

Pacific Loon
 CA 1895
 Burlington, IL
 Paul Bartsch
 Nutting 1894, Anderson 1907

Record Number: 93-AB
 Classification: NA

SPECIMEN

University of Iowa #10175

PHOTOGRAPHS (of specimen)

T. H. Kent, specimen label says "Burlington (Illinois side)"

REFERENCES

Nutting, C.C. 1894. Report of the committee on state fauna.
 Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci. 2:43-51.

Savage, D.L. 1896. [no title]. Iowa Ornithologist 2:85.

Anderson 1907

Hersey, F.S. 1917. The status of the Black-throated Loon
 (*Gavia arctica*) as a North American bird. Auk 34:283-290.

DuMont 1933

LETTERS AND NOTES

George D. Schrimper to Ronald E. Goetz, 21 Aug 1987

Drawings sent to Schrimper by Goetz

George D. Schrimper to R. E. Goetz, 24 Nov 1987

Ronald E. Goetz to Thomas H. Kent, 14 Jan 1988

VOTE: 5 A-S Red-throated Loon

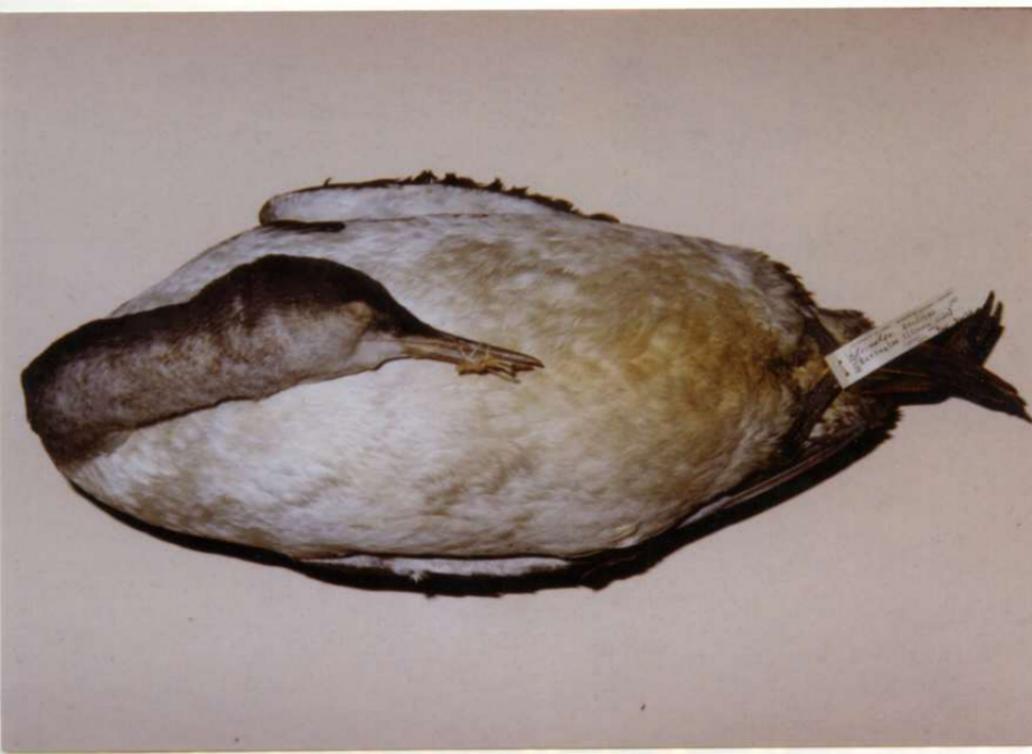
A-S for Red-throated Loon. This specimen represents an incredible comedy of errors. It is a bit surprising that Bartsch did not make the correct identification. He was a good scientist and early reviewer of Iowa ornithological literature. He also appeared to label his specimens accurately. We do not know whether Anderson looked at the specimen, even though he was at the University of Iowa. Stoner could not find the specimen, but he may not have had the number, and, therefore, may not have looked at the tag on the Red-throated Loon. [Incidentally, my father, F. W. Kent, told me that he and Alfred M. Bailey were the only students in Stoner's ornithology class sometime in the period of 1912-15 and they knew more than he did.] It is most surprising that Du Mont took Hersey's word that the specimen was not in the museum, because Du Mont apparently tried to find every specimen in the state and he also reorganized the entire University of Iowa collection. The next set of bumlbers were Mike Newlon and myself. We examined all of the University of Iowa specimens of accidental species and dutifully photographed this specimen (P-0042) in July 1981 without questioning the identification. The correct identification was made by serendipity when Schrimper examined the specimen at the request of Goetz, who was looking for possible Arctic Loons in the Midwest and got the reference from Iowa Birds. The photographs clearly indicate a juvenile Red-throated Loon as detailed by Schrimper and Goetz. If we had identified this specimen correctly in 1981, we would have reviewed the other Pacific Loon records at that time, because we looked at all records for species that were not substantiated by a specimen or photograph. /thk

