

Black-backed Woodpecker
28 Dec 1985
se of Ottumwa, Wapello Co., IA
*B. Heusinkveld
P-0189 Hoskins; IBL 56:19, 30, 43

Record Number: 85-25
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Bill Heusinkveld

PHOTOGRAPH

Hoskins, P-0189 (IBL 56:30)

REFERENCES

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 56:19

Field Reports: IBL 56:30

Hoskins, N. R. 1986. Black-backed Woodpecker near Ottumwa. IBL 56:30.

Photograph: IBL 56:30 (P-0189)

Records Committee: IBL 56:43

VOTE: 6-I-P, 1-III

III, Photo copies of photographs are fairly well diagnostic; the yellow on top of the head does not show, probably due to the angle that the photo was taken. All other field marks in the copies would suggest a Black-backed. The documentation noted barred white outer tail feathers which is inconsistent with Black-backed but suggests eastern race three-toed. I would like to see original photos or slides. If they show better detail then I would vote for I-P. The rest of the documentation describes a Black-backed Woodpecker. More documentations from other observers would have helped.

I-P, While I have no problem with the photo or documentation, I do wish more mention was made of bird's feeding habits.

I-P, Good job of documentation by the observers. Outstanding!

V-tentatively [changed to I-P by phone call to secretary].

First question: was it aberrant Hairy? No--lacks white eye stripe and Harry has plain white outer tail feathers. (Harry can have yellow crown, nearly dark back, some barring in sides, flanks.) Next: is it Black-backed or Northern 3-toed Woodpecker? Looks black-backed. However, Northern have barred tail feathers (see enclosed article) but Black-backs don't. Northern can have nearly black back. National Geographic guide pictures Black-backed with white outer tail feathers. Northern with bars, but new Peterson reverses it. Neither mentions tail in text. If bird really had barred white outer tail feathers we have a problem. I'll look for more information on woodpeckers. Roberts--both species can have black barring or spotting in bases of white outer tail feathers; probably more spotting in Northern from the way he states it. Well, well. Called Tanya. She looked it up for me in Master Guide to Birding. It says Northern have barred outer tail feathers and Black-backed have plain white ones and emphasises this as a field character. Says Northern can have dark backs. However, Roberts is rarely wrong. We should look for more information maybe and examine photos closely. Is tail barred? Is there any, even very little, white on back? And maybe I'm taking too seriously a passing statement on barred white tail feathers in the

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Black-backed Woodpecker

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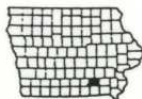
documentation. In any case, I'm confused.



Black-backed Woodpecker southeast of Ottumwa, 28 December 1985. Photo by Nelson Hoskins.

BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER NEAR OTTUMWA

NELSON R. HOSKINS

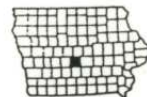


A Black-backed Woodpecker was found at the former YMCA Camp Arrowhead, 3 miles east and 1 mile south of Ottumwa, Wapello County, on 28 December 1985 by Bill and Marge Heusinkveld and later seen by Charles and Darleen Ayres and myself. The bird was in a grove of pine trees, many of which appeared to be diseased and dying. It was active, moving from tree to tree. The back was solid black with heavily barred black and white sides. It had a heavy white line below the eye and yellow cap, indicating that the bird was a male. He ignored us, even when we approached as close as 20 feet. The bird was observed just after noon on a windy, overcast day with temperature near zero. Photos were taken with a 600 mm lens at 1/60th second exposure time.

508 Shaul Avenue, Ottumwa, IA 52501

CLARK'S GREBE AT BIG CREEK STATE PARK

STEVE DINSMORE

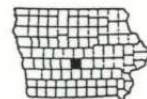


On 12 October 1985, while scanning Big Creek Lake in Polk County, I noticed what appeared to be three Western Grebes. The birds were about one and one-half times as large as several nearby American Coots. The large size, long neck, striking black-and-white coloration, and long thin bills identified the birds as Western or Clark's Grebes. Closer examination revealed that one bird was significantly lighter colored than the other two. It had a lighter back, less extensive darkness on the back of the neck, and a white cheek that included the eye. The dark color on the crown and neck was much grayer than in the other two grebes. I was not able to see the bill color. From these marks, I identified the bird as a Clark's Grebe, formerly the light phase of the Western Grebe. I notified other birders, but the bird could not be found the next morning; however, the next afternoon Francis Moore found a Clark's Grebe above the nearby Saylorville Reservoir dam. This record of Clark's Grebe is the second for Iowa. The other was found on 5 May 1983 (*IBL* 53:48, 54:38).

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PARASITIC JAEGER AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

BOB MYERS



While scoping the Saylorville Reservoir just north of the dam on 14 October 1985, I noticed a dark gull-like bird 300-400 yards out on the water. Even though the bird appeared as not much more than a brown spot, the thought of jaeger raced through my mind. After working my way up the west shore line in order to get a closer view, I could see the overall dark brown coloration, stocky neck, and slightly upturned wing tips of the resting bird. When the bird flew and began to chase Ring-billed Gulls, the overall dark brown color was confirmed, and prominent, flashing white patches were noted at the base of the primaries, both on the upper and lower surfaces. I concluded that the bird was a jaeger; but which one? The tail streamers were not developed, suggesting a juvenile bird. The bird's size—about as large as Ring-billed Gull—and its rapid flight seemed to eliminate the larger and slower Pomarine Jaeger. The large amount of white in the wing, especially on the upper wing, and the un-tern-like flight ruled out Long-tailed Jaeger. I concluded, therefore, that the bird was a juvenile dark phase Parasitic Jaeger. There are four previous substantiated records of Parasitic Jaeger in Iowa (Dinsmore et al., 1984, *Iowa Birds*).

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