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Thomas H. Kent
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Dear Tom:

Your spring report arrived in good form. I appreciate the effort you put into highlighting specific records and writing brief comments. This makes my job much easier and results in better final report. Thanks.

After reviewing the documentations I too am uncomfortable with Iceland Gulls. Jim Fuller's is probably correct, but there really isn't enough detail to eliminate a very pale Thayer's or an intergrade. Jim Sinclair's bird is perplexing. It really seems too big ("at least as large as a Herring Gull") and the primary pattern sounds strange. Information about head shape and bill size would have been very helpful. I too will defer these to the rarities committee.

In a margin you raised a question about whether Yellow Rails call during migration. I believe they do. On two different occasions in nw Indiana I have been able to elicit predawn calls by playing the Peterson tape. Responses were identical in quality and cadence to calls on the tape. Additionally, I just talked to Paul McKenzie who told me about hearing two calling birds in Missouri on May 16.

I am extremely grateful for your insightful comments about the state reports. I get far too little feed-back from other state compilers, consequently, your thoughts are appreciated. My responses are as follows:

Items 1 and 2. You handled these beautifully.

Item 3. Statements about general trends are indeed subjective and risky. But in tabulating observation dates and species numbers, I sense we often miss broader patterns. In reading a typical season report, for example, a major warbler wave would probably not be detected. Accordingly, I had hoped that comments like "great warblers on May 14," or "poor shorebirds all season" might accompany seasonal reports.

Tables:- I suspect that your assessment of tables is accurate. I was simply searching for some method of packing more information in less space. Please continue to share your thoughts and ideas.

Let me share the following tidbit. I did some birding in northeast Iowa in late May. On the 25th, I was surprised to hear a singing Yellow-throated Warbler at Pikes Peak State Park in Clayton County. This is much further north than I had expected to find a Yellow-throated. This species is quite rare in the Chicago region.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kent".