

Black-necked Stilt

18 May 1996

se. of Ainsworth, Washington Co., IA

*M. Proescholdt, ****

to 19 May; IBL 66:103,67:81,P-0501, Proescholdt '97

Record Number: 96-15

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

*Mark Proescholdt (18, 19 May), Box 65, Liscomb 50148 [4/6/97]

*Jim Fuller (18, 19 May), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

*Thomas H. Kent (19 May), 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

*Jim Dinsmore (19 May), 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014

*Chris Edwards (19 May), 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty 52317

PHOTOGRAPH

T. H. Kent, P-0501 (IBL 67:98)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:103

Records Committee: IBL 67:81

Proescholdt, M. 1997. Black-necked Stilts in Washington County. IBL 67:98.

Photo: Field Notes 50:288, 1996, P-0501

VOTE: 7 A-P



Black-necked Stilt P-0501
se. of Ainsworth, Washington Co.
19 May 1996 T. H. Kent 19-15

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Black-necked Stilt P-0501
se. of Ainsworth, Washington Co.
19 May 1996 T. H. Kent 96-15

> 016 21:00 111111-08RU 576

year bird at Metzger Marsh, OH May 19 (†NW, †ST, CM). Bald Eagle nesting reports included 14 in Indiana, four in Illinois, plus one each in Iowa, Kentucky, and Missouri. The spring Sharp-shinned Hawk flight peaked at Magee Marsh, OH Apr. 18 with 201 birds (VF). The season's N. Goshawk tally was six, which is fewer than in recent spring flights. A fine Red-shouldered Hawk movement was logged at Maumee Bay S.P., OH Mar. 14, when 68 were seen (ES). Swainson's Hawks were not reported from the traditional *Kane*, IL, nesting area, though it is unclear whether anyone specifically looked for them. The Region's only extralimital report involved an ad. light-morph Swainson's that accompanied a raptor movement over Indiana Dunes S.P., May 25 (†KB, †JCD, CF, LH, JMc). Tardy Rough-legged Hawks were more widespread than normal, with singletons in *Marshall*, IA May 30-31 (†M&BP), at Fremont, OH May 15 (VF), *Porter*, IN May 13 (KB), and Illinois Beach S.P., May 11 (RB *et al.*). Easternmost of the 13 Golden Eagle reports came from H.B.S.P., Apr. 12 (†KMe *et al.*). The season Merlin total, a hefty 43, constituted a record high for the Region. The season's most noble raptor was a white-morph Gyrfalcon, discovered in Fountain Grave W.M.A., *Linn*, MO Mar. 9 (†MBe, JR *et al.*). Prairie Falcons were reported in *Sac*, IA Mar. 12 (†RT) and in *Champaign*, IL 28 Apr. (†RCh).

A first county record was established in *Nodaway*, MO, when five Greater Prairie Chickens were found, three of which were booming, Apr. 20-21 (LM, †DE, ph.). An impressive 260 Wild Turkeys were counted in a single *Davies*, MO, flock Mar. 8 (TMc). Yellow Rails were reported only in Illinois, where singles were recorded at L. Clinton Apr. 6 (RCh), Chicago May 10 (m.ob.), and Riverwoods, *Lake*, June 10 (DD). Most surprising was a calling Black Rail at Grand Pass W.M.A., MO, in early May (BJ). Other noteworthy rail observations included a Virginia Rail at Silver Grove, KY Apr. 23 (FR) and 96 Soras at Miami-Whitewater, OH May 5 (*vide* NK). Perhaps the season's most colorful find was a Purple Gallinule at Spring Valley, OH Apr. 12-24 (†ST, CM, m.ob.). A 2nd Purple Gallinule was found dead in *Fulton*, OH Apr. 23 (JPh, *vide* NK). Sandhill Cranes were both abundant and widespread; noteworthy among many reports were 13 in *Allamakee*, IA, and Missouri's first nesting record (which failed) in *Montineau* May 17 (MDd).

