

Clark's Grebe

12 Oct 1985

Big Creek L., Polk Co., IA

*S. Dinsmore, *F. Moore

also 10/13 at Saylorville., ? same bird; IBL 55:121; 56:43, Dinsmore 198

Record Number: 85-14

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore, 12 Oct

Francis L. Moore, 13 Oct

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:121

Dinsmore, S. 1986. Clark's Grebe at Big Creek State Park. IBL 56:31.

Records Committee: IBL 56:43

VOTE: 7-III

III, One field mark appears to be sufficient.

III, Assuming both documentations are of same bird, the bird appears to be Clark's or Western with aberrant head plumage. The bill color noted by Moore would support the Clark's ID.

III, Three marks observed: orange-yellow bill; white lores; and lighter colored back compared directly with darker Western Grebe.

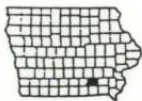
III, good descriptions.



Black-backed Woodpecker southeast of Ottumwa, 28 December 1985. Photo by Nelson Hoskins.

BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER NEAR OTTUMWA

NELSON R. HOSKINS

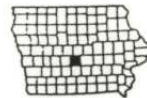


A Black-backed Woodpecker was found at the former YMCA Camp Arrowhead, 3 miles east and 1 mile south of Ottumwa, Wapello County, on 28 December 1985 by Bill and Marge Heusinkveld and later seen by Charles and Darleen Ayres and myself. The bird was in a grove of pine trees, many of which appeared to be diseased and dying. It was active, moving from tree to tree. The back was solid black with heavily barred black and white sides. It had a heavy white line below the eye and yellow cap, indicating that the bird was a male. He ignored us, even when we approached as close as 20 feet. The bird was observed just after noon on a windy, overcast day with temperature near zero. Photos were taken with a 600 mm lens at 1/60th second exposure time.

508 Shaul Avenue, Ottumwa, IA 52501

CLARK'S GREBE AT BIG CREEK STATE PARK

STEVE DINSMORE

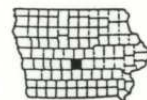


On 12 October 1985, while scanning Big Creek Lake in Polk County, I noticed what appeared to be three Western Grebes. The birds were about one and one-half times as large as several nearby American Coots. The large size, long neck, striking black-and-white coloration, and long thin bills identified the birds as Western or Clark's Grebes. Closer examination revealed that one bird was significantly lighter colored than the other two. It had a lighter back, less extensive darkness on the back of the neck, and a white cheek that included the eye. The dark color on the crown and neck was much grayer than in the other two grebes. I was not able to see the bill color. From these marks, I identified the bird as a Clark's Grebe, formerly the light phase of the Western Grebe. I notified other birders, but the bird could not be found the next morning; however, the next afternoon Francis Moore found a Clark's Grebe above the nearby Saylorville Reservoir dam. This record of Clark's Grebe is the second for Iowa. The other was found on 5 May 1983 (*IBL* 53:48, 54:38).

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

PARASITIC JAEGER AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

BOB MYERS



While scoping the Saylorville Reservoir just north of the dam on 14 October 1985, I noticed a dark gull-like bird 300–400 yards out on the water. Even though the bird appeared as not much more than a brown spot, the thought of jaeger raced through my mind. After working my way up the west shore line in order to get a closer view, I could see the overall dark brown coloration, stocky neck, and slightly upturned wing tips of the resting bird. When the bird flew and began to chase Ring-billed Gulls, the overall dark brown color was confirmed, and prominent, flashing white patches were noted at the base of the primaries, both on the upper and lower surfaces. I concluded that the bird was a jaeger; but which one? The tail streamers were not developed, suggesting a juvenile bird. The bird's size—about as large as Ring-billed Gull—and its rapid flight seemed to eliminate the larger and slower Pomarine Jaeger. The large amount of white in the wing, especially on the upper wing, and the un-tern-like flight ruled out Long-tailed Jaeger. I concluded, therefore, that the bird was a juvenile dark phase Parasitic Jaeger. There are four previous substantiated records of Parasitic Jaeger in Iowa (Dinsmore et al., 1984, *Iowa Birds*).

R.R. 2, Box 153, Perry, IA 50220

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Clark's Grebe How many? 1

Location? Big Creek SP, Polk County

Type of habitat? in middle of large lake

When? date(s): 12 Oct., 1985 time: 4:00 PM to 4:30 PM

Who? your name and address: Steve Pinomere 4024 Arborway Dr. Ames IA 50010

others with you: _____

others before or after you: Francis Moore, Waterloo (probably same bird, but seen at nearby Saybrille Res.)

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.

I first noticed the bird was different because it showed more white on the head and neck and had gray, rather than the black upperparts, of the two obvious Western Grebes swimming nearby.

The large size, as compared to Am. Coots, striking dark upperparts contrasting with white underparts, white throat, long, swan-like neck, and long, thin, slightly upturned bill identified the bird as a western Grebe type.

In direct comparison ~~to~~ to the W. Grebes, the bird showed a much whiter head and cheek. In fact, the black on top of the head was only visible when the bird dipped its head. The color on top of the head was grayer than the W. Grebes, and extended down the back of the neck to the back, which was also gray and distinctly lighter than the backs on the W. Grebes.

Similar species and how eliminated: Western Grebe eliminated by the white on the cheek which extended well above the eye.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: —

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Light was excellent with sun directly behind me, Estimated viewing distance of 75-150 yards. I used a B&L 20x Spotting Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen W. Grebes before, but I have never noticed what color phase they were.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NGS Field Guide to Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? 2 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

85-14

What species? Clark's Grebe (Aechmophorus clarkii) How many? 1Location? Just above dam at Saylorville Dam, Polk Co.Type of habitat? Open water above the dam on Saylorville ReservoirWhen? date(s): October 13, 1985 time: 12:05 pm to 12:13 pmWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Noneothers before or after you: Steve Dinsmore, Ames

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.

I was at the East pull-off on top of the dam looking over the ducks and coots when I noticed four grebes fly in and land in front of me. They were Western Grebes. I got me telescope on them and got a fairly close look at them. As I watched them I noticed one of the birds head looked lighter than the other three. The back and side of the bird looked like the other three Western's and the neck was long and thin and was black on the back of the neck and white on the front of the neck and throat. The bill was more of an orange color compared to the yellowish color of the other three Western's nearby. The top of the head was black and merged into the nape and neck on the back of the neck. The eye readily stood out on the side of the birds head. The loreal area was white and there was a definite white area above the eye. This species was recently split from Western Grebe and essentially looked like a Western Grebe with the exception of the more orange colored bill and the white superciliary area showing above the eye. It was very distinct. I do not know if this is true of all Clark's type birds but this one stayed some distance (approx. 30 - 50 feet) from the other three Western's. This could have been a short term phenomenon due to the short duration of my observation.

Similar species and how eliminated: Western Grebe does not have as orange a color a bill and does not show white superciliary area above the eye as this bird did.'

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Excellent viewing conditions, sunny, seen from approx. 100 to 150 feet at the closest using Leitz 10X40 binoculars and Celestron C90 33X telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have not seen Clark's type Western Grebe before; have seen many Western Grebes

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? Time of observ. this form completed? 6 hrs.

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240