

Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*). Both Yellow-legs were present in small numbers at nearly every visit; we were thus enabled to distinguish them by direct comparison as well as by their notes. Greater Yellow-legs were seen from April 8 to May 30.

Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*). These were seen from April 4 to June 1. Neither Yellow-legs seems to be a clannish bird with its own kind as were the Dowitchers, Red-backed and Stilt Sandpipers, but each ran bobbing about more or less independently of others of its kind.

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* subs?). Five of these great birds furnished the special excitement of May 12; they were plain looking enough when seen at rest but astonishingly striking as they flew with loud cries exhibiting their black and white wings.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*). These teetering little creatures were seen on only four visits: one on May 11 and 23, and two on May 25 and 30.

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*). A pair were present near the pond all the season and must have nested nearby. On May 30 and June 1 another pair was in evidence.

\*Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). Only one of these little Ring-necked Plovers was seen, May 15; it was collected, since the only previous instance of its occurrence in the State was a sight record.

AMHERST, MASS.

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## THE WHIP-POOR-WILL: ITS PROSPECTS OF SURVIVAL IN SOUTHERN IOWA

BY E. D. NAUMAN

During the decade from 1875 to 1885 my home was with my parents beside an extensive forest on the bank of Clear Creek in the eastern part of Keokuk County, Iowa.

At that time and in that locality Whip-poor-wills were regarded as among our common birds. Judging from the frequency of their calls in every direction at night, as well as the numbers flushed in daytime, I feel sure that they must have been as common as Robins were at the time. However, the Robin has steadily increased in number, while the Whip-poor-will has just as steadily decreased.

During the summer of 1879, I think it was, a Whip-poor-will took the queer notion of alighting on our cabin doorstep to chant, evening after evening, for a fortnight or more. And we had both



cats and dogs! At this time I had opportunity to hear his call at very close range. The call, which consists of three syllables, is uttered loudly, so as to be heard at considerable distances; but here I discovered that there is a fourth syllable resembling the word "duck", uttered in a low undertone immediately after the "will" and between the two successive calls. The sound of its voice is heard from the time of its arrival here, about April 20, to the middle of July. September 12 is the latest date upon which I have seen the bird here.

In those days, however, I made no effort to find their nests or to observe their habits of life. By the term nest, when speaking of this species, I mean the place where the eggs are laid. They never make any more of a nest than a slight depression in a bed of dry leaves on the ground under some sheltering bushes, in the woodland.

In more recent years, since my residence in Sigourney, in the same county, I have given more attention to them, and have found a few of their nests, and have made some observations which I will briefly relate. The eggs are always two in number and are grayish in color, mottled with brown spots.

On June 2, 1913, I found a nest with eggs at the side of a fallen tree trunk, under some overhanging bushes. This was in a small oak timber tract near Sigourney. When I approached the nest the bird flew silently away, without making the least demonstration of any kind. I did not go any nearer the nest than was necessary to see the eggs, and departed without disturbing any of its surroundings. But when I went back in five days the eggs were gone and no sign of them remained. Neither was there any evidence of any disturbance of the leaves upon which they rested. It appeared to have been the work of a snake. The underbrush and most of the trees on this tract have since been destroyed, and the land is now being used for a hog pasture.

On May 29, 1915, I found a second nest of this species with eggs, under some overhanging hazel brush and scrub oak timber on a tract of land for which I was preparing a bird census at the time. On leaving the nest this bird at once began to mimic an injured bird. She fluttered along on the ground and through the grass for some distance in a most helpless manner; then she suddenly flew away and disappeared in the larger timber. I went back in six days and found two fine yellowish, downy young birds which seemed to be exceedingly large for their age. The mother bird made the same kind of a demonstration as she did before, fluttering about in the grass and brush; however, she did not fly away this time, but stayed near as long as I was there.



