

Magnificent Frigatebird Record Number: 81-AB
Aug 1903 Classification: A-P
south of Burlington, Des Moines Co., IA
Paul Bartsch
Anderson 1907, Bartsch 1922, Briggs 1969

PHOTOGRAPHS

Bartsch (donated by Shirley Briggs), P-0224 (IBL 39:85)

REFERENCES

Anderson 1907
Bartsch, P. 1922. An inland record of the Man-o'-war-bird. Auk 39:249-250.
DuMont 1933
Briggs, S. 1969. Some notes on an early Iowa record and Paul Bartsch. IBL 39:85-87.
Photographs: IBL 39:85 (P-0224)
Records Committee: IBL 64:69

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

VOTE (1981): 4-I, 2-II, 1-IV

I, I still have nagging questions on these (records 2 & 3) 1. Were they really in Iowa? 2. Do they refer to the same bird? The chance of Frigatebird occurring in Iowa is low but to have 2 in Burlington in less than 1 yr seems astounding. Could the Coale record -- written in 1910 -have recalled the wrong year and spring rather than fall? We will probably never know.

I, Photo seems diagnostic. Chain of evidence poor and dates fuzzy. Would easily be talked into a IV

II, although the record leaves something to be desired, two things are obvious in my mind (1) that the photo is of a Frigatebird and (2) that it was found in Iowa.

IV, provenance of specimen uncertain.

I, Distinctive bird. Record from several obs. very reliable. Photo of one preserved.

II, Although a picture of a mounted specimen is preserved (IBL 39:85), there is no firm evidence other than hearsay that the specimen was obtained in Iowa. The identity of the specimen is certainly correct.

I(B), Photograph still extant -- in Cornell Univ. library.

(see Brown 1971).

REVOTE at meeting 1 May 1981: 4-I, 2-IV

REVOTE (1993): 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-P, Hard to tell where bird was photographed but was over the river at times, so must have been in Iowa.

A-P, I am assuming that Paul Bartsch wrote the tags that are shown on the photograph, and not that this information was attached to the specimen. That means that the information was based on hearsay only. I am inclined to accept it, however, since Bartsch saw the specimen in October of 1903, only a matter of weeks after the specimen was taken.

A-P, Location OK for Iowa -- bluffs immediately S. of Burlington are in Iowa -- bluffs on Ill. side several miles downstream (USGS Quad Map). Photo diagnostic.

A-P, Identification should not be questionable and it certainly appears that the bird was found in Iowa. Is there still a specimen somewhere?

81-AB

13 September 1993

To: IOU Records Committee

From: Tom Kent

Re: Request for reconsideration of record

Records: 81-AB Magnificent Frigatebird (see also 81-AC)

Reason for request: Reevaluation of evidence that bird was in Iowa.

Comment: The specimen was photographed by Bartsch. The questions are whether the hearsay evidence of this bird being in Iowa is correct and whether the two reports refer to the same bird. I don't remember whether I was one of the dissenters on the original votes, but am now inclined to accept the bird as having been in Iowa. I also suspect that the stories may apply to the same bird. I would accept 81-AB, not 81-AC.

Family FREGATIDÆ. Man-o'-war Birds.

Anderson 1907
p 163

The Man-o'-war or Frigate Bird is an almost strictly maritime, predaceous bird, with wonderful powers of flight. Only one species occurs in America, and is not uncommon on southern coasts. W. W. Cooke (Bird Migr. in Miss. Val., 1884-5, 60) reports two instances of its occurrence at a distance of eight hundred miles from the nearest salt water; one killed in Osborne county, Kansas, Aug. 16, 1880; and one killed a few miles north of Milwaukee, Wis., in August, 1880.

Genus FREGATA Cuvier.

26. (124). *Fregata aquila* (Linn.). Man-o'-war Bird.

