

Greater Prairie-Chicken Record Number: 94-01
6 Jan 1994 Classification: A-P
Cherokee, Cherokee Co., IA
*Bierman, *Brewer, *Hendrickson, *Kent
*Poggensee, *Fuller, to 7 Apr; P-0416, P-0417, Bierman 1994, IBL 64:48

DOCUMENTATIONS

Dick Bierman (6 Jan), 901 Harris, Cherokee [19 Aug 1994]
Marion M. Brewer (13 Jan), 1537 560th St., Cherokee 51012 [19 Aug 1994]
Dennis Hendrickson (14 Jan), 1371 450th Ave., Estherville
Don Poggensee (19 Feb), RR #1, Ida Grove 51445 [19 Aug 1994]
Jim Fuller (24 Feb), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240
Thomas H. Kent (24 Feb), 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

PHOTOGRAPHS

Don Poggensee, P-0416
Thomas H. Kent, P-0417

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 64:48; 64:74
Records Committee: IBL 65:81
Photograph: IBL 64(2) cover, P-0416; Field Notes 48:213, 1995, P-0417
Bierman, D. 1994. Greater Prairie-Chicken in Cherokee County. IBL 64:115.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Dark barring is clear in photos. Because of location, and this species' ability to move around fair distances, it was no doubt a wild bird from a near-by lek.

A-P, Primary question is whether bird is wild. No discussion by documentors except Bierman. I believe bird was wild -- expected time and location in state for winter visitor from breeding range n or nw of Iowa.

5-Jan. 9 (FH, NK *et al.*). Scattered Ross' Geese were reported in the w. states; the most noteworthy was a rare blue-morph at Smithville, MO Jan. 9 (*fide* BJ). The season's only Brants were seen at Clinton L., IL Jan. 9 (MDe, †R Ch) and in Chicago's Jackson Park Feb. 21-22 (DL, PC).

Throughout the last two-thirds of the season ice reduced puddle duck habitat across most of the Region. Among the few noteworthy reports was a possibly injured Blue-winged Teal at Clinton L., IL Dec. 19 (†RCh) and an Am. Wigeon at Rathbun Res., IA Jan. 16 (RCu). An impressive number of Greater Scaup wintered on s. Lake Michigan. Some 4400 were counted along the Evanston-Chicago lakefront Dec. 2 (LB), and an estimated 2000 were seen off the marina at Hammond, IN Jan. 2 (KB, SB, LH). In addition, a count of 40 Greaters at L. Jacomo, MO Dec. 2 (CH, TBk), was excellent for that location. An imm. ♂ King Eider at the Blackhawk Forest Preserve, Kane, IL Jan. 2-4 (†RN, †AH, †JM, ph.), generated excitement among Chicago-area birders. Harlequin Ducks were scarce; the only report consisted of a female that lingered at Lake Spfld. Jan. 16+ (†DBo). Once again Oldsquaws turned up at numerous inland locations; peak counts included four birds at Lock & Dam #13, Whiteside, IL Dec. 22 (KMc) and four on the Clinton, IA CBC Dec. 22. Inland scoters were also scattered across the Region. Noteworthy were two Black Scoter reports at Cedar L., IA Dec. 1-7 (MPt, m.ob.). Surf Scoters wandered SW to Binder L. in Jefferson City, MO, where three females were seen Dec. 4 (KP). White-wingeds were the most widespread, with small numbers appearing in every state.

Vultures to Shorebirds

Sizeable Black Vulture flocks were confined to traditional sites in Kentucky, where 80 were reported Dec. 18 at Ghent and 56 at East Bend Jan. 1 (LMc). Farther east, a Black Vulture in Hueston Woods S.P., Preble, OH Jan. 8 was unexpected (DDt). Turkey Vultures ranged farther north than usual in Indiana, establishing winter records across the n. tier of counties. An Osprey was in Carroll, IL Dec. 22 (PP, DM) and another wintered near the fish hatchery at Table Rock Res., MO (Lri). Despite extensive ice cover, wintering Bald Eagle populations remained strong across the Region; mid-winter eagle surveys produced 111 in Indiana (*fide* JCs) and 2054 in Missouri (*fide* BJ). The largest among several impressive N. Harrier concentrations consisted of 59 counted in Jasper, IL Dec. 27 (TE). In addition, 42 harriers were seen Dec. 30 in extreme n. Jasper, MO (MRo) and 35 were found in the strip-

