

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Least Tern How many? 2Location? Iowa Public Service Port Neal Generators near Selix IAType of habitat? flyash ponds - barren sand flats, shallow water, colonizing marsh & cottonwoodsWhen? date(s): 6/17; 7/3; 7/10 1986 time: — to —Who? your name and address: Bill Huser, 319 W. 17th St., S. Sioux City, NE 68776others with you: Jerry Probst of Sioux City IAothers before or after you: —

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.

6/17: J.P. first viewed a single bird. Identification is easily determined by small size, white plumage with a black cap, darker primaries, white forehead, yellow bill and long wings & tail of terns.

7/3: a pair of birds seen, same location

7/10: one apparently incubating, on barren sand flats. Other bird flies over observers acting very agitated. perched bird never moved during visit.

7/17: both birds at water's edge, away from nest site; no juveniles seen. both birds would fly away (not caused by observers) from spot & then return to same area. No agitated behavior when approached. Nest site visited - 1 egg with irregular hole pecked in it, contents partially dried, 2 eggs intact but partially covered with sand. Witnessed food exchange between the 2 adults.

Similar species and how eliminated:

forster's tern } larger, no white forehead, darker bills, deeply notched
Cormorant tern } tail.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

excellent lighting & visibility, sun to observers backs
nesting bird estimated at 150 yd.; other overflew at est. heights of 30'.
Minolta 10x binocs; Minolta 10x Binocs; Bushnell 16-42x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Seen leasts several times on Missouri R. upstream from Sioux City. Forsters seen

References and persons consulted before writing description: Golden Field guide & Nat'l Geog. Field Guide in migration often, commons less so.How long before field notes made? immediately after this form completed on 7-21-86
or during each visit.

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