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Mark J. Helsing
Crescent Lake NWR

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BLACK-NECKED STILTS NESTING IN NEBRASKA

On 7 May 1985 I saw two adult Black-necked Stilts on Lower Harrison Lake, Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co. In the middle of June photographers Charlie and Rita Summers saw two on Martin Lake. On 11 July I saw two adults and four young on Martin Lake. The whitish/gray colored young had long grayish/green legs (3-4") and a black bill, about 2" long. They appeared to be feeding by probing soft mud. The two adults were exhibiting aggressive behavior. One adult dived and screamed at a Blue-winged Teal hen with eight ducklings until they moved from the area, and also chased two adult Killdeer and one adult American Avocet in flight. The habitat the Stilts were occupying was a small exposed mud flat, about 40' x 100', with about 4"-6" of water remaining, surrounded by cattail and hardstem bulrush. This lake was drained in the summer of 1983 and kept dry during 1984, and then allowed to recharge with water in 1985. On 13 July the birds were seen on this mud flat by Kevin J. Brennan and me and photographs were taken. On 26 July I saw the birds again at Martin Lake. The adults were somewhat less aggressive than before, and the young had color patterns resembling the adults, with pinkish legs. They had moved from the mud flat, which was now dry, to the main portion of the lake. The outer 30 yards of the lake were 4"-6" deep, and the average depth of the lake was 1-1.5'. There were sporadic stems of bulrush across the entire lake.



On 15 August the six were seen by Kevin J. Brennan and me in a wetland area east of Borden Lake. The coloration of the young and the adults appeared to be identical, but the young, which stayed in a group, behaved differently from the adults. On 16 and 17 August I observed the birds on Borden Lake. The wetland east of the lake was dry. All birds were seen flying at times. I took photographs in the evening of 16 August (including the one shown here) and the next morning.

--- Mark J. Helsinger, Crescent Lake NWR,
Star Route Box 21, Ellsworth, Neb. 69340