

Black-necked Stilt  
12 May 1992  
Riverton A., Fremont Co., IA  
\*Johnson, \*Allen, \*Kent  
Johnson and Allen 1994; IBL 62:76, 63:69, P-0333

Record Number: 92-20  
Classification: A-P

#### DOCUMENTATIONS

Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211  
Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265 (6/30/93)  
Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Reid Allen, P-0333

#### REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:77  
Records Committee: IBL 63:69  
Johnson, A., and P. Allen. 1994. Black-necked Stilt at Riverton Area. Iowa Bird Life 64:20-21.

#### VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, I had some hesitation that this photograph would stand on its own without the accompanying documentation, but the photo does show a long, pink-legged black and white shorebird.

A-P, Photo distant but diagnostic.

A-P, Long distance but diagnostic photo of this species. Head and neck look too white but the long pink legs and black-and-white contrast in the photos are diagnostic.

A-P, A good photo from a distance of a very distinctive shorebird. Black-and-white pattern, shape, pink legs, and size comparison are quite evident. Good identifying details provided in documentations.

92-20

LITERATURE CITED

Bohlen, H. D. 1989. The Birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis. 221 pp.

Dinsmore, J. J., T. H. Kent, D. Koenig, P. C. Petersen, and D. M. Roosa. 1984. Iowa Birds. Iowa State University Press, Ames. 356 pp.

Koenig, D. 1979. Probable Nesting of the Northern Parula Warbler in Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 49:116-117.

Malone, C., and L. H. Tiffany. 1978. Iowa Lichens: An Annotated Listing. *Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci.* 85:74-80.

Myers, R. K. 1986. Field Reports-Spring 1986. *Iowa Bird Life* 56:90.

Oberholser, H. C. 1974. The Bird Life of Texas. University of Texas Press, Austin. 1069 pp.

Peterson, R. T. 1980. A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 384 pp.

Pough, R. H. 1946. Audubon Bird Guide: Eastern Land Birds. Doubleday and Co., Garden City, NY. 312 pp.

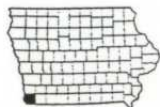
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526 Reno St., Iowa City, IA 52245

BLACK-NECKED STILT AT RIVERTON AREA

ANN JOHNSON AND PAM ALLEN

Iowa has long been a melting pot for species from other regions of North America. Iowa birders know that the southwestern corner of the state is the most likely place to find species that are more commonly found in Nebraska, Kansas, or other states further south. On 12 May 1992, we headed for southwestern Iowa in search of the Brown Pelican and Snowy Plover that had been found there earlier. Although the pelican eluded us, the plover was in sight in the Allen's scope when Johnson arrived at the Riverton Area in Fremont County. The water level was low, and the surrounding mudflats were alive with numerous shorebirds.



After studying the plover for a time, Johnson began panning the mudflats for other species. A large concentration of Hudsonian Godwits was present, but one large shorebird was immediately identifiable as a Black-necked Stilt. The bird was much taller than the other birds near it, and its black-and-white markings were distinctive. The black upper parts extended from the foreneck, down the nape, mantle, and wings. The underparts were white, as was a spot above the eye. A white "hook" was visible between the neck and the wing. The long, bright pink-to-red legs created a sharp contrast to the body. The black bill was long, straight, and needle-like.

Technological advances have not escaped the birding world. The Allen's cellular phone allowed for a quick call to Ross Silcock, who along with Tom Kent and Dick Tetrault, soon appeared on the scene. The bird was not seen again the next day.

This observation is the third accepted record of Black-necked Stilt in Iowa. Although the species may be easily observed as nearby as central Kansas in the Cheyenne Bottoms areas, it was not verified in Iowa and added to the state list until

1984. Twelve earlier reports of stilts in Iowa were judged to have insufficient information for acceptance (Dinsmore et al. 1984). The first accepted record for the state was a pair that was photographed at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Kossuth County on 1-2 June 1984 (Kent and Silcock 1985). The second observation occurred nearly seven years later when a single bird was observed by many on 6-14 April 1991 in Woodbury County (Huser 1992). Perhaps with an increase in the level of Iowa birders' activity, sightings may soon become a nearly annual occurrence. It is certainly a bird Iowans should be looking for during shorebird migration.

