

Clark's Grebe

13 May 1994

Trumbull L., Clay Co., IA

*Marion M. Brewer

IBL 64:72; 65:82, Brewer 1995

Record Number: 94-07

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Marion M. Brewer, 1537 560th St., Cherokee, IA 51012 [19 Aug 1994*]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 64:72

Records Committee: IBL 65:81

Brewer, M. M. 1995. Clark's Grebe in Clay County. IBL 95:23.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Intermediate birds also have white lores, white above eye. The question is how much white is present. Description of flanks -- noticeably lighter? -- would have been helpful.

A-D, The description of the bill color and head pattern supports the brief description. The observer needs to be aware of the possibility of field guides influencing the written description.

A-D, I'm not sure how to interpret "deep yellow bill" which is unfortunate since bill color is the most reliable characteristic to distinguish the two birds. It would have been nice to have a comparison of bill colors on the day that the two birds were present. The record might be more difficult if not from spring. Kaufman indicates that white lores on a spring bird indicate Clark's Grebe. The entire head pattern is classic.

A-D, In spring, the pattern of white around the eye seems to be diagnostic of Clark's Grebe. The bill color is said to be the "best" field mark. I'm not sure what "deep yellow" means. I would like to know how the bill color compared with the "western" nearby. Also, the amount of white on the sides would be useful, especially in comparison.

A-D, Diagnostic field marks for Clark's seen well.

A-D, In May plumages are most distinctive. Yellow bill is diagnostic.

search yielded nothing but exhaustion and unfortunately that "second look" would never come.

I contacted Jim Fuller, and he and Tom Kent went to the same area the next morning and relocated the bird. I also returned later that day and searched for the bird, but my search was brief and unsuccessful, due to a dust storm created by strong southerly winds.

This sighting is the eleventh record for the state. Dating back to 1969 there are 10 previous records in Iowa: four from the western region of the state, three from the central, and three from the east. Seven of these previous records occurred in the spring, with two in the fall and one in the summer. It appears that this species could show up anywhere in Iowa, especially in the spring.

806 15th Ave SW #5, Cedar Rapids IA 52404

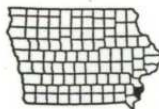
LARK BUNTING IN DES MOINES COUNTY

CHARLES FULLER

One of my favorite birding areas in Des Moines County is the wide agricultural belt that is east of Highway 99 and north of Burlington. This area includes four or five excellent vantage points where one can view the Mississippi River. On 30 April 1994, as I was making my rounds in the old floodplain and heading toward the river, I drove down my favorite road where, in most late winters and early springs, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings can be found. This was a "B" level minimum maintenance road and was just dry enough to traverse without getting stuck. At a 90 degree turn in the road, there were two birds in the middle of the road, 30-40 feet from my car. The first was easily identified as a Vesper Sparrow, while the other got my immediate, undivided attention. The most conspicuous field mark was the large creamy-white wing patch (not bars). The bird in question was slightly larger than the nearby Vesper Sparrow and had a heavy sparrow-like bill. It had a slight, but readily apparent eye ring with a light stripe just above and through the eye. The breast was streaked, and the tail was slightly notched with a white-tipped end. The bird also had a very fine white outertail line. After observing the bird on the ground for nearly a full minute, it abruptly flew and possibly landed in a recently plowed field 0.2 mile away. My first impression of this bird was that I had found a female Lark Bunting, and the various field guides I consulted did nothing to change my mind. Although there are a number of previous records of Lark Buntings from western Iowa, there are few from eastern Iowa and none from Des Moines or other nearby southeastern Iowa counties.

It must be noted that on 29 April, the day before the sighting, a powerful front came through Iowa, ushering in strong northwest winds which gusted above 25 mph. I speculate that it was this weather disturbance that brought in this bird.

420 South Garfield, Burlington, IA 52601



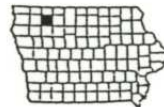
CLARK'S GREBE IN CLAY COUNTY

MARION M. BREWER

During spring, I like to tour eastern Clay and western Palo Alto counties every week to see what birds I can find. One area I visit regularly is Trumbull Lake in Clay County. Over the past several years, it has been especially good for grebes. This spring proved no exception as I found Red-necked, Eared, and Western grebes there.

On 13 May 1994, I stopped at the boat access at the southwest corner of Trumbull Lake and scanned the lake. Among the birds on the lake were a pair of large grebes. One was clearly a Western Grebe while the other was a Clark's Grebe. The latter bird had a bright yellow bill which contrasted with the greenish-yellow bill of the Western Grebe. The lores region of the Clark's Grebe was white and the white coloration extended in front of, over, and behind the reddish-colored eye. The two grebes were preening and diving together while I watched them. I revisited the area on 19 May and saw one Clark's Grebe again in the same area but the Western Grebe was not present.

1537 560th Street, Cherokee, IA 51012



BOOK REVIEWS

A Guide to the Birding Areas of Missouri compiled by Kay Palmer. Audubon Society of Missouri. 1993, 179 pp., paperback \$10.00. Available from Kay Palmer, 15100 S. Clinkenbeard, Ashland, MO 65010. \$1.50 postage and handling. With the exception of Zimmerman and Patti's *A Guide to Bird Finding in Kansas and Western Missouri*, no other book has been published on bird finding for the entire state of Missouri. This guide contains descriptions of areas from many contributors. As a result, writing styles vary. Many of the articles appeared in *The Bluebird* the society's official journal.

The guide breaks the state down into six regions. Each region averages 17 birding areas with the exception of the southwestern region which has 45. Directions are given to each area as well as short descriptions of the natural features, species that can be expected to be seen, and general information or restrictions. Maps are provided for 35 of the 128 areas described. Unfortunately, the quality is not uniform. Many have been reduced to such a degree that a magnifying glass is needed to read the print.

An index lists bird species and birding areas by county, state parks, and conservation areas. An annotated official state checklist is provided with the guide, but it could easily become separated from the book. Adding several pages to the book and reprinting the checklist could have easily solved the problem. There are not any individual species accounts; rather birds are classed by the habitats in which they could be found such as forest edge or shrubby fields. A bar graph time line of arrivals and departures would have been helpful as well as a listing of abundance status.

These limitations notwithstanding, those not familiar with Missouri birding areas will find this guide helpful. A final word of caution. The preface states that "due to the extreme flooding in 1993, conditions in birding areas along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers could be quite different from the way in which they have been described."—Hank Zaletel

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

94-07

What species? Clarks Grebe How many? 1Location? Trumble LakeType of habitat? LakeWhen? date(s): 5-13 5-19 time: 12:30 PM to 12:50 PM
1:15 PM to 1:18 PMWho? your name and address: Marion M. Brewer 1537-560 th St. Cherokee, Ia 51012

others with you: _____

others before or after you: _____

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

A light phase western grebe, deep yellow bill, long neck, black over top of head down back of neck over the back. White down the throat, belly, ~~the~~ White lores, over the top of eye and behind the eye. Reddish eye. On the 13th it was seen with a dark phase western grebe diving and preening. The white in front, over and behind the eye of the Clarks was vary noticable. Only the Clarks was seen on the 19th diving for food. No voice was heard. I failed to notice if it was part of the pair I saw ~~the~~ on 4-29 & 5-6.

Similar species and how eliminated: Western, White in front, over & ~~the~~ behind eye.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Viewed with kowa spotting scope. At estimated 175 yards, good lighting

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Many western Grebes over the years.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic, Kaufman Advanced Birding.

How long before field notes made? same day this form completed? 5-28

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