

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Mute Swan How many? oneLocation? outlet of Mud Lake into Smith Slough, Clay County,Type of habitat? small channel leading into pond; in open water but most of surrounding ponds  
still frozenWhen? date(s): 15 and 16 March 1984/mic time: 6 p.m. (15th) to 7:30 a.m. (16th)Who? your name and address: James Dinsmore, Department of Animal Ecology, ISUothers with you: Mike Brown (ISU), Fred Heinz (ICC, lives across road from place)others before or after you: Fred Heinz first saw bird on 8 March, has been there since

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.

Very large waterfowl, seen next to a number of Canada Geese (mostly mid sized with some giant forms); the bird was easily twice the size of the geese it was with.  
All white color

Major features noted:

- long thin neck
- wings held up over back giving it a look of greater bulk and size
- bill orangish red in color
- black at the base of the bill with a prominent knob in front of the eye

Bird was seen feeding, which it did by extending head and neck under water

Heinz said he saw the bird fly in on the 15th

Similar species and how eliminated:

Snow Goose much too large, by comparison with Canada Geese

Tundra Swan/Trumpeter Swan by combination of bill color, knob on head, wing posture

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

both times, bird only about 30-40 yards away, viewed with 6x30 binoculars, light dim on 15th but good light from behind me on the 16th and bird seen well

Previous experience with species and similar ones: have seen domestic Mute Swans on ISU campus and in zoos, also in New England, have seen both other geese in the wild

References and persons consulted before writing description: Robbins et al 1983

How long before field notes made? 10 hours this form completed? 3 days

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