

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What Species? Common Nighthawk

How many? 1 on Oct. 29, 1986

Location? Keokuk, Iowa. Viewed from intersection of 16th St. and Timea

Type of Habitat? Urban

When? date(s)? Late dates: Oct. 19, 24, time: about 6:15 P.M.. Just before dark.
→ 27, 29, 1986

Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil, 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa

others with you: No

others before or after you: No

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. About the 20th of Oct. each fall, I start looking for late Chimney Swifts. On the 19th, in addition to Swifts, I also found Nighthawks over Keokuk--the latest for me by a couple of weeks or more. I began returning to the location(16th and Timea--a high location with fewer large trees to block view) on evenings when I was in town, and when the weather was fairly good. The following observations of Nighthawk were made: Oct. 19--3; Oct. 20--0. Oct. 24--8. Oct. 27--2. Oct. 29--1. I quit looking after the 29th, thinking I had already stretched the limits of the Field Report editor's credibility too far.

Features observed: In most cases, the bird(s) were a ways off, but I kept them in my binoculars or scope until I could get a clear view of the white band crossing the wing about equidistant between the tip and the main wing joint (elbow?). I also noted the long, narrow wings, and long tail that was slightly notched at the end. The flight was also characteristic of Nighthawk--erratic as it foraged for insects. At least one other species that flies over Keokuk in the evenings has the general profile of a nighthawk--the "seagull"--but these birds are obviously not involved in aerial foraging--they are either going somewhere, or kettling. At no time did I hear any sounds from the birds, ~~also a couple of times they were close enough.~~

although ← ~~similar species and how eliminated:~~
I think the combination of white wing bar and evening flight eliminates all other reasonable choices.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? N.A.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Viewing conditons good, but in slowly fading light. Used both 10x40 binocs and 20x Nikon Scope.

Previous experience with this and similar species: Have seen many times.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? Not made

How long before this form completed? 10 hrs.