

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Lesser White-fronted Goose; **Number:** 1

Location: L. Macbride, Johnson Co., IA

Date: 11 June 1998; **Time:** 6:30 to 7:50 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: James Huntington found the bird yesterday.

Habitat and circumstances: artificial lake and state park.

Description of bird: I spotted the bird on the far side of the lake with 7 Canada Geese. It was half as long and its head was half as high from the water as the Canadas. It was a tiny goose, more the size of a duck and with short neck and rounded head. The bird was overall gray-brown except for the white under tail area. The bill was small (one-fourth the length of the head), concave on the upper surface, and yellow-orange. The forehead was white, giving the appearance of a white shield when viewed head on. From the side the white was almost all above the bill. There was a thin white line along the edge of the wing. As the bird moved closer, I was able to see the thin yellow eye ring. I saw the yellow-orange legs once. The bird fed by picking at the surface and was quite active as it swam. The Canada Geese sometimes chased it a short distance. After an hour, the bird flew a short distance and later flew to the end of the lake. It made a three noted tu 'tu sound repeatedly when flying. In flight, I could see black streaks on the breast and belly. After a short time with a second group of Canadas, it flew back to the original group.

Voice: see above. The voice was different than I have ever heard from a Greater White-fronted Goose.

Similar species: The size, tiny bill, large white forehead, yellow eye ring, and voice all distinguish this bird from a Greater White-fronted Goose, the only other alternative. I did not remember the difference in primary projection, so I did not note this feature.

Any one have reservations?: James sounded convinced.

Light: cloudy, dull; **Distance:** 100 yards (guess); **Optics:** 10x binocular, 20x scope, 560 mm lens.

Previous experience: I saw the only accepted North American record on Attu in 1994 and took photos of the specimen.

References before/after viewing: none until description typed, then I looked at Japanese and European guides.

Time of notes: through out observation period. **Final typing:** 2 hours.