

AMERICAN AVOCETS
NEAR SALIX, IA

19 May 1986

Two American Avocets (Recurvirostra americana) were seen at the Port Neal fly ash settling ponds near Salix, IA.

7 June

Two American Avocets were seen at the middle, water-filled ash pond on this date. The birds flew as we (Jerry, Bill and I) walked past the pond.

19 June

I went to the ash ponds to check on the Piping Plovers. The Avocets were still present in the middle, water-filled ash pond. I saw at least three Avocets. The birds approached me like they were military aircraft. They lifted from the water, appeared to "zero-in" on me, shot past me (as close as about 20 feet) & arced behind me to zip past a second time, but at a farther distance. A pair of Avocets did this once, while one Avocet repeated five or six times while I remained at that location.

Each take-off and flight in my direction began with a high, loud "Glee-eep!" from the bird. As I continued my survey for Piping Plover nests, one Avocet continued to observe me until I left the ash ponds. Shades of Alfred Hitchcock!