

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa ✓

What species? Red-necked Grebe How many? 1Location? Big Creek SP, Polk CountyType of habitat? large lakeWhen? date(s): 20 Oct., 1985 time: approx. 10:30 AM to 10:40 AMWho? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010others with you: Jim Sinclair, Indianolaothers before or after you: —

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.

The bird was sighted as it swam alone in the middle of the lake about 100 yards from two Redheads. In comparing it to the Redheads, it appeared slightly smaller in size, although the neck was longer and the head and bill were shaped differently.

The bird was patterned similar to a Horned Grebe in winter plumage (i.e. light throat and underparts, gray back and back of neck, and dark top of head), but appeared to be larger and had a bigger bill. The bird seemed duller than a Horned Grebe. The striking black and white ~~coloration~~ coloration of a Horned Grebe was replaced by a duller gray and white coloration.

While we were watching the bird, it suddenly took off allowing us a rare look at a grebe in flight. Even at our distance, the bird appeared extremely large, almost loon size, in flight. The bird's long neck and head drooped below the wings, a characteristic of grebes in flight. The bird also had a large white patch on the trailing edge of the secondaries, and another smaller patch on the leading edge. This mark is diagnostic, as no other grebe or loon has white on the leading edge of the wing.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The size and longer, thicker bill eliminate Horned and Eared Grebes. The bird was not large enough to be a W. Grebe. ~~_____~~ The white on the leading edge of the wing and long neck also eliminate loons, and W. or Clark's Grebe.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: —

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

The sun was overhead and the sky was mostly overcast so the light was o.k. Estimated viewing distance was 200+ yards. I used a B+L 20x spotting scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen Red-necked Grebes in Iowa and Minnesota. Note that I saw 4 the day before near Ames!

References and persons consulted before writing description:

NBS Field Guide to Birds of N. America

How long before field notes made? — this form completed? 6 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240