

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Red-necked Grebe How many? 2Location? Saylorville Reservoir, Polk CountyType of habitat? open body of waterWhen? date(s): 3 Nov., 1985 time: approx. 10:00 AM to 10:45 AM.Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50014others with you: Dennis Thompson, Des Moines

others 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.

I first noticed one of the birds because its large size made it stand out among a group of Ruddy Ducks. The bird's body was slightly larger than that of a Ruddy Duck. The upperparts were mostly gray and the underparts were white. The neck was fairly long, definitely longer than a duck or loon. The head was quite large as compared to the body size and appeared dark colored. At such a great distance, I could see the large bill but I couldn't see any color. It was also impossible to see the white crescent on the cheek. Size was the best mark on this bird.

I found the second bird among a raft of several hundred ducks. This bird was much closer. It appeared to be about the size of a scaup, but the long neck, large head, and white throat stood out. The large bill was easily seen, but again I could not get any color. This bird was near several Horned Grebes which allowed excellent comparison. This bird was larger than the Horned Grebes, longer necked, larger billed, and had a grayer, not black, back. The white crescent on the cheek could be seen on this bird.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Loons eliminated by shorter neck, size, bill shape, and lack of crescent on cheek.
Horned Grebe separated above.
Western and Clark's Grebes eliminated by longer, swan-like neck, black, not gray back, thinner bill, and lack of crescent on cheek.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: _____

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

Light was good - sky cloudy and sun behind us. Estimated viewing distance of several hundred yards. I used a B+L 20x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen Western, Red-necked, and Horned Grebes several times this year.

References and persons consulted before writing description: noneHow long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 6 hours

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