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## Bird Records of Two Winters, 1920-1922, in the Upper Missouri Valley

T. C. Stephens  
*Morningside College*

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BIRD RECORDS OF TWO WINTERS, 1920-1922, IN THE  
UPPER MISSOURI VALLEY

T. C. STEPHENS

The writer has published three papers<sup>1</sup> in the Proceedings of this Academy dealing with the winter bird life in the Missouri River region during the years from 1916 to 1920. More recently Mr. Chas. J. Spiker has published a paper<sup>2</sup> on the same subject dealing with the years from 1922 to 1926. The present paper is intended to bridge the gap between these two periods and to place in permanent form a few very interesting and important records of the bird life in the region dealt with.

The records presented in this paper may be placed in two groups for the purpose of explanation. A fair amount of field work was done within short distances of Sioux City, a radius of, perhaps, fifteen or twenty miles. Unless otherwise mentioned the writer is responsible for such material. More important than this are the numerous records of specimens sent in from considerable distances to the taxidermist, Mr. A. J. Anderson. Mr. Anderson was very generous in allowing me to have access to his records, and because of his kindness much valuable information is preserved. Similar data were contained in the three preceding papers in this series. Since Mr. Anderson's death occurred in 1923 we will no longer have this valuable source of records. With the presentation of this paper a ten-year period in the study of winter birds of the region is completed and reported upon.

LOON. *Gavia immer*. A female specimen, received by Mr. A. J. Anderson on Nov. 16, 1920, had been killed the day before at McCook Lake, Union County, S. D.

RING-BILLED GULL. *Larus delawarensis*. Mr. Anderson found a dead specimen a few miles up the Missouri River in November, 1921. It was mounted for his own collection.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT. *Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*.

<sup>1</sup> Bird Records During the Past Winter, 1916-1917, in Northwestern Iowa. By T. C. Stephens. Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., XXIV, 1917, pp. 245-258.

Bird Records of the Past Winter, 1917-1918, in the Upper Missouri Valley. By T. C. Stephens. Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., XXV, 1918, pp. 71-84.

Bird Records of the Past Two Winters, 1918-1920, in the Upper Missouri Valley. By T. C. Stephens. Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., XXVII, 1920, pp. 395-407.

<sup>2</sup> Winter Bird Records, 1922 to 1926, in Northwestern Iowa. By Chas. J. Spiker. Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., XXXIII, 1926, pp. 307-313.

The following two specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson:

Oct. 17, 1920, one from Ponca, Nebraska. No. 3677. Sex?

Nov. 9, 1921, one from Dakota County, Nebraska. No. 4324. Immature male.

WHITE PELICAN. *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. In early May, 1921, Dr. F. J. Smith saw a flock of about sixty White Pelicans alight on the sandpit in front of the Lakeside Laboratory, on Lake Okoboji, Dickinson County, Iowa. For three days in the fall of 1921 (September 17, 18, and 19) Mr. H. R. Moen saw a very large flock of these birds on a bayou of the Missouri River near Onawa, Iowa. He estimated that the flock contained at least 5,000 birds. The following specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson:

Oct. 8, 1920, one from Alexander, S. D. No. 3674. Female.

Oct. 16, 1920, one from LeMars, Iowa. No. 3676. Sex?

Nov. 3, 1920, one from Hinton, Iowa. No. 3687. Sex?

Sept. 10, 1921, one from (locality unknown to me). No. 4255. Sex?

Sept. 27, 1921, one from Union County, S. D. No. 4266. Sex?

AMERICAN MERGANSER. *Mergus americanus*. Several specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson, as follows:

April 24, 1920, a female from Boyden, Sioux County, Iowa.

Nov. 27, 1920, a male from Ticonic, Iowa. No. 3713.

Nov. 19, 1921, a female from Union County, S. D. No. 4361.

Nov. 21, 1921, a male from Dakota County, Nebraska. No. 4364.

