

Common Poorwill

22 Jun 1982

2 mi. north of Waubonsie State Park, Fremont Co., IA

*B. Walters, *J. Braley, *R. Phipps

IBL 53:36

Record Number: 82-24

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATIONS

Betty Walters

Jean B. Braley

Ruth Phipps

LETTER

Jean M. Braley to Tom Kent, 17 August 1982

REFERENCES

Field Reports: none

Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 1-II, 3-III, 2-IV, 1-abstain

Description of call not very detailed. Observer inexperienced.

I'm confused by the letter from Braley.

Needs to be recorded and seen for first state record.

Why can't we get Doris tape?

Call heard by three persons at close range who familiarized themselves with whip-poor-will's and chuck-will's-widow, and the poor-will.

These ladies are careful birders and Jean Braley is very experienced. Somewhat confusing information but call notes well described.

Should occur on occasion in w. Iowa. Has bred some 70 mi. west.

REVOTE (at meeting, 20 November 1982): 5-IV, 2-V

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Poor-will

DATE SEEN: 22 June 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: 2 mi. N. of Waubonsie State Park, Fremont Co., IA

OBSERVERS: B. Walters, J. Braley, R. Phipps.

DATE OF REVIEW: November 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: Discussion followed by secret ballot

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: The records committee regretfully classified this record as a class IV sighting (actually 'hearing', I guess), for several reasons: the rarity of the poor-will in Iowa (no fully substantiated records), the difficulty of definitively describing bird voices, and the desirability of having tangible evidence, such as a recording, for the first record of a species' occurrence in Iowa.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Poor Will (Phalaenoptilus nuttalli) How many? 1 ⁸²⁻²⁷ (Possible second at distance)Location? Fremont County, IA., 2 1/2 miles north of NW corner Waubonsie Sr. ParkType of habitat? Open field bounded by wooded hills, small streamWhen? date(s): June 22, 1982 time: 8:45-50 to 9:15 pm (Dusk to nearly dark)Who? your name and address: Jean B. Brakley (Mrs. F.M.), 209 W. Thomas Ave, Shenandoah, IA 51601others with you: Ruth Phipps (Mrs. Wayne); Betty Walters

others before or after you: _____

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Heard only. Bird moving along edge of field according to call; within 50 to 60 yds. at one time; call distinctive two note "poor-will", repeatedly uttered. Three viewers unable to spot bird with binoculars.

Similar species and how eliminated: Call differs from that of Whip poor will (heard in nearby area same evening) and that of Chuck will's widow, recorded regularly in recent years at Waubonsie Park vicinity.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Poor will heard (seen in flight) ^{once} at ~~Waubonsie Park~~ ~~near Saw Creek Refuge~~ ~~near Mound City, Mo.~~ ~~near Cabin near Saw Creek Refuge, Mound City, Mo.~~

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 8-17-82

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

Shenandoah, Iowa
August 17, 1982

82-24

Dear Tom,

I have been waiting for a friend to return from vacation, since she told me she had taped the "Poor Will". She and her husband have an acreage near Waubesa State Park and had told us of a different Goatsucker call, describing what sounded like that of a Poor Will. She also said that the call wasn't always the same. While they are not birders per se, they are learning and interested.

In talking with her husband, he asked if we'd heard the fairly loud "Click" preceding the two note call. He said he was slightly deaf & sometimes he couldn't hear the "poor will" (they are familiar with the ever-present whip-poor-will) - but when it clicked he

So when Dexis arrived last night with her tape, I was not too surprised to have it be an almost exact copy of the Peterson Field Guide series recording of the Chuck Will's widow.

Ruth, Betty and I did not hear the Chuck Will's widow, but evidence of the tape and our friends would indicate it was present at ~~the~~ about the same time we heard the poor will. Three species of goatsuckers in the same area? Probably, but more records are needed & unfortunately none of us has been able to return to the area more than once. None of us realized that the

could hear the entire call.

