

Pacific Loon
CA 1951
Scott Co., IA
A. W. Housman
Baily 1954

Record Number: 93-AG
Classification: NA

REFERENCE

Baily, A.L. 1954. Three records from Scott County. IBL 24:18.
Brown 1971

LETTER

Ronald E. Goetz, Comments on Iowa Loon Records, 28 March 1988
VOTE: 5 NA

NA, Lang Baily was a respected ornithologist. He was recruited from the Denver Museum, where he was Curator of Ornithology, to direct the Davenport Public Museum (now Putnam Museum). He was there for only a few years when he died from malignant melanoma. I remember his coming to our house for lunch and discussing his disease. This does not excuse his failure to describe the bird. I do not know how well we searched the museum for this specimen. I am not sure that I would vote to accept it even if found. We do not know whether it was labeled. Apparently, Baily got his information secondhand from Housman, who in turn got the specimen and information about it from someone else. It could easily have been taken in Illinois. This record falls in the category of probably correct (based on Baily's ability) and probably from Iowa (because the hunters were likely to have been on the Iowa side). /thk.

NA, Source of specimen more troubling to me than identification./jjd

Baily, A.L. 1954. Three records for Scott County. IBL 24:18.

Three Records from Scott County.—*Gavia artica pacifica*, Pacific Loon: An immature unsexed bird has been located among the mounted specimens belonging to A. W. Housman of Pleasant Valley, Iowa. The bird was given to him in the flesh as being taken nearby on the Mississippi. Mr. Housman reports that he received the specimen during the winter of 1951-1952. This constitutes the first record of the species for Scott County. 7

Colymbus g. holböllii, Holboell's Grebe: Two birds of this species were observed on December 15, 1953, diving in the slush ice of the Mississippi at Lock No. 14. One specimen was secured and on examination proved to be an immature female. The bird has been placed in the skin collection of the Davenport Public Museum.

Plectrophenax n. nivalis, Snow Bunting: Though reported a regular winter visitor to Iowa, the Snow Bunting appears to be of rare enough occurrence in Scott County to merit attention. Two birds were observed on December 15, 1953, under paint test racks at Lock No. 14. Later observations by members of the Tri-City Bird Club recorded four buntings throughout the latter part of December in the same vicinity of testing racks, the birds evidently preferring the shelter proffered by the open structure.—A. LANG BAILY, Davenport, Iowa.

Arctic Loon *Gavia arctica* (Linnaeus)

Accidental

Brown. 1971
p 389

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). 5
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descriptions of three Missouri and Illinois sight records from Nov of adults, all of which were apparently entirely in Definitive Basic. In general, the retention of some Alternate scapular feathers into winter (in addition to the always retained Alternate wing coverts) is not exceptional (see Palmer, Handbook of North American Birds, Volume 1), but I found no indication that full Definitive Alternate was ever retained so late. I suppose, however, that with so many observers there is no chance of error?

7. Winter 1951-2. Mississippi R., Scott Co. A.W.Housman. (Baily 1954).

Any chance that the specimen still exists? (Davenport Museum?). No information given to allow judgement.

8. 6-11 (or 20) Jun 1964. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. A.Berkowitz, W.H.Brown. (Brown 1964, Audubon Field Notes 1964).

No details.

9. 22 Oct 1965. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. W.H.Brown. (Brown 1971).

No details.

10. 11 Nov 1970. Des Moines Res., Polk Co. W.H.Brown. (AB 1971).

No details.

11. 6 May--3 Jun 1972. Des Moines Res.-Moffitt L., Polk Co. D.Mooney, W.H.Brown. (Iowa Bird Life 42:37 & 69).

No details.

12. (1981-02) 28-29 Apr 1981. Amana L., Iowa Co. C.Bendorf*, M.Newlon*, T.Kent*, Shires. (Bendorf, 1981).

Fine details of a Definitive Alternate Pacific/Arctic Loon. Bendorf mentions black sides and back of bird (presumably he would have noticed white sides and flank patch), and Kent describes the back of head and neck as light fluffy gray. These points favor Pacific Loon so heavily as to essentially preclude any thought of Arctic Loon.

13. (1985-13) 13 Oct 85. Saylorville Res., Polk Co. B.Engebretsen*. (IBL 56:44).

Not much detail for a fall bird. Identification seemingly based only on bill shape and size, but no Common Loons seen in juxtaposition?

14. (1986-07) 1 Nov 86. Saylorville Res., Polk Co. S.Dinsmore*. (Dinsmore 1987).

Reported as Winter Adult. There are some points that I do not care for here. First, the back is described as medium gray, slightly lighter than a Common Loon. This makes it certain that the bird was not an adult Pacific, which have very dark backs. It does not even sound good for juvenile Pacific, which are still at least as dark as juvenile Common. Second, the crown and nape are described as light gray, lighter than the back. Adults in basic plumage usually have napes slightly paler than back,