

Yellow-billed Cuckoo Breeding in North Dakota

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The yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) is listed as a hypothetical breeder in North Dakota (Stewart 1975). Johnsgard (1979) reports no definite breeding records for this species in the state. In this paper we report a previously unpublished nesting record for the yellow-billed cuckoo in Burleigh County with additional observations indicating nesting in Traill and Dickey Counties in North Dakota.

Randall located a yellow-billed cuckoo nest with 3 eggs on 24 June 1956, in a tree nursery in south Bismarck, Burleigh County. The nest was in a plum tree (*Prunus americana*) approximately 2 m above the ground. The nest was subsequently destroyed by an unknown agent. The site is now occupied by a shopping mall.

Bliss and Hlavinka have recorded yellow-billed cuckoos throughout western Traill County each breeding season from 1975 to 1980. The birds arrive in May and continue calling into August. No nests have been located.

A yellow-billed cuckoo was seen feeding in a shelterbelt approximately 3 km southeast of Oakes, Dickey County, on 19 June 1980 (David Child pers. comm.). Oswald and Gatz observed three yellow-billed cuckoos in the same location on 3 July 1980. One bird was observed feeding another, suggesting a fledgling being fed by an adult.

It should be mentioned that in 1980 the yellow-billed cuckoo was noted in unusual numbers or in extra-limital locations by 12 of the 24 regional *American Birds* (Arbib 1980) reporters throughout continental North America. However, the widespread but sporadic sightings of this species in North Dakota during the breeding season since 1873 (Allen 1874), including records of singing adults in Ward, McKenzie, and McLean Counties (Stewart 1975, U.S. Dep. Inter. 1980), indicate the yellow-billed cuckoo may be an irregular nesting species in the state and may be a regular breeder in at least local areas of southeastern North Dakota.

This species has nested regularly in the southern half of Minnesota (Green and Janssen 1975) and in eastern South Dakota (Whitney et al. 1978). It has nested rarely in southern Manitoba (Godfrey 1966) and there is circumstantial evidence of it breeding in southeastern Montana (Skaar 1980).

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