Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union Printed: 11/22/00

Pinyon Jay
Record Number: 96-66
30 Nov 1996
Classification: A-P
n. of Boone, Boone Co., IA

*J. Dinsmore, *M. Proescholdt, *Kent IBL 67:23,61,82, P-0529,0543, Crim 1997

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014 [4/6/97] Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb 50148 Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52240 PHOTOGRAPH

T. H. Kent, 6 Dec 1996, P-0529 [IBL 67:65, Field Notes 51:65] Jim Fuller, 6 Dec 1996, P-0543

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:23, 61
Records Committee: IBL 67:82, 68:87

Crim, L., and G. Crim. 1997. Pinyon Jay in Boone County. IBL 67:64-65.

Photo: Field Notes 51:65, 1997, P-0529 VOTE: 7 A-P





Pinyon Jay n. of Boone, Boone Co., IA 6 Dec 1996 T. H. Kent

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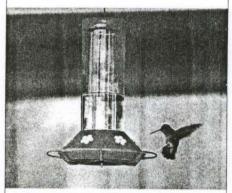
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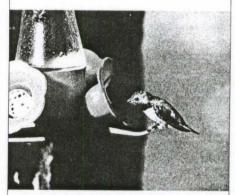
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Once again the autumn hummingbird news was dominated by Selasphorus reports; this time, however, the season was also flavored by the Region's first representative from the genus Cynanthus. Illinois' first Broad-billed Hummingbird, a female, which attended a feeder on the w. side of Trivoli, Peoria, IL Nov. 7-23 (†DBo, VK, †DJ, ph., v.t., m.ob.), was captured and the identification confirmed by measurements (MD). Adult ♂ Rufous Hummingbirds visited feeders in Fordland, MO Aug 1-3 (JSh), Springfield, MO Aug. 6-10 (LRi), near Sprit L., IA Aug. 21-23 (†LSc, †JF, ET, ph,), and in Luckey, OH Sept. 8-Nov. 13 (RFr, GS, ph.). In addition, an imm. female was netted and measured in Urbana, IL Oct. 7 (SBI, EWa, †RCh, †BC) and an imm. male was captured, banded, and mea-



A first for Illinois was this female Broadbilled Hummingbird in Trivoli, Peoria County, November 22, 1996. Photograph/Joe B. Milosevich.



In Luckey, Ohio, this adult male Rufous Hummingbird was present for much of the autumn of 1996. Photograph/Raymond Froelich and Gwen Schult.

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Probably a refugee from drought in the west, this Pinyon Jay that appeared November 30, 1996, in Boone County, Iowa, furnished a second state record. Photograph/Thomas H. Kent.

SNOWY PLOVER AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 3 May 1996, I saw a Snowy Plover at the Oak Grove Beach Recreation Area of Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. I studied and photographed the bird at distances as close as 20 m between 10:00-10:21 a.m. When I arrived at the beach, I noted a distant pale shorebird near the water which I



thought was probably a Piping Plover. I left the bird for a couple of minutes to look at some Sanderlings, after which I couldn't immediately relocate the bird. Several minutes later, I found the bird high up on the beach. As soon as I put the scope on the bird, I recognized it as a Snowy Plover (Fig. 1). Overall, the bird was very pale. The upperparts were a pale, sandy brown. When viewed from behind, the bird had a narrow white collar and the crown appeared buffy and contrasted with the mantle. The underparts were white. The forehead was white with a small black patch on the forecrown. The bird also had a small black auricular patch and a black "slash" mark

on each shoulder. The bill was very thin, black, and had a slight upturned appearance. The legs were grayish, and the bird seemed long-legged for its size. Throughout the observation, the bird's upright posture and very active foraging behavior were distinct. Based on the brightness of the plumage and black head markings, I sexed the Fig. 1. Snowy Plover, Saylorville bird as an adult male. Other birders did not Reservoir, 3 May 1996. Photo by relocate the bird later in the day.



Stephen J. Dinsmore.

