

Iowa & Missouri

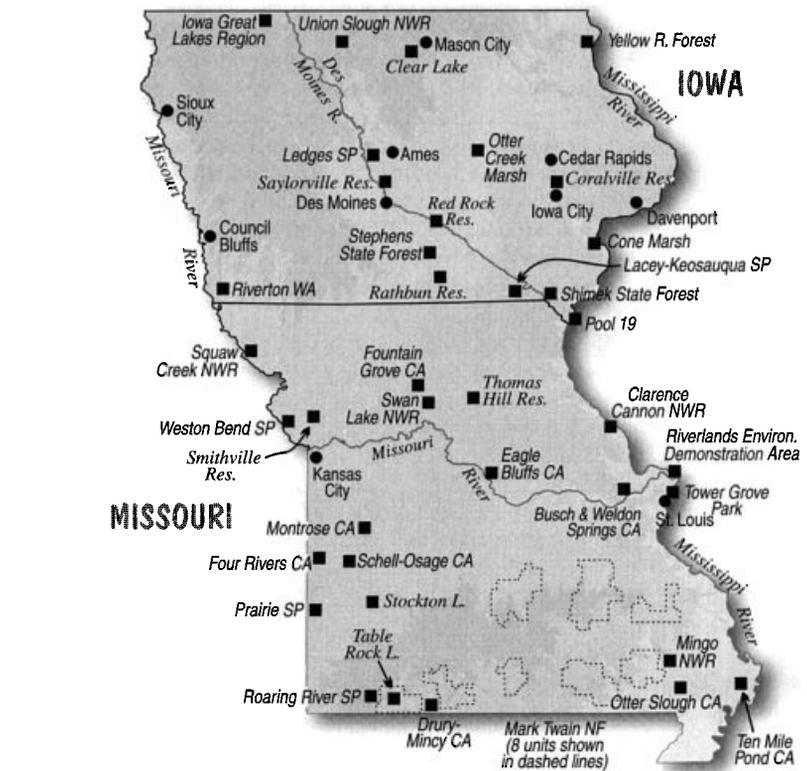
The 2005 spring season was characterized by generally warm and dry conditions throughout the Region, except that May rains relieved the drought across parts of Iowa. Predominantly southerly winds and warm temperatures in mid-April were responsible for many early migrants in both states, most notably passerines. Migrant waterfowl were present throughout the Region by early March, the shorebird migration was good (especially in parts of northern Missouri and southern central Iowa), and the warbler migration was the best in years in northern Missouri and Iowa. Many of the rarities were indicative of the western flavor of this spring season, e.g., reports of species like White-faced Ibis, Western Tanager, and Lazuli Bunting.

Abbreviations: B.C.A. (Bird Conservation Area); E.B.C.A. (Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, Boone, MO); Hawkeye (W.A., Johnson, IA); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles, MO); Riverton (W.A., Fremont, IA); S.C.R. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO); T.G.P. (Tower Grove Park, St. Louis, MO).

GREBES THROUGH GROUSE

Red-necked Grebes were reported from three Iowa locales after 21 Apr; a pair 7–9 May at Eagle L., Hancock (PH) was suggestive of nesting. Eared Grebe numbers were about normal, with three Missouri and 18 Iowa reports. Western Grebes were reported only in Iowa, with up to 5 birds 30 Apr–29 May at five locales. Six Snowy Egret reports from Iowa 19 Apr–14 May made an above-normal number for spring. Good numbers of *Plegadis* appeared in both states. Single Glossy Ibis on 30 Apr at S.C.R. (ph., †TR) and 12 May at Cooley Lake C.A., Clay (Kyle Driggers) were notable for Missouri. White-faced Ibis were noted from both states 20 Apr–23 May; most reports were from the w. edge of the Region. Peak counts were 20 on 23 May in Holt, MO (TR) and 18 on 19 May in Fremont, IA (PEL). Black Vultures continue their northward range expansion in Missouri; this spring, pioneering birds were found 4 Mar in St. Genevieve (2 birds; JWE) and 4 May in St. Louis (†Linda Tossig).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks again made news this spring; three flocks of 3–4 birds each were noted 18–20 Apr in Dickinson, Hardin, and Johnson in Iowa, and 6 birds were documented 11 May at Springfield, MO (†DB); all are presumed to be wild. Good numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from the e. part of the Region, including 500 on 6 Mar at Clarence Cannon N.W.R., MO (JWE). There were only a few reports of Cackling Goose; birders are encouraged to take care when separating this species from similar subspecies of Canada Goose, especially *B. c. parvipes*. Cinnamon Teal reports



