

Pacific Loon

Dec 1902

below Beaver Creek, Polk Co., IA

Lester P. Fagan

Record Number: 93-AD
Classification: NA

REFERENCES

DuMont, P.A. 1931. Birds of Polk County Iowa. Des Moines
Audubon Society, Des Moines. p 14.

DuMont 1933 [not mentioned]

LETTER

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

VOTE: 5 NA

NA, No evidence. Not accepted by Du Mont./thk

DuMont, P. A. 1931. Birds of Polk County Iowa. Des Moines, Des Moines
Audubon Society pp 1-72 (p 14).

[PACIFIC LOON, *Gavia arctica pacifica* (Lawrence).

Lester P. Fagen sent the following record of the Black-throated
Loon: December 1902, Des Moines River below mouth of Beaver Creek
two individuals only seen, twice on successive days.

F. Seymour Hersey (1917 pp. 233-290) has shown that all records of
G. a. arctica Linnaeus in the Mississippi Valley refer to *G. a. pacifica*
(Lawrence). In this case the author does not consider a sight identifi-
cation sufficient evidence on which to base an addition to the records
of this species in the state.]

Goetz 1988

93-AD

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