

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/20/00

Pacific Loon

31 Oct 1995

Pleasant Creek L., Linn Co., IA

\*Thomas H. Kent

IBL 66:17, 95

Record Number: 95-33

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:17

Records Committee: IBL 66:95

VOTE: 7 A-D

95-33

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

**Species:** Pacific Loon; **Number:** 1

**Location:** Pleasant Creek L., Linn Co., IA

**Date:** 31 October 1995; **Time:** 9:00 to 9:10 a.m.

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

**Others before/with/after:** seen later in week by Chuck, Jane, and Jim Fuller

**Habitat and circumstances:** deep-water, artificial lake

**Description of bird:** While scoping, I noticed a small loon with a small bill (compared to Common Loons seen earlier). The bill, which was held horizontally, was gray, relatively thin, and tapered to a point. There were no other birds present for direct size comparison, but I had seen 28 Common Loons earlier in the morning at Coralville Reservoir. The bird was a contrasty white below and dark above. The white on the fore-neck was sharply set off from the dark hind-neck, and when viewed head on I saw a very thin chin strap near the bend of the neck. The division between white and black on the neck presented nearly a straight line with a thin anterior indentation of black. There was white on the face below the eye and extending into the auricular area. I saw no white around the eye or in the loreal area. The head was rather elongated with a slight crest on the forehead, which was very much like the photo of the basic plumage bird in the Master Guide to Birding. The top of the head and back of the neck were a soft dark brown/black and the back and coverts appeared to be finely speckled.

**Voice:** not heard

**Similar species:** I studied the Common Loons seen earlier in the morning. They presented a wide spectrum of face patterns and size. I based the identification of Pacific Loon subjective evaluation of size, bill shape and size, sharp line of separation of black and white on the neck, and chin strap.

**Any one have reservations?:** Jim Fuller was confident of the identification. I did not talk to anyone else.

**Light:** light rain; **Distance:** 200 yards (guess); **Optics:** 20x scope

**Previous experience:** I have seen several in Iowa, including one on 26 October.

**References before/after viewing:** I looked at National Geographic guide while viewing and the Master Guide while typing final copy.

**Time of notes:** during observation; **Final typing:** 4 days