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 pp.

Kent, T. H., and W. R. Silcock. 1985. Report of the I.O.U. Records Committee for 1984. *Iowa Bird Life* 55:56-58.

Huser, B. 1992. Black-necked Stilt in Woodbury County. *Iowa Bird Life* 62:84.

532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211 and 1601 Pleasant Street, West Des Moines, IA 50265

GYRFALCON IN KOSSUTH COUNTY

BRAD BOLDUAN

On 27 March 1992, I was photographing waterfowl at the Iowa Lake Wildlife Management Area in northwestern Kossuth County. I was at the edge of the water in a pothole which contained hundreds of ducks and geese when almost all of the birds flushed. I then saw a large bird flying in the midst of a large flock of ducks about 100 yards away. It rapidly closed the gap between it and one of the ducks. The bird then appeared to grab the duck in midflight and flew out of sight behind a hill.



After about 30 minutes, I decided to look for this bird. As I came to the crest of a rise between two potholes, a large raptor flew from a Wood Duck box to a nearby willow. I walked to the willow where I thought the bird had landed. Just as I was giving up on reocating the bird, a large raptor flushed about 20 yards from me. Due to its size, my first impression was that the bird was a Great Horned Owl. The bird flew in a semicircle about 40 yards from me. During this time it banked away from me showing a definite falcon silhouette. The falcon then flew about 100 yards north before flying past me and landing near my original position to the south. As the falcon flew below eye level, I was able to see the top of the falcon. I had not yet been able to see any color on the bird so I decided to walk to the southwest and approach the bird with the sun at my back. I had walked about 100 yards when the falcon flew from its perch and made a complete circle around me. It broke from the circle and flew over a pond at an elevation of about 20 feet, flushing a duck from the pond's surface a short distance in front of it. The falcon made a shallow dive and knocked the duck into the water where it landed with a large splash. The falcon then flew along the edge of the pothole and flushed another duck which flew in front of and below the falcon. When the duck was about 10 yards above the water, the falcon made a shallow swoop, grabbed the duck with its talons, and flew north with the duck in its grasp. The falcon landed in a willow tree north of the pond.



92-20

Black-necked Stilt P-0333  
Riverton A., Fremont Co., IA  
12 May 1992 Reid Allen 92-20

## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

*Species:* Black-necked Stilt; *Number:* 1

*Location:* Riverton Area, Fremont Co., Iowa

*Date:* 12 May 1992; *Time:* 4:45 to 6:00 p.m

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

*Others before/with/after:* with Ann Johnson, Reid Allen, Pam Allen, Ross Silcock, and Dick Tetrault

*Habitat and circumstances:* Shallow mud-lined pool at low water level.

*Description of bird:* Tall shorebird, larger than other shorebirds present, except perhaps for Hudsonian Godwits not in the same field of view. Very long pink legs. Black upper parts and white below. Black line up back of neck. Black on face with white spot above eye. Long thin black bill. Short tail, only seen in flight and then I could not see enough to tell its color. Bird was feeding in shallow water and flew occasionally.

*Voice:* Not heard.

*Similar species:* None that I know of in North America.

*Any one have reservations?:* No.

*Light:* Sun behind viewers; *Distance:* 1/4 mile to about 75 yards; *Optics:* 10x binocular; 20x scope.

*Previous experience:* Have seen many, but none in Iowa.

*References before/after viewing:* None.

*Time of notes:* Notes while watching; *Final typing:* form handwritten at 5 hours and typed 3 days later.

