

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Common Tern How many? 1-3 (1 on the latter date)  
 Location? Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County (seen below dam and at Oak Grove Rec. Area)  
 Type of habitat? seen perching on stumps, sitting on sandy beach, or in flight ~~while feeding~~ while feeding  
 When? date(s): 25 Aug to <sup>27</sup> Oct, 1985 (over) time: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010

others with you: \_\_\_\_\_

others before or after you: Bob Myers, Perry and Erik Munson, Ames

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 observed two birds, 1 adult in breeding plumage, and 1 juvenile bird. The adult was identified by the dark primaries as it associated with several Forsters Terns. The juvenile bird was identified by the dark shoulder bar and dark crown with white forehead. It was also seen in with Forsters Terns. Up to three Common Terns were seen in with Forsters Terns regularly through the end of September at Oak Grove Rec. Area on the east side of the reservoir.

Several days after the birds disappeared from Oak Grove Rec. Area, I rediscovered what probably was one of the same birds feeding on the ponds below the dam. This was one of the adult birds, which by now had acquired its winter plumage. The dark shoulder bar was obvious as the bird perched on stumps in the pond. Probably the best mark on this bird in flight was the dark cap extending over the head and the white forehead. Although few bird guides I have read stress ~~the~~ field mark, I think it is the best mark because it is easy to see in flight and really sticks out. The bird below the dam frequently gave a sharp "tip" note in flight which is different from the raspy "keer" of a Forsters Tern.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Forsters Tern eliminated by the dark primaries (birds ~~at~~ at Oak Grove), dark shoulder bar (all birds) when perched, and the dark cap going across the top of the head with a white forehead.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Most of the time I was able to move about in order to get favorable light on most observations. Viewing distance ranged from 25 ft as a bird flew directly over me to several hundred yards as they fed on the lake. I used a B&L 20x spotting scope and Nikon 8x23 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen Common and Forsters Terns several times in Iowa, including this year. I have seen hundreds of Common Terns in Massachusetts.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NBS Field Guide..., Robbins, et al. Field Guide to Birds of N. America, Harrison, Seabirds

How long before field notes made? \_\_\_\_\_ this form completed? \_\_\_\_\_

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