

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species NORTHERN SHRIKE 2. Number: one
3. Location Hickory Hill park, Iowa City, Iowa
4. Date: 6th November 1976 5. Time Bird seen: 9:30 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field): The bird was first seen as it perched in a tree. Shrike shape, large size captured my attention. It flew in a long descending glide to ground and then perched in another tree where I observed: light coloration above, mask clearly not meeting above beak, scaling on breast, light color of basal part of lower mandible, size of bird judged to be distinctly larger than my image of a loggerhead shrike.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: Curiosity. It kept staring at me so I was able to have good look at mask-bill relationship. Gliding flight drop to ground.
9. Habitat - general: grassy-bushy hillside at edge of Iowa City, in city park.
specific: perched in small tree. Bushes on hillside mostly Hawthorne of some type, with several locust trees higher up the slope.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Loggerhead shrike lacks breast scaling, light base of lower mandible, is a smaller bird, darker above, with mask spreading out in front of the eye so as to meet above the bill. On this bird the mask tapered from the eye so as not to meet over the bill.
11. Distance (how measured)? 25-30 feet. paced. 12. Optical equipment: 8x35 binoc.
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Somewhat overcast sky, sun-observer-bird angle about 170 degrees for extended time.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
Never seen before. Many loggerheads seen in California and more recently last winter and spring in Missouri.
15. Other observers:
The bird was seen and identified independently by Mike Newlon some 15-30 minutes earlier. Roger Milkman had reported shrike(sp) on 11/1 in H. Hill
16. Did the others agree with your identification? Newlon, yes.
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Mike Newlon
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
None consulted for description as I've looked for species previously. Peterson and Robbins et.al. were consulted to be sure my description fit that of Northern and nothing else.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? about 10 minutes. I ran home to call Newlon who was already in the park!

Signature Richard J. DeConter II Address: 628 Reno St.

Date: 1 December '76 City, State: IOWA CITY, IA 52240

Documentation submitted since there always seems to be doubt as to whether a fall shrike is a northern or a loggerhead.

(over)