

Common Name: Yellow-crowned Night Heron

Scientific Name: *Nyctanassa violacea*.

Date: 5/8 - 5/9/96 Time: 2:30 pm

Length of time observed: ~ 3 hours over 2 day period.

Number: 1 Age: Adult

Sex: —

Location: .5 mile N. of Burrison Pond

JUAB County, UT

Lat/long:

Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: ~25 yards at closest point

Light conditions: Mid-day - full sun to partly cloudy.

Optical equipment: 8x40 Nikon binoculars

Weather: 15x surveyor scope
Partly cloudy

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The following is a list of the heron's characteristics I have gleaned from my field notes (attached).

1. Grey bodied - medium sized heron - seemed same size as black-crowned
2. White face patch bordered by black.
3. Dark bill
4. Orangish-pink legs.
5. All grey on breast, belly, and neck.
6. Black under chin - unbroken from border of cheek patch.
~ 1-2 inches wide
7. Pale-yellow crown - yellowish at forehead and fading to white from crown to back of head and streamers.
8. Red eye
9. Wings and back gray streaked
10. "Streamer" feathers white, and seemed more wispy than those of black-crowned Night heron.
11. In flight, legs extended more noticeably than black-crowned?

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: Voice NOT HEARD

Behavior: Flushed from thick Russian olives, would fly a short distance and land in Russian Olives and perch. This heron had a favorite roost on an old downed log. The heron would return to this log, when things had calmed down. When we approached the heron stretched out his neck a bit and seemed nervous and ready to fly.

Habitat:

The heron was in a dense Russian Olive thicket in a spring and creek fed swampy area. The thicket was also characterized by willows, thistle, a few cottonwoods, and rushes and sedges. The thicket was surrounded on both sides by pastures. The water in the area was ~1-3 feet deep and is slow moving and not moving in some areas.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

Both immature and adult black-crowned night herons were present in the area and allowed for good comparisons both in flight and while roosting. Adult black crowns showed large black patch of back, shorter appearing legs in flight, black on the head, no black border on white on cheek, and lighter colored underneath. The immature herons were brown streaked, and legs did not extend as far past tail while in flight.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have looked for yellow-crowned night herons on Eastern trips, but had not seen one until this instance. I have observed black-crowned night herons every year for the past ten years or so.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Consulted Peterson's guide to Western Birds after initial observation. Original description and sketch were done prior to consultation of guide. On subsequent observations I looked for the extension of the legs while in flight as described in Peterson's.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

I did not know the status of the bird in UTAH until consulting with Dennis Shirley, Merrill Webb, & others. Although I noticed that Peterson's guide listed it for surrounding states.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

See attached field notes, sketch, AND slides (3) - 2 Prints

Description from notes taken at time of sighting ☒ notes made later ☒ from memory ☒

Observer: DARREN SHIRLEY

Signature:

Darren P. Shirley

Address: 399 N Loafer Dr.

Elk Ridge UT 84651

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Ned Hill, Robert Herbert, Matt & Pia DeVries

Date prepared: 6/2/96

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120

2 of the slides are made from the originals so that Ned could keep them and one is an original.

~1/2 mile N. of Burriston Bend, Twp 8 Co. UTAH

①

D. Shufly

While eating lunch observed a medium-sized heron fly by. After it had passed Will Richards commented that it was sure grey underneath. At the same time I was thinking that I couldn't see any black on the back. After considering the possibility of a yellow-crowned night heron, we walked along the creek south to Burriston Bend. We flushed 4 - immature and 2 adult - black crowned night herons. We gave up after searching for ~1 hr and returned to our survey site.

1430

While Ann and I walked just north of area where we had been eating lunch to observe springs we were going to map. We flushed a heron from low along the waters edge approx. 25 feet ahead of us. We both simultaneously shouted, "That's it." The pale-yellowish head and overall green color were what impressed us,

②

D. Shufly

While Will commented on the white cheek patch. We did not see the heron leave the south end of the patch of Russian Olive we were in so we circled to the south and slowly worked our way North along the stream. I spotted the heron on a dead log just as it jumped and again was impressed by the pale crown. The heron flew up and landed in a tree ~100 yards north.

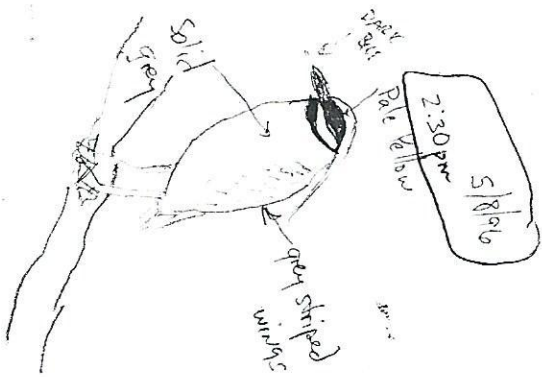
We circled back to our equipment and could see the heron through the surveyor scope at ~75 yards. (See picture). Sketched picture and listed off characteristics to each other: Pale crown, yellowish at forehead and fading to white going from forehead to streamers, bill - dark, white cheek patch bordered by black, black extending unbroken under chin ~1-2 inches wide,

③

Legs appeared a pale orangish-pink, entire belly, breast and side on neck uniform grey, wings and back grey and stripey.

Will and I moved in close to ~25 yards. All characteristics including red eye were evident through 8x40 Nikons. The heron stretched his neck and looked at us warily at this range. We backed off and returned to survey scope. We watched the heron until ~3:15 pm. Not wanting to leave while the heron was still there in plain sight left to go find someone to come see the heron at ~3:15 pm.

D. Shufly



- 1- grey bodied medium heron flew over head.
2. Flashed - could see yellow on head and white face patch in close bordered by black. All grey body.
- 3- Found in tree - observed for ~ 20 min
- 4- Moved in close ~ 25 yards. Could see red eye patch on wings, streamer feathers evident. - Seemed wispy.

through surveyor scope at ~ 75 yards.
Could see all distinguishing characteristics well.

position on wings, streamer feathers evident. - Seemed wispy.
(watched for another 30 min or so.)

Dan Shuler

This sketch was made at the time of my first observation. The slides are from Med Hill, and were taken the following morning w/ Will Richards and myself present. Will and I observed the heron ~~on~~ 10-15 times from noon on 5/8 until about noon on 5/9.

