

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Yellow-crowned Night Heron How many? 1Location? beaver ponds below the Saylorville Reservoir dam, Polk County.Type of habitat? edge of small pond surrounded by dense Willow thicketsWhen? date(s): 11 Oct, 1985 time: 5:00 PM to 6:00 PMWho? your name and address: Steve Dismore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

others with you: _____

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

I first noticed that the bird was different as it fed with or near two immature Black-crowned Night Herons. I first noted that the bill was entirely black in color, not yellow at the base becoming darker at the tip as in the two Black-crown's. The brown speckling on the belly was much finer than on the Black-crown's, giving the birds underparts a darker appearance. The back was also appreciably darker than the light brown backs of the two Black-crown's. The legs, rather than being a muddy yellow color like the two Black-crown's, were bright yellow. I also had an opportunity to view the bird in flight several times as it flew back and forth from feeding areas. In flight, it showed a definite gray color on the top of the tail and its feet and a couple of inches of each leg protruded beyond the tip of the tail. In contrast, the two Black-crown's showed a uniform light brown color above and their feet barely stuck out beyond the tail.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The black bill, finer spotting on underparts, darker back with some gray wash on the tail ~~and~~ bright yellow legs, and legs protruding well beyond the tail eliminate immature Black-crowned Night Heron.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: _____

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Light was excellent with the sun directly behind me and a clear sky. Estimated viewing distance of 50 ft. at closest. I used a B+L 20x Spotting Scope and Nikon 8x23 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen both species of night herons (ad.'s and imm.'s) in Iowa this year.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

NGS Field Guide to Birds of America Robbins, et al. Field Guide to Birds of America

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 3 1/2 hours

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