92-20

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-necked Stilt

Location: Riverton Wildlife Area, Fremont County, IOWA

Habitat: Broad expanse of mud flats

Date: 12 May 1992

Time: 14:55 to 16:55

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Pam & Reid Allen, Ross Silcock, Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault

Description of bird:

While scanning the mud flats and shallow water for interesting shorebirds, I noted a long-legged shorebird which was immediately identifiable as a Black-necked Stilt. The bird was larger than the other shorebirds present and particularly longer legged. It was standing with some herons and looked somewhat a cross between a heron and a shorebird. General structure was similar to a phalarope; i.e., proportionately small and round head and a long neck. The upperparts from the cap to the tail were black and the underparts were white. A small white patch was directly above the eye. The bill was black, long and straight. The legs were long and bright pink. The bird spent most of the time during observation foraging in shallow water.

**Similar species and how eliminated:** Identification of a Black-necked Stilt is straight forward. The only other bird in North America which is even remotely similar is the American Avocet. It can be eliminated by the black feathering on the head and neck, straight bill, and pink legs.

**Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification?** No

**Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics):** The bird was an estimated 500 yards away. The day was bright and the sun was to our backs. Observation was through a 15x-60x scope.

**Previous experience with species and similar ones:** I have seen many Black-necked Stilts on numerous occasions in the west.

**References and persons consulted before writing description:** None.

**How long before field notes made?** Dictated upon return to car  
**How long before this form completed?** Two weeks

REFERENCES CONSULTED: FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, National Geographic Society, Second Edition, 1987. THE AUDUBON SOCIETY MASTER GUIDE TO BIRDING, Volume 1, Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

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

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: June 5, 1992.

DATE: 12 May, 1992

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 4:00-5:30 p.m.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Ann Johnson, Norfolk, IA

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

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Pam Allen, Ann Johnson, Thomas H. Kent, W. Floss Slick and Edward Tetzlaff

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: This distinctly marked large shorebird stood very tall on its bright red legs. The black and white coloration of the bird was very striking as well. The top of the forehead, down the nape, mantle and wing were black. The eye was almost surrounded by a white ring patch. The bill was very long, needle-pointed and black. The tail, belly, breast and throat were white. There was also a white "hook" or "angle" between the wing and the neck (see crude drawing next to this description. Photographs (2) taken by Pam Allen are enclosed. (NOTE: The slide is the better picture of this bird).



SMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: There really is no similar North American species.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Mostly sunny, although the wind was blowing furiously.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Has been viewed and photographed many times in the Rio Grand Valley and lower coastal areas of Texas.

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TS14 spotting scope; Bushnell 6x35 Custom Binoculars; Minolta X-700 camera.

DOCUMENTATION

SPECIES: **Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus)**

HOW MANY: 1

LOCATION: Riverton Wildlife Refuge, IA

HABITAT: Shallow water mudflats, with some grassy patches near edge of wet mud leading to the water.

DATE: 12 May, 1992

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 4:00-5:30 p.m.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Ann Johnson, Norwalk, IA

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

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen, Ann Johnson, Thomas H. Kent, W. Ross Silcock and Richard Tetrault

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: This distinctly marked large shorebird stood very tall on its bright red legs. The black and white coloration of the bird was very striking as well. The top of the forehead, down the nape, mantle and wings were black. The eye was almost surrounded by a white ring patch. The bill was very long, needle-pointed and black. The tail, belly, breast and throat were white. There was also a white "hook" or triangle between the wing and the neck (see crude drawing next to this description. **Photographs (2) taken by Reid Allen are enclosed. (NOTE: the slide is the better picture of this bird)**



SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: There really is no similar North American species.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Mostly sunny, although the wind was blowing furiously.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Has been viewed and photographed many times in the Rio Grand Valley and lower coastal areas of Texas.

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TSN-4 spotting scope; Bushnell 8x36 Custom Binoculars. Minolta X-700 camera.