

Roseate Spoonbill

4 Aug 1997

Waubonsie W.A., Fremont Co., IA

*S. Dinsmore, *M. Proescholdt, *Kent

*Fuller; P-0567, IBL 68(1), 10, 85

Record Number: 97-38

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen J. Dinsmore (4, 5, 13 Aug), 612 1/2 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, CO 80521 [2/15/98]

Mark Proescholdt (5 Aug), Box 65, Liscomb 50148

Thomas H. Kent (5, 6 Aug), 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

Jim Fuller (13 Aug), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

Michael D. Overton, 1316 S. Duff, Ames 50010 [late, no review]

PHOTOGRAPHS

Stephen J Dinsmore, 13 Aug, P-0567 (IBL 68(1) cover)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: 68:10, 68(1) cover

Records Committee: IBL 68:85

Field Notes 52:66, 1998, P-0576

Dinsmore, S. J. 1998. Roseate Spoonbill in southwestern Iowa. Iowa Bird Life 68:136-137.

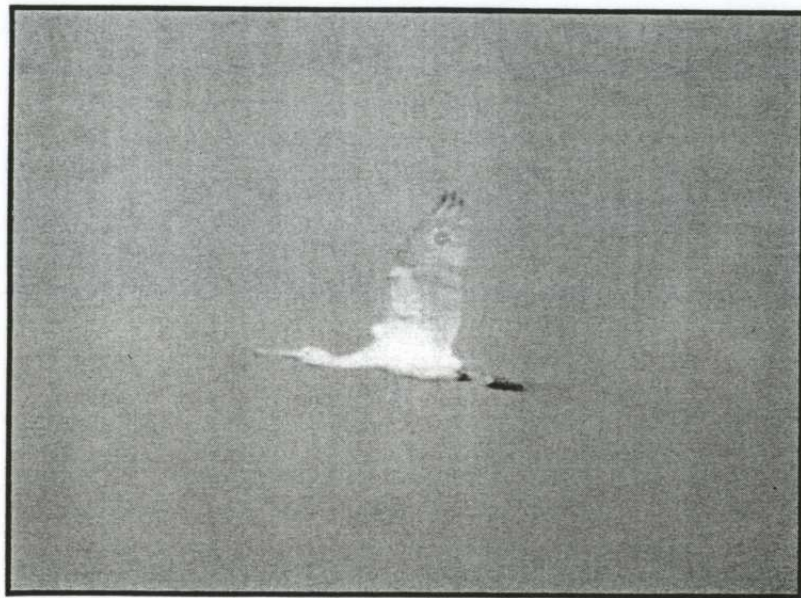
VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, The photos are nice, adding to an already extensively documented record.

97-38

IOWA BIRD LIFE

Winter 1998 Volume 68 Number 1



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



Roseate Spoonbill 97-38 P-0567
Waubonsie W.A., Fremont Co., IA
13 Aug 1997 Stephen J. Dinsmor

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71+00 NNCNN-6AU

Roseate Spoonbill 97-38 P-0567
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wander into Iowa with the maximum number of reports placed at 20 in the winter of 1984. But not since 1992, when there was a single report, have crossbills appeared in Iowa during the summer. For sheer numbers, however, the summer of 1996 was unprecedented at any season.

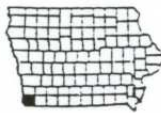
A final sidelight of the Red Crossbill saga involves an amusing story. An unidentified caller to the Iowa Birdline reported finding a crossbill lying on the ground after apparently hitting a window at an Ames shopping mall. After surmising that the bird was only dazed, she placed it in a box and took it home, where she attempted to "straighten its damaged bill", then later released it.

