

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Mute Swan How many? 1

Location? Northwestern States Portland Cement Co. Mason City, Ia.

Type of Habitat? Open water pond on cement plant grounds

When? date(s): 17/12/1988 time: just before dark by plant workers
12/20/1988 We confirmed it was a Mute Swan time 1:25 PM to 1:35 PM

Who? your name and address: Jan L. Walter, 934-13th S.E., Mason City, Ia., 50401

Others with you: Jim Walter

Others before or after you: Plant workers, Curt Nelson

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.

Extremely large, all white bird with long neck held in S shaped curve. Bill was orange with a black knob at the base.

This is probably the same Mute Swan that was on the sewage lagoon at Plymouth, Ia., about 6 or 7 miles n.e., from mid-summer till the lagoon froze over about the first of December. We saw it there 27/10/1988. Since it never flew, near-by residents thought it was injured and fed it daily. An attempt was made by Jim Hansen, DNR, and others to capture it just before freeze-up, but it flew away without difficulty showing it was neither injured nor pinioned.

The pond at the cement plant never freezes over and every year hundreds of ducks winter there. This year there are also Canada Geese there.

Similar species; how eliminated: Size, color, and shape eliminate all but Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. Neck curve and bill coloration eliminate them.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

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

Sunlight Distance: about 100 yards (guess) 8X40 and 7X35 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen Mute Swans at cemeteries, etc. and migrating Tundra Swans, including a flock of about 250 in March, 1984 and a flock of 10 in March, 1988.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? At once this form completed? Next day

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