mine areas of Ohio and Muhlenberg, KY Dec. 11 (BBC). Some 30 N. Goshawks were counted in 5 states, suggesting a modest winter invasion. Rough-legged Hawks were unevenly distributed; few birds were reported in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, but good numbers appeared in Missouri and a fine count of 12 was made at Ottawa N.W.R., OH Feb. 6 (EP). Mid-winter eagle surveys yielded four Golden Eagles in Indiana (*fide* JCs) and ten in Missouri (*fide* BJ). Merlin numbers remained above normal throughout the Region. This winter's 14 reports were distributed across all 6 states. Most noteworthy were four Merlins that wintered at Bath, Summit, OH (NI, LK, ph.). Winter Prairie Falcons reports are also increasing, especially e. of the Mississippi R. In addition to expected observations from the w. states, the Ohio, KY bird returned for the 6th consecutive year (*fide* ASm) and another Prairie Falcon was documented at Wolf L., Chicago Dec. 5 (WM).

The Iowa Ruffed Grouse population fared poorly; only one was reported on that state's CBCs (*fide* RS). A ♂ Greater Prairie-Chicken was at the airport in Cherokee, IA Jan. 4+ (†DBi, †TK, ph., †m.ob.); this is the 2nd consecutive year in which singletons have appeared in n.w. Iowa. In addition, more than 100 Greater Prairie-Chickens, with 85 in one flock, were flushed from the Taberville Prairie Conservation Area, MO Feb. 27 (KZ, MRo). A road-kill King



Numbers of wintering Merlins in the region seem to be increasing. Most notable this season were four that wintered at Bath, Ohio, where this one was photographed February 27, 1994. Photograph/Larry Rosche.

Rail, found in Jasper, IL Jan. 19 (TE), provided one of very few winter records for that state. The Region's only Virginia Rail reports also came from Illinois, where two were seen in Will Dec. 18 (JM) and two in Jackson Jan. 18 (CS, TF). Most unexpected were two Com. Moorhens discovered at Wolf L. on Chicago's s. side Jan. 2 (MDa, FD). Good numbers of migrant Sandhill Cranes were seen in w. Ohio, with 87 in Hamilton, Dec. 11 (*fide* NK) and 115 at Ottawa N.W.R., Feb. 6 (EP). An intrepid Ruddy Turnstone tarried at Headlands



Not your typical vagrant, but a species known to wander somewhat in winter, this Greater Prairie-Chicken put in a rare appearance in Cherokee County, northwestern Iowa, in January and February 1994. Photograph/Tom Kent.

Beach S.P., OH Dec. 4-26 (RHa, LRo). Other lingering shorebirds included three Least Sandpipers in Alex, IL Dec. 21 (VKI). The Region's only Purple Sandpiper was reported at Edgewater S.P., OH Dec. 31 (RHa, LRo).

