

Red-throated Loon

Record Number: 84-03

3 Apr 1984

Classification: A-P

Cedar Lake, Linn Co., IA

*#Bendorf, *Staudt, *Myers, *Moore, *Peterse

*Kent; P-0158, IBL 54:41; 55:56, Bendorf 1984

DOCUMENTATIONS

Carl J. Bendorf (3,6 April)

Thomas J. Staudt (3 April)

Robert K. Myers (4 April)

Francis L. Moore (4 April)

Peter C. Petersen (5 April)

Thomas H. Kent (8 April)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Carl Bendorf, 6 April, P-0158 (IBL 54:53, AB 38:916)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:41

Bendorf, C. J. 1984. Red-throated Loon at Cedar Lake. Iowa Bird Life 54:52-54.

Photograph: IBL 54:53, P-0158; Am. Birds 38:916, 1984, P-0158

Records Committee: IBL 55:56

VOTE: 7-I-P

I-P, nice.

MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Bruce G. Peterjohn

Spring began with the return of winter weather to most of the Region. Snow cover was prevalent in the northern states while temperatures were well below normal. Sub-zero readings were widespread March 9-10, and the monthly average temperature was 5 degrees colder in March than in February at Columbus, Ohio. These unfavorable conditions reduced migration to a trickle during the first half of March and retarded migration by one-to-two weeks at month's end. However, when the migrants returned, their numbers appeared to be normal.

April's weather remained cool and wet. Average temperatures were several degrees below normal in most areas while the greatest amount of precipitation fell in Iowa, nearly six inches above normal. Arrival dates remained one-to-two weeks later than normal while unfavorable winds produced few overflights. Typical April migrants were distressingly scarce in many areas, perhaps as a result of the adverse weather conditions. Significant declines were reported for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush and Brown Thrasher. A warming trend April 24-28 produced a strong Regionwide flight, possibly the most pronounced movement all spring.

The cool, wet weather continued throughout May. Most migration appeared to occur on only a few days with the strongest movements May 11-12 and 18-22. These migrants did not linger and relatively little activity was noted on other dates. Arrival and departure dates remained one-to-two weeks later than normal and many migrants passed through the Region well into June.

These conditions produced a largely uneventful spring. While most observers' perceptions depended upon whether or not they were out during the few flight days, most agreed that numbers were relatively low especially when compared to those of last spring. Despite the poor showing of many migrants, a typical representation of rarities was discovered in each state.



ABBREVIATIONS — S.C.R. = Squaw Creek Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Mo.; M.M.W.A. = Magee Marsh Wildlife Management Area, O.; Spfld. = Springfield, Ill. *Italicized* place names are counties.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Surprisingly, the only Red-throated Loon was detected at Cedar Rapids, Ia., Apr. 3-16 (†CB, †TS *et al.*); this species is a casual migrant in Iowa. Common Loons returned to all states during the last one-half of March with maxima of 18-37 reported from several sites. This spring produced an eventful grebe migration. Pied-billed Grebes remained scarce in the e. states but were numerous in the w., with a maximum of 165 at Waterloo, Ia., Apr. 14 (FM, RM). Horned Grebes were widespread through May 19 with concentrations of 40-90 reported from Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Red-necked Grebes appeared in remarkable numbers. March reports consisted of singles along L. Michigan Mar. 3 plus inland at Laurel River L., Ky., Mar. 7-21 (†JE *et al.*) and Horseshoe L., Ill., Mar. 15-17 (JWa, †m.ob.). A small flight developed during April with singles at 3 n. Ohio locations Apr. 2-8 and 2 Iowa lakes Apr. 12-17 while a late bird remained in Clay, Ia., May 21 (†MB). As expected, small numbers of



Red-throated Loon at Cedar Rapids, Ia., Apr. 6, 1984. The extensive white on the face and neck, small bill with upturned lower mandible, and fine white speckling on the back are all evident here. Photo/Carl Bendorf.