A-S RT Loon (NA Pacific Loon). I should note that I can not

claim to be the 'Ross W. Silcock' who pronounced the specimen a
Red-throated Loon in the late 1970s!/wrs

RE-VOTE: 5 NA

NA, I meant to vote NA on this record because label clearly
indicates that specimen was taken in Illinois. Can you imagine
another error on this record!/thk



Red-throated Loon P-0042
Burlington, Des Moines Co.
?? ?? 1895 Paul Bartsch, phot

93-AB

Red-throated Loon P-0042
Burlington, Des Moines Co.
?? ?? 1895 Paul Bartsch, phot

5 000 4800 MINNIN 5005 111-0216

Red-throated Loon P-0042
Burlington, Des Moines Co.
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93-AB

5 000 4800 MINNIN 5005 111-0216

Nutting, C. C. 1894. Report of the committee on state fauna. Proc Iowa Acad Sci 2:43-51.

Black throated loon, *Urinator arcticus*, Linn. Burlington, Iowa.
Paul Bartsch.

Savage, D. L. 1896. (no title). Iowa Ornithologist 2:85

The notice of the taking of a Black-throated Loon near Sabula, Iowa, as given in the April IOWA ORNITHOLOGIST, read, by J. Giddings, but should read H. J. Giddings. One initial was omitted thus crediting the note to the wrong person, there being a J. Giddings at Sabula.

I must also modify my supplementary note on this species, as a specimen taken by Paul Bartsch at Burlington, Iowa, was reported in the proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Sciences, 1895.

7. (9). *Gavia arctica* (Linn.). Black-throated Loon.

The Black-throated Loon is a northern species which very casually visits Iowa. Two specimens have been taken in Jackson county. J. Giddings reports (Iowa Orn., ii, 4, 1896, 73): "Nov. 15, 1895, a male Black-throated Loon was shot while swimming in the Mississippi River a little way from the shore opposite Sabula, by Mr. W. Eldridge. Identified by Dr. C. Hart Merriam." H. J. Giddings reports (West. Orn., v, 3, 1900, 60): "On Nov. 26, 1899, an immature male was shot on the Mississippi River at this place [Sabula] and sent to me for mounting." A specimen in the University Museum, No. 10175, in juvenile plumage, was taken at Burlington; recorded by Prof. C. C. Nutting (Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., 1894, 44).

Anderson 1907
pp 151-152

Hersey, F. S. 1917.

The status of the
Black-throated Loon
(*Gavia arctica*) as a
North American bird.
Auk 34: 233-290.

