

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Eared Grebe How many? Three(3)Location? Lake Anita State Park, located one(1) mile south of AnitaType of habitat? Large, open lakeWhen? date(s): November 6, 1981 time: 8:10 am to 9:00 amWho? your name and address: R. Craig Hensley, 13 Ridge Road, Atlantic, IA 50022others with you: Noneothers before or after you: None that I know of

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.

I first noticed these birds at the north end of the rock dam swimming in the shallows. Upon seeing them, I recognized them as grebes from the way they were swimming and from their overall shape and actions. (The following observations were from 25-30 feet away) The birds were in winter plumage, being brownish gray on the back, wings and neck. The front portion of the neck and breast were colored a light gray, as was the lower half of the head. There were two light colored patches on the neck towards the back. The birds held their necks straight up. The beaks were dark and stout, and longer than a pied-billed grebe's beak. These birds were quiet at all times. They dived under water continuously for 5-10 second intervals.

Similar species and how eliminated: The pied-billed grebe is the only other relative that is commonly encountered in Cass County. This species was ruled out due to body size and proportions and the different beak. Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NA

If yes, explain:

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

Early morning 30 minutes after sunrise; from 300 yards to 25 feet was

the viewing distance; Used a 7 X 35 binoculars and a 35mm camera with a 230mm lens attached.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen the western grebe and pied-billed previously; a new species for me.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Consulted the most recent addition of Peterson's Field Guide

How long before field notes made? 10 minutes this form completed? many weeks

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