

Documentation Form

Species Scissor Tailed Flycatcher  
Location Ames, IA  
Habitat Residential district bordering open golf course; powerlines  
Date 26 Aug 1986; 7:10 - 7:20 PM  
 by Erik Munson 3223 West St., Ames, IA 50010  
 no others were able to see it.

Description

A strange call note caught my attention, for it was something I had never heard before. A repeated "cheet," like a pectoral sandpiper but louder, less buzzy; "karreep." The second time it flew overhead, at about 70 ft., I got a better look. The bird resembled a fem. martin in wing strokes, belly color, size. Then I noticed a long, 2-parted tail, flopping around behind the bird. It doubled the bird's length; it appeared thicker at the very tip.

Similar Species + how eliminated

purple martin by tail length, call. Magpie by size, call, flight, behavior

Disagreement on I.D.?  yes  no

Lighting - fine

Distance - 70 ft. directly up, est.

Optical equipment none (next time I'll bring binocs to a friend's cookout)

Previous experience with it and similar species

none with scissor-tails, little with magpies, a lot with martins, which had left Ames 2 weeks before.

References

How long before field notes made? 1 hr. before this form completed? 3 mo.