This is the fifth record of a Snowy Plover for Iowa. Previous records are all from spring: 6-7 May 1988 at Bays Branch Wildlife Area, Guthrie County (Dinsmore and Fix, Iowa Bird Life 58:86-87, 1988), 22 May 1988 at Dunbar Slough, Greene County (Dinsmore and Fix, Iowa Bird Life 58:86-87, 1988), 28 April 1990 near Burlington, Des Moines County (lowa Bird Life 62:21), and 10-13 May 1992 at Riverton Wildlife Area, Fremont County (Iowa Bird Life 62:76, two birds).

4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

PINYON JAY IN BOONE COUNTY

LLOYD AND GAYLAN CRIM

At 7:45 a.m. on 30 November 1996, while watching a flock of Blue Jays at our bird feeder, we noticed one "odd" bird. After checking the bird book, we decided it was a Pinyon Jay. We then called Jim Dinsmore who came to see it. After he arrived, all three of us were able to observe it returning to the bird feeder three times in the next several hours.



The bird was roughly the size of a Blue Jay, with a shorter tail and a longer, thinner, slightly curved beak (Fig 1.). In color, it was mostly gray with some light bluish-gray color on the head, tail, and edges of the wings. It had a white throat patch, but lacked the streaking an adult should have, and was labeled a juvenile by some of the many visitors who came to see it. It walked rather than hopped, and mingled with the Blue Jays as one of them. Its visits to our feeders were fairly

regular at first, becoming more erratic as the season progressed and the snow melted. It seemed to prefer the peanuts, but occasionally took sunflower hearts, even hanging from a "super ball" feeder to do so. It was last observed on 22 March 1997.

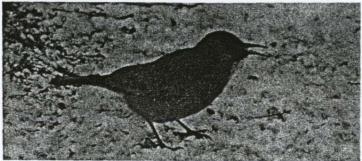


Figure 1. Pinyon Jay in Boone County, 6 December 1996. Photograph by Thomas H. Kent.

This is only the second report of this western species in Iowa, the previous report being one seen at Shenandoah from December 1972 to January 1973 (Zollars, Iowa Bird Life 43:28-29, 1973). To our knowledge, this is the furthest east report of this species.

1750 140th St., Boone, IA. 50036

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER IN HARDIN COUNTY

MARK PROESCHOLDT

On 2 June 1995, I stopped at Eagle City County Park along the Iowa River Greenbelt in north Hardin County. I heard a loud unfamiliar warbler song in a brushy tangle along the park's edge. There were several birds in the tangle. I heard one or two loud "chip" notes then and zeroed in on the area of the



chips Then a warbler popped out into view about eight feet up in the tangle. It looked like a breeding-plumaged male Mourning Warbler. It was yellow underneath, had a dark green back, and a dark gray hood with a definite black smudge on its upper breast. It was blackish around its eye area. But it had very vivid white eye crescents above and below its eye like a breeding-plumaged Franklin's Gull would have. I had a very good look at it for approximately five seconds, and it was a broken white eyering that was incomplete both in front of and behind the eye. I was very surprised! The bird moved, and I did not see it again. The unfamiliar song continued, but I was unable to find the singing bird. Then lack of additional time forced me to leave. Although I had only a brief view of the bird, the presence of the incomplete eye ring made it clear that this was a MacGillivray's Warbler, a western species that otherwise might be confused with a Mourning or Connecticut warbler. This is the first accepted record for Iowa of a MacGillivray's Warbler.

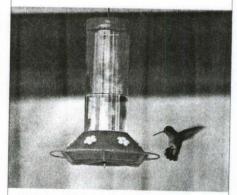
Box 65, Liscomb Iowa 50148

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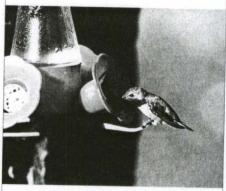
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Probably a refugee from drought in the west, this Pinyon Jay that appeared November 30, 1996, in Boone County, Iowa, furnished a second state record. Photograph/Thomas H. Kent.

