

Swallow-tailed Kite
25 Aug 1872
Creston, Union Co., IA
F. P. Atkinson, collector

Record Number: 94-AE
Classification: A-S

Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard; #201,624, IBL 65:82; 66:97

LETTERS

Mark Robbins to James Dinsmore, 22 March 1988

Thomas H. Kent to Curator of Birds, Museum of Comparative Zoology, 1 July 1995

Raymond A. Paynter, Jr. to Thomas H. Kent, 7 July 1995

REFERENCE

Records Committee: IBL 65:82; 66:97

VOTE: 4 A-S, 1 A-D, 2 NA

NA, Can we get MCZ to send us a picture or computer printout of details, or some definite information. No reason to doubt but would be nice to have some solid evidence on hand.

A-S, While I recall that a Records Committee member should personally observe and confirm this record, I'm convinced the IOU will fly one of us to Philadelphia to do so. Mr. Robbins is certainly a competent scholar, and the accompanying information he provided is consistent with Nineteenth Century Iowa records of this species.

A-S, Requires faith in labeling.

A-D, Taking it on faith that specimen is properly labeled.

NA, How can member or members of the committee get a look at this record to verify it?

A-S, No reason to doubt accuracy of labeling -- species occurred in Iowa at that time.

RE-VOTE (by mail 1995): 7 A-S

A-S, I will accept the letter from Mr. Paynter as evidence that this specimen does exist and was from Iowa.

A-S, Not unexpected at that time.

A-S, According to our revised guidelines, confirmation of a specimen may be done by a curator of a museum.

A-S, A. S. T. Kites lived in Iowa then.

A-S, No change in my A-S vote; no indication of any problem with labelling. As far as I can ascertain, Brewster (in whose collection this bird once resided) was a scholar beyond reproach; I would assume that he would maintain a collection worthy of his academic standards.

PHILADELPHIA

215/299-1000

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22 March 1988

Dr. James Dinsmore
Dept. of Animal Ecology
ISU
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Dr. Dinsmore,

I and David Easterla are preparing a book on the birds of Missouri (by the way, I'm originally from the northwestern corner of Missouri). We are in the process of incorporating specimen data from various institutions in the book. About a year ago, I received a printout from Marion Mengel at KU regarding ISU's holdings of Missouri material. One specimen that we would like the identity and date confirmed is ISU # 781, listed on the printout as a Northern Shrike, taken in Lafayette County (is there more specific locality data?) on 1. March 1884.

Incidentally, we have a substantial number of Iowa specimens in our collection, and one significant specimen that I came across in the MCZ collection was a Swallow-tailed Kite taken at Creston, Iowa on 25 August 1872 (MCZ # 201624).

Thanking you in advance!

Sincerely yours,

Mark Robbins

Mark Robbins
Ornithology

94.AE

July 1, 1995

Curator of Birds
Museum of Comparative Zoology
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Curator:

We would like to confirm the presence of a specimen of American Swallow-tailed Kite taken at Creston, Iowa, on 25 August 1872 (MCZ #201624). We obtained a reference to this specimen from Mark Robbins (copy of letter enclosed).

We would like confirm that you have the specimen and know the content of its label. Information on who collected the specimen would also be useful.

Information on this record will be added to our file on records of rare birds in Iowa and the record will be cited in a new book on Iowa birds by Professor Dinsmore and myself.

It has been sometime since anyone has looked for specimens of Iowa birds in National collections. I have heard that many museums now have computerized indexes to their collections. Would it be possible to find out what other Iowa species that you have? Do you think it would be feasible for us to survey other collections for records of Iowa birds, or is this an unreasonable request to make?

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Kent, Secretary
IOU Records Committee
211 Richards Street
Iowa City, IA 52246

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

The Agassiz Museum

94. AE



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
26 OXFORD STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

7 July 1995

Thomas H. Kent, Secretary
IOU Records Committee
211 Richards St.
Iowa City, IA 52246

Dear Mr. Kent:

The Swallow-tailed kite from Creston, Iowa is indeed here. It was collected 25 August 1872 by F. P. Atkinson. It was originally in the Brewster collection (no. 1624) and came to the MCZ where it is now no. 201,624. It is labeled as an adult male. There is no further information.

Our collection is about one-fifth (60,000 specimens) computerized. We are making steady progress, but to accurately transfer the data is slow going. It might be ten or more years before we finish, unless a fairy godmother drops a bag our money in our laps and we hire full-time help.

No, I don't think it unreasonable to ask other collections for print-outs of their Iowa specimens. That, after all, is one of the joys of computerized collections--we can answer queries such as yours without having to say "Come, do it yourself."

If you think a search of our computer files will be useful, although incomplete, please let me know.

Very truly yours,

Raymond A. Paynter, Jr.

RAP:ap