

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species ^{Little} Least tern 2. Number 1
3. Location Cone Marsh - N. of bridge
4. Date: 8-24-78 5. Time Bird Seen: 8³⁰ - 8⁵⁰ to _____

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):

A small generally white tern. Smaller than immature black terns seen in the same field of view. Faster flying than black tern. Flew entire time unchallenged except for 1 brief landing. Black top to head, especially from bill to eye. Forehead difficult to see but lighter colored - never saw sharp white on forehead. From top, wings white over distal half of secondaries, black over anterior and outer part of primaries. Gray between these contrasting areas. Tail white and slightly forked. Under parts generally light colored (white). Two Forster's terns were seen earlier in the morning - larger, slower, overall and white wing with white areas in primaries were distinctly different from the least tern.

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: Fast flying with rapid turns and dives

9. Habitat - general: open marshy lake with mud flats

specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

see above

11. Distance (how measured)? 30 to 200 yards - est. 12. Optical equipment: 8x40 Leitz Telescopes

20x bausch & lomb eyepiece

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): on Bushnell scope
oriented to viewing, bird seen from many different angles

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

seen on East coast several times

15. Other observers: none

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Robbins. Looked at book before, during and after seeing bird. Used book to
look for characteristic features.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 1/2 hr

Signature: TH Kent Address: 211 Richards St

Date: 8/24/78 City, State: Iowa City Iowa