Nov. 30, 1921, a male from Dakota County, Nebraska. No. 4391.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. *Mergus serrator*. This is a relatively rare duck in this region, and each specimen is worthy of record. On November 11, 1921, a female of this species was killed at Crystal Lake, Dakota County, Nebraska, and was later mounted by Mr. Anderson (No. 4330). Mr. Anderson was under the impression that this was about the seventh specimen he had mounted during his thirty odd years of taxidermy work in Sioux City.

HOODED MERGANSER. *Lophodytes cucullatus*. This species is by no means rare as a fall migrant, and is supposed to breed within what may be considered the Sioux City area; but the number of specimens received by Mr. Anderson in the fall of 1921 exceeds the number in any other season, and are enumerated as follows:

Nov. 18, 1920, a male from Hornick, Iowa. No. 3705.

Nov. 21, 1920, a male from Badger Lake, Monona Co., Ia. No. 3708.

Nov. 7, 1921, a female from Dakota County, Nebraska. No. 4314.

Nov. 11, 1921, a male from Brower's Lake, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 4328.

Nov. 15, 1921, a male from Huxley, Story County, Iowa. No. 4342.

- Nov. 17, 1921, a male from Missouri River sloughs, Iowa side. No. 4347.  
 Nov. 17, 1921, a female from Missouri River sloughs, Iowa side. No. 4348.  
 Nov. 17, 1921, a female from Missouri River sloughs, Iowa side. No. 4349.  
 Nov. 19, 1921, a male from Jefferson, Union County, S. D. No. 4388.  
 Nov. 18, 1921, a male from McCook Lake, Union Co., S. D. No. 4389.  
 Nov. 23, 1921, a male from McCook Lake, Union Co., S. D. No. 4365.  
 Nov. 23, 1921, a male from McCook Lake, Union Co., S. D. No. 4366.  
 Nov. 28, 1921, a male from Brown's Lake, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 4383.  
 Nov. 30, 1921, a male from Crystal Lake, Dakota Co., Nebr. No. 4387.

Dr. A. F. Smith shot two male Hooded Mergansers out of a flock at the head of West Lake Okoboji, Dickinson County, Iowa, late in November, 1921.

**MALLARD.** *Anas platyrhynchos*. This species is so common that it is hardly necessary to mention specimens, but for the sake of the record we may say that Mr. Anderson mounted the following:

- Nov. 7, 1921, a male from Crystal Lake, Dakota Co., Nebr. No. 4313.  
 Nov. 18, 1921, a male from Kingsley, Plymouth Co., Iowa. No. 4394.

Mr. Anderson also mounted an albino Mallard which was shot at McCook Lake, Union County, S. D., on November 11, 1921. This specimen was practically pure white or cream color.

**BLACK DUCK.** *Anas rubripes*. The following specimens were mounted by Mr. Anderson:

- Nov. 4, 1920, one from Brown's Lake, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 3691.  
 Nov. 6, 1921, one from near Salix, Woodbury Co., Ia.  
 Nov. 9, 1921, a female from near Onawa, Monona Co., Ia. No. 4323.

The last two were reported as killed along the Missouri River.

**BALDPATE.** *Mareca americana*. A fine male of this species was shot on the Missouri River bottoms in Woodbury County, Iowa, on November 17, 1921, and mounted by Mr. Anderson (No. 4346).

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL.** *Nettion carolinense*. Two specimens were mounted by Mr. Anderson, as follows:

- Nov. 11, 1921, a male from near Onawa, Monona Co., Ia. No. 4329.  
 Nov. 11, 1921, a male from Brown's Lake, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 4334.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL.** *Querquedula discors*. Mr. Anderson mounted a male which had been shot on the Missouri River bottoms in Woodbury County, Iowa, on November 18, 1921. No. 4351.

**PINTAIL.** *Dafila acuta tzitzihoa*. Mr. Anderson mounted a male which had been shot on the Missouri River bottoms in Woodbury County, Iowa, on November 7, 1921. No. 4350.

**WOOD DUCK.** *Aix sponsa*. Newspapers reported that two Wood Ducks had been killed on October 7, 1921, at Emerson, Mills County, Nebraska.