Shorebirds

A Snowy Plover at Saylorville Res., IA May 3 (†SD) provided the Region's only

report. Piping Plovers were well represented in the spring flight, with 27 birds scattered across every state except Kentucky. Three Black-necked Stilts, present in a flooded field s.w. of Ainsworth, IA May 18-19, added flavor to the spring Iowa Ornithological Union meeting (†M&BP, RW, †m.ob., ph.). Elsewhere, four were recorded in Illinois, and three in Missouri. Typically, Am. Avocets were widely distributed; peak counts included 12 at Jax.P., Apr. 28 (PC) and 11 at Grover's L., IA May 5 (ET). Willets staged an unusually strong flight, providing records in every state. Noteworthy counts included 44 at Waukegan, IL May 7 (RHu), 43 at Spfld., Apr. 26 (DBo), and 35 at Riverton W.M.A., IA May 3 (B&LP). Whimbrels were quite common in the w. states, with high counts of 13 at S.C.R., May 18 (GG, BF, SA), eight at Riverton W.M.A., IA May 18-19 (†M&BP, MW), and two at Miller Beach, IN May 29-June 1 (JMc, m.ob.). Marbled Godwits were also widespread, with reports from every state except Kentucky. The easternmost reports consisted of two birds at L. Rockwell, OH Apr. 21 (†VW), and two at Conneaut, OH May 8 (†R&SG). The 450 Baird's Sandpipers at Eagle Bluffs W.M.A., MO Apr. 21 (PMc) constituted an all-time high spring tally for the state. An astonishingly early Buff-breasted Sandpiper, carefully examined at Cone Marsh, *Louisa*, IA Mar. 29 (†JF), appears to constitute the Region's first March record. The following Ruffs were reported: one at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., OH Apr. 12-13 (ELu, VF), a female at L. Chautauqua, IL (KR), and a female in *Polk*, IA May 10 (BE). After several discouraging spring flights, phalaropes staged the Region's best migration since 1989. Both Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes were recorded in every state except Kentucky, with astronomical Wilson's counts of 155 at Riverton W.M.A., IA May 7 (BE), 108 in *Holt*, MO May 11 (DE *et al.*), and 88 at Eagle Bluff, MO May 1 (BG). The peak Red-necked count was 21 at Blue L., IA May 2 (JF, TK), but other noteworthy reports included five at the Woodburn sewage ponds in n.e. Indiana May 15-15 (Haw *et al.*), two at Metzger



Black-necked Stilt (one of three present) near Ainsworth, Iowa, May 19, 1996. Photograph/T. H. Kent.

Marsh, OH May 17 (D&JH), and one at Riverlands W.M.A., MO May 11 (BR *et al.*).

Jaegers to Terns

A dark jaeger, apparently an immature, was seen on Carlyle L., IL Mar. 20 (†JVb). Casual just a decade ago, Laughing Gulls are now well established in the Region. This spring Laughing Gulls were logged in all 6 states, with daily counts of three birds in both Illinois and Indiana. The westernmost reports involved adults at Horseshoe L., MO Apr. 29 (MR, DKl) and at Saylorville Res., IA May 10 (†SD). The season's most unusual gull was a leucistic Franklin's Gull at Mound City, MO May 9-11 (DE ph). Other good finds included a breeding-plumaged Little Gull that associated with Bonaparte's Gulls on Blackhawk L., *Sac*, IA Apr. 21-22 (†PE, †JF), and an ad. Black-headed Gull that flew past Michigan City Harbor, IN Apr. 20 (†KB, †JCD, m.ob.). Bonaparte's Gulls peaked on L. Michigan Apr. 24, when 13,100 were counted along the Chicago lakefront (EWa). Mew Gulls have definitely arrived in the Region. Illinois sightings, all adults, included birds at Montrose Beach, Chicago, Mar. 22 and Apr. 3 (†RHu), L. Clinton Mar. 23 (†RCh), and an alternate-plumaged bird on Lake Spfld. on the extraordinary date of May 23 (†DBo). The latter apparently constitutes the Region's first May record. Indiana's 3rd Mew Gull, an adult in alternate plumage, was discovered at Michigan City Harbor Mar. 29 (†JCD, ph.). The only California Gull was an adult at Montrose Beach, Chicago, Apr. 2 (†RHu). Arctic gulls lingered in the Region later than normal, as reflected by a Thayer's Gull at Waukegan, IL May 7 (LB), and imm. Glaucous Gulls at Rainbow Beach, Chicago (SM), and Michigan City Harbor, IN (SB), both May 11. Immature Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen at Alton, IL Feb. 2-Apr. 6 (DKa), at Montrose Beach, Chicago, Mar. 28 (RHu, JPu), Mel Price Dam, MO, through the period until Apr. 6 (*vide* CH), and on L. Michigan off Johnson Beach, IN Apr. 18 (JMc, KB, CF, LH).