6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

ROSEATE SPOONBILL IN SOUTHWESTERN IOWA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

At about 7 p.m. on 4 August 1997, I arrived at the Waubonsie Wildlife Area and adjacent flooded areas to look for herons. This area had a large heron and egret roost in 1996, and I was hoping the roost was present again in 1997. After I crossed the Highway 2 bridge over the Missouri River from Nebraska, I noticed a few egrets flying toward a stand of willows near the east end of the flooded area. I quickly checked the flooded areas near the Missouri River, then drove east along Highway 2. About a mile east of the Highway 2 bridge I saw a large number of egrets perched in willows just south of the highway. I pulled off on the shoulder to count the birds coming to the roost. At 7:13 p.m., I was completing my first count of Great Egrets when I noticed a pinkish heron perched in the top of a larger willow, above the egrets. The bird was preening, and I immediately recognized it as a Roseate Spoonbill. I studied the bird until 7:51 p.m. The bird was very distinctive because of the body color and bill shape. The bird was slightly smaller and shorter-legged than a Great Egret. The bill was long, horizontally flattened, and had a spatulate shape. The bill appeared dull green, but when viewed from underneath it sometimes had a flesh-colored, translucent appearance. The head, neck, and body were white except for some brown smudging on the nape. The wings were pink, and when seen in flight the primaries had dusky tips. The tail was also pink. The legs were pinkish with darker knees. In flight, the bird had more rapid wingbeats than a Great Egret and flew with the neck outstretched. On the basis of the mostly white head and neck, and dusky wingtips, I aged the bird as an immature in first-fall plumage.



I returned to the roost on the morning of 5 August with Ross Silcock. At 5:53 a.m., the spoonbill left the roost. We watched it until 6:15 a.m. as it circled the roost and flew north, then turned west, and finally flew south into Nebraska. The bird was last seen coming to the roost on 14 August. To my knowledge all Iowa sightings were at the roost, most often in the evening. The bird was apparently feeding some distance away as it often arrived very late, sometimes an hour or more after the last egrets had arrived. Apparently, the bird was feeding in adjacent Otoe County, Nebraska; observations there on 5 and 14 August (pers. obs.) provided the fourth record for Nebraska.

Roseate Spoonbills are extremely rare vagrants to the Midwest. This is the second record for Iowa. The first record was of an immature on 16 August 1960 at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Kossuth County in north-central Iowa (Burgess, H. H. 1960. Roseate Spoonbill observed at Union Slough. *Iowa Bird Life* 30:67-68).

I located additional records for Wisconsin (1), Nebraska (3), Missouri (1), and Kansas (3). There are no recent reports for Illinois, Minnesota, or the Dakotas.

612 1/2 West Magnolia Street, Fort Collins, CO 80521

WINTER DICKCISSEL AT BURLINGTON

AARON E. BRES

On 19 January 1998, I made my annual trip to Burlington in search of Eurasian Tree Sparrow. After arriving at the Tama Road area north of town, I located a large mixed flock of birds in the brush lining 115th Street. From a distance, the flock appeared to consist of House Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows, and about 15 Eurasian Tree Sparrows. The birds were feeding on the ground in the ditch as well as flying across the road to a feeder. As I slowly drove by, I noticed a House Sparrow-sized bird with a bright yellow wash on its breast. Not being able to identify it, I turned the car around and got out my camera. As I pulled back up to the brush, the bird hopped up into a tree and sat in full view. The yellow wash was brightest at the top of the breast, fading to white lower down. The throat was white, outlined on each side with a thin dark line. Across the top of the breast was a black bib. The back, tail, and wings of the bird were brown except for the wing coverts which were rusty. As I photographed the bird, it became obvious that I was looking at a male Dickcissel in basic plumage. This is Iowa's fifth winter record of the species, which usually winters from central Mexico to northern South America (*Birds in Iowa*, Kent and Dinsmore, 1996).

