

Snowy Plover 1
28 Apr 1990
2 n. of Burlington, Des Moines Co., IA
C. Fuller
IBL 60:64, 67, 62:21

Record Number: 90-10
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Chuck Fuller

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:64, 67

Records Committee: IBL 62:21

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: I believe document is adequate to accept. A good bird found in an acceptable location by a good birder.

A-D: Conclusively and carefully documented. Good job.

A-D: Complete description of all key field marks eliminating the most likely species (Piping Plover) to be misidentified as Snowy Plover.

A-D: Solid description.

A-D: The dark legs, thin all black bill, black smudge behind eye eliminate other plovers and similar species. The only characteristic mentioned which doesn't support Snowy is the mention of extremely light plover which tends to support Piping, the lightest of the plovers.

A-D: Very good description eliminating other species that might be possible. Dark gray to black with pattern of black bars and marks on head and upper body with rump being same color as back could be nothing else.

A-D: Good documentation and descriptions.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

90-10

What species? Snowy Plover How many? 1

Location? Highway 99 2 miles north of Burlington, Water Treatment Plant Pond

Type of Habitat? Water edge of settling pond

When? date(s): 4-28-90 time: 4:45 pm to 7:00 pm

Who? your name and address: Chuck Fuller, 420 S. Garfield, Burlington, Iowa 5260

Others with you: No

Others before or after you: No

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.

On April 28 at 4:45 p.m., I stopped at one of the settling ponds of Burlington's Waterworks north on Highway 99. Among the usual pectorals, yellowlegs and other peeps was a very small, extremely light plover which could only be a Piping or a Snowy Plover. I have seen Piping Plovers in Iowa every year and this struck me as being different. I noted the following pertinent field marks:

- 1) Incomplete black ring on neck leaving the front open. The two portions were like 2 small shoulder patches extending slightly onto the neck.
- 2) Forehead--horizontal black mark.
- 3) Bill--slim and finer than other plovers and all black.
- 4) Legs--dark gray to black.
- 5) Definite black smudge behind eye in the area of the ear.
- 6) When bird flew, the ^{rump} ~~wing~~ area had the same coloration as the back.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Piping Plover--See above description
Bill-size and color
Legs--color
Smudge behind eye
Absence of a white rump

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? _____
If yes, explain:

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

35-40 yards looking N to NE--partly cloudy as sun was going down in the SW. When the sun was out, it was over my left shoulder and low.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Winter Experience: Beaches of Sanibel (FL), Biloxi (MS) and S Padre (TX)

Summer Experience: June--Bear River--Breeding Plumage

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None--Description written before Field Guide consulted.

How long before field notes made? 10 min. this form completed? next day (4-29-90)

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).
typed (5-18-90)

OVER →

After observing for 10 minutes I went home (which took 10 minutes) and called my brother (Jim) because I was sure I had a Snowy Plover. I returned to keep the bird under observation. I watched the bird until 7:00 p.m. when I had to leave.

The bird was actively feeding on the water's edge and on several occasions, made short flights to a different spot. The bird made no sound. This description was written down during this time, before field guide(s) were consulted.

The bird was gone when I returned at 6:00 a.m. the next morning.