included 2 at Goose L., Clinton 6 Apr (Paul Van Nieuwenhuysse), one at S.C.R. 12 Apr (KM et al.), and one at E.B.C.A. 2 May (CC); hybrids (with Blue-winged Teal) were seen 11 Apr in Clay, MO (KM) and 4 May in Story, IA (Wolfgang Oesterreich). Lingering waterfowl included Greater Scaup 13 May in Holt, MO (DAE) and 15 May in Dickinson, IA (LAS), a Surf Scoter 7 May in Lee, IA (PEL), a Black Scoter 16 May at Chichaqua W.A., Polk, IA (Darwin Koenig), single Long-tailed Ducks 30 Apr in Madison, IA (DTh) and 28 May in Buchanan, MO (LL et al.), and a Common Goldeneye 27 May at R.E.D.A. (CM).

Ospreys are casual breeders in Missouri; they were reported nesting this season in Dade, Randolph, and St. Clair/Benton/Hickory (m.ob.). Mississippi Kites continued to wander away from the Mississippi R. in Missouri, with one as far nw. as Mound City, Holt 29 May (TR); Iowa reports were 9 May at Otter Creek Marsh, Tama (†MTW) and 19 May in Boone (2 birds; †MTW). The last Rough-legged Hawk was seen 2 May at S.C.R. (†LL), the latest ever for Missouri. The winter Merlin gathering at Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines, Polk, IA contained 7 birds on 3 Mar (JG); elsewhere, migrants occurred in both

Stephen J. Dinsmore

5711 Valley Drive

Ames, Iowa 50010

(cootjr@iastate.edu)

states, with the last on 14 May in Livingston, MO (SK et al.).

Ruffed Grouse continue to struggle in both states. One was heard 26 Mar at Daniel Boone C.A., Warren (JPU, KM, DW); this is a species of concern in Missouri. In Iowa, they continue to hang on at Stephens S.E., Lucas, where singles were reported 14 & 19 May (AJ, RIA, PHA). Another species of concern in both states is Greater Prairie-Chicken. In Missouri, numbers were thought to be declining in general (CM, JM), while at their single Iowa locale at Kellerton B.C.A., Ringgold, up to 12 birds were reported (m.ob.), similar to last year.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Single Yellow Rails at S.C.R. 25 & 26 Apr (TR) were the only reports. A King Rail after 10 May near Cuming, Warren (JG, m.ob.) was

one of the most cooperative in Iowa in years; only three were reported from Missouri. An injured Virginia Rail found 30 Mar in *Cerro Gordo* (Lowell Washburn, *fide* PH) was the earliest ever for Iowa. The 75 Sandhill Cranes 19 Mar at Pool Sl, *Allamakee* (FL) were indicative of their continued spread in ne. Iowa.

The shorebird migration was typified by good numbers and better-than-average diversity in areas where there was habitat, particularly in nw. Missouri and sw. Iowa. The usual scattered reports of Piping Plover continued this spring; 3 were in Missouri 30 Apr–6 May, and 11+ birds were reported at six Iowa locales 23 Apr–20 May. The Black-necked Stilt expansion continued this spring; there were five sightings of up to 7 birds each in e. and cen. Iowa, but only a single bird in Missouri outside their se. Missouri stronghold. Lesser Yellowlegs were widely reported, with good counts of 1113 on 3 May at S.C.R. (FD), 2500 on 6 May at Riverton (PEL), and 1000 on 10 May at Hawkeye (CRE). Whimbrel reports included 4 on 14 May at Schell-Osage CA, *St. Clair*, MO (Lisa Berger), one on 24 May at R.E.D.A. (†JPU), 10 on 29 May at E.B.C.A. (†Heather Clenin), and 2 on 29 May at Riverton (†JWR). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper 6 May in Holt, MO (TR, PEL) was notable for spring: most pass to the w. of the Region in spring.

Single Ruffs made news on 11 Apr at S.C.R. (ph., †TR et al.) and 6 May at Riverton (†PEL). Red-necked Phalaropes were detected in both states 12–30 May; all reports were of one to 3 birds. Noteworthy totals included 171 Hudsonian Godwits 14 May at S.C.R. (DAE et al.), 30 Ruddy Turnstones 19 May at E.B.C.A. (CC), 1000 Least Sandpipers 10 May at Hawkeye (CRE), 1800 Baird's Sandpipers and 2000 Long-billed Dowitchers 6 May at Riverton (PEL), 2500 Pectoral Sandpipers 28 Apr in *Dunklin*, MO (PEL), and up to 3000 Pectoral Sandpipers 10 Apr–10 May at Hawkeye (CRE, THK).

