

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? BURROWING OWL How many? 4Location? 1 1/2 miles southwest of Aurelia in Cherokee Co. Section 21 ofType of habitat? Bare ground, hoglot, ag. land Pitcher Twsp.When? date(s): 5 June 1985 time: 1730 to 1815Who? your name and address: Dick Bierman 901 Harris Cherokee Iowa 51012others with you: Bill Glawe the farmer that alerted me about them,others before or after you: MARION BREWER, VERNON BIERMAN, Jim Huber

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.

The birds were perched on top of a hog house, about 6 feet off the ground.

They were tan with a darker brown necklace, large yellow eyes, no ear tufts, and long legs. I approached within 50 feet to photo them and 3 took off. I photoed the remaining owl. It then flew and made a fast short circle above my head and settled back on the ground about 100' away. The other three had flown some 500' out into a corn field that was about 1' high. From a distance they could have easily been passed over as meadowlarks as they were about the same size. I then picked up a pellet from below the perch. It had many small bones and insect parts visible. I will include it with this report.

I WILL INCLUDE ALSO A SLIDE OF THE OWL.

THE FARMER SAID THAT IN MAY THEY NESTED. HIS HOGS BROKE INTO THE NEST WHICH WAS UNDER A HOGHOUSE. HE WAS AFRAID THEY WERE KILLED. THE NEXT DAY HE FOUND THEM IN ANOTHER HOGHOUSE. 2 WERE BEING FED, THEY LATER TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN AN OLD MARTIN HOUSE WHERE THE 2 WERE FED FOR SOME TIME.

Similar species and how eliminated: Screech owl - has ear tufts. Short eared owl is much larger and has small ear tufts.

I have seen many Burrowing owl out in South Dakota in Prairiedog towns.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: 50' Light on my back shining on bird. bright sun. 600mm mirror lens, and a 15-60x Bausch & Lomb Spotting scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? AT SITE WHILE VIEWING BIRDS this form completed? 2 hrs.

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