



IOS IORC <iorcommittee@gmail.com>

IORC Documentation Submission

1 message

IORC Web Submission <iorcommittee@gmail.com>

Sat, Nov 26, 2016 at 2:18 PM

Reply-To: iorcommittee@gmail.com

To: iorcommittee@gmail.com

1) This form submitted as supporting documentation of (check all that apply):	Unusual species Unusual number
If other, please describe:	
2) Species:	Anhinga
3) Number of birds:	7
4) Age/Sex/Plumage:	Varied
5) Date:	05/04/2010
6) Location (include county):	Evergreen Lake, Comlara Park, McLean County, IL
7) Observers:	Suzanne M. Coleman, MD
8) Your name:	Suzanne M. Coleman, MD
Street Address	██████████
Street Address Line 2	
City	██████████
State / Province / Region	█
Postal / Zip Code	██████
Country	██████████
10) Your e-mail address:	██████████
11) Others agreeing with the identification:	Staffer at the "nature center" said that there had been sightings of anhinga in the past, rarely
12) Observers NOT agreeing with the identification:	none, no one with me or around me
13) Description of bird (size, shape, proportions, details of both color and pattern on head, back, chin, throat,	Here is my ebird description from a couple (?) years ago when I entered it. I based this on written notes and visual recall. Certain details are imprinted in my visual memory. I was on the east trail bordering the lake, north of the eastern outcropping wetland area (where the trail also goes east and then away from the lake; in the northern part of the large lake area). The sun was over my right shoulder (west). On my left came in low a small flock of 7 or 8 large odd birds in a tight group. They had extremely long, thin necks, with a u-shaped kink/loop in

breast, flanks, wings, undertail, and tail, etc.; coloration of soft parts: bill, legs, and feet) include only details actually seen in the field :

some (long like a swan, disproportionately long). There were two types of plumage in the flock, some were black and "grey" in appearance and others were the same but instead of black had a light tan-salmon color from the beak to the chest (and I recall that this area appeared like fur, slightly matted small short bunches of colored feathers). The beak was long and sharp like an ivory straight knife and a uniform color (off-white). I did not see any hook at the end of the beak. They seemed to have no head, meaning from the beak throughout the neck was the same width, without any significant bulging of the head area in size. The wings and tail appeared kinked and odd, they were both bent sharply with feathers not smoothed and splayed about. The tail bent upwards at the rear. I noted white dashes on black on the part of the wings facing me (top outer area but not at ends, nearer to joint); I focused on the bird nearest to me in the time I had to observe. They were also large birds, maybe 30-36 inches or more long as an estimate. My notes indicate the appearance of "greyish sides" but the birds were overall black except as noted above (some birds appeared grey, those I did not get to examine). They flew by me not very high above me and lateral to me so I could only see them from the side view; maybe 15-20 feet away from my head. I don't recall if there were any sounds coming from them. They passed me from north going south. The formation if I recall correctly was about 4-5 birds in a line and a 1-2 lateral to that straight line, on each side. They flew in formation towards the wetland area. I saw them for about 8-10 seconds or so. They then appeared shortly later but farther away, appearing to circle to land. When I later arrived at the wetland they were not there. In the 2+ years I birded this location (3+ times a week in spring summer and fall mostly) I never saw this bird. I also never saw a single cormorant at this location. Here is what I wrote today just trying to recall from memory, mostly the same as above. 1. Size. Birds were similar in size to each other. Very large birds. Hard to say for sure on size, maybe 4-5 feet from beak to tail. Beak, head and neck in length together, equalled about the body plus maybe 1/3 of the tail length. Wing span, harder to guess, maybe 4-5 feet? They were next to me so that compresses width's (wings/body) appearance. 2. Proportions. Very long neck, S-shaped kink, very clearly present. Long straight bill at the end. Head not clearly evident versus neck as far as width of it. Body was much thicker/wider than the narrow neck. Tail was maybe 1/2 to 2/3 the length of the body. Wings were bent and might have been about the length of the body (one wing). Beak was long, but so was the neck, beak maybe 1/7 the length of the head+neck- not sure. 3. The very long neck and face were the same color and were a very pale pinkish-cream color and appeared to be covered in short fur vs. feathers. This color and appearance extended onto the shoulders/upper chest of the bird nearest to me which was the one I focused on as they flew by me. The color remained essentially consistent from this area on the body all of the way to the beak. The beak did not stand out in color to me as I recall it and was lightly colored similar to the head/neck. The head was similar in width to the neck so it was hard to determine where the head actually was, very snake-like. The body of this bird was black. There were short, white dashes near the body on the wings (I believe this was the area, it was a quick view). They were not too thick and not too thin and were spaced apart from each other fairly evenly on the black background. They were pure white on black. Some of the birds appeared grey as they flew by, and others black. The tails were bent up, "kinked" is how I thought of it. Very unusual, disorderly/disorganized appearing tails and distal wing feathers; these feathers were all black from what I could see. They were not smoothed together and clean-edged like most birds but skewed and the feathers on both the tail and wings after the first joints were separated from each other so the feathers were visible beyond the tips (maybe 2/3 of the length or less of those distal feathers). Sorry I don't know bird feather terminology/anatomy better but I could show you on a drawing if it doesn't make sense. The bill was straight and sharp, narrowing to the tip. They eye was not very large. 4. I don't recall seeing the legs or feet, or if I did they did not make any big impression like the other features recalled above. 5. When I saw these birds, my mouth literally fell open because they were so strange and bizarre.