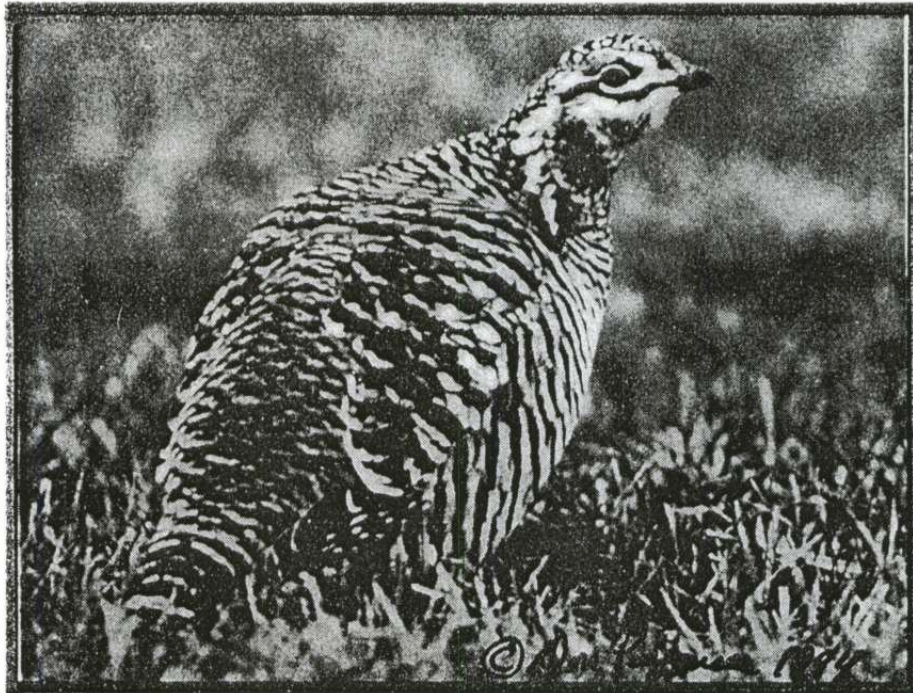
Gulls

A breeding-plumaged Franklin's Gull was at Saylorville Res., IA Dec. 21 (SD) and six early migrants arrived at Burlington, IA Feb. 17 (CFu). The Region's only Little Gulls were seen along Ohio's lakefront: singles at Headlands Beach S.P., Dec. 5 (Lro, RHa) and Eastlake Dec. 21-23 (KM, CH, RHn). The peak Bonaparte's Gull count was 6000 at Headlands Beach S.P., OH Dec. 5 (Lro, RHa). This winter Iowa gullwatchers were treated to two Mew Gulls; a first-year bird was at Red Rock Res., Dec. 19 (†AJ, †RWi, †SF) and an adult was seen at Saylorville Res. the following day (†SD, SG, E&EA). In addition, an ad. Mew Gull was found at Waukegan Harbor, IL Feb. 1 (†DDz). An ad. California Gull, identified at Avon L., OH Feb. 27 (†Lro, †JDu, m.ob.), showed field characters suggesting the large interior race *albertaensis* (*fide* JDu). A second ad. California Gull was seen in Madison, IL Jan 6 (†JVB). Following the pattern established in recent years, Thayer's Gulls wandered far from the Great Lakes, providing records for every state except Kentucky. Iceland Gulls were restricted to 2 states; 15 were reported in Illinois and nine in Ohio. Surprisingly, most of these birds were seen at inland sites. A majority of the Illinois Icelanders were seen away from L. Michigan, and in Ohio inland birds were seen at Garfield Heights Jan. 12 (RHn) and in Cuyahoga Feb. 13 (ES). The expansion of Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued across the Region. Lessers, mostly adults, were reported in every state except Kentucky, with eight in Illinois, three in Indiana, two in Iowa, one in Missouri, and at least eight in Ohio. Glaucous Gulls were exceptionally

94-01

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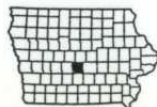


IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

FIRST-WINTER CALIFORNIA GULL AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

RANDY PINKSTON

In the early afternoon on 6 December 1993, I was scanning through a distant flock of Ring-billed Gulls above the Saylorville Reservoir dam, Polk County. I was using my Zeiss 10 x 40 binocular and a Bausch & Lomb 30x telescope. My attention was drawn to a dark brown immature gull on the near side of the flock. On the water it seemed no larger than nearby Ring-billed Gulls. Its bill was distinctly bicolored: pinkish at the base, black at the tip. The pale bill base blended with whitish feathering at the front of the face. The remainder of the head and back were a rich chocolate-brown, indeed the darkest parts of the bird except for the black flight feathers and tail. I noticed a dark smudge around the eye at some angles. A pale patch was noted on the nape when it lowered its bill or when the wind blew from behind. The tertials were distinctly bicolored: basal two-thirds solid dark brown, distal third whitish. The wing coverts were paler than the rest of the upperparts and mottled with brown bars parallel to the feather shafts. The underparts were also a paler mottled brown.



In flight, the gull was easily picked out among others by its overall dark brown appearance. Its size was intermediate between Ring-billed and Herring gulls. Proportionately, its body was more slender and its wings longer when compared to Herring Gull. The underwing was entirely dark. The upperwing displayed two dark bars across the secondaries and greater wing coverts.

In comparison to several first-winter Herring Gulls observed that day, this gull's smaller size, darker head and neck relative to the underparts, and bicolored bill were consistent distinguishing characters. I suspected it might be a California Gull, and I reported it to the Iowa Bird Line.

Thirteen days later on the Saylorville Reservoir Christmas Bird Count, Stephen J. Dinsmore identified a first-winter California Gull (presumably the same individual) at Lakeview Recreation Area. Steve's description matches mine, and he noted the following additional distinguishing characters compared to nearby Herring Gulls: lack of a pale "window" at the base of the primaries, a slender bill with no pronounced gonyx, and wing coverts "neatly" barred with dark brown. Steve also noted a dark eye, pink legs, and noticeably pale rump and vent.

