

Black-crowned Night-Heron
21 Dec 1997
Polk City WA, Polk Co., IA
*Ann Johnson, *S. Dinsmore
P-0591, IBL 68:53, 56, 85

Record Number: 97-52
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk 50211
Stephen J. Dinsmore, 612 1/2 West Magnolia St., Fort Collins,
CO 80521 [11/27/98]

PHOTOGRAPH

Stephen J. Dinsmore. P-0591

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 68:53, 56
Records Committee: IBL 68:85

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, immature.

A-D, Limited leg extension beyond tail, spotting, and short neck used to distinguish from immature Yellow-crowned.

A-D, Flight feathers of imm. YCNH also greyish rather than brown--is a good flight mark, but not noted by observer.

RE-VOTE (by mail 1998, with photo): 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-P, The short leg extension beyond the tail supports the identification.

A-P, Rounded-wingtip silhouette of night-heron. The short leg extension indicates Black-crowned. A good quiz bird.

A-P, This silhouette photo from below shows feet but not legs extending beyond the tail.

A-D, Very short neck, apparently not folded, consistent with BCNH, but photo equivocal in that feet extend significantly past tail.



Black-crowned Night-He P-0591
Polk City W.A., Polk Co., IA
21 Dec 1991 Stephen J. Dinsmor

97-52

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Black-crowned Night-Heron (immature)

21 December, 1997

Polk City Wildlife Area, Polk Co., Iowa

Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

Other observers: Aaron Brees, Phil Walsh

This bird was first observed at approximately 9:30 am as we walked the old highway in the refuge. Most of the water was frozen although the edges had a little seepage. The bird flushed from the willows along the edge and we observed a small, chunky, brown heron.

The back was brown with a great deal of white spotting. The underparts were pale with brown, vertical streaks. In flight the light legs extended just beyond the tail.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was eliminated by the boldness of the markings on both the upper and underparts of the body and by the leg extension in flight.

The bird was seen again in the afternoon as it circled over the area for several minutes.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Black-crowned Night-Heron

Number: 1 immature

Location: Polk City W.A., Polk Co., IA

Habitat: willows along shore of frozen lake

Date: 21 December 1997

Time: 1:17-1:30 p.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird: Ann Johnson, Aaron Brees, m.ob.

Description of bird(s): The bird was found earlier by Ann Johnson and several others. When I arrived in the area, I flushed the bird from some willows along the frozen lake edge. The bird flew around for a couple of minutes and landed. I flushed the bird once more and then left. The bird was a medium-sized heron, much smaller, shorter-necked, and shorter-legged than a Great Blue Heron. The fairly short, thick bill was mostly dark with some yellow color at the base of the lower mandible. The underparts were light-colored with heavy, dark brown streaking. When perched, the mantle and upperwings were dark brown with some lighter spotting on the wings. The legs were greenish-yellow. In flight, the legs extended a few inches beyond the tip of the tail. The bird called once, uttering a low "wok" which I recognized as the call of this species. I took several photos of the bird in flight. Based on the plumage, I concluded the bird was an immature (first-year) bird.

Similar species and how eliminated: The bird was clearly a night-heron because of the plumage and shape. American Bittern was eliminated by the lack on contrasting black primaries and flight behavior. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was eliminated by the shorter legs, bill color and shape, and pattern of streaking on the underparts.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with overcast skies. Estimated viewing distance was mostly 10-50m. I used 10x42 binoculars.

Previous experience with species: I have extensive experience with both species of night-herons and American Bittern.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none written

How long before this form completed: written 24 December 1997