Eared Grebes were scattered across Iowa, Missouri and Illinois after Mar. 15 although 25 at Springfield, Mo., Mar. 27 comprised a larger than normal flock (WH). They wandered E to Merom Res., Ind., Mar. 31 (KB *et al.*) and one-to-two were in Warren, Ky., May 10-13+ (†BP *et al.*). As many as four W. Grebes were noted at 3 Iowa locations Apr. 9-May 23 where they are regular spring migrants, while one at Ft. Wayne, Ind., Apr. 20 (†FH) was e. of its normal range. American White Pelicans were numerous in Iowa and Missouri where 1500 at Swan Lake N.W.R., Mo., Apr. 15 were considered normal (*fide* JW). The only report from the e. states was of one at W. Lafayette, Ind., May 16-17 (†EH *et al.*). Numbers of Double-crested Cormorants continued to improve in all areas with maxima of 100-250 in the w. states, 200-300 at East Harbor S.P., O., during April, and 20-60 at many inland locations.

HERONS, IBISES — For the 2nd consecutive spring, most herons were reported in fairly low numbers. Both bitterns remained disturbingly scarce with a total of 22 Americans and 14 Least reported this year. As many as four Snowy Egrets at one to 4 locations in each state represented a typical movement for recent springs. Small numbers of Little Blue Herons were discovered at 8 Illinois sites and 2-4 locations in the other states except Indiana. Tricolored Herons were found for the 4th consecutive year at L. Calumet, Ill., with one-to-two present May 5-June 2 (†JL *et al.*). Cattle Egrets were locally numerous in the w. states with concentrations of 140 in Ray, Mo., May 19 (MMc, CH) and 115 near Percival, Ia., May 16 (T, RS); flocks of 30-80 were found near the Mississippi R., in Kentucky and Illinois but they were fairly scarce farther e. Both night-herons appeared to be stable; the 16 Yellow-crowned reports included a flock of 17 near Aldrich, Mo., Apr. 15 (m.ob.). A Glossy Ibis was thoroughly studied at Granite City, Ill., May 15 (†PS, †RG) while a small movement of White-faced Ibises in the w. states brought one to three birds each to 4 Missouri locations and singles to 2 Iowa sites Apr. 28-May 11.

WATERFOWL — A fairly good migration developed this spring, especially for divers during March when unfavorable weather contributed to the formation of large flocks of *Aythya* ducks at many locations. However, the puddle duck migration was poor with few sizable flocks found anywhere in the Region.

A flock of nine Fulvous Whistling-Ducks visited Muscatatuck N.W.R., Apr. 3-15, providing the 3rd record for Indiana (†KO—ph., m.ob.). Normal numbers of Tundra Swans passed through their regular staging areas. They were more numerous than normal in c. Ohio and n.c. Iowa where 200 near Charles City, Ia., Mar. 29 were remarkable for spring (*fide* JH). Scattered birds were reported from the other states except Kentucky. Latest of several lingering swans was an immature in Seneca, O., May 31 (TBA *et al.*). Greater White-fronted Geese appeared in above-normal numbers e. of the Mississippi R. As many as 18 were found at 7 Illinois locations, 2 Indiana sightings included 15 at L.

Bendorf, C. J. 1984. Red-throated Loon at Cedar Lake. Iowa Bird Life 54:52-54.

Red-Throated Loon at Cedar Lake — On the evening of 2 April 1984, news of an exciting bird spread through the informal Iowa City grapevine. A Red-throated Loon was present on Cedar Lake in downtown Cedar Rapids. At 6 AM on 3 April I met Tom Staudt, Jim Sandrock, Joey Sandrock, and Jim Fuller (all of Iowa City) at the east shore of the lake. After scanning the various waterfowl which use the lake as a resting spot in migration we moved to the south shore to get a better look. A brisk wind buffeted the steady rain and viewing conditions were less than ideal. Finally, we spotted a winter plumage loon about 200 yards away in the center of the lake. We studied the bird as best we could through rain fogged telescopes and agreed that this was indeed a Red-throated Loon.