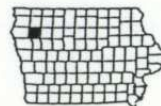
This is the fifth accepted record of California Gull for Iowa, and the second record for Saylorville Reservoir. The first state record was an adult at Credit Island in Scott County on 23-24 November 1989 (Petersen, *Iowa Bird Life* 61:121-122, 1991). The second and third state records occurred in fall 1990. An adult, possibly two, were observed at Saylorville Reservoir in September-October (Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 62:24-25, 1992), and a first-winter bird was present at Coralville Reservoir, Johnson County, on 27-28 October that year (Kent, *Iowa Bird Life* 61:123-124, 1991). The fourth Iowa record was an adult at Carter Lake, Pottawattamie County, on 21-23 November 1993 (Bray, *Iowa Bird Life* 64:82-83, 1994).

12 Hillcrest Dr., Salado, TX 76571-9576

GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

DICK BIERMAN

On 4 January 1994, I was driving into Cherokee from the south on U. S. highway 59. It was mid afternoon on a cold day. As I passed the airport I saw a tan-to-brown, large, chunky, short-tailed bird fly up from the shoulder of the road and land about 100 feet away on top of a pile of pushed-up snow. My initial thought was that it could not be a hen pheasant because of the plumpness of the bird and the short tail. A Gray Partridge was eliminated as this bird was much too large.



I pulled into an area where I could get a good look at the bird from about 50 feet away. Using my 7x35 binoculars that I had in my vehicle, I was able to see a heavily barred breast, a yellowish-orange comb over the eye, and feathered tarsi. I took a couple of pictures of the bird and decided to flush it to get a better look at the tail. When the bird flushed, it fanned its tail as it landed about another 50 feet away and showed a dark-brown color on the upper side of the tail. Having seen numerous Sharp-tailed Grouse while on many deer hunts in Wyoming, I was certain that I had a prairie chicken in front of me, but which one?

After consulting several bird guides, I was convinced that I had a male Greater Prairie-Chicken. The Lesser Prairie-Chicken is paler in color and not as boldly marked. The feathers were in excellent condition and showed no wear on the tail or wings. Also, there were no bands on either leg. This further convinced me that I had a wild bird, not an escaped or released bird. I contacted the only exotic animal owners in the area, and they said that they had never had any prairie chickens in their possession.

Over the next few weeks several birders were able to see, photograph, and confirm my sighting. I last saw the bird on 5 April in very suitable habitat four miles south of Cherokee. I also have had a recent report of it being sighted seven miles south of Cherokee on 5 August.

This was my first sighting of this species, the first recent sighting for Cherokee County, and one of only ten or so for the state since 1960.

901 Harris, Cherokee, IA 51012-1546

GYRFALCON IN NORTHWESTERN IOWA

ROSS SILCOCK

The Gyrfalcon is one of Iowa's rarest birds, and so a sighting of one at Kettleton Hogsback Waterfowl Production Area in Dickinson County on 25 September 1993 generated considerable excitement amongst those observers lucky enough to be present.



Around 3:30 p.m. on a clear, sunny day, a group of I.O.U. birders including Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, John Cecil, Jane Clark, Maridel Jackson, Tim Schantz, Jim Sinclair, and I happened to congregate at the Kettleton Hogsback ponds. To improve our viewing conditions, we were at the northwestern corner of the area, on the gravel road. Soon, Tim Schantz noticed a falcon flying into the area from the southwest. His first thought was that it was a Peregrine Falcon, but it soon



Greater Prairie-Chicke P-0417
Cherokee, Cherokee Co., IA
24 Feb 1994 T. H. Kent

Greater Prairie-Chicke P-0416
Cherokee, Cherokee Co., IA
Feb 1994 Don Poggensee

Greater Prairie-Chicke P-0416
Cherokee, Cherokee Co., IA
Feb 1994 Don Poggensee

What species? Greater Prairie Chicken How many? 1Location? Cherokee AirportType of habitat? Open, grassy, few weed patchesWhen? date(s): Jan. 6 1994 time: 2:30 PM to 2:45 PMWho? your name and address: Dick Bierman 901 Harris Cherokee IAothers with you: Jeff Brown, Jerry Fifieldothers before or after you: None

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.

The bird was on the shoulder of the road and flew to a snow pile. It was plump, large and had a short tail.

