

Clark's Grebe  
25 Nov 1994  
South Twin L., Calhoun Co., IA  
\*S. Dinsmore  
P-0433, IBL 65:11,81, Dinsmore 1995

Record Number: 94-31  
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, 50014 [6/26/95\*]

PHOTOGRAPH

Steve Dinsmore [2nd review], P-0433

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:11

Records Committee: IBL 65:81

Dinsmore, S. J. 1985. Clark's Grebe in Calhoun County. Iowa Bird Life 65:86-87.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Combination of white lores and orange bill good for Clark's.

A-D, Good description; diagnostic field marks noted.

REVOTE (with photo): 7 A-P

A-P, Not great photo but can see orangish bill, light flanks.

A-P, Photo along with description OK; white lores and hint of orange bill.

Compared to a Bonaparte's Gull, this bird was roughly 10-15% smaller. The wings were much more rounded at the tips, and the bird flew with noticeably faster and deeper wingbeats. The upperwings were entirely pale gray, with a narrow white border along the trailing edge of the wing (e.g., white tips to each of the flight feathers). The undersides of the flight feathers were black, except for a narrow white trailing edge. The axillars were paler and grayish in color. The tail was white and square-tipped. The uppertail contrasted with the slightly darker gray mantle and upperwings. The underparts were entirely white. The head was white with a dark gray cap, visible both in flight and when the bird perched on the water. There was an obvious dark spot behind the eye, similar to that of a Bonaparte's Gull. The head seemed small and dove-like, accentuated by the large eye. The legs were bright red. The bill was black, and slightly shorter than that of a Bonaparte's Gull. I aged the bird as an adult, probably in third-basic plumage since birds in second-basic plumage usually show some black on the upper surface of the primaries.

This represents the fourth record of a Little Gull in Iowa. Other records are of a first-winter bird on 27 October 1988 at Saylorville Reservoir (pers. obs.), an adult on 8 October 1989 at Saylorville Reservoir (Dinsmore et al., *Iowa Bird Life* 60:77, 1990), and an adult on 23 April 1992 south of Council Bluffs (*Iowa Bird Life* 63:77, 1993). Records of this species are increasing in the Midwest, with most records in April and from October to December.

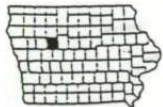
4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014

## CLARK'S GREBE IN CALHOUN COUNTY

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

On 25 November 1994, I observed an adult Clark's Grebe at South Twin Lake, Calhoun County. The lake was 99% frozen, and the grebe was resting on the ice at least 200 meters from open water. I studied the bird from 8:25-8:55 a.m. and made the following brief notes. Size was hard to judge since the bird was alone, although it was clearly longer and slimmer than some nearby Mallards. The bird was similar to a Western Grebe with a white throat and breast, black crown, back of the neck, mantle, and upperwings, a long, slender, pointed bill, and very long, swan-like neck. Other features noted included white lores (not gray or black) and white color surrounding the eye, though it appeared to be grayish just above and behind the eye. The flanks were very white mixed with some light gray color and were noticeably paler than the mantle and upperwings. The bill was bright orange, not dull yellow-green as on a Western Grebe. The combination of bill color, white lores, and pale flanks eliminates the possibility of a Western Grebe or a hybrid of the two species.

I took two distant but identifiable photos, the first such evidence of this species in the state. This represents about the fifth record of this species in Iowa. Other records include one on 5 May 1983 at Cone Marsh, Louisa County (*Iowa Bird Life* 53:48, 1983), one on 12-13 October 1985 at Big Creek Lake and nearby Saylorville Reservoir (Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 56:31, 1986), three on 30 May 1986 at Hendrickson Marsh, Story County (*Iowa Bird Life* 56:82, 1986), and one



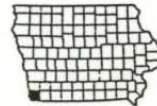
on 13, 19 May 1994 at Trumbull Lake, Clay County (Brewer, *Iowa Bird Life* 65:23, 1995).

