

Red-throated Loon  
7 May 1994  
Silver L., Worth Co., IA  
\*Jan L. Walter  
IBL 64:72; 65:81

Record Number: 94-06  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jan L. Walter, 934 13th S.E., Mason City, IA 50401 [19 Aug 1994\*]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 64:72  
Records Committee: IBL 65:81

VOTE: 7 A-D

- A-D, Description eliminates Common and Pacific Loon.
  - A-D, Detailed description was helpful in this review.
  - A-D, Good description of all necessary identifying marks. I wonder when molt occurs since another month will find them on the breeding grounds.
  - A-D, All features fit Red-throated Loon in basic plumage.
  - A-D, Diagnostic marks well documented, but can spotting on back really be seen from 300+ yards.
- All other marks rule out other loons.

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

94-06

What species? Red-throated Loon How many? 1

Location? Silver Lake, Worth Co., Ia

Type of Habitat? Shallow Lake

When? date(s): 7 May, 1994 time: About 2 PM 10-15 min  
relocated later

Who? your name and address: Jan L. Walter, 934-13<sup>th</sup> S.E., Mason City, Ia 50401

Others with you: Curt Nelson

Others ~~before~~ or after you: Eugene and Eloise Armstrong and others

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

First thing noticed was the thin gray bill with straight culmen and upturned tip of lower mandible giving the appearance of an upturned bill. The head was held with the bill slightly uptilted and this was seen every time the bird surfaced after a dive. The crown was rounded without a peak at either front or back. The gray head and hind neck were paler than the back, which was indistinctly speckled with white. The white of the throat and fore neck extended slightly above the eye on an otherwise pale gray face. The dull white throat and fore neck didn't contrast sharply with the pale gray nape and hind neck. The bird was relocated twice within the next approximately half hour. Also during this time a breeding plumaged Common Loon was seen on another part of the lake. Although the two were never seen at the same time for a direct comparison, the difference in size, shape, and color of the bills and the way they were held was readily apparent. This was also true of the overall size and the shape of the head.

Similar species; how eliminated: Common Loon - above comparisons.  
Pacific Loon - has straight, unangled bill which is not uptilted, doesn't have the white area above and in front of the eye, has sharp division between white and dark of neck.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No  
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.  
Lighting - came from behind us and varied from solid overcast to full sun  
Distance -  $\frac{1}{6}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile - guess

40x Kowa scope  
Previous experience with species and similar ones: Common Loons usually seen during spring migrations. None with Red-throated Loon except seeing them on TV programs and studying video tapes of same.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide; Audubon Master Guide; Advanced Birding, Kenn Kaufman; Sea birds, Peter Harrison

How long before field notes made? At the this form completed? Next Day  
time

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).