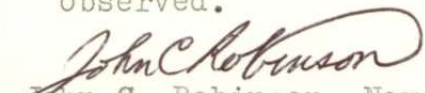


DOCUMENTATION FORM

- 1) Species: Ross' Goose 2) Number: 2 on 31 Oct.; 3 on 1 Nov.; 7 on 14 Nov. and 4 on 15 Nov.
- 3) Location: De Soto National Wildlife Refuge; 6 miles west Missouri Valley, Iowa, Harrison Co., Cincinnati Twsp., Sect. 22
- 4) Date: 31 Oct., 1 Nov., 14 Nov. and 15 Nov., 1981
- 5) Time seen: Variable; usually mid-morning to mid-afternoon; (2-3 minutes viewing time per bird).
- 6) Description: Goose-like in shape, these birds were slightly smaller than the 7,000+ Snow geese with they were associating when discovered. The immatures were paler in overall coloration than the immature Snow geese (white phase). The immature Ross' geese also had noticeably darkish caps contrasting with white facial patterns. Bill coloration of the immatures was dark. The adults all showed bluish wartlike marks at the base of the bill. The mandibles of all 16 birds were noticeably smaller than the mandibles of the Snow geese and they lacked the 'grinning patch' that is evident in Snow geese. Legs were pinkish in the adults but leg coloration was not discernible for the immatures as they were in the water. All birds had relatively shorter necks than the Snow geese which were present.
- 7) Voice: not heard.
- 8) Behavior: These birds fed in corn fields and roosted in the De Soto Lake like Snow geese but tended to isolate themselves somewhat from the Snow geese (all birds were seen at the peripheries of major flocks).
- 9) Habitat: General: Mixture of large acreages of agricultural land, open lake oxbow, and cottonwood forest.
Specific: Corn fields (harvested) and open water.
- 10) Similar species which are eliminated:
Snow Goose: This species is larger and has a larger bill, a grinning patch on the mandibles, and a longer neck. Immature white phase birds of this species are duskier than immature Ross' geese.
- 11) Distance: 50 to 85 yards.
- 12) Optical equipment: Pentax 10 by 50 Binoculars and Bushnell Spacemaster Telescope with 20x eyepiece and zoom lens.
- 13) Light: Lighting conditions were excellent in most cases; sun was usually in back of us as we looked at the birds.
- 14) Previous experience: I have seen Ross' geese three other times in 1980 and February of 1981 and I have seen many Snow geese.
- 15) Other observers: Joe Schaufenbuel was present on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1.
- 16) Agreement: The other observer agreed with the identification.
- 17) Other independent observers: None
- 18) References: Golden Field Guide by C.S. Robbins
Field Guide to the Birds by R.T. Petersen
Both books supported the identification of this species.
- 19) This report is a summary of notes made in the field while the birds were observed.


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