

Great Gray Owl

Record Number: 96-26

1 Mar 1996

Classification: A-S

Des Moines, Polk Co., IA

*Jim Dinsmore

Dinsmore and Schepers 2000; IBL 66:107, 67:82, ISUSpec #2643, P-0503

LETTER

Jim Dinsmore to Tom Kent, 19 June 1996 [4/6/97]

SPECIMEN

Iowa State Univ. #2643

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, P-0503

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:104

Records Committee: IBL 67:82

Dinsmore, J. J., and M. A. Schepers. 2000. Great Gray Owl in Polk County. Iowa Bird Life 70:46-47.

VOTE: 4 A-S, 3 A-P

A-S, Has anyone from the committee seen the specimen?

A-P, Great!

one-time event. The rarity of reports of Hudsonian Godwits in the Midwest in the fall argues against it being a regular event. However, if these landings occurred during the night and the birds took flight again at daybreak, they would seldom be seen or reported by birders or others. Although wildlife/aircraft strikes have been widely reported, most involve species such as gulls, raptors, starlings, and waterfowl (www.faa.gov/arp/pdf/bash9098.pdf). Even though several species of shorebirds have been identified in wildlife/aircraft strikes, no known strikes involving Hudsonian Godwits have been reported previously.

Skagen, S. K., P. B. Sharpe, R. B. Waltermire, and M. B. Dillon. 1999. Biogeographic profiles of shorebird migration in midcontinental North America, *Biol Sci Rep*, USGS/BRD/BSR—2000-0003.

USDA, APHIS-Wildlife Services, 6000 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321 and 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

Great Gray Owl in Polk County

James J. Dinsmore and Malia A. Schepers

On 3 March 1996, while working at the Wildlife Care Clinic at Iowa State University, Schepers learned that a Great Gray Owl had been turned in by Stephanie Romey, a wildlife rehabilitator from Des Moines. By the time the owl arrived at the care clinic, it was dehydrated and had a broken wing. Despite efforts to care for the bird, it soon died. On 4 March, Schepers notified Dinsmore of the bird and turned it over to him where a study skin was made. The bird was a male with no fat and weighed 765 grams. It now is specimen No. 2643 in the Iowa State University collection. Its large size, overall dark gray color, white markings under the eyes, and relatively long tail make the bird unmistakable.

As best we can determine, this bird was found in the 1700 block of Hickman Road in Des Moines on 1 March. It apparently had been hit by a car and was reported to the Des Moines Animal Control Department. They in turn passed the bird on to Romey who cared for

96-26



Great Gray Owl. Photo by James J. Dinsmore.

it and then turned it over to the Wildlife Care Clinic.

One of the largest invasions of Great Gray Owls into the north-central states occurred during the winter of 1995–1996. At least 342 individuals were reported from 39 counties in Minnesota, the largest invasion on record (Eckert 1996). Several of those birds were reported in southern Minnesota so it was not surprising that a few reached Iowa. To our knowledge, this is the furthest south this species has been reported in the Midwest. What is most surprising is that it reached Des Moines but was not reported by anyone until it was found injured.

Eckert, K. R. 1996. The 1995–96 influx of northern owls, *The Loon* 68:221–228.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014 (oldcoot@iastate.edu) and 28041 510th Avenue, Kelley, IA 50134

Garganey at Forney Lake

Rick Schmid

On Friday, 2 April 1999, I had been birding all day at Waubonsie Wildlife Area and Riverton. I had planned all along to stop at Forney Lake on my way home to Omaha at the end of the day. I introduced myself to a fellow birder at Riverton, and he mentioned he had been to Forney Lake that morning. He said that there wasn't much there except for American White Pelicans. I was disappointed to hear that but decided to stop anyway.

At Forney Lake, I passed by the expected teal, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, and cormorants, and of course, I saw the large flock of



Great Gray Owl
Des Moines, Polk Co., IA 97-22
1 Mar 1996, ISU specimen #2643
P-0503

Great Gray Owl
Des Moines, Polk Co., IA 97-22
1 Mar 1996, ISU specimen #2643
P-0503

96-26

Tom - The Great Gray
Owl was found injured in
DM on 1 March. taken to
rehab person & then to ISU -
Died on 3 March