

Black-necked Stilt

6 Apr 1991

Snyders Bend, Woodbury Co., IA

**Huser,*Fuller,*Bray/Silcock,*Padelfo

IBL 61:92, 62:70, Huser 1992

Record Number: 91-09

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Bill Huser (x2), 6, 7, 10, 13 Apr, 401 E. 14th St., S. Sioux City, NE 68776.

Jim Fuller, 11 Apr

Tanya Bray/Ross Silcock, 14 Apr

Loren/Babs Padelford, 14 Apr

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 61:92

Records Committee: IBL 62:70

Huser, B. 1992. Black-necked Stilt in Woodbury County. IBL 62:84-85.

VOTE: 7-A-D

A-D, Beautiful bird, fully acceptable, seen by many.

A-D, Good descriptions of a pretty unmistakable bird!

A-D, This easy to identify bird was seen by many making the record undisbutable in my view.

A-D, Excellent details of an unmistakable bird.

A-D, Any photos?

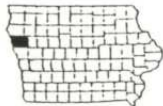
A-D, Documentations all adequately describe this easy to identify, diagnostically marked species. All documentations corroborate each other.

A-D, Good details and documentations for a very distinctive bird.

BLACK-NECKED STILT IN WOODBURY COUNTY

BILL HUSER

Snyder's Bend, an oxbow lake of the Missouri River, had low water levels during the early spring of 1991. This left a band 5-8 meters wide of exposed sand and mudflats around much of the lake's perimeter. This seemed to be ideal foraging habitat for waders and shorebirds, the latter in most years discouraged by the steeper shorelines or cattails extending into rather deep water (0.5 m).



On 6 April 1991, my son Richard and I found that waterfowl, large waders, and pelicans were quite numerous there. While viewing shallow water areas near cattails for puddle ducks, I suddenly found a Black-necked Stilt in the field of my 32 power spotting scope. The identification was obvious, immediate, and astonishing. Similar species--if there really are any--were quickly eliminated. No avocet, oystercatcher, or phalarope combined the characteristics so evident in this starkly plumaged bird.

With the bird approximately 180 meters away in excellent, direct, frontal lighting, the following description was recorded: A large, long-legged black and white shorebird foraged in very shallow water and mudflats that were covered with mats of algae killed by the winter temperatures. The bird picked at these surfaces with quick motions, covering a good deal of territory with rapid, long-legged strides. The dorsal side was jet black and contrasted starkly with the bright white underparts. Exceptions to this pattern included a white spot over the eye and white at the bill base which contrasted with the black upper face. The legs were very long and bright pink; the bill long, straight, and black. In flight, the bird showed a black back and upper wings, offset by a white tail. The undersides of the wings were black, as well. Its size, gauged against the nearby Lesser Yellowlegs, was large, with linear dimensions, but not bulk, nearly equal to those of nearby Green-winged Teal.

Over the next eight days, I viewed the stilt on five more occasions, each time confirming the identifying characters. I was surprised to find that the bird used its long legs for striding and not for wading in the deeper waters inaccessible to other shorebirds. During this time several local birders and others from across the state viewed this bird. I took photos which did not approach my expectations and are barely diagnostic. I visited the area again on 19 April and could not locate the stilt. The reason for its disappearance was obvious; water levels had risen about one foot due to rising river levels and local rain. The numerous shorebirds of several species that had been present for several weeks were also absent.

Though a former channel of the Missouri River that determined the Iowa-Nebraska boundary passes through the lake, the portion of the lake frequented by the stilt is entirely within Iowa. The Nebraska portion of the lake lies a mere 200-300 meters to the west (Mark Hainfield pers. comm.). (Note the state boundary does not coincide with either the present river channel or the present lake bed.)

Black-necked Stilts are known to Iowa by 12 references prior to 1984. Each of those references, including two specimens, however, lacked details or adequate labels. Of six specific sightings, three are from the state's western tier of counties in the early 1900s (Dinsmore et al. 1984). But on 1-2 June 1984, a pair was located, documented, and photographed at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge and accepted as Iowa's first official record (Dinsmore 1984).

The nearest known nesting site is in western Nebraska where breeding stilts were discovered in Garden County in 1985 (Helsinger 1985). Having apparently bred in the vicinity each year since, the 1991 population included at least six adults with a

minimum of two nests, both failures due to predation and flooding (Mary Clausen pers. comm.).