4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

## GLOSSY IBIS IN FREMONT COUNTY

THOMAS H. KENT, JAMES L. FULLER, AND A. RICHARD TETRAULT

At 1:30 p.m. on 18 May 1995, we were birding the east-west dike at the north end of Riverton Area in Fremont County when we noticed three large dark birds flying from the south. At first we thought that they were cormorants, but soon we saw the long, decurved bills typical of ibises. They flew directly over our heads at about 50 feet. We could not detect any white around the eye. They circled for some time as they flew off to the northwest. We followed them with binoculars and telescope as they seemed to be leaving the area, but they came back and disappeared behind trees on the west side of the West Nishnabotna River.



With the aid of a county map and after 9 miles of driving, we relocated the three ibises feeding along the edge of a shallow pond. We approached the birds so that they were to the northeast and later directly east of us at about 80 yards. We were able to study them with the telescope and later take photos with a 1500 mm mirror lens.

We identified two birds as Glossy Ibis and one as White-faced Ibis. They were large, dark, long-legged birds with long, thick, strongly decurved bills. The two glossies tended to stay together and slightly apart from the white-faced. The glossies were noticeably larger, perhaps 10 to 15 percent. All three birds had chestnut-colored necks and body and iridescent green backs and wings. There was no evidence of retained brownish feathers that might be expected on an immature bird. The white-faced had white feathering all the way around the red eyes. The glossies had thin blue lines (facial skin) above and below the eye. These lines did not extend back of the eye or around the chin. The eyes were dark without any hint of red. The lower line was thinner and neither was half as wide as the white feathering on the white-faced. The white-faced had bright carmine legs; the legs of the glossies were dark gray without any red color at the joints. The bills of the glossies were dull gray throughout; the bill of the white-face was somewhat lighter proximally and appeared pink-tinged in direct sunlight. The birds fed in shallow water and at times rested or preened.

On the 19 May we found two ibises on the north side of J46 west of the town of Riverton on the west side of the West Nishnabotna. One was a white-faced and the other a glossy. They appeared the same as the birds seen the day before except that the white feathering around the eye of the white-faced was slightly less prominent.

We visited with B. J. Rose about 8:30 p.m. on the 18th, and he indicated that there were two glossies and two white-faced present at the pond later in the afternoon of the 18th. Only one of the white-faced was smaller than the glossier. These findings were confirmed in a written description by Babs and Loren Padelford. Ross Silcock documented one of the Glossy Ibises on 22 May.

94-31



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South Twin L., Calhoun Co., IA  
25 Nov 1994 Steve Dinsmore

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X 012 19+01 ZIBIN 1100 255



94-31

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Clark's Grebe

Number: 1 adult

Location: South Twin L., Calhoun Co., IA

Habitat: shallow lake

Date: 25 November 1994

Time: 8:25-8:55 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014

Others who saw bird: Susan B. Grove

Description of bird(s): We arrived at South Twin Lake to find it 99% frozen, the only open water in the NE corner where 1,000+ ducks were keeping it open. After several minutes, I spotted an apparent Western Grebe on the ice, at least 200 meters from the open water. It was hard to tell, but the bird may have been on a section of open water not much larger than itself. Nonetheless, the bird appeared to be trapped and could not move around. When I put the scope on the bird, I was surprised to find the bird was instead a Clark's Grebe, immediately recognizable by the orange bill color. Other features noted included white lores (not gray or black), and white color surrounding the eye, though it appeared to be more grayish just above and behind the eye. The flanks showed a lot of white color mixed with light gray, noticeably paler than the mantle and upperwings. Otherwise, the bird was similar to a Western Grebe-white throat and breast, black crown, back of the neck, mantle, and upperwings, long, slender, pointed bill, and very long, swan-like neck. We watched the bird for a half hour, took several distant photos, and left without disturbing the bird. The bird was apparently gone a few hours later, possibly having been eaten by a Bald Eagle.

Similar species and how eliminated: The short body, longer neck, and bright orange bill color eliminates all species of loons. The only other similar species is Western Grebe, which has a duller yellowish bill and dark lores and dark color around the eyes.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with sun behind us and partly cloudy skies. Estimated viewing distance was 200 meters. I used a Kowa 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen this species twice before in Iowa. I am also very familiar with both Clark's and Western grebes from work in several Great Plains states where both species breed.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America  
Kaufman Advanced Birding

How long before field notes made: written during observation

How long before this form completed: completed 7 p.m. on 29 November 1994