Normal

range

Pinyon jay comes to Iowa, delighting bird-watchers

By LARRY STONE

REGISTER STAFF WRITER

A pinyon jay with a case of wanderlust has Iowa bird-watchers buzzing.

Although pinyon jays normally get no farther east than the Black Hills or western Nebraska, a single bird has been seen since Nov. 30 near Boone. The mostly blue bird, about the size of a common blue jay, has feasted on peanuts near feeders at the home of Lloyd and Gaylan Crim, northeast of Boone.

"It's been kind of fun," said Gaylan Crim. At least 38 people—some from as far as Burlington and Davenport—have come to see the bird.

Crim said the shape and habits of the distinctive-looking jay remind her of a large, blue starling.

James Dinsmore, professor of animal ecology at Iowa State University, said the jay is only the second of the species ever reported in Iowa. The other was in Shenandoah in the early 1970s.

Dinsmore said the bird may have come to Iowa because of a shortage of food. Pinyon jays often feed on

PINYON JAY

- Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus is common in pinyon-juniper woodlands of interior mountains and high plateaus in the western United States.
- Color: Blue overall, blue throat streaked with white.
- Crest: None
 Bill: Long, spiky
- Tail: Short

The pinyon jay is generally seen in large flocks and nests in loose colonies. Typical flight call is a high, piercing "mew." The immature bird is paler, grayer overall.

SOURCE: Field Guide to the Birds of North America

North America.

THE REGISTER

pinyon pine seeds.

The jay's appearance could be a clue to watch for other unusual birds, Dinsmore said. He cited red crossbills, which normally feed on seeds in coniferous forests in Canada and the northern and western United States.

Clark's nutcrackers also might

leave their mountain haunts to wander east, as they occasionally do, Dinsmore said. The gray, sharpbilled birds, with white patches on black wings, are nearly a foot long.

For information on the pinyon jay or other unusual birds, call the Iowa Birdline, (319) 338-9881. The recorded message is sponsored by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species Pinyon Jay How many? one Location? ne Boone County

Type of habitat? at bird feeder, in farm yard

When? date(s): 30 November 1996 Time: 8:45-10:15 a.m.

Who? your name and address Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive

Others with you Lloyd and Gay Crim Others before or after you

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

About the same size as Blue Jays with which it was feeding. No evidence of any crest, and tail somewhat shorter proportionally than that of Blue Jay. The bill was black, slightly decurved, and both longer and more slender than that of Blue Jay. Bill appeared to be starling-like in shape. Feet and legs were black and strong-used to hold peanuts as it beat at them with its bill.

Overall color was largely gray with a light blueish gray color on head, tail, and edges of wing, most noticeably on the alula. The chin was an offwhite color and neatly set off from the gray of the undersides. I could not see any streaking on the undersides-appeared to be all light gray.

Based on the gray undersides, I assumed that this was an immature bird.

On the ground, the bird walked starling-like rather than hopping like Blue Jays do.

Similar species and how eliminated:

This combination of body shape and color separates it from other jays.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? If yes, explain: no disagreement

Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: reasonable light-not an issue. Bird was about 15 feet away when it was at the feeder and allowed leisurely look it. Saw it

come in to feeder three times for as long as 10-15 minutes at a time. Viewed with 10 power binoculars.

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: none

References and persons consulted before writing description: looked at Robbins field guide while watching bird.

How long before field notes made? this form completed? This description written about 1.5 hours later from mental notes taken while watching the bird.