The bird would alternately sleep with its head tucked under a wing or dive for 10-15 seconds only to surface in a new location. After watching for about 30 minutes I made the following notes: size about the same as nearby Red-breasted Mergansers; back uniform brown-gray with a slight checked or mottled effect; back of neck and top of head a darker gray color extending down the side of face to just above the eye; throat, lower cheek front and sides of neck were all clean white; bill was slender and upturned. The bird also showed a small horizontal smudge about halfway down the side of the white neck. This mark was only on the left side.

From looking at the field guides the night before, I knew that one of the key field marks would be the shape, size, and carriage of the bird's bill. Features such as size and shape can be very subjective. If I drive 20 miles to see a bird and know ahead of time that the bill is supposed to be a certain shape and the head should be uptilted, it is very hard to be objective when I actually see the bird. But try as I might, there was no way I could have described the bill as appearing straight. This upturned bill was accentuated by the constant uptilt of the head.

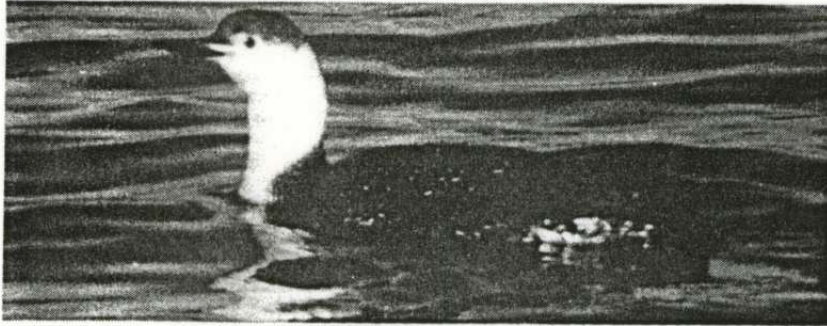
Over the next few days birders lined up by the carload to look for the loon. No one was disappointed.

I decided to try to get a look under better viewing conditions. As 6 April dawned calm and clear I loaded my camera and again got to Cedar Lake at 6 AM. As usual, the loon was sleeping out in the center of the lake. At that distance, the bird was a small image, even through the 20X scope. A photograph would only show a tiny speck, but I took several anyway. Finally the loon began to dive and move. I had read in Richard Pough's Audubon Water Bird Guide that "Like all loons, red-throateds are curious and can often be brought close to shore by a fluttering handkerchief." This sounded like an old folk tale, but I looked about, and seeing only a few drowsy fishermen, decided to give it a try. I pulled out a bright red handkerchief and started to wave it vigorously. At that distance I wasn't sure the loon could even see me. After all, he didn't have a spotting scope. After about 30 seconds I noticed the loon had begun to swim generally in my direction (pure coincidence, I thought). Despite feeling a little silly and unconvinced that I could possibly be influencing the actions of a wild bird, I continued to wave.

Suddenly the loon turned in my direction and swam steadily. As I scrambled for my camera, the loon dove and disappeared. I held my breath and waited. I was astonished when the loon surfaced less than 25 yards away in the bright sunlight. I steadied my shaking hands, quickly focused, and snapped a picture. The bird dove and resurfaced to my right. As he dove again I caught on to his game and ran along the shore to the right to be in position when he came up. I had guessed correctly as the loon came up and peered at me from only 30 feet away! Any closer and either the bird would have been on land or I in the water. The loon seemed to tire of our little game, and after the next dive he surfaced quite a distance away.

The Red-throated Loon worked its way slowly out to the center of the lake by diving and resurfacing. He was again several hundred yards out. I watched him preen for several minutes and then decided to press my luck. I pulled out my red

Bendorf, C. J. 1984. Red-throated Loon at Cedar Lake. Iowa Bird Life 54:52-54. (cont)



RED-THROATED LOON
6 April 1984
Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids
Linn County, Iowa
By Carl J. Bendorf

handkerchief and waved it over my head. Once again the loon turned almost immediately and swam toward me. Once again he started to dive and resurface closer to the shore. He didn't come in quite so close this time as he worked his way past me and back out to the lake center. This second performance by the curious bird convinced me that Richard Pough knew his birds; Red-throated Loons can indeed be attracted closer to shore. Do you suppose the red color of my flag had a special significance to the Red-throated Loon?

