

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

Species: Northern Shrike (Lanius excubitor) Number: I

Location: Five miles North of Waukon, Allamakee County, Iowa

Date: March 25, 1978 Time bird seen: 8:00 AM to 8:10 AM

Description: The size of the bird was slightly larger than an American Robin (Turdus migratorius). The head, body and tail were held mostly horizontally. Head was flat topped. Bill seemed large and strongly hooked. Tail was slightly longer than a Robin's. Over all the colors ^{were} light. Color on the upperparts was a pale metallic grey, and white on the underparts. A black patch extending from corner of mouth, passing just under eye, widening and ending on ear area. Wings were mostly black with some white on edges of wing coverts, and secondaries. There was a distinct patch of white at base of primaries, near alula. Tail was dark with much white on feather edges. The bill was mostly dark with the inner one third of lower mandible being fleshy. In flight the white rump, heavy bill and style of flying was distinct. The vermiculations were present but seemed indistinct, and restricted to lower breast.

Description of behavior: The bird appeared tame, and remained on it's perch even when approached to within 20 feet. The bird was perched in a small aspen, near the tree's tip, about 12 feet above ground. The bird stayed on it's perch for about 30 seconds with us in close proximity. Then flushed moving Eastward, staying near road-side, then landing in another small aspen, 30 yards from original perch. We did not move the car, but rather stayed where we were and observed the bird for about 8 minutes, before it again took flight heading to the North, at this time we were satisfied and stopped viewing.

Habitat: Hilly wooded areas, surrounded by cultivated lands. Some scattered brushy spots. Road was a loose crushed gravel type, with weed filled ditches.

Similar species: Loggerheaded Shrike; my bird seemed large and big billed. The small mask, light colored distal area. In flight the white rump (which is dark in the loggerhead), and the bird's lethargic behavior proves it was a Northern Shrike.

Light: Fairly good light conditions. Sun was behind observer, but sky was overcast with high thin cirrus clouds.

Previous experience: I have seen both species on many occasions (over ten times), and am thoroughly familiar with each.

Other observers: Darwin Koenig, Decorah, Iowa

No books were consulted.

A few notes were taken at time of sighting, otherwise documentation was written out of memory ten hours after sighting.

Date: March 25, 1978

Address: St. Lucas, Iowa

Signature: *Joe Schaufenbuel*

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Joe Schaufenbuel