

Long-billed Curlew
1867

western, IA

J. A. Allen

Allen 1868, Anderson 1907

Record Number: 93-DG
Classification: NA

REFERENCES

Allen, J.A. 1868. Notes on birds observed in western Iowa in the months of July, August and September ... Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History 1:488-502.

Allen 1870

Anderson 1907

VOTE: 2 A-D, 3 NA

A-D, This species is on the list of 108 species that Allen said he saw in July-September in Iowa. His statement about it seems conjectural, but he could see no other curlew in summer and his comment about breeding likely means he saw it but did not find a nest or young. I base my vote on ease of identification, lack of any other curlews in summer, and the fact that he clearly listed the species that he saw himself. /thk

NA, No evidence in terms of actual date, location, or description. /ric

A-D, Allen was founder of A.O.U. and one of leading ornithologists of the time. /jjd

NA, See above comments. I am nervous when there is no evidence available -- we are basing decision on knowledge about observer and likelihood -- many records voted NA could be A-D if we are consistent. To judge these records on case-by-case basis NA is accurate, but if concerned about the species, A-D may be OK, as most early evidence is anecdotal (unless a specimen was taken) but probably accurate unless shown to be otherwise. /wrs

Allen, J. A. 1870. Catalogue of the birds of Iowa, in White, C. A. Report on the Geological Survey of the State of Iowa. p 426.

- 214. *Numenius longirostris*, Wils—Long-billed Curlew.

95. *Numenius longirostris* Wils. Long-billed Curlew. Common in spring, and doubtless breeds about the marshes.

Anderson 1907
pp 225-226

116. (264). *Numenius longirostris* Wils. Long-billed Curlew.

□ The Long-billed Curlew is the largest of our species of *Limicola* and is known by its sickle-shaped bill, four to eight inches long. It was formerly a common summer resident in Iowa, but now appears to be only a migrant, having disappeared from its former summer haunts with the breaking up of the original prairie sod.

Thomas Say mentions the arrival of the Long-billed Curlew at Engineers' Cantonment April 1, 1820 (Long's Exp., i, 266-270).

J. A. Allen stated that it was common in spring in western Iowa, and doubtless bred about the marshes (Mem. Bost. Soc., i, 1868, 501). T. M. Trippe says "a few seen in spring in Decatur county, where I was informed that formerly it bred quite commonly" (Proc. Bost. Soc., xv, 1872, 241). In 1884 the species passed through central Iowa April 15, and in 1885, from April 10 to 15, it was noted at Emmetsburg, Iowa, Heron Lake, Minn., etc., (Cooke, Bird Migr. in Miss. Val., 1884-85, 97-8). Keyes and Williams give it as "migratory, rather common. A few remain during the summer and nest on the open prairies" (Birds of Iowa, 1889, 123).

In early May, in the '80's, J. W. Preston found the species nesting in northern Iowa. He says "Lying away to the west were the dim flats of Kossuth county. Not a sound, no shrubs for sighing winds, the wheels rolled muffled in the prairie grass. At one point, where the ground lay more rolling and dryer, were many Long-billed Curlews guarding their nests, and hovering near the wagon, uttering that peculiar mellow whistle so characteristic of the wild free prairie. Soon I was delighted to see an old Curlew flutter from the horses' feet, leaving the four speckled eggs exposed. Further on a mother Curlew led her mottled downy chicks from danger." ("Some Prairie Birds," O. & O., xviii, 1893, 82).

Dr. Trostler reports the Long-billed Curlew as a common migrant in Pottawattamie and Mills counties. A. I. Johnson reports it as a migrant in Sioux county, northwestern Iowa, saying: "I do not know of its nesting since I came to the state in 1890. Have only known of them during migration, and not very many at that." All others who reported list the species as a rare migrant.