

Winter Report intended for publication in American Birds + Iowa Bird Life

Species: Yellow-headed Blackbird (young male) Number: 1

Location: Feeder at 341 Steven Circle, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501

Date: February 26, 1978 Time bird seen: 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.

Description: Uniformly brown all over body and back of head. Breast and throat gold, ending abruptly at the belly. Face showing some brown and some yellow in no discernable pattern.

Voice: Silent.

Behavior: Fed on spilled seed on ground under feeder in hunched posture. Flew up to tree limb if alarmed by dog or sudden noise. Although species of blackbirds frequent the feeder, this bird did not appear to keep company with them. It came to the feeder alone and left alone or more often with the House Sparrows.

Similar Species: There are none.

Distance: About 5 yards. Stepped off. Optical equipment: 7x35 binoculars

Light: Cloudy. Sun to the left of both bird and me during most of observation.

Previous Experience: Both sexes of this bird commonly seen in this area during migration. Have observed nesting of this species in both Oregon and Minnesota.

Other observers: The Greer family.

Agree with identification? They always do!

Other observers who independently identified this bird: None

Books consulted: Robbins Birds of North America
Peterson A Field Guide to the Birds, Eastern
Roberts A Manual For the Identification of the Birds of Minnesota and Neighboring States

These books did not influence this description as the description was written mentally at first sighting. However, the Minnesota book cleared up a plumage problem for me in that the bird has the initial appearance of a female Yellow-headed Blackbird, the white under the breast was lacking. Still, there was no white in the wing and the body was definitely brown. In the Summary to the "Key to Blackbirds, Orioles, and Meadowlarks" just such a plumage is described under second-year breeding male.

How long after observing bird did you first write this description? 7 hours.

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