() () ()

Iowa: Dr. R. M. Anderson records (Proc. Davenport Acad. Sci., Vol. XI) three specimens of this loon from Iowa. One was, at that time, in the collection of the State University at Iowa City (No. 10175). Regarding this bird Prof. Dayton Stoner writes, "I am sorry to report that I am unable to find any specimen of *Gavia arctica* in our collections." The two remaining records are of birds reported by Mr. H. J. Giddings. One of these is said to have been identified by Dr. C. Hart Merriam and is still in Mr. Giddings' possession. Dr. Merriam has written us that he does not now recall this bird but a memorandum he has, which was made in connection with the examination of this specimen, states that all United States records are *pacifica*. Mr. Giddings states in a recent letter that the bill of this bird measures 2.15 inches from which it seems evident that it is a Pacific Loon.

In a recent letter Dr. Anderson says, "I have no doubt personally that either *Gavia arctica* or *Gavia pacifica* occurs occasionally as stragglers or accidentally in Iowa. From what I have learned in the last few years, however, I am inclined to think the bird would be *pacifica*."

Gavia arctica pacifica (Lawrence). Pacific Loon

Accidental. This species was listed by Anderson (1907) under the name *Gavia arctica* (Linn.), Black-throated Loon. He included the following records: "Two specimens have been taken in Jackson County. J. Giddings reports (Iowa Orn., ii, 4, 1896, 73): 'Nov. 15, 1895, a male Black-throated Loon was shot while swimming in the Mississippi River a little way from the shore opposite Sabula, by Mr. W. Eldridge. Identified by Dr. C. Hart Merriam.' H. J. Giddings reports (West. Orn., v. 3, 1900, 60): 'On Nov. 26, 1899, an immature male was shot on the Mississippi River at this place [Sabula] and sent to me for mounting.' A specimen in the University Museum, No. 10175, in juvenal plumage, was taken at Burlington; recorded by Prof. C. C. Nutting (Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., 1894, 44)."

Subsequently, F. Seymour Hersey, while engaged in a critical review of all North American records of the Black-throated Loon, recorded (Auk, XXXIV, pp. 283-290) that his correspondence in connection with his investigation revealed that the specimen in the University of Iowa Museum could not be found. H. J. Giddings wrote him that the specimen secured November 16, 1895, was still in his possession and that the exposed culmen measured 2.15 inches, from which Hersey concluded it must be a Pacific Loon.

This mounted specimen was examined by the writer (Wilson Bull., XLV, pp. 89-90) on April 15, 1933, and found to be, unquestionably, referable to *Gavia arctica*. All North American records of this species south of Alaska are now referred to the subspecies *pacifica*. Measurements in millimeters of this male in winter plumage are: wing, 303.5; tail, 57.9; tarsus, 68.5; exposed culmen, 51.3; height of culmen at base, 13.7; height of culmen at nostril, 12.2; culmen from nostril, 38.8. It was shot by W. H. Eldredge on November 16, 1895, while it was swimming in the Mississippi River in front of the town of Sabula, Jackson County. This statement is slightly different than the one quoted by Anderson. However, these data have been recently verified by Giddings through reference to his journals. There are no other definite Iowa records.

1933
DuMont ~~1933~~
pp 16-17

The University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Museum of Natural History

(319) 353-5893



93-AB

August 21, 1987

Ronald E. Goetz
Illinois Ornithological Records Committee
C/O 909 South Gore Avenue
Webster Grove, Missouri 63119

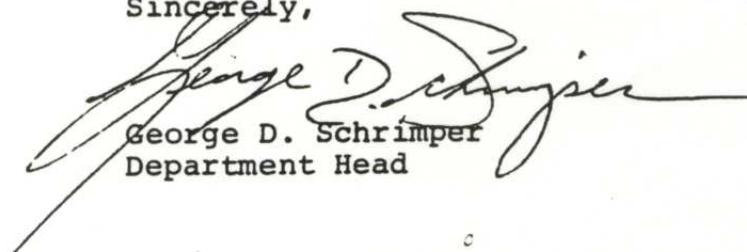
Dear Mr. Goetz:

The "arctic loon" described in your letter of July 17, 1987 was misidentified, the error apparently being carried forward over the years by various authors following R. M. Anderson's listing in 1907.

