

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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Black-crowned Night-Heron

2 Jan 1998

Cedar Lake, Linn Co., IA

*T. Kent

IBL 68:56

Record Number: 98-01

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 68:56

Records Committee: IBL 69:89

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Leg projection is the easiest field mark for me.

A-D, Flight pattern of primaries eliminates imm YC

Night-heron. Careful look at head shape, neck size, and length of legs in flight.

98-01

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Black-crowned Night-Heron; **Number:** 1 imm.

Location: Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA

Date: 2 Jan 1998; **Time:** 1:05: to 1:30 p.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: none that I know of.

Habitat and circumstances: Large round backwater lake kept open by output from Quaker Oats Plant. The lake was half frozen two days ago, but two warm days made it ice free.

Description of bird: I had passed the end of the causeway and was proceeding along the open ditch of water when I noticed a heron flying toward me. It was a medium-sized chunky bird that I immediately recognized as a night heron. As it flew over my head I could see that it was all brown. I quickly noticed the yellow feet barely extending beyond the tail with no part of the leg visible. The bird flew over the small bridge and I thought it went down along the south shore. When I walked along the south shore I could not find it, but then I noticed that it was sitting near the east shore. It was a plump bird with relatively short yellow legs, and it had a large rounded head with short neck. The face and neck appeared light yellow-brown. The bill was long and pointed. I could not see the back. In an attempt to get closer, I walked along the east shore, but I was not able to get the bird in view before it flew. I flushed it 3 or 4 time before it got away from me and I could not find it again. When it flew, I got a good look at the upper parts. The wings were uniform brown, perhaps lighter on the flight feathers than on the coverts. There was a row of small white dots long the edge of the greater coverts and much smaller dots along the median coverts. The tail and body were brown with one or two ragged tail feathers.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: The short legs and large rounded head with thick neck are the main features that distinguish immature Black-crowned from Yellow-crowned Night-Herons. The round white dots on the upper wing are supposed to be more prominent on the Black-crowned, but this is difficult for me to judge.

Any one have reservations?: NA

Light: overcast; **Distance:** 20 to 75 yards; **Optics:** 10x binocular.

Previous experience: have seen many, but not in January in Iowa. There are single December and February records for Iowa, but none for January.

References before/after viewing: I looked at National Geographic Guide after I lost the bird.

Time of notes: none; **Final typing:** 2.5 hours.