DOCUMENTATION	FORM	for	extraordinary	bird	sightings	in	Iowa
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What species? Pinyon Jay	How many?
Location? N.E. Boone County - (Lloy	d and Jaylin Crim home)
Type of habitat? Good backyard feeders, cultivated	I fields around home, woods out bag
When? date(s): Nov. 30, 1996 time: 3:3	copin. to 3:32 pin. (pproximatory)
Who?your name and address: Mark Proescheldt, B	Box 65, Liscomb, Jour 50148
others with you: Beth Proescheldt Eugene + Eloise	Armstrong Pam & Roid Allon, the Crim
Dennis + Cecille Thompson, Tom Ken others before or after you: Jim Dinsmere	saw it hatere us
	t a a to the change describe

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.

this big jay appeared and was about the size of a Blue Jay and Cardinal with it. It was relatively light blue-gray all over its plumage except it had a small white patch or circle on its throat. It had a rounded head with no crest. It had a large massive dark bill. It ate a lot and then took off and flow south behind the barn to trees beyond the barn. A neat bird in Iowa!

Similar species and how eliminated: Scrub Jays and Mexican Jays do not have the uniform blue coloration of a pinyon Jay — they have some brownish on backs and lighter underparts.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? Mo

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Cloudy, good viewing, 40 yards at first from Cer; later > 20 feet away in tree and on ground (estimated) as soon from house, 8×30 Binors Previous experience with species and similar ones: there seen a few times out West, Saw 4 Pinyon Jays in N. Arizona in August 1996, References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Seographic guide.

How long before field notes made? 8:00 p.m. this form completed? NOV, 30, 1996

That night

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Pinyon Jay; Number: 1 imm.

Location: 8 miles north of Boone, Boone Co., IA Date: 30 November 1996; Time: 3:15 to 3:20 p.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: found this a.m. at rural home of Lloyd and Gaylan Crim; Jim Dinsmore called me; present were Dick Tetrault, Beth Proescholdt, Mark Proescholdt, Dennis and Cecille Thompson; other before and after.

Habitat and circumstances: Rural farmstead on slight moraine of Des Moines Lobe with conifer grove on northwest side of house. Bird came to feeder at southeast corner of house.

Description of bird: A slender corvid, slightly smaller than 6 Blue Jays that were there at the same time. Came to feeder and then dropped to ground where it rapidly ate fragments of corn and perhaps other seeds. The bill was slender, straight, sharply pointed, and dark. The bird had no crest and was trimmer than the Blue Jays with a much narrower tail. The over all color was gray or perhaps slightly gray-blue with definite light blue tail and soft light blue on the head and nape which was not sharply demarcated from the gray of the rest of the body. The alula was also blue. The throat was nearly white and appeared well demarcated, with some indistinct broad streaks. The primaries projected down the tail only about one-third of its length and were blackish. The tail was much shorter than that of a Blue Jay and was not broad or flared at the tip. The legs and feet were dark. The body shape was somewhat like a starling, although not as chunky and with a longer, narrower tail.

Voice: not heard.

Similar species: The shape differs from other jays, especially the short, narrow tail and pointed bill. The size, shape, and coloration fit no other species. The limited extent of blue indicates that this was an immature bird.

Any one have reservations?: no.

Light: heavy overcast; Distance: 15 feet (est.); Optics: 10x binocular

Previous experience: I have seen this species twice: California and Colorado.

References before/after viewing: Looked at field guides before typing final report.

Time of notes: As soon as bird left feeder area; Final typing: 2 days.

96-66 not review

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Pinyon Jay

Number: 1

Location: Crim feeder, NE Boone Co., IA

Habitat: rural yard

Date: 1 December 1996, 28 January 1997

Time: 8:04-8:15 a.m. and 10:44-10:48 a.m. on 1 December

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

Others who saw bird: Gay and Lloyd Crim, m.ob.

Description of bird(s): The bird spent much of its time feeding with several Blue Jays. This bird was about the same length as a Blue Jay, but of slightly heavier build and shorter-tailed. The head, mantle, upperwings, and tail were dark blue. The eye and area around the eye were darker than the rest of the face. The throat was white and unstreaked. The bird lacked a crest. The rest of the underparts was light gray. Compared to the bill of a Blue Jay, this bird had a longer, thinner, slightly decurved bill. The bill and legs were black. On the ground, the bird walked instead of hopping. The flight was undulating with rapid, stiff wingbeats and short glides.