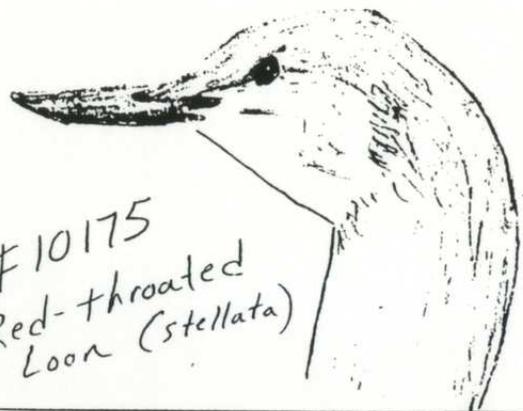
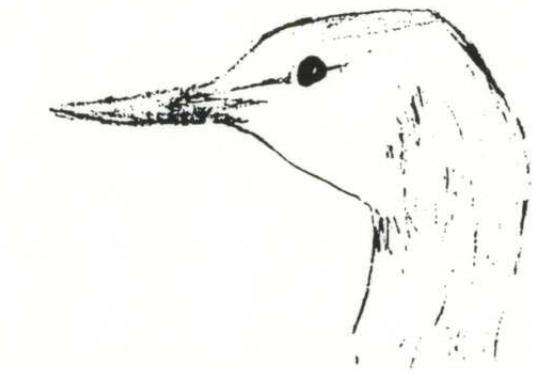
The specimen is assigned our Museum of Natural History catalog number 10175 and was taken at Burlington, Iowa by Paul Bartsch c.a. 1895. This is the same specimen referenced by Dinsmore (1984) although I am not aware that it was seen directly by Dinsmore. I do know that it was examined by Ross W. Silcock in the late 1970's who described it to be Gavia stellata. My own examination corroborates his finding.

I hope that this provides you with sufficient information. Although the specimen is a good record for Iowa, it is not an arctic loon.

Sincerely,

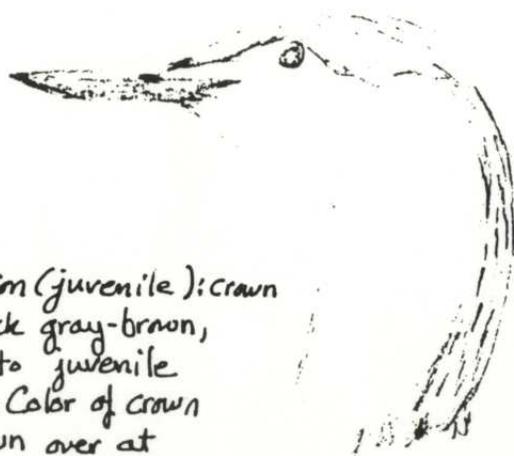

George D. Schrimper
Department Head

Juvenile head pattern: 3 examples



#10175
Red-throated
Loon (*stellata*)

Basic Adult head pattern (extremely consistent).



Description (juvenile): crown and hind neck gray-brown, color similar to juvenile Pacific. Color of crown comes down over at least part of the eye (usually half or more). Fore part of face and chin pale; remainder of face (especially auriculum) and foreneck (especially side of neck) variably streaked dingy brownish. Hind neck distinctly paler than back. Back brown, each feather with 2 white spots → (oo's) producing a random pattern of white "X"s all over back, not aligned along the length of the bird.

Description (basic adult): crown and hind neck feathers gray with dark streaks along shafts; overall slightly darker than juvenile. Gray crown just touches the top of the eye, sloping downward. White reaches to nostril. Face and foreneck with more white than any other loon; at narrowest point, the dark color of the nape is only 2 cm.

Spots on back are bigger, rounder and (especially on upper back) aligned along the length of the body. Scapulars overall blacker, less brown, than in juvenile.

