

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Little Blue Heron 2. Number 1
3. Location Old Man Slough near Cone Marsh, Louisa County, Iowa
4. Date: April 30 1982 5. Time Bird Seen: 10:45 am to 11:00 am
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):  
James Huntington and I observed a large white bird as it landed about 50 ft up in an oak tree. While perched we realized it was smaller than the Great Egret we assumed it would be. It also had short dark legs and a ~~short~~ slender dark bill. With the use of a 20X scope the bill showed up as steel blue. The upper mandible appeared to be darker at the base and continued through the dark eye. The belly and breast of the bird were white and the rest of the bird was primarily white. However, the top of the head was a light charcoal color and charcoal splotches could be seen on the bird's shoulders as it preened. The legs and feet of the bird were the same color, a dark olive, not black. The olive of the legs and feet, and the blue bill were highlighted and contrasted while the bird was seen scratching its head and neck.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: the bird was either preening or when not it held its neck in an S curve.
9. Habitat - general: riverbottom slough  
specific:
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
Great Egret is larger, has a yellow bill and black legs.  
Cattle Egret has thick yellow-orange bill, thick short neck and in breeding plumage an ~~orange~~ orange patch on breast.
11. Distance (how measured)? Estimated ~~150~~ 150 to 200 yds 12. Optical equipment: 20X scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
we were facing south on a clear morning. The bird was in full sun. The sun was to our left
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
NO previous experience with this species
15. Other observers: James Huntington
16. Did the others agree with your identification? YES
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Peterson's A Field Guide to the Birds
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 1 hour
- Signature: Thomas J. Standt Address: 931 N. Summit
- Date: MAY 24th 1982 City, State: Iowa City Ia