Stilts have been recorded throughout South Dakota on the merits of seven reports since 1949. None of these reports mention breeding. Though the reports include May (2), June (1), July (2), August (1), and September (1) dates, none mentions more than one individual being present (South Dakota Ornithologists' Union 1991).

Eckert (1983) mentions one unacceptable Minnesota record, though South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin have valid records. Janssen (1987) lists no Minnesota stilt records.

LITERATURE CITED

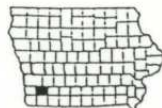
- Dinsmore, J. J., T. H. Kent, D. Koenig, P. C. Petersen, and D. M. Roosa. 1984. Iowa Birds. Iowa State University Press, Ames. 356 p.
- Dinsmore, J. J. 1984. Field Reports-Summer 1984. Iowa Bird Life 54:82.
- Eckert, K. R. 1983. A Birder's Guide to Minnesota. rev. 2nd ed. Cloquet Newspapers, Cloquet, MN, 208 p.
- Helsinger, M. 1985. Black-necked Stilts breeding in Nebraska. Nebraska Bird Review 53:72.
- Janssen, R. B. 1987. Birds in Minnesota. University Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 352 p.
- South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. 1991. The Birds of South Dakota, 2nd ed. South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, Aberdeen, SD. 411 p.

401 East 14th Street, South Sioux City, NE 68776

ROCK WRENS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

DAVID CARLISLE

On 17 September 1991, I was leaving my house in Red Oak about 7:50 a.m. when I noticed two birds inside my garage. Apparently the birds had entered the evening before when I had left the garage door open, or they came in through a small 1.5 x 2 inch opening in the weather stripping along the bottom of the garage door, the latter of which seems more likely. I had entered through the side door with the garage door still closed when I saw one of the birds attempting to exit through a closed window while the other was perched on the garage door tracks. I immediately identified both birds as wrens; however, they were larger than the common House Wren and lacked the light eye ring of that species. Fearing that the one bird which kept flying into the window was going to injure itself, I opened the garage door to allow them outside. One of the birds flew immediately out the opened door while the other kept flying into the window. I then grabbed my fishing net and snagged the other bird without any trouble.



With the bird in my possession, I immediately noticed the somewhat longer, buffy/light colored tail corners. Thoroughly confused, I took the bird to my pickup where I could use my Peterson field guide to aid me in identifying it. While referring to the field guide, I noticed that the bird lacked the definite eye stripe characteristic of the Bewick's, Carolina, and Marsh wrens. There were not white stripes on the back as

91-04

What species? Black-necked Stilt How many? 1Location? Snyder's Bend lake, Woodbury County, IAType of habitat? Mudflats with mats of vegetation near old cattailsWhen? date(s): 4/6/91 time: 10:45 - 11:10
11:25 to 11:55
1:30Who? your name and address: Bill Huser 401 E 14th St. S. Sioux City NE 68776others with you: others before or after you: Jerry Probst - Sioux City at the 1:30 sighting

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.

large black + white shore bird, working shallow water, picking prey from mats of decaying algae on mudflats.

Dorsal side, jet black; ventral side, pure white

Very long, pink legs

long straight black bill, with white spot above ^{upper} bill.

White spot just above eye on otherwise black face.

In flight, white tail contrasting black dorsal wings + back.
Ventral wing surface black, as well.

Very much larger than Lesser Yellowlegs. Body similar in length but much slimmer than nearby Green-wing Teal.

Note: Interview with Mark Hainfield who assured me that the site where the bird was viewed is on that portion of the lake in Iowa.

Similar species and how eliminated: Phalaropes - smaller, not as distinct black + white pattern or as long legs.

Am. Avocet: upturned bill, white or tawny head + necks - not black over white

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
excellent direct sunlight. ~~Subj~~ Frontal lighting on bird.
estimated 60 yards - 250 yds Photos taken w/2x210mm at 60 yd.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: in CA + west. Nebr.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Nat'l Geographic

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

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

What species? Black-necked Stilt How many? 1Location? Snyder's Bend, Woodbury County, IAType of habitat? mudflats with mats of dead vegetation near cattailsWhen? date(s): 4/7; 4/10; 4/13/91 time: _____ to _____Who? your name and address: Bill Huser 401 E 14th St. S. Sioux City NE 68776others with you: John Van Dyke
4/7 - Armstrongs, Bob Livermore; 4/13 Bob Meritz, Jerry Probstothers before or after you: Jim Fuller 4/11

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.

Activity & description as on preceding page

Details of description confirmed.