Peak counts of the regular migrant terns included 586 Caspians at Lorain, OH Apr. 24 (TL), 2200 Commons at Michigan City Harbor, IN May 18 (LH), 290 Forsters' in Chicago May 4 (JL), and 500 Blacks in n.w. IA May 21 (TK). Additionally, Least Tern numbers were up, with reports from every state except Ohio; counts included 24 in Indiana, >22 in Illinois, ten in Kentucky, five in Iowa, and two in Missouri.

Owls to Shrikes

A Great Gray Owl found injured in Des Moines, IA Mar. 1 died Mar. 3, and was

The good news was that I thought these birds could be Red Knots. The bad news was that my spotting scope was locked in my Jeep in an auto-repair shop 25 miles away! After a nerve-racking stop-and-go stalk down a dike, I was finally able to view the birds from about 30 yards away.

The two birds were larger than adjacent Pectoral Sandpipers, about the same size as Killdeer, but they looked fatter with shorter legs. They had straight, black bills about the same length as their heads. One bird was pale gray above and white below with a pale superciliary line. I couldn't see any subterminal feather markings from this distance with binoculars. The other bird was brownish on the back with no eyeline and a pale rusty "robin-red" below. The bird appeared to be molting to basic plumage as its face was grayish and the belly color was mottled.

Once, as the knots flew briefly, I saw a paler rump on the gray bird and a narrow white wing stripe along the base of the primaries and secondaries. They made calls in flight unlike those that I am familiar with.

Later, I called the Birdline, but no one else got to see the knots. A strong cold front with thunderstorms that night triggered their departure. These were the first Red Knots at Union Slough since one (also molting from alternate plumage) on 31 August 1989, and about the fifteenth fall record from Iowa.

709 North Phillips, Algona, IA 50511

BLACK-NECKED STILTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

MARK PROESCHOLDT

On 18 May 1996, Beth Proescholdt, Russ Widner, and I were heading to the spring I.O.U. meeting at Burlington and watching flooded farm fields for shorebirds. In Washington County, just south of highway 92 along highway 218, we saw a large shorebird in a flooded creek valley. We stopped, and were surprised and delighted to see three Black-necked Stilts in the field.

These large, distinctive, slim-bodied shorebirds were black on the head, back of neck, back, and wings. They were white on the underside of the body—the chin, sides of the neck, belly, and undertail coverts. They had very long, bright pink legs and a long, straight black bill. Two of the stilts had dark brown backs while one had a very black back. The National Geographic field guide states that the females are browner above.

Many people saw them on 19 May while at the spring I.O.U. meeting. According to *Birds in Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore, 1996), this sighting is one of six recent well-substantiated records with five records from the spring and one from the fall.

P. O. Box 65, Liscomb, IA 50148

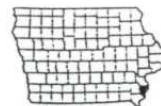


Black-necked Stilt near Ainsworth, 18 May 1996. Photo by Thomas H. Kent

BROWN PELICAN IN DES MOINES COUNTY

JIM FULLER

On 1 November 1996 Chuck Fuller was amazed to see a Brown Pelican fly from below Lock and Dam #18 on the Mississippi River north of Burlington. The only access to this area is from the Illinois side of the river, and I was there shortly after sunrise the morning of 4 November. I immediately located a Brown Pelican close to the Illinois shore just below the lock. During the next 20 minutes, I watched the bird as it drifted downstream about 300-400 yards until it was in the middle of the river. Since the main navigation channel at this location is through the lock along the Illinois shore, most of the river here is considered to be in Iowa.



