

Black-necked Stilt

2 Jun 1984

Union Slough NWR, Kossuth Co., IA

*#F. Moore, *R. Myers, #Guthrie

P-0143, P-0144, IBL 54:82; 55:57

Record Number: 84-19

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Robert K. Myers

Francis L. Moore

PHOTOGRAPHS

John Guthrie, 1 June, P-0144 (IBL 55:57)

Francis Moore, 2 June (P-0143)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:82

Records Committee: IBL 55:57

Photograph: IBL 55:57 (P-0144)

VOTE: 1-II, 6-III

III, Finally.

III, No doc. from observer(s) who discovered the birds?

III, Yes.

III, Well described, easy to identify species. How about a photo?

REVOTE at meeting 8 Sep 1984 with photos available: 6-I-P (1 absent)

REPORT OF THE I.O.U. RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1984

Thomas H. Kent
211 Richards St.
Iowa City, IA 52240

W. Ross Silcock
Box 300
Tabor, IA 51653

The Records Committee reviewed 40 records of birds seen in 1984 and 2 old records. Of the 1984 records, 31 were accepted and 9 were not. Of the latter, 1 sighting was in Illinois (Red Knot), 1 was from a captive population (Trumpeter Swan), and 7 were not convincing beyond reasonable doubt. It should be noted that none of the 1984 records were considered to be incorrectly identified. All of the 1984 records will be listed below.

One of the old records was not convincing to the Committee. The other was a belated documentation by a different observer of a previously rejected report of a Mississippi Kite at Cardinal Marsh on 29 May 1978. Based on the additional evidence, the record was accepted. This species thus moves from extirpated to accidental on the state list.

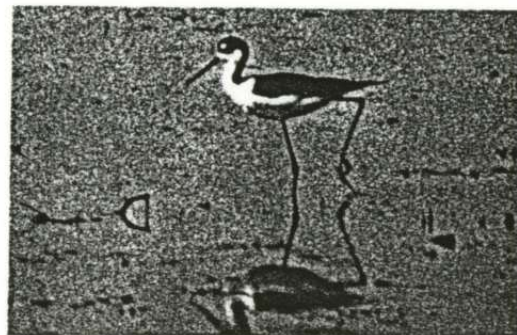
The term of James J. Dinsmore expired and will be filled by Robert K. Myers. Darwin Koenig asked to be relieved from the committee and Dinsmore was appointed to complete Koenig's unexpired term. Current committee members and the year their terms expire are: Dinsmore (1986), Joseph P. Schaufenbuel (1987), Barbara L. Wilson (1988), Peter C. Petersen (1989), W. Ross Silcock (1990), Myers (1991), and Thomas H. Kent, Secretary (appointed by other members).

The committee prepared a draft of new by-laws to conform with the new constitution of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. This will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

The committee researched and discussed the recurring problem of determining whether a bird is in Iowa or an adjacent state. A summary of the findings is included as a separate report.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

- Red-throated Loon:** 2-20 Apr 1984, Cedar Lake (Bendorf, IBL 54:52-54). A cooperative bird was seen by many and photographed for the 3rd acceptable state record.
- White-faced Ibis:** 28 Apr 1984, Otter Creek Marsh (IBL 54:42) and 1 May 1984, North Twin Lake (IBL 54:42). These are the 7th and 8th accepted records for this species.
- Bean Goose:** 29 Dec 1984 into Jan 1985, DeSoto NWR (IBL 55:12). An eastern race bird of this Eurasian species is unprecedented for our area. There is only one West Coast record outside of Alaska. The rarity of this race in captivity, the lack of feather wear of a captive bird, and recent vagrancy of other Siberian species was convincing to all but one of the committee members.
- Eurasian Wigeon:** 15-17 Apr 1984, Sweet Marsh (Moore and Myers, IBL 54:54). A single bird seen by many observers is the 2nd well-documented record for the state.
- Black Scoter:** 26-29 Oct 1984, LeClaire (Bendorf, IBL 55:31-32). Six birds were seen on the main channel of the Mississippi River for the 11th documented record of this species.
- Barrow's Goldeneye:** 17 Mar-6 Apr 1984, Forney Lake (Silcock, IBL 54:75-77). A cooperative male was photographed for the first definite state record.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** 22 Sep 1984, Liscomb (IBL 54:111). An individual of this difficult-to-identify, casual species was well described. The bird was wearing a red patagial tag that was attached in either North or South Dakota.
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** 2 Jan 1984, Osceola Co. (Spengler IBL 54:21). A single bird was 5 counties away from the site of 1980 and 1982 introductions (Manona Co.) and may have been a winter visitor from Minnesota.



