

Pacific Loon
13 Oct 1985
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
*Bery Engebretsen
IBL 56:44

Record Number: 85-13
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Bery Engebretsen

REFERENCE

Records Committee: IBL 56:44

VOTE: 4-IV, 3-V

IV, Not clear how small Common Loon eliminated.

V, Size only field mark and commons vary a lot in size.

V, Would like to have more details as to coloration of head, neck and back. I checked out several "small" loons on Saylorville this fall and finally concluded that the size of the lake and the distance from the loons were making Commons appear smaller than normal.

V, Size is only characteristic noted. Which is by itself not enough to separate Pacific from Common Loon.

IV, Need more detail on plumage (see comments above [under 85-12]). Also based entirely on bill shape.

IV, Although the identification is likely correct, size and bill size are apparently not fully reliable as field marks.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Antic Coot 2. Number: 1
3. Location Saylorville Reservoir
4. Date: 10/13/85 5. Time Bird seen: 9⁰⁵ to 9¹⁵
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): Swimming with cormorants, obviously smaller than them. As it approached, had shape of a coon, but seemed much less bulky than common coon which were very common this fall on the lake. at about 50-75 yds I got good look at bill. This was obviously smaller than the bulky bill of the common. I looked closely for the upturned angle of the Red throated, but it was decidedly straight. I could see no pattern on the back at this distance. Was white below, dark above.
7. Description of voice, if heard: —
8. Description of behavior: diving. Seemed nervous, would dive when cormorants flew over
9. Habitat - general: Saylorville reservoir, V
specific: West shore, 1 mi north of Dam
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Smaller, & bill decidedly smaller than common. Bill was not upturned as Red throated would be
11. Distance (how measured)? 50-75 yds (estimate) 12. Optical equipment: 7x50
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Sunny, to my northeast
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: none
Common coon was very common this day & others on the lake this fall
15. Other observers: none
16. Did the others agree with your identification?
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: May have been seen by Dennis Thompson a day or two later
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Peterson, Simmons, Golden.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 1 1/2 hrs
- Signature Ozary Engeltson Address: 6992 Tower Falls Place
- Date: 10/13/85 City, State: Johnston, Ia 50131