There were also American White Pelicans in the vicinity and, in comparison, the Brown Pelican appeared to be 20 percent smaller. This was generally a drab, dull brown and gray bird with an enormous bill. The back and wing were a dull brown with light mottling. The back of the neck, head, and crown were also brown. The underparts, including the front of the neck, were a light gray mottled color. From these features I concluded that this was the plumage of a juvenile bird. The neck was very long, and the eye was dark. The light gray bill, which was huge both in width and length, appeared rounded on the end. The bird kept the bill tucked against its breast. The tail was short and brown. I never did see the bird fly, and it was silent during the viewing period.

Brown Pelican is a resident of salt water habitats from the mid-Atlantic to the Gulf states as well as the Pacific coast of California. Vagrancy inland, particularly in the spring, and to Midwestern states is well documented. There are seven previous Iowa records for Brown Pelican, only one of which occurred in the fall, but that October sighting was also from the Mississippi River in Lee County. There are five spring (March-May) records and one summer record from July. All of these sightings were from the southern half of the state.

6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

IN MEMORIAM: PHILIP A. DUMONT

On 12 February 1996, Philip DuMont passed away in Chapel Hill, Carolina. He had been a member of the I.O.U. since 1924 and at the time of his death, had been a member of the organization longer than any other member. Phil was born on 9 July 1903 in Rochester, Minnesota but his family soon moved to Davenport and then Des Moines where he attended high school. He completed a B.S. degree in Biology at Drake University in 1926. In 1927 he joined the American Museum of Natural History in New York City where we worked in the bird department until 1931. During that time he spent 16 months in Madagascar studying birds as part of a museum expedition.

In 1931, he returned to Iowa and completed his manuscript on Birds of Polk County Iowa which was published in 1931. He spent part of 1932 attending the University of California at Berkeley but returned to Iowa that fall and worked on the bird collection at the University of Iowa. That project expanded into a monograph, A revised list of the Birds of Iowa which was published in *University of Iowa Studies in Natural History* (volume 15, number 5, 1933). This is the second complete survey

What species? Black-Necked Stilt How many? 3Location? Washington County - south of #92 about 1/2 mile on #218Type of habitat? Wet areas in field after flooded creek spilled out into fieldsWhen? date(s): May 18 and 19, 1996 time: 2:00 p.m. to 2:10 p.m. - app. on 18th
3:00 p.m. to 3:10 p.m. - app. on 19thWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Beth Proescholdt and Russ Widnerothers before or after you: many observers - Jim Fuller, Tom Kent, Armstrongs,
Ann Johnson, Chuck Fuller, Cal and Bernie Knight, many others

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

These are very distinctive birds. They were large shorebirds that were black on the head, back of neck, back, and wings. And they were white on the underside of the body - chin, sides of neck, belly, undertail coverts. They had very long, bright pink legs. On Sunday we observed (after talking to others before) that two stilts had dark brown backs while one stilt had a very black back. National Geographic states that the females are browner above. They were slim-bodied birds with long straight black bills.

Similar species and how eliminated:

There are no similar species that come to mind.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Mostly sunny, good viewing. 20-25 yards from #218 estimated.
8x30 Binocs.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen in Montana, N. Carolina, and Texas.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geographic guide, R.T. Peterson E. Guide, Robbins' Birds of N. America.

How long before field notes made? were not this form completed? May 22, 1996
made

96-15

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Black-necked Stilt (3)

LOCATION: Flooded farm field along hiway 218, one half mile south of hiway 92 (Washington County).

DATE & TIME: 18 May, 1996 (5:50 PM for less then ten seconds, before they flew. 19 May, 1996 (6:13-6:16 AM).

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHERS: Discovered by Mark and Beth Proescholdt and Russ Widner. Seen by MOB on 19 May.