Similar species and how eliminated: The lack of a crest and general coloration eliminated Blue Jay. The bill shape, short tail, and general coloration eliminated Inland Scrub Jay and Gray-breasted Jay.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with overcast skies. Estimated viewing distance about 5m. I used 10x42 binoculars.

Previous experience with species: I have seen Pinyon Jays in several western states, mostly in NW Nebraska.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none made How long before this form completed: written 1 December 1996

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Pinyon Jay

Number: 1

Location: E. Boone Co, Lloyd and Gaylin Crim residence.

Habitat: Rural farmstead.

Date and time: December 1, 1996, 10:55 a.m., 11:20 a.m., 12:40 a.m., each time for

approximately one minute. Seen again December 8, 1996, 11:40 a.m.

Name and address: Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

Others with you: Lloyd and Gaylin Crim, Ann Johnson, Pete Peterson, Steve Dinsmore,

Jim Sinclair, Dennis Henrickson, Ken Lowder, John Daniel, Chris Caster.

Others before or after you: Jim Fuller, Jim Dinsmore, Tom Kent.

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Approximately same size as nearby Blue Jays, but with a longer bill, shorter neck, plumper body, shorter tail, and lacking a crest. Bill long, black, pointed, and slightly decurved. Eye black. Head blue, with a brighter blue area in the malar region. Back, scapulars, and coverts mostly light blue-gray, with several blue covert feathers. Primary tips on folded wing blackish. Tail short and blue. Chin and throat white with faint grayish streaking. Breast, belly, and sides light gray. Legs and feet black.

The Pinyon Jay accompanied a small flock of Blue Jays, and came to a feeding station under a large tree next to the house. Upon arriving, it would land in the tree, drop down to the ground, and walk around on the ground picking up peanuts in its bill.

Similar species eliminated: The lack of a crest, short tail, long bill, chunky body, and coloration eliminate similar jays.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.

Viewing conditions: Overcast; viewed through the window 5 - 10 yards away with 8 x 40 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: No experience with Pinyon Jay. References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide.

How long before field notes made: Immediately. How long before this form completed: Six hours.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Pinyon Jay (Immature)

LOCATION: Feeder in farmyard of Lloyd and Gaylan Crim, northeast Boone County.

DATE & TIME: 6 December, 1996 (7:40 and 9:10 AM for 1-2 minutes each visit)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHERS: Discovered by Lloyd and Gaylan Crim, and seen by MOb before and after.

DESCRIPTION: As Tom Kent and I arrived early in the morning, the bird was in the tree above the feeder and at the feeder for about two minutes. We later saw it visit the feeder for about the same amount of time from inside the house, and it was also photographed. Comparisons to other birds were with Blue Jay and Starling, and it generally was more similar to the Starling, with a short tail, bulky body, and long, relatively thin bill. It seemed to be smaller than the Blue Jay, and a little bigger than the Starling. Specifically, the bird was a gray color on all underparts. The back was blue-gray, and the only real blue was found on the head, the tail, and the alula. The throat was white (can be seen in photo). The top of the head was rounded, with no crest, and the bill was relatively long and thin. The eye was dark, and the legs were black. It was interesting that the bird "walked" one foot at a time, rather than "hopped" (can be seen lifting one leg in photo). During the first sighting outside, as the bird flew away, it gave a series of rather sharp single note calls.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The combination of no crest, long and thin bill, short tail should rule out all other jays. The "walking" behavior is distinctive for Pinyon Jay.

VIEWING CONDITIONS & OPTICS: It was early morning of a cloudy day, and I was looking east at distances of 60-70 feet using Swift Audubon binoculars (8.5 X 44) during the first sighting, and the same binoculars and the range finder of a Pentax (500mm) camera looking south at distances from 8-15 feet during the second sighting.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen adults three previous times in Colorado and California.

REFERENCES & FIELD GUIDES: Field notes were made immediately after sighting, and National Geographic guide was viewed after sighting. This form was typed on 16 December.