I described my experience to several other birders who then also tried to attract the loon. Unfortunately, no one else had any luck. I guess maybe you can fool a loon once, perhaps even twice. But you can't fool a loon three times.

My encounter on 6 April in the bright sunlight showed the color of the bird's back to be a shade darker than that of the head and back of neck. This is contrary to the apparent shadings I saw under the poor light during my first observation. Furthermore, the distinctive pattern of small white flecks on the gray back was easily seen. It is this star-like pattern on the back of the Red-throated Loon that gave rise to part of this species' scientific name: *Gavia* (family name) *stellata* (starred).

The Red-throated Loon was first identified on 31 March by Fred Thompson of Cedar Rapids. The last known sighting was by Jim Fuller on 20 April. If accepted by the IOU Records Committee, this occurrence would represent only the fourth confirmed record for Iowa, and the second in this century. Carl J. Bendorf, 825 7th Ave. Iowa City, IA. 52240

MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Bruce G. Peterjohn

Spring began with the return of winter weather to most of the Region. Snow cover was prevalent in the northern states while temperatures were well below normal. Sub-zero readings were widespread March 9-10, and the monthly average temperature was 5 degrees colder in March than in February at Columbus, Ohio. These unfavorable conditions reduced migration to a trickle during the first half of March and retarded migration by one-to-two weeks at month's end. However, when the migrants returned, their numbers appeared to be normal.

April's weather remained cool and wet. Average temperatures were several degrees below normal in most areas while the greatest amount of precipitation fell in Iowa, nearly six inches above normal. Arrival dates remained one-to-two weeks later than normal while unfavorable winds produced few overflights. Typical April migrants were distressingly scarce in many areas, perhaps as a result of the adverse weather conditions. Significant declines were reported for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush and Brown Thrasher. A warming trend April 24-28 produced a strong Regionwide flight, possibly the most pronounced movement all spring.

The cool, wet weather continued throughout May. Most migration appeared to occur on only a few days with the strongest movements May 11-12 and 18-22. These migrants did not linger and relatively little activity was noted on other dates. Arrival and departure dates remained one-to-two weeks later than normal and many migrants passed through the Region well into June.

These conditions produced a largely uneventful spring. While most observers' perceptions depended upon whether or not they were out during the few flight days, most agreed that numbers were relatively low especially when compared to those of last spring. Despite the poor showing of many migrants, a typical representation of rarities was discovered in each state.



ABBREVIATIONS — S.C.R. = Squaw Creek Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Mo.; M.M.W.A. = Magee Marsh Wildlife Management Area, O.; Spfld. = Springfield, Ill. *Italicized* place names are counties.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Surprisingly, the only Red-throated Loon was detected at Cedar Rapids, Ia., Apr. 3-16 (†CB, †TS *et al.*); this species is a casual migrant in Iowa. Common Loons returned to all states during the last one-half of March with maxima of 18-37 reported from several sites. This spring produced an eventful grebe migration. Pied-billed Grebes remained scarce in the e. states but were numerous in the w., with a maximum of 165 at Waterloo, Ia., Apr. 14 (FM, RM). Horned Grebes were widespread through May 19 with concentrations of 40-90 reported from Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Red-necked Grebes appeared in remarkable numbers. March reports consisted of singles along L. Michigan Mar. 3 plus inland at Laurel River L., Ky., Mar. 7-21 (†JE *et al.*) and Horseshoe L., Ill., Mar. 15-17 (JWA, †m.ob.). A small flight developed during April with singles at 3 n. Ohio locations Apr. 2-8 and 2 Iowa lakes Apr. 12-17 while a late bird remained in Clay, Ia., May 21 (†MB). As expected, small numbers of



Red-throated Loon at Cedar Rapids, Ia., Apr. 6, 1984. The extensive white on the face and neck, small bill with upturned lower mandible, and fine white speckling on the back are all evident here. Photo/Carl Bendorf.