REDHEAD. *Marila americana*. Mr. Anderson mounted a male Redhead that had been shot at Kingsley, Iowa, on November 15, 1921. No. 4338.

CANVAS-BACK. *Marila valisineria*. A male was shot at Kingsley, Iowa, on November 15, 1921, and later received by Mr. Anderson for mounting.

GOLDEN-EYE. *Glauconetta clangula americana*. During the season the following three specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson:

- Nov. 18, 1921, an immature male from McCook Lake, S. D. No. 4353.
- Nov. 18, 1921, a male from McCook Lake, S. D. No. 4354.
- Nov. 18, 1921, a female from Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 4390.

BUFFLE-HEAD. *Charitonetta albeola*. The following specimens were received by Mr. Anderson:

- Oct. 28, 1920, one from LeMars, Plymouth Co., Iowa. Sex? No. 3683.
- Oct. 28, 1920, an immature male from LeMars, Iowa. No. 3684.
- Nov. 17, 1920, a male from Badger Lake, Monona Co., Ia. No. 3703.
- Nov. 17, 1920, a male from Badger Lake, Monona Co., Ia. No. 3704.
- Nov. 25, 1921, a male from Kingsley, Plymouth Co., Ia. No. 4384.
- Nov. 25, 1921, a female from Kingsley, Plymouth Co., Ia. No. 4385.

OLD-SQUAW. *Clangula hyemalis*. In the summer of 1921 Mr. Harry Tennant, of Arnold's Park, Iowa, showed me a mounted pair of Old-squaws which had been taken near Ruthven, Iowa, in the fall of 1920. The *Milford (Iowa) Mail* in November, 1918, reported that an Old-squaw duck had just been killed on Lake Okoboji by Charlie Wilson. This specimen was mounted for the State Game Warden's museum at Spirit Lake.

WILSON'S SNIPE. *Gallinago delicata*. Two specimens were received by Mr. Anderson, as follows:

- Oct. 29, 1920, a female from Sergeant Bluff, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 3686.
- Nov. 18, 1921, a male from Brown's Lake, Woodbury Co., Ia. No. 4352.

RED-TAILED HAWK. *Buteo borealis*. Mr. Anderson mounted the following specimens:

- Sept. 27, 1921, a male from Rock Rapids, Iowa. No. 4265.
- Oct. 1, 1921, a female from "the Big Sioux River." No. 4271.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK. *Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*. The following specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson:

- Nov. 13, 1920, a male from Wynot, Nebraska. No. 3699.
- Nov. 20, 1921, a male from McCook Lake, Union County, S. D. No. 4360.
- Nov. 27, 1921, a male from Remsen, Plymouth Co., Ia. No. 4375.

The two latter specimens were highly melanistic — the entire belly being black.

FERUGINOUS ROUGH-LEG. *Archibuteo ferrugineus*. Two specimens were mounted by Mr. Anderson, as follows:

Oct. 3, 1921, a female from near Sioux City, Iowa. No. 4272. This was a very dark specimen.

Nov. 23, 1921, a female reported to have been taken near Kingsley, Iowa. No. 4367.

GOLDEN EAGLE. *Aquila chrysaetos*. The following specimens were mounted by Mr. Anderson:

Nov. 27, 1920, one from Merville, Woodbury Co., Ia. Sex? No. 3714.

Oct. 11, 1921, a female from Emerson, Nebraska. No. 4292.

Nov. 20, 1921, a male from Plainview, Nebraska. No. 4376.

Dec. 7, 1921, one from the Missouri River in No. Dak. Sex? No. 4426.

BALD EAGLE. *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. The following specimens were received and mounted by Mr. Anderson:

Nov. 4, 1920, a male from LeMars, Plymouth County, Iowa. No. 3689.

Nov. 9, 1920, a female from Laurel, Nebraska. No. 3695.

Nov. 10, 1920, a male from LeMars, Iowa. No. 3696.

Nov. 25, 1921, a female from Winnebago, Nebraska. No. 4371.

