Marsh on 23 March (RH). Mallards: thought up (MK). Pintails: greatly increased over last year (JF). Green-winged: increased in numbers (RM). Blue-winged: down somewhat (MK), good numbers (KL). A Cinnamon Teal was found by Albert Berkowitz at Des Moines on 21 April. Shoveler: again abundant (MK), good numbers (KL, WHB). Redhead: may be up some (DH), a flock

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of 50 on 19 March, (FK), 150 seen on 23 March (RH), a considerable increase at Des Moines. Canvasback: none seen (DH), 60 on 23 March (RH), and several reports at Des Moines. Scaup: a concentration of 2,000 on 13 April (FK). Barrow's Golden-eye: Edwin Franks reported a male on the Mississippi at Nauvoo, Ill. was seen by Bill McKinnis and him on 14 March. Bufflehead: an unusually large number of these were seen all spring in the Des Moines area. Mergansers: 50 Common and 15 Hooded were at Sweet's Marsh on 23 March (RH).

HAWKS. Most reports said none or few, but Mr. and Mrs. Hanna saw about a dozen between Sioux City and Ottumwa, Red-tailed and one Marsh Hawk.

Turkey Vultures: arrived early at the Ledges with 17 at one roost (JF); 6 were seen there on 20 April (RM); 12 at Harper's Ferry on 30 March, seen by Glen Bloomfield (RH); 6 at Decorah on 30 March by Larry Fabian (RH); and 8 observed on 1 May with 2 or 3 seen on most clear days in April (DG). Sharp-shinned: 3 banded ^{one} on 18 March ~~and~~ ^{March, and} 25 on 3 May (PP).

Red-tailed: the only hawk seen in numbers (RM), and fairly common (KL).

Red-shouldered: 1 each on 23 March and 21 April (RH) for the only report.

Golden Eagle: 1 on 28 March (HMCK). Bald Eagle: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~, one on March ~~the~~ 11th (PL); immature on 13 February and adult on 18 March (H. MCK); 2 at Goose Lake, Hancock Co. 26 March (JF); and 1 in Yellow River Forest on 2 March by Nick Osness and Larry Fabian (RH). Marsh Hawk: 2 on 30 March (RH), in addition to the Hannas'. Osprey: 4 were seen by Hays, 1 each on 13 and 16 April and 2 on 21 April; 4 by Glen Bloomfield on 16 April, and 1 by Albert Berkowitz on 4 May. Pigeon Hawk was well seen at Sweet's Marsh by Mrs. Hewitt and Hays on 30 March.

GROUSE, BOBWHITE, PHEASANT, TURKEY. A Ruffed Grouse and 11 Turkeys were seen in the Yellow River Forest on 2 March by Nick Osness and Larry Fabian (RH). Bobwhite are plentiful (KL). Pheasants: seem numerous (DH), best population in years (RM), and scattered (KL).

SHOREBIRDS. Killdeer: more than 100 at Hudson on 6 April (RH), and 50 on 29 March (DG), but seemed fewer (MK). Black Rail: a positive identification, studied at 10 feet (GB), (no date given). Gallinule: 1 seen on 11 May at Anderson Lake near Jewell (RM). Coot: All reports mentioned unusually

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large flocks. Golden Plover: a large flock observed "in eastern Iowa" by Gertrude Weaver (DH). Killdeer: more than 100 at Hudson on 6 April (RH), and 50 seen on 29 March (DG). ^{Ruddy} Turnstone: 4 on 20 May (FK). Woodcock: courtship performance watched several times (PP, FK), 3 seen on 4 May (HMCK), 3 on 1 April by Jim Lauterback (RH), and a sighting of 4 young reported on 28 April to Fred Kent. Snipe: Almost 100 were seen on Otter Creek on 6 April (RH). Upland Plover were reported (PP, RH, DG, RH). Don Prebie reported an early one seen on 26 March. Willet: observed in the Waterloo area by Mrs. Velie and Mrs. Hewitt (RH), with several sightings at Des Moines. Dowitcher: in larger numbers than usual with 50 on 18 May (FK), a flock of 28 on 22 May with several smaller groups earlier at Des Moines, and 4 seen by Glen Bloomfield on the early date 6 April (RH). Buff-breasted Sandpiper: a flock of 15 on 17 May were seen (EB), and a flock reported in eastern Iowa by Gertrude Weaver (DH). ^a M^arbled Godwits: reported (JF, DG). Hudsonian Godwits: 2 at Anderson Lake (RM), and several small flocks at Des Moines. ^{Wilson's} Phalaropes: 200 Wilson's seen by Bob Nickolson and Eldon Bryant (DH), with a good-sized flock and several smaller groups at Des Moines. The rare Northern Phalarope was reported, 8 on 20 May (FK) with 15-20 in with a similar number of Wilson's at Des Moines on 20 May.

GULLS, TERNS. Franklin's: a few more (RM). Bonaparte's: 15 seen 22 April (HMCK). Black: several reports of very large flocks.

CUCKOOS, OWLS. Cuckoos have been exceedingly scarce, the only reports being of one Yellow-billed (PL) and both species on 14 May (RM). Burrowing Owl has been found on the Diggs' farm near Hamburg (EG). Long-eared: 5 at Dunbar Slough 8 March (JF). Short-eared; only a single seen twice in March and April (DG).

