

December 8
1980

Tom,

Normally during the months of October and November a few Bonaparte's can be seen flying over lakes up this way. Has a Bonaparte gull ever been documented with other gulls following a tractor? This bird didn't act like a tern in its movements (flying pattern and bill position). I don't think the bird had a fan-like tail either, but I don't remember for sure. As to the bill and feet, I just didn't focus on them. Sometimes I carry binocs and a field bird guide on the tractor, but not that particular day. The bird was so close and its markings so easy to spot that the binocs wouldn't have been of any help. I'm sure that this bird is more common in Iowa than the four accepted documented reports. How many farmers besides Gene Armstrong take bird watching seriously? Well, maybe one hog farmer, Ross.

Sincerely yours,
Dennis Henneken
RR 4
Estherville, Iowa

PS - At about this same time an immature short eyed owl was living along our dredge ditch.