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A NESTING REPORT OF A WILSON'S PHALAROPE IN LANCASTER COUNTY

Only once before has a nesting record of Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) been reported in Lancaster County. This report is in *The Nebraska Bird Review,* December 1985. Employees of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission discovered two fledglings at a site in the northeast part of the county at 98th and Ashland Road. The two fledglings were found in a wet meadow. They were accompanied by two male and one female phalaropes. The sighting was made on 13

June 1985.

On 7 June 1991 I visited Arbor Lake, a recently purchased salt marsh about one mile north of Interstate 80 along North 27th Street. This site is currently being managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for the city of Lincoln. My reason for visiting the site was to see what kind of birds utilized the area.

In the area that day I saw a female Orchard Oriole building a nest in an American elm tree along the west bank of Little Salt Creek as it parallels North 27th Street for part of the creek's reach to the north. In the same area I found a male and female Blue Grosbeak. Not too far to the north, Arbor Lake spread itself over the landscape attracting the following birds: 4 Killdeer, 1 Spotted Sandpiper, 3 male Blue-winged Teals, 2 female and 1 male Mallards, 3 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 4 White-rumped Sandpipers, about 40 Red-winged Blackbirds, 1 male WIlson's Phalarope, and a number of Bank Swallows flying low over the marsh.

The male phalarope came flying toward me from afar as I advanced eastward through the transition zone of the marsh. The lone male tries to lead me from the area with an aerial distraction display. I made no attempt to find the nesting site, but worked my way into the marsh to see the shorebirds farther to the east using a tripod-held spotting scope.

On 13 June I returned to the marsh on the west central side. Again as I crossed the transition zone, the male phalarope encountered me, employing an aerial distraction display so as to lure me from the site. I just set my tripod up farther to the east so as to scan the water surface and edge for waterfowl and shorebirds. Sighted on the marsh and in the vegetation around the marsh were 1 female Mallard, 4 male Blue-winged Teals, 6 Killdeer, quite a few Red-winged Blackbirds, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 16 White-rumped Sandpipers, a few Bank Swallows, and 1 male and 1 female Common Yelloewthroats in a stand of cattails, where they employed distraction display behaviors along with much vocal chattering. Apparently they were trying to protect a nest site or young in the area.

On 18 June 1991 I visited the site again. This time in the transition zone of the marsh, containing foxtail barley for the most part, I saw the male fly from an area close to where I entered. After a short search, I found the nest. I took photographs of the site and the nest. The nest contained four eggs in a shallow, grass-lined depression beneath a thin stand of foxtail barley. The male was not sighted again during the time I was there. After I photographed the nest, I went farther into the marsh to scan the area with a spotting scope. I saw 3 male Blue-winged Teals, 1 male Green-winged Teal, about 50 Killdeer, 3 Lesser Yellowlegs, and quite a few Red-winged Blackbirds which were obviously nesting in the area.

My next trip to Arbor Lake salt marsh site occurred on 25 June 1991. I did not see the male phalarope. I found the nest site intact and apparently abandoned. The marsh site had little bird activity. It was in the 90s and very humid. About 40 Killdeer and 1 Lesser Yellowlegs were sighted. I did see about 20 Cliff Swallows gathering mud from a sandbar in Little Salt Creek. They apparently were attempting to nest in a roadway culvert under North 27th Street not too far south of Arbor Lake. No evidence of these swallows was seen prior to this trip.

My last trip to the area occurred on 17 July 1991. I saw no evidence of the Cliff Swallows. The only activity on the marsh were some 15 or so Lesser Yellowlegs feeding in the shallow water, and 1 Black Tern sitting on a piece of debris along the shallower northern end of the open water. About the time I left, 2 female Blue-winged Teals came out of a dense stand of sedges on the far eastern side of the

marsh. Killdeer and Red-winged Blackbirds were still utilizing the area in fairly large numbers. I also noticed that the water level was up due to a heavy downpour in the area a week before. The access road and parking lot for the site was completed, and so was a short observation deck to the east of the lot. Construction of the road and parking lot was in full swing the week I discovered the phalarope's nesting site. Now it is much more convenient to view the salt marsh and its ever-changing array of birdlife.

---Larry Einemann, 2917 S. 53rd St., Lincoln, NE 68506