

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sandhill Crane How many? oneLocation? Little Wall Lake, Hamilton CoType of habitat? it was flying over SW side of lakeWhen? date(s): 5 April 1983 time: approx 8:00 a.m. to in sight about 1 minuteWho? your name and address: James J. Dinsmore, Department of Animal Ecology, ISU, Amesothers with you: Bird Study class, about 14 people, several of whom saw or heard the birdothers before or after you: none that I know of

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.

1. I first heard the bird call twice. Its bugling call is unmistakable and I have heard them before in Wisconsin and Florida. After the second call, it registered with me what it was and I looked for the bird.
2. The bird was circling over corner of lake, about 100 yards up and some distance off. I got glasses on it and then spotting scope. The bird was very large, obviously much larger than any of the ducks I had been watching in flight. It had long legs trailing behind it and the long neck was outstretched in front. It had a relatively long thin bill that gave a slight downward curved view. I didn't look at the bird long as I was trying to show it to the class and it was moving away from us. I had no real impression of any color but the combination of call and silhouette made me immediately positive of my identification. The wings were very broad and the bird had a heavy, labored flight.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Great Blue Heron -saw one later but it flew with neck folded rather than with the cross silhouette of a crane

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

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

Conditions were very heavily overcast. I estimated it was 250-300 yards away. I got about a 10 second view with a 20 X scope and could see the birds shape clearly.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen and heard cranes before in both Florida and Wisconsin on a number of occasions.

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 3 hours

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