On November 5, 1920, Mr. Anderson shot at a Bald Eagle along the Big Sioux River about a mile and a half above Stone Park; it then flew across the river into South Dakota. This bird had been in the vicinity for several days, and had captured several tame ducks from a small flock along the river. In the spring of 1921 Mr. Harry Tennant, of Arnold's Park, Iowa, mounted an immature Bald Eagle which had been killed east of Spirit Lake town.

BARN OWL. *Tyto alba pratincola*. On November 6, 1921, Mr. Anderson received and mounted a Barn Owl from Plainview, Nebraska. The *Sioux City Journal* for August 4, 1920, reported that three live "monkey-face owls" had just been sent to the city from Lawton, Iowa, as a gift to the Stone Park "Zoo."

LONG-EARED OWL. *Asio wilsonianus*. Mr. Anderson received and mounted two male specimens on November 27, 1920, both from Greenville, a community in the eastern part of Sioux City, Iowa.

SHORT-EARED OWL. *Asio flammeus*. On November 19, 1921, Mr. Anderson mounted a specimen taken close to Sioux City, Iowa.

BARRED OWL. *Strix varia*. On December 6, 1920, Mr. Anderson received a male Barred Owl which had been shot on the same

day in a ravine along the Broken Kettle Road within the city limits of Sioux City. This specimen was retained in Mr. Anderson's collection.

**GREAT HORNED OWL.** *Bubo virginianus*. The following specimens were mounted by Mr. Anderson:

- Nov. 6, 1920, a female from McCook Lake, Union County, S. D. No. 3694.
- Feb. 24, 1921, one from Nacora, Nebraska. Sex?
- Nov. 11, 1921, a male from Yankton, S. D. No. 4331.
- Nov. 15, 1921, a female from Des Moines, Iowa. No. 4337.
- Jan. 30, 1922, one from Dallas Center, Iowa. Sex? No. 4603.

**SNOWY OWL.** *Nyctea nyctea*. Two were mounted by Mr. Anderson, as follows:

- Feb. 28, 1921, one from Carthage, S. D.
- Nov. 12, 1921, a female from St. Cloud, Minn. No. 4336.

**RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.** *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. Prior to this time the only published record of this species as a winter resident in northwestern Iowa is given by W. W. Cooke (Report on Bird Migration in the Mississippi Valley, 1888, page 131), who reports it at Sioux City on March 11 (1885?). Mr. A. J. Anderson told me that he saw two on the bottoms below Sergeant Bluff as late as October 30 in 1920. On January 16, 1921, several persons, including the writer, saw a Red-headed Woodpecker at Riverside Park, in Sioux City. From reports this bird had wintered in the same locality, and had fed, at least in part, on suet which neighboring residents had placed out. The bird had a favorite cavity in which it roosted. (In subsequent winters as many as seven of these birds have been seen in the same place).

**MAGPIE.** *Pica pica hudsonia*. The fall of 1921 brought an unprecedented eastward movement of Magpies, crossing the Missouri River and extending well into the central part of Iowa. We know of no published record of any similar movement in this region. We have no explanation to offer, and know of none that has been offered. We will first give a list of the specimens received and mounted by Mr. Anderson, and then a resumé of field observations.

- Oct. 3, 1921, one killed near Stone Park, Woodbury County, Iowa.
- Oct. 26, 1921, one from Sheldon, Iowa.
- Oct. 27, 1921, one from LeMars, Iowa.
- Nov. 1, 1921, one from the Big Sioux River, in Iowa.
- Nov. 1, 1921, another from the Big Sioux River, in Iowa.
- Nov. 1, 1921, one from Orange City, Iowa.
- Nov. 3, 1921, one from New Lake, Woodbury County, Iowa.
- Nov. 3, 1921, one from Atlantic, Iowa.

- Nov. 8, 1921, two from Beresford, South Dakota.  
Nov. 8, 1921, one from LeMars, Iowa.  
Nov. 8, 1921, one from Hubbard, Nebraska.  
Nov. 9, 1921, one from Hartley, Iowa.  
Nov. 15, 1921, one from Sioux City, Iowa.  
Nov. 22, 1921, one from Crystal Lake, Dakota County, Nebraska.  
Nov. 30, 1921, one from Leeds, Woodbury County, Iowa.  
Nov. 30, 1921, one from Remsen, Plymouth County, Iowa.  
Dec. 4, 1921, one from Hinton, Plymouth County, Iowa.

