

Northern Gannet

4 Apr 1980

15 mi. east of Sioux City, Woodbury Co., IA

*Jack A. Holloway

IBL 55:56

Record Number: 84-AA

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Jack A. Holloway III

REFERENCE

Records Committee: IBL 55:56

VOTE: 3-IV, 3-V, 1-VI

V, Call too me suggests Caspian Tern which can look as big as a barn. Jack is a very good birder but I'm not convinced of this record.

V, This is a 'you'll never know what it was bird.' There is no precedent for spring vagrancy of adult Gannet in midwest. Voice does not fit Gannet.

IV, More details needed. Caspian Tern not completely eliminated, black cap may not be visible when viewing bird directly overhead, call suggestive of C. Tern (few guides mention Gannet's voice and then only on breeding ground), stubby tail more like C. Tern, distinctive Gannet body shape absent, flight pattern of Gannet (at least on ocean) is flap and glide.

IV, Not completely convincing. Should have noted bill size and shape at 75' and he has second thoughts about tail.

IV, Not convinced. The only mark that could not be assigned to a Caspian Tern was apparent lack of cap on head. This could have been a bird in winter plumage observed from below thus not revealing the upper head.

VI, I can't believe Gannet--doesn't say how long wings were relative to body. Calls heard strongly suggest Ross' Goose (which I have heard several times this Dec. at Riverton--amazing sound!). Gannets are pretty silent. No description of bill--critical in this case--possibility even of a Tropicbird (!!). Overall I don't like it--probably Ross' Goose, or just a small Snow Goose.

V, Might be a Gannet. Who knows? For a first state record of such a bizarre out-of-range bird we really need photos or a great documentation that includes the description of the bill. Of course, that takes a cooperative bird.