Franklin's Gulls were widespread in both states after mid-Apr; notable counts included 248 on 25 Apr at S.C.R. (TR) and 1300 on 15 May at Grover's L., *Dickinson*, IA (LAS). Reports of the larger gulls, many of them likely holdovers from winter, included 3 Thayer's Gulls in Iowa, the latest being 19 Apr at Coralville Res., *Johnson* (JLF); Lesser Black-backed Gulls 4 Mar at Smithville L., *Clay*, MO (ph., †KM), 6 Mar at Credit I., *Scott*, IA (SMF), 26 Mar at L. Manawa, *Pottawattamie*, IA (LJP, BKP), 28 Mar at Rice L., *Worth*, IA (PH), and 4 May at Hawkeye (†CRE); and 4 Glaucous Gulls in Iowa 6–14 Mar. A count of 142 Caspian Terns 12 May at Saylorville Res., *Polk*, IA was notable (SJD, JJD). Common Terns occurred in exceptional numbers in Iowa, with 38 on 7 May at Montrose, *Lee*

(PEL) and up to 65 on 12 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD, JJD, DTh). Black Terns were well reported, with a peak of 1765 on 14 May in Holt, MO (DAE).

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

Two dove species continued their expansions in the Region this spring. Eurasian Collared-Doves made news in Missouri, where they continued to expand their range "explosively" (CM, JM), and in Iowa, with first records for *Clinton*, *Mahaska*, *Muscatine*, and *Winneshiek*. Single White-winged Doves were sighted 3 May in Springfield, *Greene*, MO (JFo) and 9–11 May in Sioux City, *Woodbury*, IA (*fide* BFH). The only Snowy Owl report was a



These Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks photographed 19 April 2005 near Alden, Hardin County, Iowa, constituted about the ninth state record for this increasingly southern species. Photograph by Jay Gilliam.

single on 15 Mar in Lyon, IA (ETh). A Burrowing Owl was at S.C.R. 18 Apr (†TR, FD); this species is casual in Missouri. In Iowa, the Northern Hawk Owl discovered in Feb at Manly, *Worth*, lingered through 2 Apr (†PH). The only other holdover from the winter owl invasion in Iowa was a single Great Gray Owl 6 & 17 Apr near Decorah, *Winneshiek* (*fide* Dennis Carter; ph.).

Early Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were detected 4 Apr in *Ozark*, MO (Evelyn Ford) and 20 Apr in *Polk*, IA (DTh, earliest ever for Iowa). A cooperative male Vermilion Flycatcher was present 15 May+ at Whiterock Conservancy, *Guthrie* (†Joe Monahan, m.ob., ph.). Western Kingbirds continue to expand eastward slowly and are becoming more regular along the Mississippi R. in Missouri; 6 were in St. Louis 22 May (JWE). Other than a somewhat early Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 28 Mar in *Taney*, MO, the only other report of interest was of a single on 27 May in *Boone*, IA (Mark McInroy). The last Northern Shrikes in Iowa were 27 Mar in *Linn* (DLF, DP) and *Polk* (RIA, PHA). Warbling Vireos were early this spring: one 23 Mar at L. Wapapello, *Wayne/Butler* (Steve Dilks) was the earliest for Missouri, while Iowa had four reports 20–21 Apr (†DiP, DP, JLF, DAK), the 2nd and 3rd earliest dates ever.

Fish Crows continue their slow northward spread along the Mississippi R. in Missouri. Higher-than-normal numbers were found in St. Louis (CM, JM), and 4 were seen 15 Mar at Prairie Slough C.A., *Lincoln* (SS). After a strong winter flight, Red-breasted Nuthatches remained into May in both states, with the last on 14 May in *Buchanan* (LL et al.) and *Clay* (*fide* CM, JM) in Missouri and 30 May in *Marshall*, IA (MPr). Bewick's Wrens had a fine spring, given their general scarcity in the Region in recent years. Five were reported from n. Missouri, and one was at the usual locale at Shimek S.F., *Lee*, IA after 21 May (JG, m.ob.). A Marsh Wren 14 Apr at Chichaqua W.A., *Polk*, IA was record early (SSP). Thrushes