WHIP-POOR-WILLS, NIGHTHAWKS, WOODPECKERS. At least 5 Whip-poor-wills in the Ledges area on 7 May (JF). The first banded was on 12 April (PP). A Nighthawk on 9 May was early (PP). Reports on Flickers mentioned an unusually heavy migration (MK, RH, RM, KL). There were similar comments on

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Redheaded ^{woodpeckers} (FK, E.G. KL). Sapsuckers were in good numbers on 17 April and 3 May (PP).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS. Smaller flycatchers plentiful, but the larger species seemed late (MK). An unusual number of Empidonax in Des Moines. Eastern Kingbirds: 250 seen on 18 May (RM). Crested: late and few (RM, WHB). Say's Phoebes show a small increase after two poor years (EB). An Eastern Phoebe on 18 March was early (PP). Yellow-bellied: ^{first} 3 banded on 22 May (PP). Acadian: banded 8, 15, and 16 May (PP). An early Wood Pewee on 18 April (DH). Swallows were thought in the largest numbers ever, with flocks of thousands (RM). Tree: seemed to arrive early with 6 on 30 March (RH), and a dozen on the 31st (FK). Bank: appeared to be only half as many as last year (EG). Barn: plentiful, but Cliff absent (KL). A good flock of Cliff at Des Moines on 26 May. Purple Martins are few (GB, MK, KL, WHB).

JAYS, CROWS, WRENS. More than 500 Blue Jays were seen in one-half hour at the Ledges on 1 May (JF). Crows have definitely decreased, possibly due to hunting pressure according to Wm. Felton (DH). A Winter Wren was seen and heard singing on 28 April (RH). Bewick's on 8 and 22 April were the first in five years (PL). A few pairs of Carolina Wrens are in the same locations (PL), and have been heard (FK).

MIMICS, THRUSHES. There are no Mockingbirds in the field where there have been two pairs before (GB), but 2 or 3 are reported from the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area (RH). Robins are again having a good season in several places. A Hermit Thrush seen 3 April by Mrs. Hewitt was early (RH). Swainson's: Most commented on the unusually large numbers. Most came rather late but stayed for a longer time than usual at Des Moines. A good flight of Gray-cheeked (EB). Bluebird nestings down due to too many House Sparrows and predators (GB), and also down (KL).

KINGLETS, PIPITS, SHRIKES. Lots of Kinglets this year (FK); a great many (RH); Ruby-crowned abundant since mid-March, but no Golden-crowned (MK); no Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned in small numbers (RM). Water Pipits are fewer with only 1 seen (DG).

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Loggerhead Shrikes are scarce from all reports (GB, EB, PK, KL).

VIREOS, WARBLERS. Most reports of vireos are unfavorable: 4 Solitary but none of the others (RM); just arriving on 21 May (EB); all vireos way down (MK); only one Solitary (KL); no reports of Red-eyed (DH); diminished this year (PK); and none (KL). There was a good movement of Philadelphias with ^{of peak of} 6 banded on 22 May ^{and the best movements were in late May} (PP). Lots of Warbling (DH). There is considerable variation in the reports of warblers, especially as regards dates of arrival. Warblers scarce, except Tennessee (GB); ~~no variety and no good waves (PL);~~ good flights on 5-7 and 13-15 May (DH); best wave in Des Moines 18-19 May; 21 species on 9th and a wave on 26th (FK); 20 species on the 11-12 week-end (RM). Tennessee: a wave on 18th (RM); lots (KL). Yellow: above average (KL, WHB). A Cape May banded on 7 May (PP). Chestnut-sided and Bay-breasted scarce and only 2 Blackpoll ² (KL), but lots of the latter at Des Moines. A Kentucky and a Carolina Wren singing at the same time were heard by Fred Kent, who also had a singing Connecticut. Mourning: much more plentiful (MK). It is unusual to have three reports of the Hooded: 11 ^{May} March, Mrs. Velie and Mrs. Hewitt (RH); 28 April, singing and well seen by Tom and Fred Kent; 20 May, an excellent view at 20 feet of a male by Mary Lou Petersen in their yard (PP). Redstart: noticably absent (DH).

ICTERIDS, FINCHES. Bobolink: unusually large numbers near Des Moines. A nest of a meadowlark (sp?) was parasitized by a Cowbird (GB). Yellow-headed: seem more (DH). Red-winged Blackbird: increased decidedly (DH); thich (KL); but, fewer nests (GB). Brewer's Blackbird: a small flock seen on 21 March (MK). Grackle: increased decidedly (DH); plentiful as ever (MK); and continuing to increase in Des Moines. Late, with only a few hundred on peak days instead of 15-20,000 seen in other years (PL). Scarlet Tanagers scarce and no Summer Tanagers (KL). One male Summer Tanager is the only Des Moines report. Blue Grosbeak: 2 pairs found west of Mapleton (EB); 1 seen on 17 May (HMCK).

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Dickcissel: back in good numbers (GB); an early one on 10 April by Mrs. J. Osness (RH); only 1 so far (RM). Goldfinches are increasing according to reports. Towhee: one of the spotted variety spent some time in the area (EG); in good numbers (RM); few, if any seen in Des Moines. A Painted Bunting banded at the Diggs' farm (EG). A Clay-colored Sparrow on 4 May was unusual in Des Moines. White-crowned: none seen (EB); a late one on 24 May (PK). White-throated: very few (EB); abundant (MK); in great numbers with 200 on 28 April (RH). Lincoln's and Swamp: up slightly (MK).

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