The specimen from Hinton was shot out of a flock of twenty-five Magpies. Most of the specimens listed above were taken within a rather limited area, and they suggest to us that the birds were somewhat concentrated within this area at this time. We may now refer briefly to the various field observations of Magpies, first in Iowa counties.

Woodbury County (Sioux City). Five records for the vicinity of Stone Park were reported to me by various observers, at different times through October and November, 1921. Mr. George Biegler reported seeing these birds by the "dozens" in the woods along Missouri River bottoms during October. Mr. Weir R. Mills wrote me that he had seen several Magpies at Pierson, Iowa, on October 5, 6, and 7, 1921.

Cherokee County. Mr. Joe Weidman reported to Mr. Anderson that he had observed Magpies in the vicinity of Cherokee.

Dickinson County. Mr. Noel J. Williams wrote to me saying that he had seen several Magpies in a wooded tract three or four miles east of Milford, Iowa.

Palo Alto County. Dr. Stoner (1922) reported that several Magpies were seen at Emmetsburg by Leroy Titus Weeks "during November, 1921."

Sac County. Stoner also reports in the same paper that several Magpies were seen at Wall Lake by J. A. Spurrell and others during October, 1921. Under date of January 14, 1922, Mr. Orville Lee wrote me as follows: "During October I saw these birds (Magpies) at different times in Sac County. They were quite common along the Coon River for several weeks. I saw three together, and my nephew, Roy Keir, reports having seen seven in one bunch. One of my tenants, E. C. Ellis, reported having seen a pair in the grove on one of my farms as late as December 20th."

Pocahontas County. Mr. Lee also stated in his letter to me that he had seen a Magpie near Varina on November 5th.

Audubon County. Professor B. Shimek, of the University of



Iowa, wrote me of having seen a single Magpie on November 3rd near the town of Exira, in this county.

Madison County. Dr. Stoner (1922) reports that a specimen was sent to him from Winterset, Iowa, by Mr. Arthur Goshorn, and states that "numerous persons throughout the county have observed Magpies singly or in small flocks of from three to five or seven during the early winter." One person in this county saw a Magpie riding on a cow's back.

Floyd County. Stoner (1922) also reports that a Magpie was seen at Charles City about November 13th.

Linn County. Stoner (1922) records a specimen which was taken out of a flock of three near Cedar Rapids on December 1, 1921. This specimen was deposited in the University Museum, and seems to be the most easterly record obtained during this flight of 1921.

This same movement of Magpies attracted attention in other states as well. Summing up the reports for Nebraska, Swenk and Dawson (1921) stated that the Magpie had been observed in Lancaster, Cass, and Jefferson Counties during October, 1921, by various observers. The birds were distributed in eastern and south-eastern Nebraska in unusual numbers. I can add several records to be credited to Dakota County, in the northeastern corner of Nebraska. Mr. A. F. Allen told me of a conversation with Mr. William A. Williges, who had seen a very large flock of these birds near the Jackson swamp; in fact, there were *three* large flocks Mr. Williges said. Mr. Allen asked if there were hundreds, and Mr. Williges replied, "Yes, thousands." It may be doubted whether Mr. Williges counted these birds as accurately as he counts his money, but we may probably be assured that the birds were present in unusual numbers. The date was October 9, 1921.

On December 8 a hunter reported to Mr. A. J. Anderson that he had seen a flock of from thirty to forty Magpies near Crystal Lake, in Dakota County, Nebraska. He noticed that the birds kept near a herd of cattle. Mr. Anderson also mounted two specimens from Nebraska which were mentioned above.

In Union County, South Dakota, a hunter reported two Magpies in the neighborhood of McCook Lake on November 11, 1921. I have mentioned above the two specimens received by Mr. Anderson from Beresford. Before 1921, and since, isolated Magpies have been noted in the vicinity of Sioux City during certain seasons, at least. But during the writer's twenty years of observation no other general movement of this kind has occurred.