Add'l photos on 4/10 - should be diagnostic

Similar species and how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

100 yds at minimum; excellent, direct light; 10x binocs
& 32x scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? _____

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

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Black-necked Stilt

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, RR#6, Iowa City, 52240

OTHER OBSERVERS: Bill Huser, Eugene and Eliose Armstrong, others.

DATE: April 11, 1991. 9:10AM to 9:50AM

LOCATION: Snyder's Bend County Park, Woodbury County.

BACKGROUND: Bill Huser had reported that a Black-necked stilt was present on April 6th to the Iowa Birdline. Jim Scheib and I traveled through heavy thunderstorms and hail to reach the location early in the morning. When the rain finally abated, and it was only sleeting, we ventured out into the 30-50mph winds. The bird was quickly located, and from a sheltered area we watched it for over a half hour. It was actively feeding at the edge of cattails and on a mud peninsula across the old Missouri River oxbow from where we were. Because of the weather, we did not take our telescopes to the location, but the bird could be seen with binoculars (Swift Audubon 8.5X44) at 60-80 yards.

DESCRIPTION: The first impression was of a large, thin black and white shorebird with very long legs and a long bill. The general size was difficult to judge, because the bird was never close to any other shore bird, but I would guess it to be the size of greater yellowlegs, but not the same shape.. The legs were extremely long, and thin, even for a shorebird, and they were a red color. The back and folded wing were quite black, and there was an extension of the black onto the white of the breast, neck and belly in the shoulder area. The head was mostly black, with a white spot above the eye. The neck was very long. The bill was dark, straight, and relatively long (maybe twice the width of the head). It walked around quite fast, in what appeared to be a somewhat herky-jerky fashion. I did not see it fly, nor did I hear any vocalization

SIMILAR SPECIES: The only bird this might be confused with is a avocet, but avocet does not have reddish legs, has obvious white on the folded wing, is either whitish or reddish on the head and neck, and has an upturned bill.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen black-necked stilts many times in the west, and in Florida, and just three weeks ago saw many in southern California near San Diego and at the Salton Sea.

FIELD NOTES and REFERENCES: Notes were made immediately upon return to the car, and this report was typed on April 12. No field guides were consulted.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS

SPECIES: Black-necked Stilt

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, a Longview Knoll, RR#5, Iowa City, IA 52242

OTHER OBSERVERS: Bill Huser, Eugene and Eileen Atkinson, others.

DATE: April 11, 1991. 9:10AM to 9:50AM

Black-necked Stilt

14 April 1991; 9:10 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

Snyders Bend, Woodbury County

Observers: Tanya Bray and Ross Silcock

Before us: Bill Huser

After us: Loren and Babs Padelford

Description: Large, long-legged wader-type bird. In comparison with nearby Marbled Godwit, the body was similar in size. (but more slender-TEB). Mantle, wings, and back of neck black. (I thought the crown and nape were just a little blacker than the wings and back-TEB). Underparts white including foreneck. Noticeable white area around the eye. Long, thin dark bill--straight. Long, pink legs. Unmistakable bird!

Behavior: Waded in shallow water, feeding.

Sky: Completely overcast at first sighting; clearing slightly as we left the area.

Distance: 150 feet (estimated by TEB)

Equipment: 7 x 25 Binoculars, 25 x scope; Ross also had binoculars and scope.

There was no disagreement between observers and no books were used.

Notes written: 5 minutes after sighting

The report: 6 hours after sighting

Tanya Bray	Ross Silcock
1107 Ironwood Court	Box 300
Apt 186	Tabor, Iowa
Bellevue, Ne	

Documentation for Black-necked Stilt

Date - April 14, 1991

Location - Snyder's Bend County Park, Woodbury Co.

Time of Sighting - 9:45 - 5:55 a.m.

Description of Bird - A large, long-legged black and white shorebird. It was approximately the same size as a Greater Yellowlegs or slightly larger. The legs were dark pink. The bill was black and long (approximately 2 1/2 times the length of the head), thin and slightly recurved. The top of the head and nape of neck were black. The back and wings were black. Throat and belly were white. There was a large white spot above the eye.

Behavior - The bird was feeding on a mud flat with a Greater Yellowlegs and a Lesser Yellowlegs.

Light conditions: Overcast

Distance from Bird: approx. 50 yards

Equipment Used: Bushnell 25 x spotting scope

This account was written on 4/14/91 from notes taken in the field at time of sighting.

Babs & Loren Padelford
1405 Little John Road
Bellevue, Nebraska 68005

Loren Padelford
Babs Padelford