

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Brewer's Blackbird 2. Number: One
3. Location 1/2 mile South of Intersection of Julian Creek (Near Nevada Iowa) and U.S. 30.
4. Date: Dec. 20, 1980 5. Time Bird seen: 11:00 am to 11:02 a.m.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
- Size: 7-8 inches  
Shape: Blackbird shape  
Color: Black in shade  
Iridescent Purple in head region when in sunlight. Head/Plumage black  
Beak - dark  
feet - ?  
Eyes - yellowish  
tail - not keeled
7. Description of voice, if heard: none heard.
8. Description of behavior: Bird was first drinking water when first seen then flew into a small bush on the stream bank. Hopped about bush for a bit, then flew into woods.
9. Habitat - general: Wooded Stream  
specific: Open water in otherwise frozen stream. Banks of stream steep. A few shrubs lining the stream. Area was being grazed so grasses short. Woodlands open.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Brown Head Cowbird - bird observed had light eyes and no brown head.  
Starling - bill was not yellow.  
Redwing - no red patch on wing - light eyes  
Grackle - no keeled tail  
Rusty blackbird - bird observed was iridescent purple on the head. Had no trace of rust.
11. Distance (how measured)? At most 30 feet. Estimate - the creek isn't very wide. I was on one side the bird on the other.
12. Optical equipment: 10x50 Binoculars
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Sky Clear - Bird was fully illuminated by the sun from the side. Sun was slightly behind me.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
I have seen this particular species several times as well as the others.
15. Other observers: One other that saw it.
16. Did the others agree with your identification? He hadn't seen this species before and I can't apply to verify. He knew it was not a cowbird, grackle, starling or redwing. He ~~thought~~ It was a new bird for him.
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
none
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Without consulting a book I ~~concluded~~ concluded that the bird was a Brewer's blackbird. Later I consulted "A Field Guide to the Birds" to confirm what I knew. My biggest concern was whether it was a Rusty blackbird or a Brewer's. The purplish head decided that.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 20 hours
- Richard T. Nuss Address: 756 Pammel Ct  
Signature
- Date: Dec. 21, 1980 City, State: Ames, Iowa