

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Dickcissel
Number: 1 male in basic plumage
Location: Hallett's Quarry, Story Co., IA
Habitat: weeds along gravel pit
Date: 28 November 1996
Time: 8:55-9:22 a.m.
Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014
Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird(s): I was scanning the lake when a small bird flew by and gave a couple of short, buzzy call notes. I immediately recognized the call as that of a Dickcissel, so I followed the bird. The bird was very tame and I didn't need binoculars for much of the observation. The bird was small, about the size of a House Sparrow. The dark bill was short and conical. The head was brown with a yellowish eyeline and whisker mark. The chin was white, and there was a black patch below the throat. The underparts were unmarked with a yellow wash on the upper breast fading to white on the lower breast and vent. The upperparts and wings were dark brown except for a noticeable chestnut patch on primary coverts. The tail was short, dark brown, and the bird wagged it on numerous occasions. The undulating flight of the bird resembled that of a goldfinch or woodpecker. The unstreaked underparts and black on the throat indicated the bird was an adult male in basic plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: I immediately recognized the bird by the call note, which is very distinctive. Additionally, the black throat, yellow wash on the breast, and chestnut shoulder patch were diagnostic.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were very good with clear skies and the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was mostly <5m, but as close as 3 feet on one occasion. I used 10x42 binoculars.

Previous experience with species: Very familiar with this species.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes made: none made

How long before this form completed: written 2 hours after sighting