



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
NORTHWEST

DEPARTMENT OF GEOSCIENCES
3400 Broadway
Gary, Indiana 46408
(219) 980-6738

1 July 1994

Thomas H. Kent
211 Richards Street
Iowa City, IA 52246

Dear Tom,

Thanks for the Iowa documentations. In evaluating the Iowa records I basically ignored the records Jim indicated were being referred to the state rarities committee. This is in accord of my policy of not publishing records likely to be rejected by state committees.

My one exception to the above involved the Fish Crow. Jim seemed to equivocate a bit on this one and the documentation looked good to me. In addition, the appearance of Fish Crows in Louisa County is consistent with expansion in southwest Missouri and into southwest Indiana this spring. If you feel this record might not be accepted please let me know by the last week in July (that is roughly the latest I can ask the folks in New York to make a change).

The Purple Gallinule, Mountain Bluebird, Western Tanager, and Black-headed Grosbeak documentations appeared okay. I will offer the following comments on records in the "referred" category:

Clark's Grebe:- Until we have a better understanding about the occurrence of Clark's in the Region I am very cautious about records of this species. I am only accepting very well documented birds. Though Marion Brewer's sighting may well have been a Clark's, I would not have accepted it as no mention of bill color was made (Eckert's recent *Birding* article suggests this may be the best mark).

Red Knot:- This one is not very convincing. Though I am hard pressed to suggest an alternate identification, the description is just not adequate to overcome the astonishment of a mid-April Knot. A cursory examination of my literature revealed only on previous April record for the entire Region- six on 24 April 1970, at Squaw Creek N.W.R. (Robbins & Easterla).

Swainson's Warbler:- I am unfamiliar the the observer but information in the description (e.g., eliminating Chipping Sparrow) suggests limited birding experience. We seem to get about one Swainson's report per year in Indiana (where this bird in on the hypothetical list), and they are always seen by an

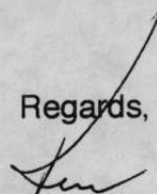
inexperienced birder. In my two good views of Swainson's Warblers the rusty cap has never been distinctive; it just appeared slightly darker than the rest of the plumage. I would have trouble accepting this one.

Lark Bunting, female:- This one is acceptable. The white wing and tail patches and size are convincing. I would have felt better if the bill description had mentioned an almost grosbeak-like bill, but the comment "heavy sparrow bill" seems okay.

I hope your Alaska trip was productive. If things can be worked out I plan to make the trek next year. In early May Scott Jackson birded a bit on your turf. We spent a few days birding up the Missouri River from Kansas City to Omaha. I finally got to see Riverton (though there were precious few birds) and the IPL ponds (and Piping Plovers). We most enjoyed Forney Lake, which was literally crawling with birds. I was also impressed by the sparrows at DeSota N.W.R. It would be a gross understatement to say I had never seen so many Harris' and Clay-colored Sparrows (there were hundreds of each). What a treat.

Spring birding was quite slow in Indiana. The best bird was a Black-shouldered Kite that was seen only one time (and not by me) near Evansville in extreme southern Indiana. The most recent news involves Fish Crows that are finally making their way up the Ohio River to Indiana (long overdue). Did you ever notice how the "good birds" invariably appear on the wrong side of the state?

Regards,



Ken Brock