DESCRIPTION: As I arrived at the location, I spotted three Black-necked Stilts immediately along the west side of hiway 218, within 90 feet. However, within ten seconds they were in the air and flew south, and then west, and I lost them. Early the next morning, I stopped at the location and found three birds in the same location close to the hiway. General appearance was a large, very long-legged, long-necked, and small headed black and white shorebird. The birds were also quite thin. Specifically, the entire upperparts were black, and the underparts were white. This included the underside of the head and neck. The head was small, the eye was dark, but had a small white area above it. The bill was dark, long, thin, and straight, almost needlelike. It was considerably longer than the width of the bird's head. Almost the first feature that I noted was the pink color of the very long legs. The birds were very active, running around and probing the shallow water. No vocalization was heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The only reasonably expected shorebird that could be confused with Stilt is basic-plumaged American Avocet. However, it has thick grey legs, entirely light neck and head, white wing patch, and a very long upcurved bill.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: I was looking toward the south-southwest at 90 feet distance using Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars. Both evening and morning were clear and warm.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have previously seen one Black-necked Stilt in Iowa, but have seen them on numerous occasions in the west and southeast.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: No notes were made until the evening of May 19. No field guide or other reference was consulted. This form was typed on 25 May.

96-15

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Black-necked Stilt; *Number:* 3

Location: 0.2 miles south of Highway 92 on Highway 218, Washington Co., IA

Date: 19 May 1996; *Time:* 8:33 to 9:50 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: Found by Mark and Beth Proescholdt and Russ Widner on 18 May; seen by many.

Habitat and circumstances: flooded fields in broad creek bottomland.

Description of bird: There were three slim, long-legged waders in the far end of the field. They flew to the center of the field and then flew high to the north and returned to a pool of water next to the road. They had long, thin, straight, black bills and long bright pink legs. They were white below and black above, including the entire upper wing surface. The tail was short and white. There was black on the posterior neck that gave the appearance of a black indentation on the neck when it was folded. There was a white spot above and posterior to the eye. The red eye touched this spot. The forehead was white. Two of the birds had a brownish cast to the back; the other was pure black.

Voice: not heard.

Similar species: None. The brown-backed birds were interpreted as females.

Any one have reservations?: no.

Light: sun behind us; *Distance:* 30 yards; *Optics:* 10x binocular, 20x scope, 560mm lens.

Previous experience: seen twice before in Iowa, many times elsewhere.

References before/after viewing: none.

Time of notes: during observation; *Final typing:* 4 days.

96-15

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species Black-necked Stilt **How many?** three
Location? just south of Ainsworth, Washington County
Type of habitat? flooded field from river out of banks
When? date(s): 19 May 1996 **Time:** . 9 a.m. for about 15 minutes
Who? your name and address Jim Dinsmore
4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, 50014
Others with you Tom Kent, Ann Johnson, Francis Moore, Hank
Zaletel
Others before or after you
Beth and Mark Proescholdt, Jim Fuller

Describe the bird(s)

medium sized shorebird with extremely long, spindly, pink legs
bill very long, sharp pointed, and black
body largely black about and white below
back, back of neck and top of head black, also a patch of black
extending through eye
tail, underside of body, front and sides of neck and front half of head
all white
tail seen clearly when one of the birds flew

Similar species and how eliminated:

Species is unmistakable

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?

No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical
equipment: birds perhaps 50 yards away, good light from behind me,
birds were in clear open field and allowed good view

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: Have had
extensive experience with this species in Florida. Also have seen it
numerous times elsewhere.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

none

How long before field notes made? made in the field
this form completed? next day-24 hours later

96-15

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What Species? Black-necked Stilt

How many? 3

Location? Along Highway 218 south of Ainsworth in Washington Co.

Type of Habitat? Flooded field.

When? May 19, 1996, 2:35 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

Who? Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

Others with you: Richard Tetrault, Pete Peterson.

Others before or after you:

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.

Medium-size shorebird. Very slender with long neck and very long legs. Bill long, thin, straight, and black. Eye dark. Area around eye white. Crown, nape, back of neck, shoulder patch black. Back and upperside of wings brownish-black. Throat, breast, belly white. Legs pink.

The birds were foraging in a muddy field. No vocalizations were heard.

Similar species; how eliminated: Plumage is distinctive.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.

Viewing conditions: Cloudy; viewed 40 - 100 yards away with 8 x 40 binoculars and 15x-45x telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Several previous observations.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None.

How long before field notes made? Forty minutes.

How long before this form completed? Forty minutes.