Eared Grebes were scattered across Iowa, Missouri and Illinois after Mar. 15 although 25 at Springfield, Mo., Mar. 27 comprised a larger than normal flock (WH). They wandered E to Merom Res., Ind., Mar. 31 (KB *et al.*) and one-to-two were in Warren, Ky., May 10-13+ (†BP *et al.*). As many as four W. Grebes were noted at 3 Iowa locations Apr. 9-May 23 where they are regular spring migrants, while one at Ft. Wayne, Ind., Apr. 20 (†FH) was e. of its normal range. American White Pelicans were numerous in Iowa and Missouri where 1500 at Swan Lake N.W.R., Mo., Apr. 15 were considered normal (*vide* JW). The only report from the e. states was of one at W. Lafayette, Ind., May 16-17 (†EH *et al.*). Numbers of Double-crested Cormorants continued to improve in all areas with maxima of 100-250 in the w. states, 200-300 at East Harbor S.P., O., during April, and 20-60 at many inland locations.

HERONS, IBISES — For the 2nd consecutive spring, most herons were reported in fairly low numbers. Both bitterns remained disturbingly scarce with a total of 22 Americans and 14 Least reported this year. As many as four Snowy Egrets at one to 4 locations in each state represented a typical movement for recent springs. Small numbers of Little Blue Herons were discovered at 8 Illinois sites and 2-4 locations in the other states except Indiana. Tricolored Herons were found for the 4th consecutive year at L. Calumet, Ill., with one-to-two present May 5-June 2 (†JL *et al.*). Cattle Egrets were locally numerous in the w. states with concentrations of 140 in Ray, Mo., May 19 (MMC, CH) and 115 near Percival, Ia., May 16 (T, RS); flocks of 30-80 were found near the Mississippi R., in Kentucky and Illinois but they were fairly scarce farther e. Both night-herons appeared to be stable; the 16 Yellow-crowned reports included a flock of 17 near Aldrich, Mo., Apr. 15 (m.ob.). A Glossy Ibis was thoroughly studied at Granite City, Ill., May 15 (†PS, †RG) while a small movement of White-faced Ibises in the w. states brought one to three birds each to 4 Missouri locations and singles to 2 Iowa sites Apr. 28-May 11.

WATERFOWL — A fairly good migration developed this spring, especially for divers during March when unfavorable weather contributed to the formation of large flocks of *Aythya* ducks at many locations. However, the puddle duck migration was poor with few sizable flocks found anywhere in the Region.

A flock of nine Fulvous Whistling-Ducks visited Muscatatuck N.W.R., Apr. 3-15, providing the 3rd record for Indiana (†KO—ph., m.ob.). Normal numbers of Tundra Swans passed through their regular staging areas. They were more numerous than normal in c. Ohio and n.c. Iowa where 200 near Charles City, Ia., Mar. 29 were remarkable for spring (*vide* JH). Scattered birds were reported from the other states except Kentucky. Latest of several lingering swans was an immature in Seneca, O., May 31 (TBa *et al.*). Greater White-fronted Geese appeared in above-normal numbers e. of the Mississippi R. As many as 18 were found at 7 Illinois locations, 2 Indiana sightings included 15 at L.

BIRD DOCUMENTATION FORM

CARL J. BENDORF
825 7TH AVENUE
IOWA CITY IA 52240

SPECIES: RED-THROATED LOON NUMBER: 1
LOCATION: Cedar Lake COUNTY: Linn
DATE: 3,6 April 1984 TIME: See Below

HABITAT: Good sized open lake near downtown Cedar Rapids. Good spot for migrant waterfowl.

