

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 02/04/94

Common Raven  
11 May 1843  
below mouth of Little Sioux, Harrison Co., IA  
J.J. Audubon  
Anderson 1907

Record Number: 93-FJ  
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Anderson 1907 [from Journals,i,p.484]

DuMont 1933

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, The bird was large and in Iowa, but we have no other  
details. /thk

Anderson 1907  
pp 295-296

209. (486). *Corvus corax sinuatus* (Wagl.). American Raven.

The Raven probably does not occur in Iowa at the present time. If it does it can only be accounted as a very rare or accidental straggler. Formerly it ranged over the whole of the United States but now is restricted to wild and restricted localities. "The restriction of its range in the United States is probably reducible to a fortuitous matter, since this bird, like some others, sooner or later finds the advances of civilization unsupportable, and retires to regions more congenial to its wild and wary nature" (Coues, Birds of N. W., p. 205).

Thomas Say notes the raven at Engineers' Cantonment—"the young nearly able to fly May 12, 1820" (Long's Exp., i, pp. 265-269). Prince Maximilian noted the "Kolkrabe" above the Nishnabotna River May 1, 1833, and at the mouth of the Platte, May 3, 1833 (Reise, i, p. 290). Audubon writes May 11, 1843: "A fine large Raven passed at one hundred yards from us, but I did not shoot [below mouth of Little Sioux]" (Journals, i, p. 484).

T. M. Trippe states that "a resident of Decatur county who had become familiar with the Raven in the northwest assures me that he had occasionally seen it in this county" (Pr. Bost. Soc., xv, 1872, p. 240).

Mr. George H. Berry reports that a correspondent observed a specimen near Rockford, Iowa, in 1900, feeding with Crows. It was also observed to be much larger than the Crows, which makes the record appear probable.

Kumlien and Hollister report that while the Northern Raven (*C. c. principalis* Ridgw.) is common at several points along Lake Superior, it has been rarely seen in southern Wisconsin of late years. Nelson found it a rare winter visitant in northern Illinois in 1876 (Birds of Wis., pp. 85-86). Whether any of the Iowa records pertain to this northern and eastern variety can not now be determined.

*Corvus corax sinuatus* Wagler. American Raven

Extinct for many years in Iowa. There is no evidence that the raven ever bred in the state. However, Thomas Say noted it at Engineer Cantonment, with young nearly able to fly, May 12, 1820. Prince Maximilian recorded observations of this bird, probably on Iowa soil, above the Nishnabotna River, May 1, 1833. Audubon, while below the mouth of the Little Sioux River, stated that a fine large Raven passed at one hundred yards. Trippe (1872) said: "A resident of Decatur County who had become familiar with the Raven in the northwest assures me that he had occasionally seen it in this county."

DuMont 1933  
p 100

The determination of the subspecific form of Raven which formerly occurred in Iowa is certainly speculation. No specimens have been preserved nor is there any evidence that one was ever collected. The writer has followed the A. O. U. Check-List, 4th Edition, wherein the bird occupying the area from Montana, North Dakota, and Illinois southward is referred to *sinuatus*, the Northern Raven, *Corvus c. principalis* Ridgway, occurring from central Minnesota northward.