Fearing that some dogs might follow my tracks if I went there too often, I did not return for ten days. But by that time the young birds were gone. I cannot say positively that these young birds left their nest in safety at the end of sixteen days, but there was no evidence to indicate that the natural course of events had been interrupted. The timber and brush tract where this nest was located has since been destroyed, and the land has been converted into a cultivated field.

In the next season, June 3, 1916, I found a third nest with eggs in a ten acre tract of large elms and hickory trees within the city limits of Sigourney. It was among some barberry bushes and under a small, overhanging hickory tree. When the bird was flushed from this nest she behaved somewhat differently from either of the other three here reported. She flew in an excited manner from bush to bush, occasionally darting at me, and all the time uttering a guttural, croaking sound that could be interpreted to mean a full broadside of vituperation and imprecation. This action on her part brought the mate into the arena. But he was shy and contented himself with flitting about among the bushes at a little greater distance, and only occasionally emitting a guttural croak.

On returning a few days later I found one young bird, which appeared to be at least three times as large as the other unhatched egg. The parent birds acted about the same as they did on the previous visit. The following night a heavy storm of wind, lightning, and rain passed over. Next morning I visited the nest to learn what the effect of the storm had been. Neither young nor old birds could be found; the one infertile egg was in its place. The young bird was, of course, unable to fly. On the same trip I visited an Indigo Bunting nest in some nearby hazel brush and found the three young dead in the nest.

All of the bushes, underbrush, and some of the trees in this tract have since been destroyed, and the land has been converted into a hog pasture.

On June 5, 1920, I found a fourth nest of the Whip-poor-will on dry leaves under a gooseberry bush among evergreen trees near a vacant farm-house. As the bird flushed she tumbled on the ground a short distance and swiftly disappeared without making any sound. This nest was not visited again. The field and premises where this nest was located have, for the past two years, been used as a sheep pasture, and all cover has been destroyed by the sheep.

Thus we see that while the voice of this interesting and useful bird may still be heard occasionally on warm and quiet nights, the



day is not far distant when farmers, gardeners, and horticulturists will have a myriad more of night-flying bugs, moths, and millers (and their larvae) to contend with, unless we can manage to save some suitable nesting sites for this most valuable bird.

SIGOURNEY, IOWA.

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## NOTES ON THE SHORE BIRDS OF CENTRAL IOWA

BY W. M. ROSEN

Boone County, located almost in the center of Iowa, was formerly dotted with hundreds of ponds and sloughs; and in 1870, when my father first came here, this was the home of thousands of water fowl and shore birds. We of the second generation are not allowed to witness scenes such as they saw in those early days. However, this spring (1925) it was my great privilege to observe what to me was the best migration of shore birds and water birds that I have seen here. Our ponds have almost all been drained, and where formerly was the home of the Blue-Winged Teal, Bitterns, rails and Yellow-headed Blackbirds among the cattail rushes, now wave the vast fields of Iowa corn. However, there still remain a very few small shallow ponds in meadows here and there and it was in these that I made the acquaintance of some of our beautiful and dainty shore birds during migration this spring.

The first Lesser Yellowlegs appeared on April 19; the Bartramian Sandpipers on April 24, and the Greater Yellowlegs on April 26. The Spotted Sandpipers were noted first on May 2, as were also the Green Heron and the Sora Rail. The Wilson Snipe was on hand on the 28th of March which was about the time that the ducks were stopping to feed in our ponds on their way northward. The long drouth in the month of May caused the water in our shallow ponds to recede and this left the large mud flats on which the shore birds found a great amount of food and then it was that I found a sight that I had longed to see, a good collection of shore birds to study at close range.

On the morning of May 3 we found in the center of a small pond, which was but a few inches deep, a large Canada Goose which stood like a giant surrounded by nineteen Lesser Yellowlegs and two Greater Yellowlegs. The same morning in another pond we found our first Pectoral Sandpipers.

On May 10, just a week later, we found in one small pond the following: eight Least Sandpipers, one Semipalmated Sandpiper, one Pectoral Sandpiper and one Lesser Yellowleg. These were all ob-



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