In this account of the Magpie reference has been made to two papers, which are now cited in full, as follows:

"An unusual eastward movement of the Magpie in Nebraska," Myron H. Swenk and Ralph W. Dawson. *Wilson Bulletin*, XXXIII, pp. 196-7, December, 1921.

"On the Eastward movement of Magpies," Dayton Stoner. *Wilson Bulletin*, XXXIV, pp. 44-5, March, 1922.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK. *Sturnella neglecta*. The winter of 1921-1922 was an unusually mild one, and many Meadowlarks wintered in northwestern Iowa, as well as in other parts of the State. On December 26 Mr. E. W. Johns saw six Meadowlarks near Pierson, in Woodbury County. On December 28 Mr. H. G. Huntington saw one near Onawa, Monona County. Concerning their occurrence in Sac County Mr. John A. Spurrell wrote to me as follows under date of January 22, 1922. "Meadowlarks are winter residents here this year. On the 17th I saw one about two and a half miles north of Wall Lake, one near Lake View, and one about three miles northeast of Sac City. Mr. Orville Lee reported seeing thirty-two Meadowlarks at one time. The most I have seen is six, about three weeks ago, and about two and a half miles north of Wall Lake."

Dr. F. J. Smith saw one near Milford, Dickinson County, in January. Mr. Arthur Goshorn saw several on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1921, near Winterset, Madison County, Iowa. Records already published (in the *Oologist* and in newspapers) indicate that Meadowlarks wintered in Chickasaw, Delaware, Story, Humboldt, and Pocahontas Counties, in Iowa, and near Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It is possible that in the eastern part of Iowa the wintering bird may have been *magna*.

PURPLE FINCH. *Carpodacus purpureus*. The Purple Finch is never a common winter visitor in northwestern Iowa, but a few may be seen nearly every winter if one is in the field enough. In the winter of 1920 Mr. A. F. Allen told me of seeing one in "Cardinal Glen" on December 5, and three in Stone Park on December 26. Later he saw six in Stone Park on January 2, 1921. Both of these localities are within the city limits of Sioux City.

CARDINAL. *Cardinalis cardinalis*. The Cardinal has become well established in recent years along the Missouri River in the region of Sioux City. It was first noted in the vicinity of Sioux City in 1902 by D. H. Talbot. It would now be very interesting to know how far up the Missouri River these birds have extended their range at the present time; and also how far up the tributaries in

this region they have penetrated. It will be unnecessary to give any dates of observation during the present period, since this species is resident, and may be found on almost any winter day when looked for in a suitable habitat. Though it must be said that these tend to congregate in well sheltered places where food is plentiful.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING. *Bombycilla garrula*. A flock of approximately fifty of these birds made their appearance in Sioux City on December 30, 1921. They were seen at various places in the city, and by different observers, throughout the following January, February, March, and the first week in April. Bittersweet berries and Asparagus berries were eaten greedily early in the winter. Toward the last of March, when the berry supply was probably low, these birds were seen to eat frozen apples carelessly left on a porch, and one was seen to alight on the ground and feed on an old apple core. Ordinarily these birds are very fond of the fruit of the Russian Olive tree, and there are hundreds of these trees throughout the city. But I do not happen to have such a record for this season, though I have no doubt this food supply was utilized.

BROWN CREEPER. *Certhia familiaris americana*. This species was not recorded in quite the same abundance, perhaps, as in other winters.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH. *Sitta canadensis*. The winter of 1921-1922 seemed to be favorable for the Red-breasted Nuthatch in this territory. The earliest records this fall were secured by Mrs. E. A. Fields in her home yard on October 29, 1921. Mr. A. F. Allen also saw them (two) on the following day at the same place. Mrs. H. M. Bailey saw two in the Cardinal Glen on November 5, and the writer saw two in the same region on November 24. The latest record was made by Mrs. Bailey up the Big Sioux River on April 1, 1922.

MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE,  
SIOUX CITY, IOWA.