DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Red-necked Grebes How many? 2

Location? Little Wall Lake — (Hamilton Co.)

Type of habitat? Small natural lake

When? date(s): May 1, 1986 time: 7:50 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.

Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowa

others with you: none

others before or after you: Steve Dinsmore

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.

Two grebes were riding the waves and facing into the wind and facing my direction. The sun was behind me and to my side and I had good viewing light as sunset approached at 8:12 p.m. that evening. Both birds had black caps, white throats and white on the sides of their face, long red necks, and a light yellow bill on one bird and a light-colored bill on the other one. The red neck on one bird was very striking and not as defined on the other bird, but at sunset both birds looked the same coloration. They had reddish sides somewhat with whitish streaks on the sides. One showed white underneath when it raised and flapped its wings. They had a dark-looking back and back of their necks. They were much larger than eared and horned grebes. They preened but never dived. Both birds had their heads tucked in and rested for a bit at sunset but later were quite alert and actively preening. They were approximately 100–120 yards away.

Similar species and how eliminated: Horned grebes are much smaller and lack the white throat and cheeks.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? —

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Clear, sunny skies with a NW wind at my back. Distances estimated. 22x Scope and 8X30 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen breeding-plumaged Red-necked Grebes in Iowa and Minnesota and I'm familiar with Horned Grebes.

References and persons consulted before writing description: R.T. Peterson's Guide to the Birds, Nat'l. Geog. Birds of N. America, Robbins' Birds of N. America.

How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? May 13, 1986

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