staged a good flight Regionwide; large groundings occurred 7 May and 13–14 May. Veeries were thought to be more numerous than normal in Missouri (CM, JM). Gray-cheeked Thrushes were fairly common in both states, with a maximum of 30 on 7 May at Pilot Knob S.P., *Hancock*, IA (PH). Swainson's Thrushes also drew comment: high counts were of 90 on 7 May at Pilot Knob S.P., *Hancock*, IA (PH), 110 at S.C.R. 13 May (DAE), and 81 at Hitchcock N.A., *Pottawattamie*, IA 14 May (MOr). A notably late Hermit Thrush was seen 7 May at T.G.P. (BR). An ad. male Varied Thrush 22 May in *O'Brien* (ph. Bruce Morrison) furnished a record-late date for Iowa. Sprague's Pipit reports from Missouri included one in *St. Charles* 4 May (†Steve Mitten) and 3 in *Livingston* 7 May (SK); this species is accidental in Iowa and is undoubtedly an overlooked migrant. An American Pipit 14 May in *Boone* (†PM et al.) was record late for Missouri.

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

The spring warbler flight drew mixed review in both states. Many species probably experienced a "normal" migration, although some *Dendroica* were present in exceptional numbers and some breeders wandered more than normal. The 10 Golden-winged Warblers 15 May Hickory Hill Park, *Johnson*, IA (CRE) was a good count. The southerly airflow in Apr may have been responsible for early individuals of several species, including single Orange-crowns at T.G.P. 28 Mar (Jim Ziebol, John Solodar et al.) and at Walnut Woods S.P., *Polk*, IA 10 Apr (RIA, PHA), both record-early dates, a Northern Parula 31 Mar at Castlewood S.P., *St. Louis*, MO (Ian Hunt), a record-early Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat 20 Apr in *Jefferson*, IA (†DiP), a record-early Prothonotary near Cumming, *Warren*, IA 20 Apr (ph. JG), and a Louisiana Waterthrush at T.G.P. 19 Mar (DB et al.). Tennessees were widespread, as is usual; a tally of 258 on 14 May in *Livingston*, MO (SK et al.) is indicative of their abundance in the Region.

Missouri reported 3 Black-throated Blues 3–17 May; this species remains scarce in spring in Iowa. Blackpoll and Bay-breasted Warblers were more numerous than usual, especially in Iowa. A trickle of Cape May Warblers in the first half of May included three reports from each state, with a high of 5 on 7 May at T.G.P. (NB). Connecticut Warblers staged one of their strongest flights in years with 10 in Missouri and 4 in Iowa. All but 2 occurred in the narrow window 12–22 May; one seen 29 May at Emmenegger Park, St. Louis, MO (BR) was late. Extralimital reports included a Yellow-throated Warbler 29 May at Brookside P., Story, IA (SSP), a Prairie Warbler 5 May and a Yellow-throated 7 May at Watkins Mill S.P., Clay, MO (KM), a Prothonotary at Agency, Buchanan, MO 27 May (JH), a Louisiana Waterthrush 12 Apr at Parker's Woods, Cerro Gordo, IA (RGo), a Hooded Warbler 29 May at Cuivre River S.P., Lincoln, MO (SS), and 5 Hoodeds in Iowa 6–30 May.

Wandering Summer Tanagers were widespread in Iowa, with five reports from the n. half of the state, where rare; all were found after 7 May. A Scarlet Tanager 10 Apr at T.G.P. (DB) was the earliest ever for Missouri. Two male Western Tanagers were in Iowa this spring: 11–16 May at Mason City, Cerro Gordo (†CJF, m.ob.) and 15 May at Hickory Hill Park, Johnson (CRE, MCD). At Mason City, CJF recorded the tanager "grand slam" (Summer, Scarlet, and Western) on 13 May!

