

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-billed Cuckoo

Location: My Yard - small acreage in northern Warren County, IA

Habitat: Mixed open woods and field edge with creek and many shrubs

Date(s): 4/23/89

Time: 12:30 pm to 12:31 pm

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: none

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 behavior and voice.

Overall this bird was approximately the size of a blue jay but much more slender with a long tail. It flew stealthily through the trees and landed in a tree in front of me. I identified it immediately as a cuckoo. It was plain white underneath, contrasting with the brown upper body, wings and tail. There were no markings on the wings and my angle precluded seeing the underneath tail pattern. The bill was black and the red eye ring was noted. The bird did not call. This would appear to be a record early date for a black-billed cuckoo.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Yellow-billed Cuckoo - Was eliminated because of the black bill, red eye ring and lack of rust on wings

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

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

Excellent light with sun at back. I would guess the bird was about thirty feet high in the tree and approximately fifty feet away. Seen through 7x26 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

30+ years experience in birding.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None.

How long before field notes made? 7 hours      How long before this form completed? 7 hours