DESCRIPTION: On 3 April, at 6:20 AM, spotted a winter plumage loon diving in the west-central side of lake. It dove frequently and stayed down most of time. After about 5 minutes it stopped diving and swam steadily across our field of view. I noted following details:

Size very close to nearby Red-breasted Mergansers. Bill thin, dark, with a definite slight upcurve. The upturned bill was not an illusion based on uptilted head as bill appeared upturned even when head was tilted downwards. Head was held uptilted at least 90% of time, only exception was when bird was preening. Back of neck and over top of head and down to bill was solid dark gray. This dark area was quite narrow on back of neck. Dark extended down side of face to approximately even with eye.

On left side of neck about halfway down was a small horizontal gray smudge extending from dark area on back of neck into white of side of neck.

Back of swimming bird was a fairly uniform gray-brown without obvious flecking. Light lower flanks visible on side of swimming bird. Belly, breast, throat, cheek and sides and front of neck were pure white. On right side of face there appeared to be a small white spot between eye and bill. Not so much a spot as an eruption of white up into dark cap.

Distance estimated at 75-150 yards with 20X scope. Others present and in agreement were Tom Staudt, Jim Sandrock, Jim Fuller-Iowa City and Neil Bernstein-Cedar Rapids. Notes taken while viewing bird in scope. Rewritten 3 hours later. Form typed 17 May.

On 6 April under perfect viewing conditions I saw bird again. Bird approached within 20 Yards! of my 15 X scope. I noted following additional details:

Color of head and neck now appeared to be noticeably lighter than base color of back. Back was uniformly mottled with small white flecks. Dark of cap did not quite come down to level with eye.

Notes taken while viewing bird. Typed here 17 May.

continued next page

RED-THROATED LOON

CARL J. BENDORF

PAGE 2

SIMILIAR SPECIES--COMMENTS:

Similar birds would be all other winter loons. The clear size comparison to Red-breasted Mergansers should rule out common and yellow-billed. The thin upturned bill and flecked back should decide in favor of Red-throated as opposed to Arctic. Kim Eckert says in his Birder's Guide to Minnesota "I have yet to see a Red-throated Loon that wasn't immediately obvious because of its bill position/profile...".

AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT OF OTHERS: Others present named above all agreed. There were numerous others who saw bird afterwards. Apparently was first identified by Fred Thompson of Cedar Rapids on 31 March.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES

Very familiar with winter Common Loon. Have seen all three other loons in winter plumage in California.

REFERENCES, PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION: None

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Red Throated Loon winter plumage How many? 1

Location? Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Ia

Type of habitat? Small city lake near industrial area

When? date(s): April 3 1984 time: 6:15 am to 6:45 am

Who? your name and address: THOMAS J. STANDT

others with you: Carl Bendorf, Jim Fuller, Jim Sandreck

others before or after you: members of Cedar Rapids Audubon

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

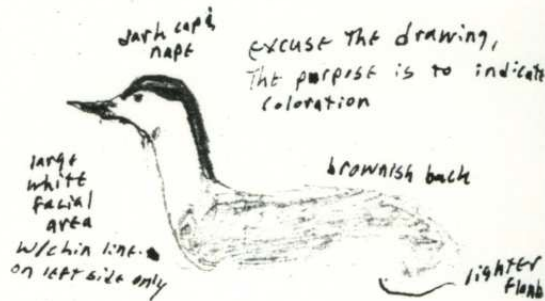
Dark thin bill, slightly upturned. Head held at a slight upward angle. Cap and Nape very dark, darker than the back. Cap extended to upper level of eye but not below eye. At close range a white area could be seen on the forehead between the reddish eye and dark bill. Chin, throat, cheeks, ariculars, foreneck and sides of neck cleanly white, strongly contrasting with the almost black cap and nape. The white in the facial area was interrupted (on the left side only) by a grayish chin line or more correctly a smudge. The neck color was all white ~~with~~ however, there was a thin black line on the hindneck that extended from nape to back. Body was brownish, not nearly as dark as cap and nape.

Flanks were off white to grayish brown, noticeably lighter than the rest of the body.

