

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/20/00

Red-throated Loon

16 Nov 1995

Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA

\*Stephen J. Dinsmore

also 17 Nov; IBL 66:17, 95

Record Number: 95-29

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014 [3/24/96]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:17

Records Committee: IBL 66:95

VOTE: 7 A-D

95-29

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Red-throated Loon  
Number: 1 adult basic  
Location: Saylorville Res., Polk Co.  
Habitat: large lake  
Date: 16,17 November 1995  
Time: 3:48-4:10 p.m. on the 16th  
Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014  
Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird(s): I was scanning the lake from Cherry Glen Recreation Area when I noticed a single loon that I immediately recognized as a Red-throated. The bird was clearly smaller than several nearby Common Loons. At a distance, the upperparts appeared solid black. When it swam closer, some pale flecks were visible on the mantle and upperwing coverts. The flanks were white. The back of the neck was also dark, becoming slightly paler gray on the crown. The throat and foreneck were white. There was a sharp line of contrast between the lighter foreneck and darker back of the neck. The area around the eye was white. The bill was black and thin; the culmen was straight, while the lower mandible angled upward, giving the appearance of an upturned bill. The bill was also relatively short, being roughly equal to the length of the head. This was accentuated by the fact that the bird held its head tilted slightly upward. Based on the clean neck pattern, I concluded the bird was probably an adult in basic plumage, and was a different individual from the one seen at this location in late October. On the 17th, I again located the bird off Cherry Glen. This time, the bird was swimming with three Common Loons. Compared to them, this bird was about 20% smaller and much slimmer. It also had a more slender neck and appeared much smaller-headed.

Similar species and how eliminated: The smaller size, neck pattern, and bill shape and size eliminated other species of loons.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with good light and partly cloudy skies for both observations. Estimated viewing distance was 250-400m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: Very familiar with this species from work in North Carolina and Massachusetts.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes made: written during initial observation  
How long before this form completed: 20 November 1995