TOWHEES THROUGH SISKINS

Spotted Towhees are regular in winter in both states, so it was no surprise that a few lingered into spring. However, reports after early May are a bit unusual, and this year there were singles on 14 May in Knox, MO (Anne Downing et al.) and Greene, MO (DB et al.), while in Iowa, singles were seen 14 May at Bacon Creek Park, Woodbury (JV) and at Hitchcock N.A., Pottawattamie 27 May (MOr), the state's 2nd latest ever. A Lark Bunting 7 May at Giachie Manitou N.A., Lyon (†DEC) was notable for Iowa. Henslow's Sparrows seemed less numerous in Missouri (CM, JM), although 45 on 20 Apr at Taberville Prairie C.A., St. Clair (DW) was a nice total. In Iowa, they continue to increase and were widely reported from e. and s. Iowa; singles seen 9 Apr in Ringgold (JLF) and Van Buren (RLC) were early. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows are rare spring migrants in the Region; this year, 2–4 were seen at Doolittle Prairie, Story, IA 20–28 May (SSP) and singles at B.K. Leach C.A., Lincoln, MO 25 & 29 May (SS). Lingering sparrows in Missouri included a Lincoln's 18 May at T.G.P. (JWE) and a White-crowned 27 May at Columbia, Boone (BJ). Smith's Longspurs were found in both states; 3 on 8 May at Hawkeye (CRE) were record late.

A male Black-headed Grosbeak was reported 25 May at Hitchcock N.A., Pottawat-

tamie, IA (†MOr). Lazuli Buntings made news in both states: up to 2 males were noted at Fairfax, Atchison, MO 8–21 May (†Evanne & Wilbur Wright, m.ob.); a male was at Hitchcock N.A., Pottawattamie, IA 10–13 May (it later collided with a window; †MOr; *Iowa State University); and another male was found at Sibley, Fremont, IA 19 May (Carl Priebe, *vide* WRS). An Indigo Bunting 23 Apr in Algona, Kossuth, IA (MCK) was the 2nd earliest ever. Painted Buntings were reported only in Missouri, with a male after 12 May at Weldon Springs C.A., St. Charles (CM, 4th consecutive spring), a female 7 May at Marais Temps Clair C.A., St. Charles (†JWE), and 5 birds 24 May in Ozark (PM et al.). Great-tailed Grackles may have slowed their expansion in both states; fewer reports were received than in recent years. However, they can be locally common, as evidenced by 120 on 14 May at Banner W.A., Warren, IA (DAK); one in Floyd, IA 21 May provided a first local record (PH) and was at the n. edge of their range. An Orchard Oriole 20 Apr at Hawkeye (†CRE) was record early.

Winter finch reports were few. Purple Finches lingered into May in both states but were present only in small numbers. Four n. Iowa locales had up to 3 Common Redpolls lingering into Mar. Pine Siskins remained in fair numbers through the end of the period, although there were surprisingly no hints of nesting. The last birds were seen 29 May in Holt, MO (TR) and 31 May in Winneshiek, IA (EB).

Contributors: IOWA: Danny Akers (DAK), Pamela H. Allen (PHA), Reid I. Allen (RIA), Ellen Bell (EB), Doug Chapman (DEC), Raymond L. Cummins (RLC), Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Michael C. Dooley (MCD), Chris R. Edwards (CRE), Steve Freed (SMF), James L. Fuller (JLF), Jay Gilliam (JG), Rita Goranson (RGo), Paul Hertzell (PH), James L. Fuller (JLF), Bill F. Huser (BFH), Ann Johnson (AJ), Matthew C. Kenne (MCK), Thomas H. Kent (THK), Paul E. Lehman (PEL), Fred Leshner (FL), Mark Orsag (MOR), Babs Padelford (BKP), Loren Padelford (LJP), Shane S. Patterson (SSP), Diana Pesek (DP), Diane Porter (DiP), Mark Proescholdt (MPr), John W. Rutenbeck (JWR), Lee A. Schoenewe (LAS), W. Ross Silcock (WRS), Ed Thelen (ETH), Dennis Thompson (DTH), Jerry VonEhwegen (JV), Matthew T. Wetrich (MTW). MISSOURI: Nick Barber (NB), Dave Becher (DB), David Blevins (DB), Chris Corben (CC), Frank Durbian (FD), Joseph W. Eades (JWE), David A. Easterla (DAE), Jim Fossard (JFo), Jack Hilsabeck (JH), Brad Jacobs (BJ), Steve Kinder (SK), Larry Lade (LL), Charlene Malone (CM), Jim Malone (JM), Kristi Mayo (KM), Paul McKenzie (PM), Tommie Rogers (TR), Bill Rowe (BR), Scott Schuette (SS), Joshua P. Uffman (JPU), Doug Willis (DW). 🐦

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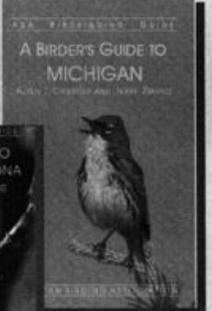


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