I crept up to within 15 yards of it. It was heavily barred on the breast & belly. It had elongated dark neck feathers. The lower legs were feathered to the ankle. The head had a buffy tint to it and the yellowish eye comb was noticeable at close range. I flushed it to get a better look at the tail. It was dark, not barred. The feathers were in good condition. There were no leg bands.

I left and called others. We returned in 30 minutes and could not find it.

I am sure it was a wild bird from the feather condition.

Also, I think it is a male. The barred breast & belly was too bold to be a lesser prairie chicken.

* seen by others until 2:26 so far.

Similar species and how eliminated: Hen Pheasant, Sharp-tailed grouse. They have longer pointed tails. Gray Partridge has a redish tail and is smaller.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Sunny. 15 yards. 10x42 ELITES.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I've seen many sharp-tails in South Dakota.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geo. field guide.

How long before field notes made? during sighting this form completed? 1 hour

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

What species? Greater Prairie Chickens How many? 1Location? S Edge of city of Cherokee - on Hwy 59Type of habitat? 60 Fair Parking lotWhen? date(s): 1-13-94 time: 1:36 to 2:39Who? your name and address: MR MARION M BREWER - 1537-560TH ST.
CHEROKEE IA 51012others with you: DICK + HELEN BIANCHI

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

Smaller than a Hen Pheasant, Brown
Plumage, Heavy barred belly, Bared
Back + Wings - Dark short rounded tail
& neck feathers. Was seen scratching
for food under a tree.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Pheasant - Short tail Heavy barring + Neck feathers

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Sunny - Cold - 10°, Viewed with spotting scope
at estimated 60 yards

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Dick - National Geographic

How long before field notes made? 1 hour this form completed? 24 hours

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

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

94-01

What species? Greater Prairie Chicken How many? 1

Location? Cherokee

Type of Habitat? Savannah

When? date(s): January 14, 1994 time: 10 AM to 10:30 AM ?

Who? your name and address: Dennis Henrickson 1371 450th Avenue Estherville

Others with you: Dick Bierman

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.

- (1) white under tail region (very visible when digging in snow)
 - (2) Tail showed black, short and squarish to round-like
 - (3) blackish neck feathers visible
 - (4) very plump looking bird
 - (5) short bill
 - (6) brown back
 - (7) ventral barring most striking feature
- the bird dug a resting hole in the snow and for a while only his head was visible

Similar species; how eliminated:

Lesser Prairie Chicken - this bird had very dark barring ventrally

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

" Good sunlight behind me, (counted ^{70 feet} fence posts) } 7x50 Bushnell
(distance between fence posts)

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Greater Prairie Chicken - lek (Wisconsin) Lesser Prairie Chicken - lek (Texas)

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Peterson's "A Field Guide to Birds", Dick Bierman, "National Geographic Society Guide Birds of North America"

How long before field notes made? 10 min this form completed? 4 hours

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

94-01

What species? GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN How many? 1

Location? SOUTH EDGE OF CHEROKEE COUNTY AIRPORT CHEROKEE, IOWA

Type of Habitat? OPEN GRASSLAND-MOWED GRASS AREA

When? date(s): SATURDAY 2 P.M. FEB. 19, 1994 time: 2 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Who? your name and address: DON POGGENSEE

Others with you: NONE

Others before or after you: DICK BEERMAN OF CHEROKEE, IA ALSO REPORTED THIS BIRD

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.

HAD EXCELLENT VIEW OF THE BIRD. IT WAS FIRST ALONG THE EDGE OF HWY 59 AND THEN IT MOVED DOWN THE BANK ON THE AIRPORT. I TOOK SEVERAL COLOR SLIDES OF THIS BIRD. I HAVE SEEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED MANY PRAIRIE CHICKEN OUT IN CENTRAL NEBRASKA, AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION IN MY MIND AS TO IT SPECIES.

SEE COLOR SLIDES ENCLOSED WITH THIS LETTER.

Similar species; how eliminated:

HEN PHEASANT- SHARPTAIL

SEE COLOR SLIDES

TAIL WAS SHORT AND ROUNDED-WEDGED AS THE PRAIRIE CHICKEN ARE. FACE AND NECK WERE DIFFERENT. SEE DETAILS ON THE SLIDES.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

DAYTIME, GOOD LIGHT, ABOUT 30 FEET AWAY. CANON LEN 450MM

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

PHOTOGRAPHED THEM IN NEBRASKA FOR THE PAST FOUR SPRINGS.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

DICK BEERMAN, PETER ERNZEN

How long before field notes made? AT TIME this form completed? THREE DAYS LATER

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Greater Prairie Chicken

LOCATION: Cherokee Airport (Cherokee County)

HABITAT: Open field with some taller grass.