Molt to alternate underway by 28 Mar; nape as in alternate 1 April.

This is a copy of a copy of my notes on Red-throated Loon specimens at the Field Museum which I sent to Dr. Schrimper on 29 Sep. 87
REG

Spotting and streaking on throat may remain to 10 Jan [this bird already w/ fresh feathers in crown, nape and upper back]

First year still recognizable 3 Apr.

The University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Museum of Natural History

(319) 335-0480



November 24, 1987

Mr. R. E. Goetz
909 South Gore Avenue
Webster Grove, Missouri 63119

Dear Mr. Goetz:

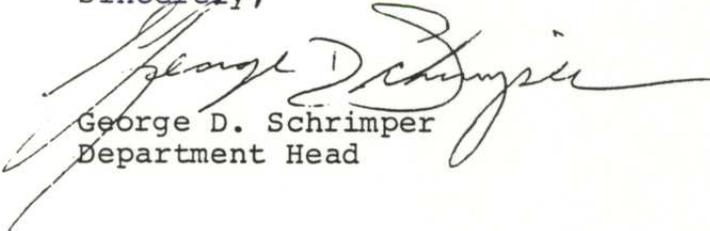
I regret the delay in responding to your inquiry of September 29, 1987.

The plumage of the red-throated loon (#10175) comes most closely to your third rendering of the juvenile appearance. It has significant infusion of the brown coloration in the facial area both behind and below the eye. The random X-spotting of the back also follows the juvenile pattern.

One note that should be made is that although the collecting locale is Burlington, Iowa, a parenthetical "Illinois side" is written on the specimen tag. If the authors of Iowa Birds strictly adhere to the political boundaries, they may have elected not to include this specimen. The boundary normally follows the middle of the navigation channel--I presume from the note that the bird was taken on the Illinois side of the channel.

Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,


George D. Schrimper
Department Head

93-AB

909 S. Gore Ave.
Webster Groves, MO 63119

.14 January 1988

Thomas H. Kent
211 Richards Street
Iowa City, IA 52240

Dear Tom:

Many thanks for your informative letter of 20 December 1987. First, to fill you in on the background of my correspondence with George Schrimper, I should explain that I am researching an article on the identification and ageing of loons and their status in the Middlewestern Prairie Region. As part of this research, I am attempting to examine or at least obtain detailed information on as many specimens of all the loon plumages as I can, and in particular to obtain as much detail as possible on specimens of the scarcer species taken in the region. I am especially interested in the Pacific-Arctic Loon identification problem, and have examined all available specimens in Illinois collections in detail. To add to my data, I was attempting to gather similar information on the Iowa specimens (there are some changes in the fine details of the throat and face pattern which seem to be caused by wear, and the more data I have the better I can judge the timing of these changes). Thus you were correct that I originally asked Dr. Schrimper about the Burlington loon specimen in order to obtain enough detail to determine whether the bird was a Pacific or an Arctic, and to determine the age, plumage and state of wear. I did not anticipate that the bird was incorrectly identified or that it might have been taken in Illinois rather than Iowa. I am still interested in the details of other Iowa specimens of Pacific-Arctic Loons--do you have photos of the others? If so, I would greatly appreciate the loan of them. I have examined a couple hundred loon specimens during the last year, and would be glad to act as a consultant for Iowa loon records. The literature and field guides have not yet provided thorough treatments of the loons, and I have found that many observers are unaware of even the basic ageing sequences. I will go into this information in detail for the article.

