

Babs & Loren Padelford
1405 Little John Rd.
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Documentation of Red-throated Loon

Location: Mid-America Power Plant south pond, Pottawattamie
County, Iowa

Date: November 13, 1998

Time observed: 3:05 - 3:55 p.m.

Description of bird: A small loon with an upturned bill. There were no other birds nearby for a size comparison. The bill was short (length was less than the length of the head) and light gray in color. The lower mandible was angled upward at the end giving it a very slender appearance. The top of the head and nape of neck were uniformly light gray, contrasting with a slightly darker gray back. The back feathers were edged with light brown. The chin and cheeks below the eye were white. The white extended to just below and behind the eye. There was a noticeable auricular spot just slightly darker than the surrounding gray feathering. The throat was speckled with gray spots on a white background, which gave the appearance of a gray wash. The gray from the nape of the neck wrapped around and joined the grayish throat patch. The belly was white. Underwing coverts were white. Flanks showed considerable white along the water line. The eye was dark. Feet and legs were dark gray or black.

Behavior: During the period of observation, the bird was sitting quietly on the water until 3:20, when it began actively diving and preening. It preened vigorously and turned over on it's back kicking it's legs up in the air. Several times it ran across the water for several feet before submerging.

Viewing conditions: Clear, with the sun at our backs. Light southwest breeze. Bird was observed at 60 X.

Distance from bird: approximately 200 yards

Optical equipment: Swarovski ST80 - 20-60 X

This report is being written on 11/14/98 from notes written at the time of sighting.

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