

Anhinga
21 May 1995
Oto, Woodbury Co., IA
*Peter C. Petersen
IBL 66:97

Record Number: 95-26
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport 52803
[11-6-95]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: none
Records Committee: IBL 66:97

VOTE: 2 A-D, 5 NA

A-D, Wish 'white on dorsal surface of wing' had been described in more detail.

NA, The field marks fit Anhinga, but are also very similar to a first year D-C Cormorant. The lack of white in the wing supports D-C Cormorant as does the light colored neck and upper chest. The field marks reported definitely say Anhinga. My only reservations are length and quality of observations and why Jim Sinclair did not document this sighting.

NA, ID seems to be based primarily on the bill. Black bird with buffy neck and breast suggests female (immatures are browner), but a female should show a considerable amount of white on the wings. I believe the original observer would have submitted a documentation had he been confident of the ID, but my understanding is that he felt he was originally mistaken.

NA, I can't image the power of suggestion being stronger than in the case of this bird. Two Iowa State University students had reported an Anhinga in Monona Co. on 16 May 1995. There were rumors of others in the Midwest. Jim Sinclair and another observer reported an Anhinga on this snag an hour or so earlier. The Monona Co. bird, based on documentations received later, was a cormorant. Sinclair and his companion did not submit documentations and indicated in a note that they had made an erroneous identification. A large number of people arrived shortly after Petersen had left and found an immature Double-crested Cormorant on the snag (the only place in the small pond where a bird could perch). In view of the situation, I would expect a very thorough documentation which would clarify phrases such as "bill pointed", "tail long", "neck very long", and "very little white". It is difficult to find photos or descriptions of immature Anhingas. The Master Guide to Birding and Bent do not suggest to me that a year-old bird would have "very little white" in the wing. Why would a leading birder leave such a rare bird when others were expected to arrive soon? Why no photos?

NA, This description does not rule out Double-crested Cormorant completely and the description is similar to an immature Double-crested Cormorant looked at shortly after the time listed for this description. I think this is the same bird seen by many soon afterward.

NA, Other observers stated that the bird they saw was not an Anhinga.

A-D, Description acceptable. How about documentation from original observer? (who usually documents such sightings).

9-15-45

Tom
 regretted last weekend I had
 not realized you & the rest of the
 group did not see the aulungs
 at O to that Jim Sinclair reported
 last May. I rushed off my spring
 report prior to the L. H. - Ma
 trip & omitted the Ida Grove
 sightings shared with others.

We certainly picked the right
 weekend for the fall meeting -
 163 species Fri - Sun, 27 warblers

Jim Dodge is going to do a
 doc. to go with his Slua photo
 from April 2. Peter Harrison has
 seen it & is positive it is a Slua,
 but not which one. Am taped his
 remarks which I will send with
 the doc. Pete

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

95-26

What species? Anhinga How many? one

Location? 5 mi. S.E. Oto, Ia. - Woodbury Co.

Type of Habitat? Small pond along river Floodplain

When? date(s): May 21, 1995 time: 12:05 to 12:15 PM CST

Who? your name and address: Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd, Davenport, IA.

Others with you: Marylou Petersen
Jim Sinclair 5289

Others before or after you: _____

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Large, chiefly black darter perched on a snag in pond.
Neck very long, held in an S shape, bill pointed, yellow.
Tail long, black. Back black. Neck + upper chest buffy brown,
ending in a very even edge. Remainder of underparts black.
Dorsal surface of folded wings showed very little white
indicating it was a first year bird.

Similar species; how eliminated: Cormorant - smaller, shorter neck, hooked bill,
shorter tail, plumage either brownish or black, no neck upper
chest brown only pattern in any plumage,
African Darter shows brown in wing in all plumages

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Sun to side at about
a 90° angle, distance est. at 200 m, 30-45X 77 Kowa scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen many in S. U.S. + S. C.
America.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Checked Geo guide prior to obs.
After obs. used Handbook of N. Am. Birds - Palmer's Cormorants,
Darters + Pelicans of the World by Johnson.
How long before field notes made? during obs. this form completed? 3 mo.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).