

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Brewer's Blackbird

Number: 1 female

Location: Snake Creek M., Greene Co., IA

Habitat: small island in pond

Date: 11 May 1996

Time: 3:54-4:05 p.m.

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

Others who saw bird: Bery Engebretsen

Description of bird(s): I was looking at the ducks near the island when I noticed a large, all-dark blackbird walking along the water's edge. I immediately called Bery's attention to the bird. There were numerous Red-winged and Yellow-headed blackbirds and Common Grackles nearby for comparisons. The shape of the bill was similar to that of a grackle, but it was slimmer and smaller. This bird seemed larger than a cowbird and about the same size as a male Red-winged Blackbird. The entire bird appeared flat black, sometimes gray-black when the light was just right (no purplish gloss or rust color). Most of the time, the wings appeared darker than the rest of the bird. The short tail was dark. The eye was dark. When the bird flew, it gave a sharp "chuck" note, different from that of a grackle or Red-wing.

Similar species and how eliminated: The dark eye and lack of any rust color eliminates Rusty Blackbird, which is similar in size and shape to this bird. Common Grackle has a longer tail, females show lots of brown color, and the call note is different.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were superb-sun behind us, good light on bird, and seen at close range. Estimated viewing distance was 15m. I used 10x42 binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have extensive experience with this species from recent work in Montana and Nebraska.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: none made

How long before this form completed: completed on 11 May