The Man-o'-war Bird is only an accidental visitant in Iowa. Morton E. Peck (Iowa Orn., ii, 2, 1896, 34) reports the occurrence of a specimen at LaPorte, Iowa (Blackhawk county), and Dr. Paul Bartsch told me of a specimen taken near Burlington, Iowa, by a gunner in the latter part of September, 1903, but as it was not known whether obtained on the Iowa or Illinois side of the Mississippi River, the latter may hardly be considered as an official Iowa record.

Family *Fregatidae**Fregata magnificens* Mathews. Man-o'-war-bird

DuMont 1933
p 22

Accidental. Anderson (1907) gives the following records: "The Man-o'-war-bird is only an accidental visitant in Iowa. Morton E. Peck (Iowa Orn., ii, 2, 1896, 34) reports the occurrence of a specimen at LaPorte, Iowa (Blackhawk County), and Dr. Paul Bartsch told me of a specimen taken near Burlington, Iowa, by a gunner in the latter part of September, 1903, but as it was not known whether obtained on the Iowa or Illinois side of the Mississippi River, the latter may hardly be considered as an official Iowa record."

Relative to the above observation Morton E. Peck on October 12, 1932, wrote that the specimen was not taken, but that the bird observed could hardly have been anything but this species.

In the Auk (XXVII, p. 75), Henry K. Coale of Highland Park, Illinois, records that while passing through Burlington, Des Moines County, Iowa, he saw a mounted Man-o'-war-bird (*Fregata aquila*) in a store window. Upon inquiry he was told that the bird was killed in the spring of 1904. It was first noticed by some hunters as it flew along the Illinois shore of the Mississippi, who shot at it, when it turned and flew across the river into the city of Burlington where it struck an electric light wire and was killed. Coale believed it to be the first record for Iowa and for Illinois. Another occurrence, referred to by Anderson, was recorded by Paul Bartsch (Auk, XXXIX, pp. 249-250) who stated that on a visit to the Lone Tree Club, near Gladstone, Illinois, on October 10, 1903, he saw a mounted specimen of a Man-o'-war-bird. Inquiry revealed that the bird had been found in an exhausted condition on the Iowa bluffs of the Mississippi, immediately south of Burlington, in August of the same year, and although it had been fed, they had succeeded in keeping it alive for a few days only. He believed this to be the first Iowa record for the Man-o'-war-bird (*Fregata magnificens rothschildi*).

81-AB

Bartsch, P. 1922. An inland record of the Man-o'-war-bird. Auk 39:249-250.

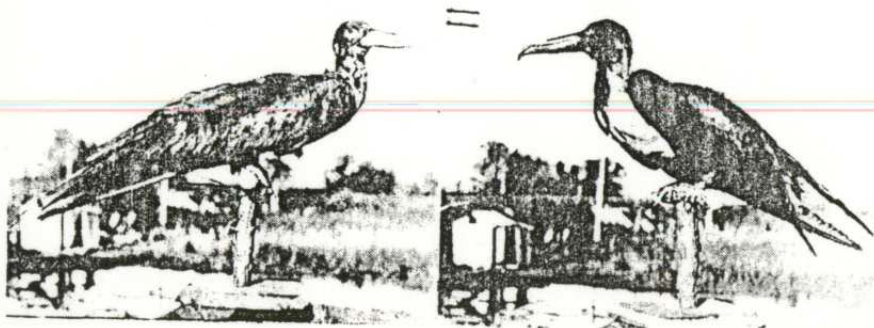
An Inland Record for the Man-o'-war-bird. In going over some old journals recently, I found a note which should have been recorded long ago.

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On a visit to the Lone Tree Club, near Gladstone, Illinois, on October 10, 1903, I saw a mounted specimen of a Man-o'-war-bird. Inquiry revealed that the bird had been found in an exhausted condition on the Iowa bluffs

of the Mississippi, immediately south of Burlington, in August of the same year, and that although it had been fed, they had succeeded in keeping it alive for a few days only. I believe that this is the first Iowa record for the Man-o'-war-bird (*Fregata magnificens rothschildi*).—PAUL BARTSCH, U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.