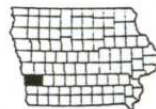


509 South West Street, Corydon, IA 50060

ROSS'S GULL IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

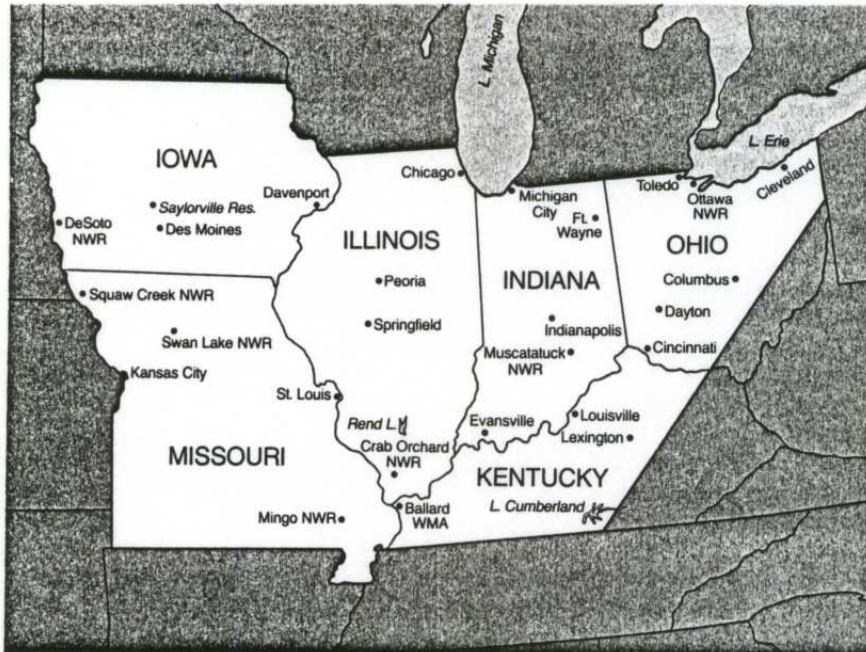
LOREN AND BABS PADEFORD

On 27 December 1997, we were driving around Lake Manawa with Jim and Sandy Kovanda, stopping periodically to look for birds on the lake. The lake was mostly frozen except for a narrow opening on the west side. The sun was shining and there was a lot of glare from the ice. We were scanning the lake for gulls when we saw a bird with tern-like buoyant flight. For a few minutes, because of glare and distance, we could not identify the bird. After some study through binoculars and scopes, we determined that the bird was probably a Ross's Gull. As we watched the bird for about 30 minutes, it flew and sat on the ice alternately. About 11:00 a.m. it flew south off the lake and toward the Mid-American ponds. We drove to the ponds but could not relocate it.



We went back to Lake Manawa that afternoon and found the bird again about 3:15 p.m. in much more favorable viewing conditions. The bird was a small gull, the only one on the lake, with short legs and small bill. The only birds on the lake for size comparison were Ruddy Ducks and Common Mergansers. It appeared intermediate in size between the two. In good light, the bird had an obvious pink blush on the breast and belly. The head was small, white, and rounded with no visible markings or collar. The upper wings and mantle were light gray. The wings

middlewestern prairie region



A second state record was provided by this immature Roseate Spoonbill at the Waubonsie Wildlife Management Area, extreme southwestern Iowa, on August 13, 1997. Photograph/Stephen J. Dinsmore

KENNETH J. BROCK

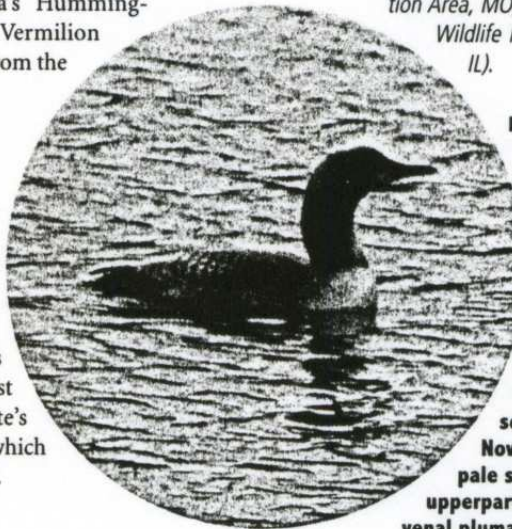
The weather in August, September, and October was generally mild, with few pronounced fronts. These mild conditions caused several correspondents to suggest that the dearth of storm systems allowed many species to overfly the Region. Although cause and effect cannot be established with certainty, the numbers of several bird groups were certainly below expectations. Foremost in the disappointment category was a predicted banner duck flight that never materialized. In addition, counts of Neotropical migrants were down. In Iowa, Dennis Carter characterized the fall flight as the most uneventful of the last eight years, and in northeast Indiana Jim Haw reckoned that only six Neotropical songbird migrants were above their 17-year annual fall means at Fox Island Park, with 29 below the mean.

In contrast, it was a marvelous fall for several seemingly unrelated species, such as Red-throated Loons, Red-necked Grebes, Swallow-tailed Kites, Merlins, Sabine's

Gulls, Red-breasted Nuthatches, American Pipits, most sparrows, and winter finches.

