

Pacific Loon
8 Dec 1948
Glendale Cemetery, Polk Co., IA
Jack Musgrove
Musgrove 1949, Brown 1971

Record Number: 93-AE
Classification: NA

SPECIMEN

Iowa State Department of History and Archives [not examined]

REFERENCES

Musgrove, J.W. 1949. Pacific Loon in Polk County Iowa. IBL
19:19.
Brown 1971

LETTER

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

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, Musgrove had the specimen in hand and presumably was capable of identifying it. Yet, we have an incomplete description that is not convincing to an outside reviewer (Goetz). Jim Dinsmore looked for specimens at the State Historical Museum and apparently did not find this one. Perhaps we should look again.

/thk

NA, I'll try to find this one when I'm at the museum./jjd

Musgrove, J. W. 1949. Pacific Loon in Polk County Iowa. IBL 19:19.

Pacific Loon in Polk County, Iowa.—On December 8, 1948, a Pacific Loon (*Gavia arctica pacifica*) in immature plumage was removed from the ice of Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines. Inasmuch as the bird was badly wounded, it was killed and made into a specimen for the State Historical Museum. To my knowledge, it is the first specimen of this species recorded in this state for a number of years. This specimen is black on the back with no spotting except on the wings and scapulars. The back of neck and top of head are dark gray with white throat and underparts, and a distinct brownish-gray band across the throat.—JACK W. MUSGROVE, Dept. of Hist. & Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.

Arctic Loon *Gavia arctica* (Linnaeus)

Accidental

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).

Brown. 1971
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Comments on Iowa Loon Records

I. Pacific/Arctic Loons

1. Specimen UI 10175. As indicated in previous correspondence, this specimen is a juvenile Red-throated Loon.

2. 15 (or 16) Nov 1895. Mississippi R. near Sabula, Clinton Co. J.Giddings, W.Eldridge, C.Hart Merriam. (Giddings 1986; Anderson 1907; Hersey 1917; DuMont 1933; DuMont 1934).

I am not certain yet that the measurements given eliminate *arctica* completely. However, the bird was at least not a Common or Red-throated Loon. Apparently the plumage characters which can support separation of *pacifica* from *arctica* were unknown until very recently and in any case were not described here. This was a young bird, since feathers of upperparts were margined with grayish. I may be able to say more about this bird after I do some research on measurements. Any chance that the specimen still exists?

3. 26 Nov 1899. Mississippi R. near Sabula, Clinton Co. H.J.Giddings. (Anderson 1907).

Almost no detail.

4. Dec 1902. Polk Co. Lester P. Fagan. (DuMont 1931).

No details provided to make judgement from.

5. 8 Dec 1948. Glendale Cemetary, Des Moines, Polk Co. Jack Musgrove. (Musgrove 1949).

Does the State Historical Museum still have this specimen? He says the bird was in immature plumage, but this is not consistent with his description. He states that the back is black with no spotting except on the wings and scapulars. Immature loons of all species except Red-throated have conspicuous wide gray margins to the feathers of the entire upperparts. Hence this bird must be an adult Common or Pacific (or conceivably Arctic) Loon. He also says that there was a distinct brownish-gray band across the throat. Does he mean across the base of the throat (in which case adult Pacific is far less likely than adult Common) or across the top of the throat (i.e., a chinstrap, in which case the bird was a Pacific)? Since size is not described, I would recommend treating the record as hypothetical unless the specimen can be located.

6. 11-12 Dec 1948. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. Berkowitz, Musgrove, Peasley, Stiles. (Berkowitz 1949).

Clearly a diagnostically described Pacific/Arctic Loon, yet it seems quite exceptional that it was in full Definitive Alternate plumage so late. I have data from only three specimens of fall adult Pacific: The Missouri specimen, taken 23 Oct, was in almost complete Definitive Alternate, but shows white feathers molting into the auricular region, the chin, and the throat; one of the Field Museum specimens, taken 16 Nov, was in Definitive Basic except that it showed remnants of the black throat patch and a few of the white squares left on the mantle; and another specimen taken 20 Dec was in Definitive Basic except that it still had a few of the scapular squares (less than the 16 Nov specimen). In addition, I have