

Common Raven

< 1952

Spirit Lake, Dickinson Co., IA

James Sieh

Sieh 1957

Record Number: 93-FO
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Sieh, J. 1957. First authentic record of Raven in Iowa. IBL
27:21-22.

VOTE: 4 NA, 1 A-D

NA, I wish Sieh had told us how he made the identification
from beak, skull, and a few feathers. Date is vague. /thk

A-D, Bill size. /jjd

NA, I am sympathetic to JJD's note, but no details of beak
size are given. /wrs

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First Authentic Record of Raven in Iowa.—One of the aerial acrobats of the wilderness was mistaken for a Crow and accidentally killed on October 7, 1956, by Art Weik of Spirit Lake (exact location: Potter's Slough, Section 23, Superior Township, Dickinson County, Iowa). Thanks to the alertness of Dr. Mary Roberts and our Editor, this specimen was obtained and delivered to Jack W. Musgrove, Museum Director of the State Dept. of History and Archives, Des Moines, who listed it as the first authentic record of a Raven recovered in Iowa. Mr. Musgrove furnished this information: "I am convinced that this bird is the Northern Raven, *Corvus corax principalis*, the specimen showing the following measurements: Length, 25¾ in.; wing, 17 in.; bill, 3 in.; extended wing, 51 in.—which puts this bird well within the measurement range of *principalis*. I am sorry I could not record the weight of the bird, but after that length of time, it had lost considerable weight through evaporation."

In about 1952, this writer positively identified the remains (beak, skull, and a few remaining feathers) of another Raven then in the possession of Frank Marnette (now deceased) who reported finding the dead bird in the vicinity of Spirit Lake. Writings of DuMont and Anderson indicate the species absent from Iowa for 50-70 years, and mention some of the early records as questionable. Perhaps Ravens are again occasionally visiting the Hawkeye State, and ornithologists should brush up on their field identification of the species in contrast to the common Crow. The harsh and raucous voice, the ridiculous antics of the inquisitive buffoons, and their superb playfulness in air currents endear the Raven to earthbound admirers.—JAMES G. SIEH, Biologist, Iowa Conservation Commission, Spirit Lake, Iowa.

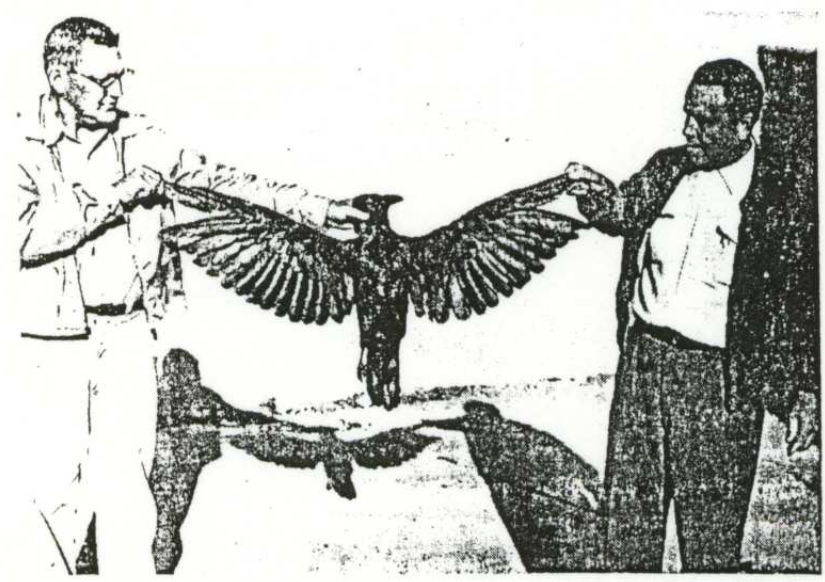
Northern Raven

Sieh 1957 (cont)



COMPARISON OF SIZE OF COMMON CROW AND THE RAVEN SHOT IN DICKINSON COUNTY

The specimens are held by Jack W. Musgrove, Museum Director of State Dept. of History & Archives, Des Moines. Photograph by Jim Sherman, reprinted from "Iowa Conservationist," February, 1957, page 107.



ART WEIK (LEFT) AND DALE LUNDSTROM HOLDING THE RAVEN WHICH WEIK SHOT OCTOBER 7, 1856 (Photograph furnished by Spirit Lake "Beacon")