Undersparts white.

The size of the bird was comparable to the Red-breasted mergansers which it was often close to.

The bird at times sat very low in the water with little more than the head/neck exposed giving it an ankingish-snake appearance.



Similar species and how eliminated: Horned grebes in winter plumage were present, they are about 1/2 the size of this loon, have a much shorter straight bill and the head shape is flatter. Common loon is much larger with a correspondingly large straight black bill, head held straight. Arctic loon in winter plumage would have less white in the facial area, a straight dark bill, less contrast from the facial area to cap/nape.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment; 100% overcast and raining 30 to 100yds swimming away; most observations were made overall very poor viewing conditions. from the ~~100~~ 100yd distance 20x scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NO previous experience with a Red-throated loon, numerous sightings of winter common loons & Horned grebes

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic's Field Guide to the Birds of North America and the Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding Carl Bendorf, Jim Sandreck

How long before field notes made? during sighting this form completed? 2 hrs.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

84-03

1. Species Red-throated Loon (Gavia stellata) 2. Number 1
 3. Location Cedar Lake in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
 4. Date: April 4, 1984 5. Time Bird Seen: 6:30 A.M. to 6:50 A.M.
 6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
 1. Small - loon shaped bird about size of red-breasted mergansers with it.
 2. Basically white on throat and front of neck + breast and darker (grayish brown) on top of head, back of neck, + back
 3. Through 33X small whitish spots could be seen on back
 4. Most obvious feature was the slender, very pointed bill which was definitely upturned.
 7. Description of voice, if heard: Not heard
 8. Description of behavior: Sleeping, preening + swimming
 9. Habitat - general: Lake next to Cedar River
specific: ↑ small
 10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
Bird was too small and had too small of a bill for Common. Spots on back and the very obvious + upturned bill (thin bill) eliminate Arctic.
 11. Distance (how measured)? 100 yd.
 12. Optical equipment: 25+ 33X SCOPES
 13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Cloudy - light rain to partly cloudy
 14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
None with this or Arctic but have seen many Common Loons
 15. Other observers: Francis Moore - many before + after
 16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Mary
 18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
NBS guide, Robbins, Peterson, Master Guide, Palmer - many others
 19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 4 days
- Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: 1236 Sylvia Ave.
Date: April 8, 1984 City, State: Waterloo, Iowa

What species? Red-throated Loon (Gavia Stellata) How many? 1Location? Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IAType of habitat? Open water lakeWhen? date(s): April 4, 1984 time: 6:30 am to 6:50 amWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Bob Myersothers before or after you: Carl Bendorf, Pete Peterson, m.ob.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

The bird was in winter or non-breeding plumage. The top of the head and back of the neck was a gray color which faded into a white color on the cheek and throat down on to the breast the sides and back were more of a medium brown-gray color. With 55x eyepiece the spotting on the back was evident, though did not stand out because of the distance involved. The tail was the same color as the back and sides. The bill was dark and had an upturned look to it, partly because the bird seemed to always keep its head held in an upturned fashion. The bill seemed very thin compared to any other Common or Arctic Loon I had seen. No voice was heard.

Similar species and how eliminated: Common Loon is much larger with a lot heavier bill. Arctic Loon has a heavier shaped bill that does not have an upturned look as in the Red-throated.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: cloudy with light rain falling from approx 100 yd. using 25x60 Spacemaster and 33x90 C90 Celestron telescopes.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen quite a few Red-throated Loons on coast in Virginia. Lots of experience with Common Loon. No experience with Arctic Loon.
References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 4 hrs this form completed? 13 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

SUPPORTING DETAILS: UNCOMMON OR RARE SPECIES AND/OR SPECIES IN HIGH NUMBERS

CBC name _____ CBC date _____ Compiler _____

Observer writing this account and date Peter C. Petersen Apr. 5, 1984

SPECIES Red-Thro Loon NUMBER, AGE, SEX 1, winter plumage, perhaps sub ad.

