

Common Raven  
16 Mar 1969  
Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA  
Anon.

Record Number: 97-AA  
Classification: NA

IBL 68:86; Cedar Rapids Gazette, 16 Mar 1969, photo

REFERENCES

Anon. 16 Mar 1969. untitled. Cedar Rapids Gazette.

Records Committee: IBL 68:87

VOTE: 2 A-P, 1 A-D, 1 A-O, 1 A-E, 2 NA

A-P, Thick neck and body, bill shape, length of legs correct for raven. No mention of voice.

NA, The bill looks like a Raven. I can't judge the tail from the photo. I don't see the shagginess on a photo at 30 or 40 feet. ID seems based totally on size which seems dangerous. Date is reasonable, however.

A-O, The bird's behavior and unwariness make me believe it spent some time in captivity as a pet or exhibit.

NA, Is it a raven, and, if so, where did it come from? It looks like a raven to me based on bill shape, feathers on culmen, and huge feet. Also it was said to be large. Tail seems to be long. I would like a raven expert's opinion. Could someone have brought a raven to Cedar Rapids? Are they kept in captivity?

A-E, The photo looks to be that of a Raven (bill shape and size) and the description of the size and wingspan is that of a Raven. This bird seemed to be real tame and wonder if this might have arrived at this location other than on its own and might have been in captivity at some time or another to get to Iowa. Are all Raven's this tame?

A-P, Heavy bill with rectal bristles about 1/2 way along culmen indicative of C. Raven. Am. Crow bill slimmer, thus appearing longer, and rectal bristles far less prominent. (see pictures Howell and Webb and also photos in Aud Soc Field Guide).  
RE-VOTE: 2 A-P, 4 A-O, 1 NA

A-O, Based on the shape and apparent size of the bird, I believe it was a Common Raven. Because of the bird's tameness, I think it's possible that the bird was in captivity at some point. According to The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds, ravens are normally shy and wary, which corresponds with my own limited experiences with the species.

A-O, This may well be a good record, but where did it come from? Hard to judge from a newspaper article well after the fact.

A-O, Wild ravens just don't stroll down the streets of downtown Duluth (or St. Paul) in winter. Or, at least, I am unaware of this behavior.

NA, Looks like a raven to me. Behavior suggests it may have been raised in captivity.

A-P, Date and place of sighting are consistent with vagrancy in this species. Ravens are tame if hungry and tolerate humans. Possibility of escape, but I don't believe it is significant in

97-AA

this case.

DISCUSSION AT MEETING (20 Sep 1997): The Records Committee amended procedures to eliminate category A-O and consider previous votes as NA.

CEDAR RAPIDS RESIDENTS have a new conversation piece, at least that segment of the population which works downtown and uses the razed urban renewal area for a parking place, has something different to talk about. It's a big black bird. It apparently makes its headquarters in the area north of A avenue NE between Fifth street and St. Luke's hospital. Downtown workers have reported seeing it there when they park their cars on the way to work in the morning. It also makes fairly regular calls at the Elks club, perching on the railing of the rooftop parking area there Friday noon. It's been seen on Second avenue SE, Bever avenue SE, Maplewood drive NE, A avenue NE and on the vacant lot adjoining the Roosevelt hotel's parking building.



What a stir the bird has created. The writer first saw it swooping to a landing in the parking of Seventh street just below A avenue. His first reaction was "what the deuce is a crow (a very wary bird) doing in such a thickly populated area?" His second was "my gosh, if that's a crow it's the biggest one I ever saw." And it is big. People who have encountered it have described it as being anywhere from over a foot to two feet in length from beak to tail. A lady who saw it standing on the curb on Second avenue said its head came to the door handle of a car parked at the curb. Well, so who knows, perhaps it was a high curb. Two work-bound men said it zoomed over their car as they were parking and landed nearby. They estimated its wingspread at nearly three feet.

It apparently has little fear of man. Two men who saw it on Maplewood drive tried to catch it. The bird had no objection to their approach, but when they got too close it simply moved off a bit. Some women who were walking east on First avenue suddenly were confronted by the bird as they reached the vacant lot beyond the Roosevelt parking building. His rolling, cocky gait prompted them to make a wide detour to the edge of the walk to get around him. Gazette Photographer L. W. Ward who took the picture above shot it from about 30 or 40 feet. He approached as close as 25 feet for another picture. The bird was patrolling Fifth street NE, about 50 feet below A avenue when Ward, who had been assigned to get a picture of the bird, found him. Well, the question is "What's a big bird like that doing in a place like this? Or, for that matter, what's a big bird like that?"

It seems likely that Cedar Rapids is entertaining a raven, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a raven has been entertaining Cedar Rapids. Byron Arnold, biology instructor at Washington high school, says the description would have to be that of a raven, because the wing span of a crow does

(Continued: Page 19C, Col. 7.)

The Cedar Rapids Gazette: Sun., Mar. 16, 1969 19C

## Around the Town

(Continued from Page 2C.)

not exceed a couple of feet. Ravens, he says have a wing span of about three feet. However, he adds that the bird would be out of place in Cedar Rapids since in this country it has the Rocky mountain area as his habitat—Utah and Nevada, for example. His diet is the same as the crow's, grain, corn, vegetable matter and carrion. So the guessing game continues. How did it get here? Why does it stay? Why doesn't it just up and fly away?