DATE & TIME: 24 February, 1994 (11:40 AM-12:00N)

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

OTHERS: With me were Dick Tetrault and Tom Kent. Previously reported by Dick Bierman, Marion Brewer, and Don Poggensee.

BACKGROUND: Dick Bierman had seen and photographed a bird of this species at this location over a month previously, and Don Poggensee had photographed a bird here on 19 February. On 24, February, we had flown to the Cherokee Airport, arriving about 11 AM. We began searching the roadside and grassy areas south of the hangars and administration building, when a gallinaceous bird flushed from the grass and flew toward the highway shoulder. It then flew a long distance to an area along the runway. In this area it flew twice more, but we got to within 25 feet of the bird.

DESCRIPTION: This chicken-like bird was generally streaked and gray-brown in general color, with a small head with a crest. The underparts were white, with heavy black horizontal barring. The back and folded wing were brownish-gray and more finely streaked. The tail was short and blunt and was black with a narrow light terminal bar. The legs were very heavily feathered and a tawny color, and the feet appeared gray. The head was small with a dark cap, which most often was raised in a crest. Areas above and below the dark eye were a light tawny color, as was the throat. The bill was very short and had a straight lower mandible border, and a curved upper mandible border. On the side of the neck there was a rather unique well circumscribed area which was longer up and down. It was black and white, with mostly black at the bottom.

The bird was a strong flyer, and when in flight, the tail was black, with a very narrow light terminal band.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The female Ring-necked Pheasant has a much longer tail, no barring on the underparts, and a much larger bill. The Sharp-tailed Grouse has more diffuse dark markings on the underparts (not heavy barring) and its tail is sharp and shows considerable white when in flight. The Lesser Prairie Chicken is generally paler and the underparts barring is not heavy or dark.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen Greater Prairie Chicken several times on its booming ground in Wisconsin, and also seen them in Nebraska and Minnesota.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Midday and overcast. Mostly looking toward the north at distances of 25-400 feet with Swift Audubon 8.5 X 44 binoculars. Seen in flight at distances from 25-400 feet.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: Field notes prepared immediately after return from trip, and this form typed the same evening. National Geographic Field Guide viewed on return trip after viewing bird.

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Greater Prairie-Chicken; **Number:** 1 male

Location: Cherokee airport, Cherokee Co., IA

Date: 24 February 1994; **Time:** 11:40 to 12:00 a.m.

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

Others before/with/after: Dick Bierman, Marion Brewer, others before; Jim Fuller and Dick Tetrault with me.

Habitat and circumstances: One strip airport with buildings and a grassy area; between highway and river south of Cherokee.

Description of bird: Jim flushed the bird from the grassy area, which is on the east side of the strip and west side of the highway. It took several minutes for him to get our attention, but we finally saw him waving his arms. As I ran toward him, the bird flew from near the highway and in front of the buildings to the area in front of the terminal building. We walked up to it as it walked on the access ramp and watched it until an incoming plane flushed it to some dirt embankments north of the airplane parking area. We then recovered our cameras and eased up to the bird. Dick went around to the north and "pushed" the bird to the top of an embankment where we photographed it at about 15 yards. The bird was a large chunky grouse, perhaps as large as a pheasant but heavier and more compact. It was heavily barred above and below -- dark brown/black on light gray. The barring on the wings and back were at different angles and bars were of different width. The tail was fairly short and only slightly rounded. The upper tail coverts were barred and tail black, giving the appearance of a black tail band. There was a fine light edge to the distal tip of the tail. The legs were covered with gray feathers. The bill was dark gray/black and somewhat conical. There was a buff line above the eye and the throat was buff. There was a vertical patch on the side of the neck with buff and brown feathers. Photos taken at close range.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: The darkness of the bird and heavy barring indicate Greater rather than Lesser Prairie-Chicken. The square tail excludes Sharp-tailed Grouse. The black tail indicates a male.

Any one have reservations?: No.

Light: Light overcast with snow on ground; **Distance:** As close as 15 yards; **Optics:** 10x binocular ; 420 mm lens.

Previous experience: Have seen this species in Texas and Nebraska.

References before/after viewing: We looked at NG Field Guide after viewing.

Time of notes: 20 min.; **Final typing:** 4.5 hours.