

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Red-throated Loon; **Number:** 1 basic

Location: Lack and Dam 18, Des Moines Co., IA

Date: 18 Dec 1998; **Time:** about 9:15 to 9:45 a.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: has been present several weeks; Jim Fuller with me.

Habitat and circumstances: Mississippi River above dam, swimming on Iowa side.

Description of bird: After some searching we spotted a small loon near the Iowa side. It was a bit larger than nearby ducks, but generally small and slim. The thin bill appeared to point slightly upward. The underparts and face were white. The upper parts were gray, the head neck were lighter than the back. The bird made several short flights and one prolonged flight, circling and landing upriver. The underparts were white, with some dark on the edges of the wing according to Jim, who was looking with telescope.

Voice: not heard

Similar species: Smaller and slimmer than Common, smaller bill. I could not see whether the eye was in the dark or light part of the face. The size and upturned bill argue against Pacific Loon.

Any one have reservations?: no

Light: sun behind us; **Distance:** 200+ yards; **Optics:** zoom scope.

Previous experience: have seen many, but not at this date.

References before/after viewing: none.

Time of notes/Final typing: 5 hours