

Whooping Crane  
21 Sep 1972  
Adel, Dallas Co., IA  
A. M. Harvey  
Harvey 1973

Record Number: 81-MR  
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Harvey, A.M. 1973. Whooping Crane observed near Adel. IBL  
43:28.

VOTE (1981): 2-IV, 3-V, 2-VI

VI, Inexperienced observer who couldn't identify bird. Second  
sighting. (#4) convinces me she was wrong. Very unlikely that  
same person would see this species twice.

VI, pelicans?

V, Wh. Pelican not ruled out.

IV, Not satisfactorily separated from White Pelican. Vision  
problem, inexperience and presence of flocks raises questions.  
Also far east of range.

## Whooping Crane

Harvey, A. M., 1973, Whooping Crane observed near Adel, Iowa Bird Life 43:28

**Whooping Cranes Observed near Adel** -- I live in the south edge of Adel, a block east of Hwy 169. The morning of September 21, 1972, was a red-letter day for me. Early that morning there was a sharp drop in temperature. Before sunrise I hiked south across my garden, to my son Don's greenhouses and gladiola field, to find out if the glads had been hurt. While my son and I were standing at the west end of the glad field near one of the greenhouses, Don said "What kind of birds are those?" I looked up, and there above us, not much more than twice treetop height, were three large white birds with the outer part of their wings jet-black. They were flying slowly like the Great Blue Herons when they have just come from the river. The Raccoon River flows along the east side of Adel just a few blocks away, and judging from the time of day and how slow they were traveling, I figured they had probably spent the night somewhere along its banks. I had to tell Don I had no idea what they were. We watched them for the minute or two it took for them to fly over the low hill south of Adel and out of sight. Then I realized I hadn't taken my eyes off those three long enough to learn how many more there were in the irregular flock of birds to the east. But Don told me later that only one other small group of either two or three birds were the same . . . that the others weren't like them, though he hadn't noticed either what kind the big white ones were traveling with, only that they were different. My reason is simple. I have to wear bifocals and my range of clear vision is very limited. If I try to see too much, I end up with all my "watching" blurred, and that can be very frustrating.

After I came back home, I started looking in my bird books for large white shore birds. Of course the Whooping Cranes were there, but they were pictured standing with wings close to their sides with the black all under cover. I finally gave up and I didn't get to the library that week. Then a week later on September 28, the October Reader's Digest came. As I am an artist, the first thing I always look at on the Digest is the cover. There were my unidentified birds! Inside, below the editors' names I found the name "Whooping Cranes" by Charles Frace. It still is amazing to me how those black feathers can be so well hidden in photographs as in the Audubon Nature Encyclopedia showing them on the Aransas Refuge in Texas. This book said the Whooping Crane used to nest in Iowa a hundred years ago! Who can say that when fall comes again a few won't decide to travel where their ancestors used to live? The human race isn't the only ones that have pioneer blood in their veins. It could be that they feel instinctively that, now that they are protected, they don't have to have so much privacy. I'm going to hear that other birders have sighted them in our territory too. -- AGNES M. HARVEY, 619 Cottage St., Adel.