Flavor was added to the season by a fine array of rarities. These included Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, and Eurasian Collared-Doves from the southeast, and White-winged Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, and Vermilion Flycatcher from the southwest.

The Missouri summary arrived too late for inclusion in this report; fortunately, Chris Hobbs e-mailed a list of the state's highlights, which are included.



Abbreviations: Carl.L. (Carlyle Lake in Clinton, Fayette, and Bond Counties, IL); Jax.P. (Jackson Park on the Chicago lakefront); H.B.S.P. (Headlands Beach S.P., OH); L. Cal. (Lake Calumet, Chicago); L. Chau. (Lake Chatauqua N.W.R., IL); O.N.W.R. (Ottawa Nat'l Wildlife Ref., OH); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO); S.C.R., (Squaw Creek Nat'l Wildlife Ref., MO); Spfld. (Springfield, IL).

LOONS TO SPOONBILL

The Red-throated Loon migration exceeded even last year's extra-

A scattering of Pacific Loons across the upper Midwest included this bird on Lake Monroe, southern Indiana, on November 11, 1997. The pale scalloping visible on the upperparts is an indication of juvenile plumage. Photograph/Don Whitehead

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Documentation Form

Species- Roseate Spoonbill

Number- 1 immature

Location- Waubonsie W.A., Fremont Co., IA

Habitat- roosting in willows in flooded bottomland

Date- 4,5,13 August 1997

Time- 7:13-7:51 p.m. (4 August), 5:53-6:15 a.m. (5 August), 6:44-7:47 p.m. (13 August)

Observer- Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 ½ W. Magnolia Fort Collins, CO 80521

Other observers- Ross Silcock, James Dinsmore, m.ob.

Description- When I arrived at the Waubonsie W.A. on 4 August, I noticed a few egrets perched in distant willows. At about 7:10 p.m., I pulled off the shoulder of Highway 2 and began counting Great Egrets at the roost. I had almost completed my first count when I noticed a pinkish heron perched in the top of a willow, high above the egrets. The bird was preening and I immediately recognized it as a Roseate Spoonbill. The bird was very distinctive because of the color and bill shape. The bird was slightly smaller and shorter-legged than a Great Egret. The bill was long, laterally compressed, and had a spatulate shape. The bill mostly appeared dull greenish, but when viewed from underneath it sometimes had a pinkish, translucent appearance. From above, the tip and edges of the bill were pink. The head, neck, and body were white except for some brown smudging on the nape. The wings were pink, and in flight the primaries had dusky tips. The tail was also pink. The legs were pink with darker knees and black feet. In flight, the bird had more rapid wingbeats than a Great Egret and flew with the neck outstretched. On the basis of the mostly white head and dusky wingtips, I aged the bird as an immature (first-fall).

Similar species and how eliminated- The heron shape, pink body color, and bill shape are unique to this species.

Previous experience with this and similar species- I have seen numerous spoonbills in Florida, plus one in North Carolina.

Viewing conditions and equipment- Viewing conditions were excellent with partly cloudy skies. Estimated viewing distance was about 150m at the roost, although the bird flew directly overhead (<25m) on several occasions. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

References used- NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were written? written during observation on 4 August

How long before this form was completed? written 7 August 1997 and updated on 15 August

What species? Roseate Spoonbill How many? 1
 Location? Fremont County — Nebraska City area wetlands
 Type of habitat? Heron and Egret Roost — lots of water + willows — Hwy 2
 When? date(s): Aug. 5, 1997 time: 8:27 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.
 Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148
 others with you: Beth Proescholdt, Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault, Armstrongs, Ross Silcock,
Dennis Hennickson, John Sullivan, Doug Rose, BJ Rose
 others before or after you: Steve Dinsmore; many others later

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I saw this bird flying low from the right with a different posture. Its bill was straight out and gave this bird a different look than the great egrets. This was a good-sized bird and maybe close in size to a great egret. I saw a light pinkish tint to this light-colored bird as it flew. It flew to the left side of the roost and disappeared into the willows.

Later, we went up Hwy. #2 and were closer and saw it some more in the roost. I saw the Spoonbill-shaped bill and head through John Sullivan's scope once. I saw its pink wings through my scope as great egrets were pecking at it and it moved around some and moved its wings.