Black-necked Stilt
June 1, 1984
Union Slough NWR
John Guthrie photo

- Black-necked Stilt:** 1-2 Jun 1984, Union Slough NWR (IBL 54:82). A pair was photographed for the first definite state record. There are 8 old undocumented reports.
- Whimbrel:** 12-13 May 1984, Hendrickson Marsh (IBL 54:45,82). This is the 15th state record.
- Red Knot:** 15 Sep 1984, Hendrickson Marsh and 16-27 Sep 1984, Coralville Reservoir (IBL 54:113). These birds, both in basic plumage, represent the 4th and 5th documented records for the state.
- Ruff:** 1 Sep 1984, Hendrickson Marsh (IBL 54:114). This is only the 3rd Iowa record for this Eurasian species, which is apparently establishing itself in North America.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** 1-5 Dec 1984, Red Rock Reservoir (Kent and Bowles, IBL 55:21-22). A bird photographed below the dam is the first Iowa record for this species, which is increasing in numbers and range in North America.
- Black-legged Kittiwake:** 21-22 Nov 1984, Saylorville Reservoir (IBL 54:115). An immature bird provided the 6th well-documented Iowa record.
- Least Tern:** 19 May 1984, Cone Marsh (IBL 54:46). The dark outer primaries provided an important field mark for this briefly observed bird that occurred at an uncommon location.
- Selasphorus sp.:** 25 Sep-2 Oct 1984, Chester (Moore, Myers, and Kent, IBL 54:104-106). An immature male hummingbird, probably a Rufous, was photographed at a feeder. Based on the pictures and descriptions, the bird could not be definitely distinguished from the much more unlikely Allen's Hummingbird. Measurements and close examination of tail feathers after netting would have allowed specific identification. This is the first state record for this genus.
- Rock Wren:** 21 May 1984, near Stone Park, (Kent and Silcock, IBL 54:37-38). This is only the 3rd report since 1910 and the first photographed for the state.
- Mountain Bluebird:** 22 Dec 1984, near Lamoni (Livingston, IBL 55:19-20). A wintering male was seen by many and photographed for 4th state record.
- Solitary Vireo:** 20 Dec 1984, near Lost Nation (IBL 55:12). A Christmas Count bird is the latest on record by seven weeks.
- Common Yellowthroat:** 20 Dec 1984, near Keokuk (IBL 55:29). Iowa's first winter record of this species was long overdue.
- Western Tanager:** 15 May 1984, near Sabula (IBL 54:86). Iowa's 6th record of this western species came from the most easterly point in the state.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: BLACK-NECKED STILT

DATE SEEN: June 2, 1984

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Union Slough NWR, Kossuth County

OBSERVERS: Francis Moore, Bob Myers

DATE OF REVIEW: 1984

METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation by mail to Records Committee; check of photo at meeting.

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: I-P

COMMENTS:

Availability of photos left no doubt in the Committee's mind as to the accuracy of the identification of this easy-to-identify species.
This appears to be the first confirmed record for this species in Iowa, although it has reported several times in the past without any accompanying description.

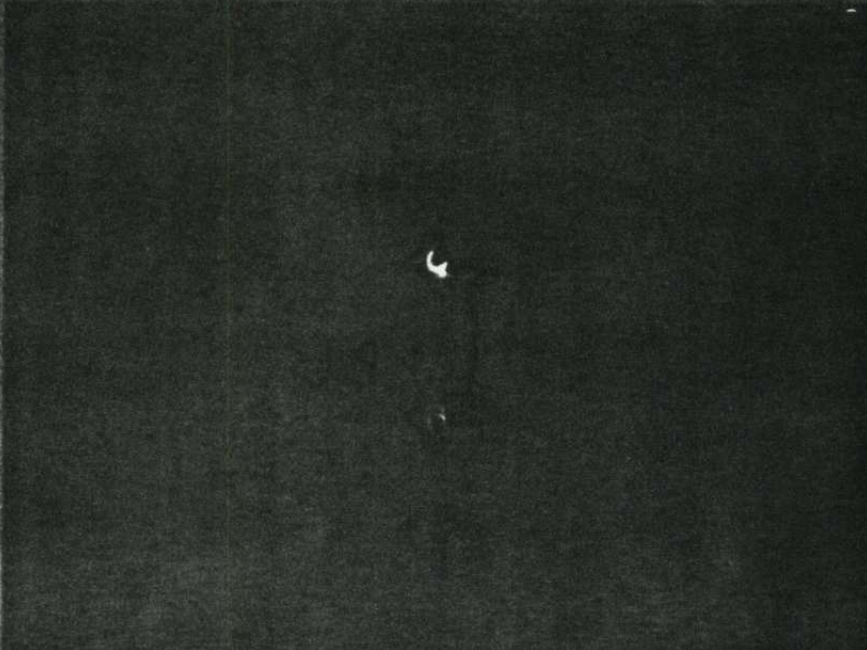
The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.



