

## DOCUMENTATION

SPECIES: **White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*)**

HOWMANY: 1

LOCATION & HABITAT: Polk County, 1601 Pleasant Street, West Des Moines, IA; typical suburban residential area with many large mature tree plantings and feeders.

DATE: First appeared in yard May 2, 1998 and is was last seen on May 21, 1998.

TIME & VIEWING CONDITIONS: It was viewed in all kinds of lighting and viewing conditions.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Pam Allen on May 2, 1998 at 1:30 p.m.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street,  
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PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Reid Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street,  
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OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen, Thomas Kent

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: This very vocal crossbill was constantly "chattering" and at first difficult to locate. It allowed us to approach and view it for about 25 minutes at distances from 50 to 20 feet. Since it has been coming to a feeder, it has been observed as close as 8 feet. The age of this bird is a little hard to determine, but it looks to be an immature male that is just barely starting to molt into alternate plumage. I'm not familiar enough with molting patterns in crossbills to know how long this might take. Anyway, starting with the obvious features of this bird are the crossed bills and the bold white markings on the wings. The forehead is just starting to show a definite rosy-pink coloration on one side, with splatterings of rosy-pink feather sprinkled amongst dull yellow feathers which are also interspersed with gray-brown feathers, giving the bird a very splotchy appearance on the forehead, crown and nape. The upper back of the bird showed a more streaked appearance. The bird's rump is a little lighter dull yellow color, with rosy-pink feathers. The lores and earpatch on this bird are quite darkish gray-brown. The eye is dark. The throat, breast, flanks and belly is the same dull yellow color with splotchy gray-brown and rosy-pink feathers. The tail is dark gray-brown and is forked. The white markings on the dark gray-brown wings are bold and conspicuous. It was feeding at a mixed finch seed thistle feeder. The bird is about the size of a House Sparrow.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: Red Crossbill would not have the unique white wing markings of the bird observed.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Have seen several White-winged Crossbills in Iowa.

EQUIPMENT: Bausch & Lomb Elite 8x42 binoculars; photographed by Reid I. Allen with a Canon A2E camera with a 400 mm lens. Photographs are enclosed.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: None before making field notes and then verifying identification by consulting the FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, National Geographic Society, Second Edition, 1987.

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES MADE: Just after observation of bird.

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: May 15, 1998 (and updated on June 1, 1998).