

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Western Grebe; **Number:** 1

Location: above Lock and Dam 18, Des Moines Co., IA.

Date: 18 Dec 1998; **Time:** about 9:15 to 9:45 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: has been present a few weeks; with Jim Fuller

Habitat and circumstances: Mississippi River above dam on Iowa side.

Description of bird: After some searching we finally located the large black and white grebe. It was about the same length as nearby ducks but its head and neck stood much above the ducks. It had a long thin neck and large forward pointing bill. The under parts were white and upper parts black. There was a thin black line up the back of the neck extending to the top of the head. Eye location could not be determined. The bill appeared grayish rather than bright yellow to me, but the distance was great.

Voice: not heard.

Similar species: It would be hard to exclude Clark's Grebe. I don't know whether the previous observers saw it closer.

The bill color and probability are the basis for calling it a Western.

Any one have reservations?: no

Light: sun behind us; **Distance:** 200+ yards; **Optics:** zoom scope.

Previous experience: have seen many, but not at this date in Iowa.

References before/after viewing: none.

Time of notes/ Final typing: 5 hours