

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Western Grebe How many? 4 Adult
1 JuvenalLocation? Silver Lake Access, Silver Lake, Worth Co., IowaType of Habitat? lakeWhen? date(s): August 14, 1991 time: 11:50 AM to 12:15 PMWho? your name and address: P.O. Box 531, Decorah, Iowa 52101Others with you: noneOthers before or after you: 5 adults and 1 Juvenal seen by Curt Nelson on 8/16 and 6 birds seen on later Aug. dates by other observers, as reported by Iowa Bird Line.

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I visited Silver Lake for the first time on 8/14/91 and was surprised to find western grebes there. Looking NW from the edge of the lake at the access area on the SW side, I first saw an adult bird and noted the striking black and white pattern and long neck and bill. Soon another ^{other} adult bird surfaced close to shore, no more than 15 yards from me. I could see it well, even without binocs. The bill was long and pointed and yellowish. The clearly-defined black cap extended to just below the eye which was a bright red. The back of the neck was black and sharply separated from the remainder of the neck which was pure white. The back was black with some gray mixed in. The bird appeared to be ^{and about twice the size of a B Grebe which was nearby.} larger than a coot and with a much longer neck. The bird near shore surfaced again twice. (see reverse side).

Similar species; how eliminated:

I know of no species that would be similar, except possibly Red-necked Grebe in winter plumage. The sharply defined black cap and black stripe down the back of the neck were unlike this other grebe.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? _____

If yes, explain:

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

8X40 binoculars used

lighting was excellent with the light at my back

1 Adult was viewed at close range (about 15 yards) as it surfaced near shore

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I had seen this species in Iowa (Union Slough NWR) about 35 years ago. I also saw it when I lived in Colorado and Utah.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Field Guide to Eastern Birds - Peterson

Field Guide to Birds of North America - National Geographic

How long before field notes made? on site this form completed? evening of 8/14/91

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

I also saw a juvenal bird that was swimming close to an adult bird (perhaps the first bird I saw), about 250 yards away, toward the SW edge of the lake. The young bird was mostly white, although I later saw that the back ^{and wings} were more gray. It appeared to be about $\frac{1}{3}$ rd the size of the adult. When I first saw these two birds, there were no other birds in their vicinity.

Shortly before I left the area, I saw 4 adults and 1 juvenile Western Grebes on the surface at one time. At other times, fewer birds were visible because they dove frequently. ~~At~~ At one time, an adult bird flew a short distance. The rear portions of its wings were whitish, although not marked with a distinct stripe.

I once heard a loud 'Krick-Krick' call that seemed to have been made by one of the grebes. Some of the grebes preened at times, exposing a pure white breast and belly.

Just before I left the area, the grebes drifted toward a group of 9 Ruddy Ducks which were feeding near the rushes.

On the evening of August 14, I notified Curt Nelson of Mason City and the Iowa Birdline of this sighting.

Dennis Carter