

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Sandhill Crane How many? 1

Location? West end of Lake Colchester in Norwalk, Warren Co., Iowa

Type of Habitat? Marshy, cattails, shallow water border by corn fields on north and lawns on the south.

When? date(s): May 8, 1990 time: 12:10 PM to 2:15 PM

Who? your name and address: Sue Spieker, 1000 Gordon Ave., Norwalk, Ia. 50211

Others with you: None

Others before or after you: Ann Johnson observed it flying about 5:00 PM

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I first noticed a large bird flying well above the tree tops, neck outstretched and legs held back. I knew it was not a Great Blue Heron by it's flight. It landed on the opposite shore in a corn stubble field. Immediately, it gave a rattling call. I located it with my scope and observed that it was about the size of a Great Blue but appeared a little larger. The long neck was gray and not held in an "S" posture. The bill was a dark gray or black, forehead was red and it had a light gray cheek. The bill was long and about the same length of the head. The gray back was flecked with some tan on the sides. It sloped to a bustled tail. The belly of the bird appeared a lighter gray. The legs were long and dark gray. I did not see the feet while it was standing. It preened it's feathers for quite awhile then fed in the corn field. The bird kept a close watch on me and my whereabouts as I observed him.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Great Blue Herons fly with neck crooked, also when standing crooks neck much of time. Great Blues bill is yellowish and has no red forehead. Whooping Cranes are white as are Great Egrets.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NA

If yes, explain:

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

The sun was bright and at my back. Viewed at Aprox. 140 yd., paced off half the distance. Minolta binoculars 7X50. Monolux scope 30X60

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

This is my first Sandhill Crane but I see many Great Blue Herons

References and persons consulted before writing description: Peterson's Guide to Eastern Birds and Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding. Spook with Ann Johnson and Bob Myers.

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

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).