

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Eared Grebe

Number: 1

Location: Red Rock Reservoir, Marion County, Iowa

Habitat: large lake

Date: 19 December 1998

Time: 9:14-10:05 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 ½ West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird(s): Maridel Jackson

Description of bird(s): I was scanning the small bay at the south end of the Red Rock Reservoir dam when I noticed a small, gray and white grebe feeding alone. We were able to study it carefully for more than half an hour. The bird was alone, and I estimated that it was slightly smaller and slimmer than the numerous Pied-billed Grebes using another part of this bay. The body was very stocky, and the bird had a rather long, thin neck. The mantle, wings, back of neck, nape, crown, forehead, and cheek were very dark gray, almost black in color. The flanks were gray, slightly paler than the mantle. The foreneck was also light gray, obviously paler than the back of the neck but darker than the white chin. The bird also had a conspicuous white "crescent" mark on the cheek. The bill was very thin, pointed, and dark-colored. The bird also had a very steep forehead, giving the appearance of a very peaked crown.

We returned later in the afternoon and the grebe was still feeding in the same area. Based on the features we noted, I concluded the bird was an Eared Grebe in basic plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated: The only species this bird could have been confused with was Horned Grebe. The combination of head shape, smaller, thinner bill, darker foreneck and cheek, and white "crescent" mark on cheek eliminated Horned Grebe in basic plumage.

Previous experience with species: I am very familiar with this species and the similar Horned Grebe.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with mostly cloudy skies. Estimated viewing distance was 100-150m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes written? none written

How long before this form completed? written 4 January 1999