

late

Bird Sighting

Tow

D. Parker
via PPP Sep 79

Mrs Patti Stockham who lives on a farm $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Anita on 148 and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east on a gravel road, discovered the bird lying dead on her front step July 24, 1979. She was alerted at once by the pink coloring, she presumed it had been killed and left by a predator. It was a hot, humid day. At the north edge of her lawn is a long row of cedars. Many other trees and bushes surround the well kept farmstead. In front of this row of cedars are two bird baths and several bird feeders. Many ornamental shrubs and plantings and other trees dot the large lawn. She feeds birds heavily in the winter and continuously all year but lighter in summer, leaving out crumbs for the fewer numbers that feed. She is an avid bird watcher and we compare sightings regularly. Since I told her to call me if she spotted anything unusual, she did, saying she thought she had a crossbill of some kind. Mrs Black had written me to be on the rare bird alert last winter. Shortly after she phoned me, she brought the bird to my home on a plastic tray for me to examine. Using *Birds of North America* as a guide we felt it had to be the adult male white wing crossbill, unusual as it would seem to be. I wrote Mrs Gladys Black this information, then after posting the letter, decided I should telephone her. She instructed me to get the bird & freeze it. I did. Fortunately Mrs Stockham could rescue it, as she had disposed of it I called in three other birders, Bill Parker, a postmaster, his wife Carol and son Dan, they confirmed the identification and Bill took a snapshot of the dead bird.

The bird appears to be molting, but the pinkish head, the definite dark colored chunky cross bill and the broad white wing bars at the shoulder, the pink rump, dark grey body with mottled appearance, pink feathers interspersed with grey, the dark grey or black wings, shape of the head, the split tail, the size $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches and the general appearance lead us to believe it must be the adult male white winged crossbill.

The general area around this sighting is flat to rolling farmland in a high state of cultivation. Corn and hay fields are near this farmstead. The only trees except for roadside bushes etc are those surrounding farmsteads. There is a vacant farmstead $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of this place with many trees but no conifers that I recall. Dorothy Parker

I might also add besides being neighbors, I live just 2 miles north of Mrs Stockham, we are very close friends and our interest in birds gives us much pleasure. If we have indeed sighted a rare and unusual species for this area it is a ~~fine~~ ^{fine} experience for both of us, and a great satisfaction for the many hours spent enjoying and caring for our feathered friends.

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It may also be worth noting Lake Anita State Park with its many pine, cedar & conifer trees is just 3 1/2 miles from this sighting.