

Black-backed Woodpecker
23 Dec 1978
north of Boyden, Sioux Co., IA
*Jay A. Stravers
IBL 49:26,56

Record Number: 81-CN
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jay A. Stravers

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 49:26, 56

VOTE (1981): 7-III

III, bare minimum detail, behavior fits.

III, exemplary documentation.

III, OK description in documentation from 3 observers.

III, 'Meticulous' documentation accepted by Halmi and appears
sound to me.

Field Station 81-CN
second, first since 124 #7

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species: ^{male} Black Backed Three Toed Woodpecker, *Picoides arcticus* 2. Number: ONE

Location: 2 1/2 miles North of Boyden Iowa on east side of county highway L14

Date: Dec. 23, 1978 5. Time Bird seen: 1:00 PM to about 2:30 PM

temp. - 4°F winds from the N-NW 10-20 mph relatively low barometric pressure (less than 30.0mm)
Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Size - body size slightly larger than hairy woodpecker, around 25cm² from crest to tip of tail (guesstimate)
Body shape rather like hairy woodpecker. Beak - black - 4.5cm long. Feet - very dark almost black
3 toes each about 3-4cm long. Nails invisible. Featureless black back. Wings black with white speckles
on tips of wings, no discernable pattern to these white specks because plumage was ruffled by winds.
Featureless white breast. Short (less than 1cm.) black bars on the bird's sides - Bars are roughly
perpendicular to the long axis of the bird's body. Throat is white with a thin black stripe ~~on both~~
~~side~~ running ~~down~~ from the base of the beak down both sides of the throat. There is a bright yellow
patch covering ~~the~~ nearly the entire crest but not appearing on the back or sides of the bird's head so it
is invisible if you were looking up at the bird at an angle greater than about 45° measured upward from
horizon. Eyes black with no eye rings. Short white whiskers at the base of the beak. **OVER**

Description of voice, if heard: no voice heard possibly feeding?
Description of behavior: chipping bark from trees (mostly dead elms). The bird spent an average of
about 5 mins. at each individual tree, usually starting near the base of the
tree and working upwards to a height that never exceeded about 10m. Size of bark chips varied up to about 25cm²
behavior of bird could have been affected by proximity of observers, but the bird seemed totally unafraid until approached to within 3m.
Habitat - general: 3000 m² farm grove in wide open (formerly prairie) gently rolling farm land.

specific: grove is a thick growth of shrubs, weedy plants, ash trees, and American + Chinese Elms.
many of the Elms are dead and fallen. There are 2 rows (closely spaced) of Ponderosa Pine on the North side
of the grove. The grove is surrounded with mature Honeysuckle shrubs. Ground covered with 0.5m. of snow
Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: in the grove.

~~Pileated Woodpecker~~ There are really no other species that could be confused other than
possibly a Pileated Woodpecker who is much too large + has 4 toes instead of 3

Distance (how measured)? 15 meters to 30 meters (estimated) 12. Optical equipment: naked eye,
8x50 Binocular, 60mm Bushnell spacemaster - 20x eyepiece

Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
recast sky. Bird was observed from virtually every different sun angle

Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
no previous experience with this species. I am well acquainted with the Downy, Hairy, and

Other observers: Pileated woodpeckers
Loreen Stravers, Henry O. Stegeman, Aaron Stegeman

Did the others agree with your identification? yes

Other observers who independently identified this bird: Loreen Stravers

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Robbins, Braun, Zin, and Singer; 1966; Birds of North America
Peterson - A Field Guide to the Birds.

The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds (Western Region)

Description of the bird given in 6. was rewritten from field notes taken during observation period
The books were used only for identification + general information. They did not influence the **OVER**
Jay A. Stravers Jay A. Stravers Address: 3220 Madison Ave #2

Date: 5-13-79 Location: Boulder City, State: Colorado 80303

Comments - this form lacks an entry for specific weather conditions at time of sighting
(over)

nt.

mostly black about 8cm long. There are some white feathers in the tail but there is no white on the tail could not be determined because of wind ruffled plumage.

Halmi, N. S. 1979. Field reports. Iowa Bird Life 49:23-26 (p 26)

scarce. On December 23, Mr. and Mrs. Jay Stravers saw a male Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker near Boyden, Sioux Co. (fide GB). Since there is no recent record of this species in the state, documentation is eagerly awaited.

Halmi, N. S. 1979. Field reports. Iowa Bird Life 49:56-63 (p 56)

Jay Stravers furnished meticulous documentation for the male Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker he, Mrs. Stravers and two friends studied at leisure and from as close up as 1.5 m on December 23, 1978. This is the first Iowa record since 1924, and only the third time the species has been seen in Iowa. A Varied Thrush at a feeder in

nt.

isn't other than to suggest particular details to ~~observe~~ note while making observations