14) Description of behavior:

The group of birds was flying south, about 15 feet above the ground, in a relatively tight formation. There were 2-3 birds on each side and I think 2-3 at the front forming a possible "clumpy" "V." They were all at relatively similar heights to the ground I believe. They flew in the direction of a shallow, open (surrounded by

	<p>trees, lake and field, but open water) wetland just to the south of where we were. After they flew over, as described above, they circled back in my direction but farther away, and then disappeared out of sight. I did not see them again. They flew right by me about 15 feet away and at least one looked at me as it flew by. Some flew with their necks in the "S" kink but others did not and were elongated, and I believe some had a partial "S." I noticed that their tails seemed bent up and feathers were spread out so you could see individual feathers and the wings seemed to be bent and the same thing, the feather tips were separated vs. smooth. The overall appearance was of "kinked" tail and wings.</p>
15) Description of vocalizations:	None noted
16) Description of immediate and surrounding habitat(s):	They were heading south to the eastern part of the northern lake area which is shallow and consistent with wetlands, flying along the land edge of the eastern lake, east of me on the path.
17) Optical equipment used for observation (type, power):	Good old-fashioned eyes
18) Distance/how measured?	15 feet, estimated
19) Time of observation:	03:00 pm
20) Total time of observation:	They flew by me twice, probably 20 seconds give or take.
21) Weather conditions:	Sunny and clear, sun behind me and on them. I don't recall wind.
22) Previous experience with this species and similar species:	Little with anhinga (possibly seen on trips to FL in the past but not sure). I was familiar with cormorants.
23) Please eliminate other similar species and/or hybrids:	<p>Anhinga vs. cormorant, the question I have asked myself and studied for 6 years after being told "it was 'impossible' that they were anhinga" even though by all appearances, that is what they were. The necks on this bird were much longer than a cormorant, the body much larger, the tail was longer and wider vs. a cormorant, the wings also seemed possibly wider (head to tail) and longer (body to tip), the wings had a clear bend around the middle of the length of them with the distal portion bending posteriorly (towards the bird's back), the distal feathers were visible as separate feathers at the tips and down towards the joint and the feathers were wide and large, and the tail kinked up at the rear of the body fairly extremely and also had splayed distal feathers, the bill was longer and had no hook on the end, the bill was also more rounded around than a cormorant's which is a bit squared off in some areas, and tapered to the point slightly, the curve or "S" in some of the birds' necks was very deep, with the two ends of the neck that entered and exited the curve almost touching, the birds seemed longer and larger overall, also the flight behavior seemed different to me as far as wing and tail usage, power, speed, body movement while flying, they seemed like heavier birds as well. I saw the white on black dashes very clearly and I have not heard of or seen any images of cormorants that have that type of marking. Based on their neck length, large, deep "S", long straight bill, head being similar in circumference to the neck, large overall size, white dashes on black, and kinked, separated feathers with wing and tail positioning, body part proportions, I believe that these were anhinga and that they were not cormorants.</p>
24) Were photos obtained?	No
25) If so, by whom?	not obtained
26) Books and	Numerous photos of anhinga posted on facebook and online such as Cornell's

illustrations consulted and advice received. How did these influence this description?:	allaboutbirds.org in various positions and plumage. This supported an ID of anhinga. Visual observations of cormorants in various positions and plumage also served to support the ID of anhinga and not cormorants.
27) How long after the observation were field notes recorded?	immediately
28) How long after the observation was this form completed?	6 years. I was not aware of this system until recently and had entered info into ebird where I thought it would be reviewed.
29) Additional remarks (URLs can be entered here):	To this day, this was one of the most remarkable birding, and life, experiences that I have had. Link to the ebird.org entry: http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S15660674