

Pacific Loon

6 Jun 1964

Des Moines Impounding Reservoir, Polk Co., IA

A. Berkowitz, W. Brown

to 11 June; IBL 34:64, AFN 18:511, Brown 1971

Record Number: 93-AH

Classification: NA

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 34:64, AFN 18:511

Brown 1971

LETTER

Ronald E. Goetz, Comments on Iowa Loon Records, 28 March 1988

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, No description is presented. At this time of year the bird should have been in alternate plumage and easily recognized by the same observers who gave good details for a 1948 sighting. The date seems quite unusual, but not impossible. /thk

93-A-H

Audubon Field Notes
18:511 1964

Loons, Herons—A Common Loon on June 1 at Baker Lake near Chicago (CC) was late, but an adult on July 4 at Indianapolis (CB, *fide* CEK) was out of season. An *Arctic Loon* was at Des Moines for several weeks in early June; seen by several observers (WB). Herons were generally

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Field Reports. Iowa
Bird Life 34:64
1964

Loons, Grebes, Cormorants. An Arctic Loon was found on 6 June at the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir by Albert Berkowitz and W. H. Brown. According to the custodian of the Reservoir grounds the bird arrived several days earlier, and it was also seen by numerous observers during the following two weeks. Pied-billed Grebes at Muskrat Slough are down, (PP). Elev-

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Arctic Loon Gavia arctica (Linnaeus)

Accidental

Brown. 1971
p 389

Its status, according to Grant (1963), was: "Rare, extension of range, winter visitor." Recent observations include one summer and one fall date: 9 December, 1948, Glendale Cemetery, Des Moines (now a specimen in the Iowa State Department of History and Archives) (Musgrove, 1949a); 11 and 12 December, 1948, Des Moines Impounding Reservoir (Berkowitz, 1949); winter of 1951-1952, Scott Co. Baily, 1954); 6-11 June, 1964, Des Moines Impounding Reservoir (ACB); 22 October, 1965, Des Moines Impounding Reservoir (WHB).

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descriptions of three Missouri and Illinois sight records from Nov of adults, all of which were apparently entirely in Definitive Basic. In general, the retention of some Alternate scapular feathers into winter (in addition to the always retained Alternate wing coverts) is not exceptional (see Palmer, Handbook of North American Birds, Volume 1), but I found no indication that full Definitive Alternate was ever retained so late. I suppose, however, that with so many observers there is no chance of error?

7. Winter 1951-2. Mississippi R., Scott Co. A.W.Housman. (Baily 1954).

Any chance that the specimen still exists? (Davenport Museum?). No information given to allow judgement.

8. 6-11 (or 20) Jun 1964. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. A.Berkowitz, W.H.Brown. (Brown 1964, Audubon Field Notes 1964).

No details.

9. 22 Oct 1965. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. W.H.Brown. (Brown 1971).

No details.

10. 11 Nov 1970. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. W.H.Brown. (AB 1971).

No details.

11. 6 May--3 Jun 1972. Des Moines Res.-Moffitt L., Polk Co. D.Mooney, W.H.Brown. (Iowa Bird Life 42:37 & 69).

No details.

12. (1981-02) 28-29 Apr 1981. Amana L., Iowa Co. C.Bendorf*, M.Newlon*, T.Kent*, Shires. (Bendorf, 1981).

Fine details of a Definitive Alternate Pacific/Arctic Loon. Bendorf mentions black sides and back of bird (presumably he would have noticed white sides and flank patch), and Kent describes the back of head and neck as light fluffy gray. These points favor Pacific Loon so heavily as to essentially preclude any thought of Arctic Loon.

13. (1985-13) 13 Oct 85. Saylorville Res., Polk Co. B.Engebretsen*. (IBL 56:44).

Not much detail for a fall bird. Identification seemingly based only on bill shape and size, but no Common Loons seen in juxtaposition?

14. (1986-07) 1 Nov 86. Saylorville Res., Polk Co. S.Dinsmore*. (Dinsmore 1987).

Reported as Winter Adult. There are some points that I do not care for here. First, the back is described as medium gray, slightly lighter than a Common Loon. This makes it certain that the bird was not an adult Pacific, which have very dark backs. It does not even sound good for juvenile Pacific, which are still at least as dark as juvenile Common. Second, the crown and nape are described as light gray, lighter than the back. Adults in basic plumage usually have napes slightly paler than back,