As for the Burlington record, the photographed specimen is certainly a juvenile Red-throated Loon, *Gavia stellata*. The most distinctive feature is the back pattern, with thin white edges on each side of each feather, not joined at the feather tip. The overall effect is quite distinctive for a bird in the hand, a random pattern of "X's" all over the bird. This pattern is unique among loon plumages: No other loon species has a remotely similar pattern, and even the similar adult winter Red-throateds have larger spots, more nearly aligned along the length of the bird. In addition, the dark feathering of the crown of the photographed specimen extends to the nostril and covers more than half of the eye (adults in basic plumage have the dark crown only just touching the top of the eye, with white feathering extending to the nostril), and there are fine brown feather tips scattered across the foreneck and auriculum, giving this area a "dirty" look contrasting slightly with the white chin and lower face. This patterning indicates that the bird is in fairly fresh juvenal plumage: the brown tips to the foreneck feathers usually wear off by early January (usually before), and a molt commences usually by mid-January into a first basic plumage which more nearly resembles the adult basic plumage. As a very rough guess, I would suggest that the bird was likely taken before mid-December.

I don't think I would need further information on this record (measurements, etc.), but as I said before, I would be interested in seeing photos or obtaining descriptions of the remaining Iowa Arctic-Pacific Loon specimens. Let me know if this is possible. (I have not yet examined the Wilson Bulletin reference you provided for the Jackson County Pacific Loon record, but I will do so shortly.) I have forwarded the relevant

information on the Burlington loon to Dave Bohlen, who was not previously aware of the record. Do you think the bird should be an Illinois or an Iowa record? I am having duplicate slides made, and will return your slides as soon as the duplicates are finished.

IORC is not yet reviewing records as old as the Burlington Magnificent Frigatebird: in fact, we have just begun looking at records for the rarer species back to about 1971. When we've completed these, we will begin reviewing selected older records before publishing an "official" state list (probably about 2 years away). We would certainly appreciate knowing the Iowa Committee's findings on some of the records from the Illinois/Iowa border when the time comes.

I enjoyed your discussion on the Iowa border--we will have to compile a similar treatment for Illinois eventually, but it's not something I'm looking forward to. The Missouri-Illinois boundary apparently remains fixed even when the river changes course (resulting in a number of "indefinite boundaries"), but a recent court case to determine whether Missouri or Illinois labor unions had jurisdiction over the construction of the new Alton Dam has also changed the mapped border here: I don't know yet whether this "change" was based on historic argument, on the projected future course of the river, or was simply a compromise negotiated by the states to ease the union problem.

Thanks for the additional documentation for the Lesser Black-backed Gull at Keokuk 21 October 1986. The problems I have with this bird are the very small red gonydeal spot described by Cecil, and the lack of head streaking. I have subsequently learned that the streaking (normally quite conspicuous during winter) can appear inconspicuous in October. I'll keep you informed on IORC's evaluation, and let you have some information I have been gathering on possible Lesser Black-backed X Herring Gull hybrids which may complicate identification of Lesser Black-backed Gulls. A bird photographed in November 1986 at Joliet, Illinois has been thought by some experts to be such a hybrid! Was the Keokuk bird seen in Illinois?

I will probably urge the Committee to retain the subdivisions in the voting categories, if only because it does make Members think more about acceptance criteria. I thought that McCaskie's comment on criteria for members was on the money: the more thoroughly a person documents birds, the more they will be aware of the potential problems with documentations.

Illinois will almost surely be making some change in the way members are selected, but this will probably not be possible for another year. Currently, we are investigating instituting a system essentially similar to yours, but instead of the Board of the Illinois Audubon Society, we will have to form another committee to fill the role performed in Iowa by the Board of the IOU. This is necessary since the Board of the Illinois Audubon Society is not necessarily made up of birders, nor does it necessarily represent all the birders in the state. I can scarcely believe that the Minnesota committee has no provision for regular turnover of its members. If you like, I will keep you informed on our revisions to the bylaws.

I am glad you brought up the idea of increasing communication between records committees of the surrounding states, as I think this could prove very beneficial to all. I am afraid I have been guilty of not paying as much attention to nearby states as I should, but I am certainly willing to learn from others' experience.

Again, many thanks, and keep in touch!

Sincerely,

