

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Plowee sp. (atypical Lesser Golden Plover?) 2. Number 1
3. Location Sugar Bottom Recreation Area by Coralville Reservoir, Johnson Co., Iowa
4. Date: 9-20-78 5. Time Bird Seen: approx 9:30 to 9:50 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): Definitely larger than Killdeer (by direct comparison). Rather slender. Plover bill, not as heavy as Black-bellied Plover's, thick. Legs black, irides brown. Upper parts brownish-grey, with feathers on back having lighter edges giving a scamated appearance; off-white superciliary stripes fading in whitish forehead; no white on rump or tail; tail entirely dark above. In flight, very distinct white wing stripe (white tips of secondary and inner primary coverts). Underside light greyish-brownish-buff, not contrasting sharply with color of back. Underwings gray, no black axillars.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: walking around with Killdeer and flying off and alighting together with it when approached. Flight pattern like Killdeer's
9. Habitat - general: grassy-sandy uplands  
specific: periphery of short-grass-sand picnic, RV camping area on N. shore of Coralville Reservoir, with sandy spits extending into water
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: gestalt and most details like Lesser Golden Plover, but very distinct white wing stripe inconspicuous.
11. Distance (how measured)? est. 80-300 ft.
12. Optical equipment: 785 binoculars and 20-45x zoom scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Overcast; excellent diffuse light; different angles because bird flew around as approached
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Familiar with all N.A. Plovers (except Alaskan spp.) in winter plumage.
15. Other observers: T.H. Kent, T.K. Shires
16. Did the others agree with your identification? all equally baffled by incongruity
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Standard US and European field guides. Bent. Roberts' Birds of Minnesota. Falla et al. N.Z. guide. King. Slates; shows thin white stripe for L. Golden Plover's Long (only book to do so).
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? notes prepared in field within 1/2 hr. Detailed description around 7:30 PM
- Signature: W.H. Allen Address: R# 6
- Date: 9-20-78 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240