Distance from bird(s) 200-300 yards Relative size of bird about same as R. br. Merganser nearby.

HEAD & NECK (Describe forehead, crown, auricular, malar region, median line, etc.)
chin & throat white, white just above eye, forehead & crown, back of neck uniform dark grey, good contrast where it met white

EYE & LORES (Describe supercilium, ring, stripe, color, etc.) eye reddish, white ground eye

UPPER & LOWER MANDIBLES light grey, seemed slightly upturned, carried at slight upward angle.

LEGS & FEET not seen

UPPERPARTS (Describe nape, back, rump, upper tail coverts, etc.) dark grey, back streaked with white

UNDERPARTS (Describe throat, belly, side, flanks, crissum, etc.) parts visible above water white extending from throat along sides

RECTRICES (Describe inner, middle, outer tail feathers, color pattern, shape, etc.) seemed grey, bird had little tail.

WING (Describe color, length, shape, linings, bars, coverts, leading and trailing edges, etc.) didn't fly while we were observing, while swimming ^{showed} as dark grey, some white flecking visible.

VOCALIZATION not heard

BEHAVIOR swimming, diving, sleeping

Date of observation Apr 5 1984 Time 9:30 AM Weather 46° 5-8 mph wind - 10' Sky cover Clear

Duration of observation 50 min. Bird - Sun orientation Sun behind obs.

Exact location Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids

Habitat open lake Other observers Larry Linden, Pete Wickham, Fred Thompson, Jim Sandrock

optical equipment 60X scope, used also at 40X & 10X, 10X binocs.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS Jim Sandrock saw the bird fly before we arrived & reported it rose from water like a Mallard & had a deep wing beat.

AN ACCOMPANYING SKETCH OR PHOTOGRAPH CAN BE AN EXCELLENT FURTHER DOCUMENTATION
doc. done immediately after observation

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Red-throated Loon (1), 8 Apr 1984, Cedar Lake, Cedar Rapids, Linn Co. Iowa.

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Other observers: seen by many over last week.

Time: 5:15 to 5:45 PM

Habitat: Open river bottom lake in city near Quaker Oats Plant.

"A winter-plumaged loon, with body size the same as Red-breasted Mergansers in the same field. The top of the head, back of the neck and back are uniform dark--darker on top of the head, slightly brownish on the back. Maybe a few white flecks on the back. At the waterline the bird is white with irregular line of demarcation with the back. The front of the breast, neck, and sides of the face are white. The white goes slightly higher behind the eye; otherwise it is below the eye in front. There is a dark mark at the junction of the head and the neck going forward a few centimeters from the neck. In one area the front of the breast looks slightly tinged with dark on the feathers. The bill is about one-third the length of the head and is very thin and slightly upturned at the tip. The bird holds the bill slightly raised most of the time."

The bird appeared slightly shorter than the Red-breasted Mergansers. Carl Bendorf said the dark neck mark was only on one side.

Song: not heard

Behavior: sleeping, swimming, diving.

Conditions: 150 yards (est); light rain; 20x scope.

Similar species: The size and bill eliminate Arctic Loon. Also, the forehead was rounded--not steep. The poor light probably accounts for the head and neck appearing darker than the back and difficulty in seeing spots on the back.

Agreement: Identified by many others before me.

Previous experience: Seen on West Coast and Alaska with all other loons.

References/time used: Looked at field guides when I got home.

Time of notes/typed: Notes dictated while viewing; typed 21 hours later.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Red-throated Loon
DATE SEEN: April 3, 1984
SITE OF OBSERVATION: Cedar Rapids, Linn County
OBSERVERS: Carl Bendorf, Tom Staudt, Bob Myers, Francis Moore, et al.
DATE OF REVIEW: 1984
METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation by mail to Records Committee
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: I-P
COMMENTS:

The Records Committee much appreciated the diagnostic photo of a Red-throated Loon in winter plumage.
Fortunately there were enough Committee members who did not see the bird ~~in~~ left to vote on this record!

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.