

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/24/00

Snowy Plover

14 Jun 1997

Black Hawk Lake, Sac Co., IA

\*Pam Allen, \*P. Ernzen

P-0564, IBL 67:123, 68:85

Record Number: 97-25

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines 50265 [\*10/1/97]

Peter Ernzen, 407 Court, Ida Grove 51445

PHOTOGRAPHS

Reid Allen, P-0564

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:123

Records Committee: IBL 68:85

VOTE: 7 A-P



Snowy Plover p-0564  
Black Hawk L., Sac Co., IA  
14 Jun 1997 Reid I. Allen 97-25

71+00 NNNNN -SHU 2051

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71+00 NNNNN -630 2051

97-25

DOCUMENTATION

SPECIES: Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

HOWMANY: 1

LOCATION & HABITAT: Sac County, in a dredge pond just east of the most easterly edge of Black Hawk Lake. The bird was observed feeding quite near the edge of the water and near shore area of the dredge pond which was mostly gumbo-like mudflats with some grassy patches.

DATE: June 14, 1997

TIME & VIEWING CONDITIONS: First observed from 1:10 to 1:20 p.m. C.D.T. and then again from 2:00 to 2:15 p.m. C.D.T. Partly cloudy skies and slightly breezy.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Reid Allen

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street,  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: This small, "peep-sized" shorebird was first seen from about 1/4 mile away. All you could tell was that it was either a Piping Plover or a Snowy Plover. After getting to within 25 yards, it was much easier to see the bird was a Snowy Plover with many diagnostic characteristics. It was about one-third the size of a Killdeer, with a short, thin pointed black bill (longer, however, than a Piping Plover's stubbier short bill). The belly, breast, flanks, and most of the area around the face was white with the top of the head, back, wings and tail being a very, very light greyish brown. This male breeding plover had a black stripe across the top of its forehead and a black slanted patch stripe down from the back of the eye toward the nape of the neck. Also conspicuous was the black patch which was located just at the top of the "shoulder" where the wing joined the body and extending a little ways toward the mid-breast area (but nowhere extending as far as the complete or semi-complete breastband common on the Piping Plover). The legs and feet were a dull dark slate grey (with no hint of the orange/pink coloration indicative of a Piping Plover). **SEE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY REID I. ALLEN WHICH ARE ENCLOSED.**

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: See above description.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Have seen many in Texas in spring and winter as well as the bird which was present at Riverton in May of 1992.

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TSN-614 spotting scope; Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope; Bausch & Lomb Elite 8x42 binoculars; photographed by Reid I. Allen with a Canon A2E camera with a 400 mm lens and with 800 mm telephoto attachment on Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, National Geographic Society, Second Edition, 1987.

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES MADE: During observations of bird.

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: August 1, 1997.



PETER ENRZEN  
407 COURT  
IDA GROVE IA 51445

#### SNOWY PLOVER

On the afternoon of June 14, I received a phone call from Tom Kent alerting me to the presence of a Snowy Plover in Sac Co. Specifically at the dredge - spoils pond on the south east corner of Black Hawk Lake. I contacted Rob Thelen of Carrol and told him of the birds presence.

I arrived at the location of the bird at approximately 3:00 pm. Almost immediately my attention was drawn to a small shorebird which was walking/running on the far south/south west end mudflat of the spoils pond. The bright afternoon sun and the west side location of the road meant that I had almost ideal lighting.

The following impressions were recorded in my car at the time of observing the bird. Small plover like bird, with black legs, white belly and a very, very light brown/gray back, 1/2 black breast band, with black in the eye and forehead region. Wanting a better look at the bird, I set down my 7 x 35 binoculars and set up my window mounted 15 to 40 power zoom scope. With the scope I was able to discern several characteristics that appeared somewhat fuzzy with my binoculars. The following characteristics were brought into view. Black line on forehead between the white area on the forehead and the gray/brown of the back, also the black band on the breast went about 1/4 of the way across the breast area. There was a black eye patch and a thin black bill.

After confirming my sighting with the National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America, I waited for Rob Thelen to arrive. While waiting I observed the bird flying on several occasions. Sometimes the bird would fly to the east side of the pond for a few minutes, but it always returned to the south/south west corner of the pond. About 20 minutes after I arrived, I was joined by Rob Thelen and Joe Clark (also from Carrol). For the next 25 minutes we all watched the bird.

Piping Plover and Semipalmated Plover were eliminated for the following reasons, the bill and legs were black. If it was a Piping or Semipalmated Plover the bill would have been a bicolored orange black and the legs would have been orange. The back of the bird was very similar in color to the Piping Plover - Semipalmated Plover is a darker brown. I have observed both the Piping and Semipalmated Plover over the years and I feel confident that this bird was neither, but instead was a Snowy Plover. It was my impression that this was a Male Snowy Plover due to amount of black observed on the bird.

I saw the bird two other times. Saturday June 14 at 5:42 pm

for several minutes and again on the morning of June 15 at 8:03 am.