

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Red Crossbill; **Number:** 10

Location: farmstead northeast of Iowa City at feeders

Date: 13 July 1996; **Time:** 4:40 to 5:40 p.m.

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

Others before/with/after: Dave Conrads called me and was there with me

Habitat and circumstances: Open farm land, multiple feeders, no conifers seen in area.

Description of bird: According to Dave the birds were first seen today by his friends who live in the old farm house.

Several days later, Jim Fuller was there and he tells me that the residents last saw the birds on 14 July. The birds came to hanging feeders and a long window-ledge feeder. I was as close as 6 feet, Dave within 3 feet. All of the birds had crossed bills, proportionately large heads, and notched tails. They were about twice the bulk of House Finches, but not twice as long. Two birds had red-orange coloration. One was fairly uniform red on the underparts, head, back, and rump, and the other had a patchy red-orange and green-yellow coloration. The bird with patchy coloration had fine light edging to the flight feathers, the other did not. Several of the birds were yellow and unstreaked, and several were heavily streaked on the underparts and had streaks of yellow. One bird seemed mostly plain brown. In looking at my photos later, I see that some of the juveniles have a thin, white wingbar. I forgot to mention in my notes that the flight feathers and tails were dark brown-black. The juveniles were full-sized birds.

Voice: I did not hear them. We were inside the house looking out.

Similar species: None.

Any one have reservations?: no.

Light: side light, partial sun on hanging feeders; **Distance:** 6 to 20 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular; zoom lens at 540 mm and less.

Previous experience: Have seen many, but not in July in Iowa.

References before/after viewing: Looked at National Geographic Guide during and after viewing.

Time of notes: 1 hour; **Final typing:** 11 days.