

Clark's Grebe
30 May 1986
Hendrickson M., Story Co., IA
*Steve Dinsmore, *Paul Martsching
IBL 56:82; 57:77

Record Number: 86-01
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Paul Martsching
Steve Dinsmore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 56:82
Records Committee: IBL 57:77

VOTE: 7-III

III, 2 birds class III, 1 bird class V. The description by Dinsmore would appear to definitely indicate Clark's Grebe for the two birds (of three) as "the white color of the cheek included the eye and extended above the bill near the forehead." The third bird with "a murkier whitish color on the cheek" could still have been a Western Grebe. The lighter area on the cheek for Western Grebe is illustrated in both the National Geographic Guide and the Master Guide. Thus without seeing the details of the bill color, one could not say the third bird was not a Western, or at least an intermediate. Martsching's description did not note that there was any difference among the three birds.

III, In spring white above and around the eye is diagnostic.

III, I think the records committee needs to discuss this new species to the I.O.U. checklist. Is only one field characteristic (white around the eye) reliable enough to document the occurrence of this new species to Iowa. Should there be a combination of field marks needed to correctly identify this species.

III, If the extension of white above the eye is in fact diagnostic then the I.D. must be correct.

III, Poor light, but adequate description appears to eliminate possible juveniles (see Nuechterlein, Auk 1985.)

III, Dinsmore's documentation copied badly.

86-01

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: *Clark's Grebe*
DATE SEEN: 30 May 1986
SITE OF OBSERVATION: *Hendrickson Marsh - Story Co.*
OBSERVERS: *Steve Dinsmore, Paul Martsching*
DATE OF REVIEW: 9-1-86
METHOD OF REVIEW: *Vote via mail*
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: *III*
COMMENTS: *Vote: 7-III*

The Records Committee was in basic agreement that at least two of the three birds were Clark's Grebes. The documentations adequately describe the appearance of the birds' heads and seemingly the one characteristic noted (white area around eye) is enough (without bill color) to separate Clark's from Western Grebes.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

86-01

What species? Clarks Grebe How many? threeLocation? Hendrickson Marsh, Story County, IowaType of habitat? shallow open water "lake" with quite a bit of marshy area adjacent.When? date(s): 30 May 1986 time: ca 8 to ca 8:30 pm (very late afternoon)Who? your name and address: Paul Martsching 1120 Marston Ames, Iowa 50010others with you: Steve Dinsmore, Beth and Mark Proescholdtothers before or after you: Hank Zaletal (before)

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.

~~Large~~ large grebes, with straight longish upright necks, and long, thick bills. birds dark gray to black, except front and side of neck and sides of head which were white. white on side of head ~~extended~~ extended over the eye - the eye was surrounded by white.

Similar species and how eliminated: Western is dark immediately around the eye. Red necked is reddish on front and sides of neck this time of year, with white confined to chin, throat and cheek.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

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

sun to our west; birds more or less to our north. 7 x 35 binoculars and 20X and 22X spotting scopes. 200 yds - wild guess.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen quite a few in South Dakota.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

On the spot National Geographic field guide.

How long before field notes made? one hour this form completed? 2 days.

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

Steve Dinsmore

Steve Dinsmore

86-01

SPECIES : Clark's Grebe

NUMBER : 3

DATE : 30 May 1986

LOCATION : Hendrickson M.

DETAILS : Three large black-and-white birds, slightly smaller than a nearby Common Loon but with much longer necks. The back, back of neck, and crown were dark. The dark color on the crown was much less extensive and grayer than it should be for a Western Grebe. The underparts, throat, and cheek were white. The white color on the cheek included the eye and extended above the bill near the forehead. This was very obvious on two birds, but the third bird had a murkier whitish color on the cheek. I still think it was a Clark's Grebe because the color around the eye was considerably lighter than the color of the crown. The distance and rather poor lighting did not allow me to see the bill color, although they appeared dark at a distance.