Similar species and how eliminated:

No other species like this.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Partly ~~was~~ cloudy by then and sun had set — (sunset at 8:27 p.m. that night),
Pretty good light still. Distances when flying 150-200 yards estimated and
80-100 yards away later. 22x Scope, 8x30 Binocs — when flying.
 Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen in Florida.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Robbins' Guide Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? Aug. 8, 1997 this form completed? Aug. 13, 1997

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DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Roseate Spoonbill; **Number:** 1 immature

Location: Waubonsie Wildlife Area, Fremont Co., IA

Date: 5 and 6 August 1997; **Time:** 8:30 to 8:45 p.m. and 6:15 a.m.

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

Others before/with/after: Found by Steve Dinsmore on 4 Aug and seen the next morning with Ross Silcock. On the evening of the 5th 12 people were present: myself, Dick Tetrault, Ross Silcock, Mark Proescholdt, Beth Proescholdt, Dennis Henrickson, John Sullivan, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, B. J. Rose and his son and wife. The morning of the 6th, 7 people were present, but only myself and Loren and Babs Padelford saw the bird leave the roost.

Habitat and circumstances: flooded bottom land and ponds just west of the Missouri River along Highway 2, which is just across from Nebraska City, NE. A large heron-egret roost has been present in this area in recent years.

Description of bird: Dick Tetrault and I began looking for the bird at 10:30 a.m., covering the local area, Riverton Area, and the ponds inside the dike from the Missouri border north to this area. We took up watch at the roost area at 5:00 p.m. and were later joined by the birds and birders. The main movement of birds into the roost was between 6:00 and 7:30 p.m. with about 200 Great Egrets, 100 Cattle Egrets, 16 Little Blue Herons (2 imm., 2 calico, 12 ad.), 2 Snowy Egrets, 4 Black-crowned Night Herons, and 4 Green Herons. Many Great Blue Herons were in the area, but they did not join the roosting birds. The spoonbill was said to have been found on the roost by Steve Dinsmore the night before at 7:30 p.m. As the Armstrongs were leaving and others were talking about leaving, Mark Proescholdt spotted the bird flying into the roost from the south. I was able to get my scope on it as it raised its pink wings to land low in a dense area of the roost. B. J. Rose and others moved up the road where they were closer and could view the back side of the island (row of trees) where the birds were roosting. We joined them and I saw the bird through their scopes; however, I got a much better look when I set up my Kowa. In spite of the fading light, I saw that the bird was smaller than Great Egrets. The bill was spatulate, being wider at the tip than the base. I described the color as yellow-gray. It was drab. The head and neck were light colored and appeared ruffled or lightly streaked brown. The wings and body were a rather uniform pink-white, perhaps more pink on the under wings. The bird moved around several times and raised its wings. I did not see the leg color. The general shape of the bird was much like the egrets. Dick and I arrived at the roost site at 5:30 a.m. the next morning, where we found five birders from Nebraska who were anxious to see the bird fly into that state. Ross Silcock said that the bird flew out of the roost shortly before 6:00 a.m. the previous morning. At 6:00 it was still rather dark, but birds were leaving the roost. The sun came up about 6:25. I was watching with the Padelfords when I saw a slightly darker bird (pink) leave the roost with 10 or more Great Egrets and we watched it until it was out of site to the southwest. The others, who were at different viewing points, did not see it.

Similar species: The pink color and spatulate bill are distinctive. The size and body shape were appropriate also. Young birds are supposed to have white (feathered) heads with increasing pink over 3 years. I do not know whether my observation of the head color was tainted by the weak light. The bird did seem very light pink to me.

Any one have reservations?: no.

Light: Late evening and early morning light, rather dull; **Distance:** 300 and 100 yards (est.); **Optics:** 20x scope (5 Aug) and 10x binocular (6 Aug).

Previous experience: Have seen many on the Gulf Coast.

References before/after viewing: I looked at the National Geographic Guide after viewing on the 5th.

Time of notes: 1 hour after viewing on the 5th; **Final typing:** 1 day.