Some Notes on an Early Iowa Record and Paul Bartsch--While sorting through the Bartsch collection of photographs given to the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States by his widow I came across the two photographs reproduced below. The specimen photographed is mentioned in Du Mont The Birds of Iowa--1934:



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For the benefit of those unfamiliar with Dr. Bartsch the following excerpt from the Atlantic Naturalist of July-Sep. 1960 by Irston R. Barnes is reprinted:

Dr. Bartsch, curator emeritus of mollusks at the Smithsonian Institution, died in his 89th year. He was the son of Henry and Anna Klein Bartsch, his mother, a physician, being the third woman graduate in obstetrics at the University of Breslau. He was born in Tuentschendorf, Silesia, and came to America in 1882 with

his parents, settling in Iowa.

Paul Bartsch's scientific career encompassed a broad spectrum of interests and activities. He came to the Smithsonian Institution in 1896 and entered into work in the field of mollusks, a then neglected field. Yet in establishing himself as one of the foremost authorities in this field, he did not cease to be a general biologist. In an age of specialists, his broad competence in all phases of biology enabled him to bring together the several disciplines that enabled him to deal with problems in their entirety.

He began his scientific career as a high school lad, entering the State University of Iowa with his own collection of over 1500 birds. As a freshman he prepared his first scientific paper for the Iowa and U. S. Geological Survey, *The Fossil Flora of the Sioux Quartzite*. He received his B.A. in 1896, his M.A. in 1899, and his Ph.D. in 1905. At the hundredth anniversary of the University, he was honored as one of its 100 most distinguished graduates.

As a Smithsonian scientist, he spent many years in explorations in the Pacific and Caribbean areas. The most famous of these was the Philippine Islands Expedition from 1907 to 1909. On these expeditions he collected in all fields of natural history and the Museum's specimen cases include millions of items with his labels. The Museum's monographs and other publications present his formal findings as a foundation for the work of all who follow. His bibliography of more than 500 items tells the story of a mind that took all natural history for its vineyard, observing, recording, speculating and teaching, not only in his chosen field, but in almost every natural history discipline. His retirement from the Museum did not end his serious work; since 1945 he has completed a monumental manuscript of nearly 2000 pages on the Uroceptidae of Cuba

His work made many contributions of immediate economic and public health importance. His work on shipworms led to a process for protecting wood immersed in salt water. He treasured a letter of thanks from President Eisenhower for his timely warning of the dangers of parasitic blood flukes to American soldiers entering infested waters. In the first World War he provided the Chemical Warfare Service with a sensitive poison gas detector -- the common garden slug that rolled over in convulsions and protected itself by exuding a creamy fluid in the presence of mustard gas in dilute quantities of 1 part in 12,000; it was not dangerous to man until it reached concentrations of 1 part in 4,000,000.

Dr. Bartsch was never content with one career. In addition to his museum work, he was an outstanding teacher. In 1899, he began teaching histology at the Medical School of Howard University, continuing for 37 years and serving in later years as director of the Histological and Physiological Laboratory. In 1900, he began teaching at George Washington University, introducing botany and biology into the curriculum and starting the school's graduate work in the natural sciences. His hundreds of students have approached life tasks imbued with his high values.

Dr. Bartsch was a pioneer in every field he entered. He was foremost in seeking to make the Museum an educational force, with exhibitions that really taught the public. He was the first to use the arc lamp for projecting living microscopic creatures, eliminating the troublesome shadow by tilting the carbons. He developed his own photographic equipment for early undersea photographs. He was the first in America, after Audubon's one-time try, to band birds, beginning with a local colony of night herons.

Dr. Bartsch was always an active participant in the affairs of the city. He served for many years on the basic science committee of the Medical Licensing

Board. He began his work with the Boy Scouts with the organization of the first Washington troop, served as vice-president of the National Capital Area for many years, and was awarded both the silver beaver and the silver antelope for his contributions to scouting. He had been an officer and director of the Audubon Society for many years, and he had been active in a long list of other scientific, educational and natural history organization. --SHIRLEY BRIGGS, 7605 Honeywell Lane, Bethesda, Maryland.