Poor will was unrecorded in Iowa 8224
in recent years. DeMont's ^(Birds of Iowa) Iowa Studies in
Natural History, 1934, published by the
University of Iowa, notes "Nuttall's Poor Will:
a casual summer resident; a single
breeding record. (Rudolph M.) Anderson (1907)
says: "Dr. Isidor S. Trostler gives the species as
a 'very rare summer resident in Pottawattamie
County. I took a set of two eggs May 5, 1895;
bird shot almost to pieces, but enough saved to
make identity certain." There is no specimen
or additional records.

The Nebraska O.V. check list includes
The Poor Will and one Nebraska Bird
Revised notes "Nuttall's Poor-will: An uncommon
summer resident and breeder ~~in western~~
throughout the state, more frequent in the
northwestern part."

All these observers - Phipps, Leathers &
Brady - are completely satisfied the bird we
heard on June 22 was a Poor will.
We are all familiar with the whippoor
will and know the Chuck will widow's
call. Sorry we haven't a tape to send
along. We have asked our friends to
notify us if they hear anything other than
a whippoor will, but free it's getting late
for a performance this year.

With kindest regards

Jean B. Brady (Mrs. F.M.)

What species? Poor will How many? TwoLocation? North of Waubesaic Park in Loess Hills.Type of habitat? Woods, Pasture, + HillsWhen? date(s): June 22, '82 time: 8:45 PM to 9:15 PMWho? your name and address: Paul Phipps, 310 University, Glenwood, Iowaothers with you: Betty Walters + Jean Boraleyothers before or after you: John + Doris Mc Kelley

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We did not see the birds but heard them distinctly singing "Poor will." The song was softer than that of the "Whip-poor-will."

Similar species and how eliminated: Whip-poor-will. There are three notes in the whip-poor-will's song and only two in the Poor will's song

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
at duskPrevious experience with species and similar ones: My first experience with Poor-will. I have seen + heard many whip-poor-wills.References and persons consulted before writing description: Burt's "Life Histories of No. Am. Cuckoos, Boat-tailed Hummingbirds + Their Allies" where he mentions Pooah-williamisHow long before field notes made? 7 weeks this form completed? 8-10-82 (over)

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

82-24

What species? Poor-Will How many? 2Location? Road north of highway #2 west of Waubonsie State Park, North on road to first rock road on the right and then about 1/2 mile.Type of habitat? Loess Hills, wooded area and pasture area.When? date(s): 06-22-'82 time: 8:45 pm to 9:00 pmWho? your name and address: Betty Walters 207 W. Thomas Shenandoahothers with you: Ruth Phipps Jean Braleyothers before or after you: Mary Beth Vaughn Barbara Cunningham 06-23-82
same evening time

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Did not see the birds only heard the birds sing. Whip-Poor-Wills were also singing.

People or a couple ^{from} Shenandoah have a small vacation home in the area and they were the ones insisting that we come over for they were hearing two different songs. Being they were non-birders they felt they needed someone else to help them verify ~~the~~ song situation.

I played Peterson's record 'A Field Guide to Bird Songs' before and after hearing the birds song.

The Whip-poor-will had the loud 3 syllable song while the Poor-will had the softer 2 syllable song. I have also heard the Chuck-will's-widow sing plus listening to it on the record before and after the trip to the Waubonsie area. On many occasions to the area I've heard the Whip-poor-wills sing.

Similar species and how eliminated: Whip-poor-will and Chuck-will's widow.

Playing Peterson's record...A Field Guide to Bird Songs. Counting the syllables...going back the next night.
Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: Difference in song syllables and tone inflections.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have been to the area previous years to hear the Whip-poor-will sing and one time heard Chuck-will's widow.
References and persons consulted before writing description:

Peterson's books and record and Birds of North America, Robbins etd.
How long before field notes made? 06-24-82 this form completed? 08-11-82

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240