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DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Roseate Spoonbill

LOCATION: Waubonsie Wildlife Area east of Nebraska City (Fremont)

DATE & TIME: 13 August, 1997 (6:12 AM for about 3 minutes)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240

OTHERS: Seen my M. Ob. Previously

BACKGROUND: After arriving at the heron roost south of highway 2 east of Nebraska City when it was still dark, I waited until birds began leaving the roost about 6:05 AM. About a dozen large herons/egrets had flown out, when at 6:12 AM, a bird with an entirely different profile flew out and circled around, and then flew northwest with three Great Egrets until it was out of sight. The bird was in view for about 3 minutes, but only half that time at relatively close range. At one point, it flew fairly close to directly overhead. It was well before sunrise, and still not fully light.

DESCRIPTION: The bird could be compared to Great Egrets, as it flew away with three of them. It seemed to be slightly shorter than the egrets, and also gave a humpbacked appearance. The trailing legs did not appear to extend as far back as those of the egrets. It also had generally pink wings, while the egret's wings were white. It also held its rather thin neck straight out, and the bill presented a long flat profile. When it flew nearly overhead, the spatulate shaped bill could be seen. The wings were pink and the neck and head were white. No red was seen.

SIMILAR SPECIES: No other species has pink color and spatulate bill.

VIEWING CONDITIONS & OPTICS: I watched the entire time with Swift Audubon binoculars (8.5 X 44), and the viewing ranged from southeast to northwest, but most of the time the bird was relatively close. I was looking east to northeast. It was as close as 40 yards, but distances were up to a mile as it disappeared in the northwest. It was a partly sunny day, but the sun did not rise for about 15 more minutes. Nevertheless I had good viewing of the bird and could easily see the pink color and other features described.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen these birds along the Gulf coast and Florida a number of times.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Field notes were made immediately after sighting, and the National Geographic Guide was viewed at that time. This form was typed on 15 August.

97-38
not reviewed

IOWA BIRD SIGHTINGS DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) **How many?** 1 immature

Location: Fremont co., Waubonsie Wildlife Area, .25 miles SW to .25 Miles NW of jct. IA Hwy 2 & Fremont co. Rd. L31

Habitat: Freshwater marsh with scattered willow thickets and hardwood groves.

Date: 9 August 1997 **Time:** 7:07pm to approx. 7:25pm

Observer: Michael D. Overton, 1316 S Duff #93, Ames, IA, 50010

Other Observers: Dixie Overton, Ann Johnson, James Scheib, Pam Allen, Reid Allen, Peter Erzen, and one other lady from NE that I did not know.

Observers Before and After: Before: Steve Dinsmore After: ??

Description:

Size: Larger than Little Blue Heron and smaller than Great Egret, both of which were present.

Shape: Heavy bodied for a wading bird. Broad wings in flight. Flew with legs and head extended.

Bill: Large spatulate, about 2.5 to 3 times as long as the head. Off-white with yellow-green tint.

Eye: Not noted.

Head: Pale pinkish white.

Neck: Long, concolorous with head.

Back: Pinkish white shading to a darker pink toward the rump.

Breast and belly: Pinkish white, slightly lighter than dorsal surfaces.

Wings: Darker pink than rest of bird. Lesser coverts intense hot pink.

Legs: Long, color not noted.

Vocalizations: None.

Behavior: Initial flyby over roost of Little Blue Herons and Great Egrets, circled, then flew NW approx. .5 miles and landed on a snag in the marsh.

Similar species and how eliminated: Greater Flamingo: Larger size, longer neck and legs relative to body, bill shape and color, black in flight feathers. Scarlet Ibis: Smaller size, bill shape and color, overall color, black tipped primaries.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No.

Viewing conditions: Late day light behind observers. Approx. 50 yards on initial flyby and 250 yards when perched (best guess). Leica 10x42 and Leupold 12-40x60. Photographed with 135mm and doubler then enlarged.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Roseate Spoonbill: numerous sightings in TX and FL Greater Flamingo: Three sightings in FL (1, 16, and 13 wild individuals), One sighting in TX (single escape?). Scarlet Ibis: One sighting in FL (apparent wild individual not accepted for political reasons).

References and persons consulted before writing description: None before field notes, NGS after.

How long before field notes made? 30 min. **this form completed?** 4 months.

Comments: Sorry this description is so incomplete, but I took very few notes as most of what registered is that we were looking at a large pink bird in Iowa. Also, my apologies regarding the photograph; it was the best possible with the lens and film available. Was this bird a second year immature?