Black-necked Stilt 06/01/1984
Union Sl. NWR, Kossuth Co.
photo by John Guthrie
1 print
sent by J. Dinsmore

Use this photo. Enlarge +
copy to show bird.
Return to

T.H. KENT
211 RICHARDS ST.
IOWA CITY, IA 52240

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

84-19

1. Species Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) 2. Number 2
 3. Location Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge - Kossuth County, Iowa
 4. Date: June 2, 1984 5. Time Bird Seen: 7:58 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. to 8:45 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):

1. Very long legged thin shorebird - about as tall as Greater yellowlegs but much thinner.
2. Legs were very long + thin and red in color. - feet were red also.
3. Bill was black and fairly long ($\frac{1}{2}$ x length of head) - very sharply pointed
4. Back, wings, back of neck and most of head was black or at least very dark
5. Rump, tail, and under side (breast, belly, neck, and front of face in front of eye) was white.
6. Small area around eye was also white.
7. Bird that flew within 30' of me had jet black back + wings
8. Neck was fairly long - maybe $\frac{1}{3}$ length of body not including legs
9. Legs were almost as long as rest of body.
10. As indicated below we observed mating between the two birds, so we must have had both sexes but I couldn't discern a browner color of the ♀ as stated in guides.

7. Description of voice, if heard: A somewhat nasal "kek-kek" given in flight.
 8. Description of behavior: The birds were actively feeding - probing Type. They also mated while we were observing and displayed a courting display by both holding their heads straight up and their bills together and walking rapidly.
 9. Habitat - general: large cattail marsh.
 specific: shallow muddy pool on north edge of Refuge.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
 Nothing really is similar. American Avocet has upturned bill and shows much white in wings.

11. Distance (how measured)?
 1st sighting = 35 yd. - closest as they flew over = 30 feet
 2nd. " = 100 yd. - eye est.
12. Optical equipment: 7x35 + 10x40 binocs, Spotting scopes at 20, 25, 33 + 56 power

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
 Clear day - bright - It was early and sun was low + to left of bird and was no problem to viewing, very excellent viewing conditions.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
 None - but none needed.

15. Other observers: Francis Moore + Russ Hays with me.
 Several others the day before (June 1, 1984)

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: All above.

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
 No books were needed for this easy I.D.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 15 hours

Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: 1236 Sylvia Ave.

Date: June 2, 1984 City, State: Waterloo, Iowa 50701

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa 84-19

What species? Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) How many? 2 (1♂ + 1♀)Location? Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Kossuth County, IAType of habitat? Open edge marsh, emergent cattail areaWhen? date(s): June 2, 1984 time: 8:30 am 8:45 am second time
7:58 am to 8:00 am 1st timeWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Bob Myers, Russell Haysothers before or after you: Some before; I do not know who they are

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.

We arrived at the Northeast corner of Union Slough NWR. along County Rd. A 40 and immediately saw the two Black-necked Stilts that we had heard was there. They were walking and feeding in a low water, marshy, muddy area near some emerging cattail. When we first saw them they were about 35 yards away with Sun shining on them; we were facing toward the South from the road bed. We watched them for about two minutes before they took flight and flew to the South. We then drove to the next East-West road 1 mile South of A40 (after looking at other shorebirds). We found the two birds again on the South side of the gravel road. This time we watched them for about 15 minutes using binoculars, telescopes and I also took about 15 photos of them through my 1000mm C90 Celestron. The birds had extremely long red legs. The bills were black and about 1 1/2 times as long as the head. The bill was needle-like very petite looking. The top of the head was black. The back of the neck was black, the blackness extending into the breast a little ways in front of the bend of the wings. The back was black as well as the upper and lower surfaces of the wings. The birds had a large white splotch above ~~the~~ the eye and a small white line below the eye inside the black face. The front of the face, front of the neck, breast, belly and under coverts were white. The upper tail coverts were white, this whiteness extended about half way up the back. The tail appeared white also.

(continued on back.)

Similar species and how eliminated: American Avocet is the only species in North America that even remotely looks like the Black-necked Stilt. The American Avocet has a long recurved bill, these birds did not. Avocet has large patches of white in wings when in flight, these birds did not. Neck was not rusty color as in Avocet. Avocet's head lacks black as these birds had.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Sunny, we were facing South watching birds with full sun on them. Closest distance was about 30 to 40 feet, other viewing distances were at approx. 35 yards and 100 yards. Viewed using 10x40 Leitz binoculars, 25x60 Spacemaster and 33x and 55x C90 Celestron telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen one Black-necked Stilt at Crane Island, Portsmouth, Virginia on May 8, 1977. Have seen many American Avocet.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? 9 hours this form completed? 9 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

The eye was black. I did not notice any color difference between the two birds. As we watched the two birds at the second location the male began doing a little dance next to the female while raising and lowering his head. He then got up on her back and copulated with her. They then raised their heads almost straight up and walked side by side for 5 to 10 steps. Before and after this behavior they were feeding actively by running quite fast and agilely about catching insects on the emerging vegetation. They moved surprisingly fast for that long legged a bird. After watching the two birds for about 15 minutes from approximately 100 yards away they flew toward us and passed directly overhead at about 30 or 40 feet. They flew to the North. We went and checked the Southern portion of the slough at that time. We then returned to A40 and did not see either birds. We returned to the road one mile South of A40 again but did not see them either at about 12:00 noon. We figured that they were somewhere between the two roads on one of the many potholes that we could see between the two roads. We then left for home.