

Barrow's Goldeneye
28 Feb 1999
De Soto NWR, Harrison Co., IA
*Dave Obrecht
IBL 69:93, 70:145

Record Number: 99-08
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Josh Obrecht, 33178 335th St., Minden 51553 [9/17/99]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 69:93
Records Committee: IBL 70:145

VOTE: 7 NA

NA, The best field mark in support of the identification is the yellow bill. The perception of pupil size and amount of white in the speculum seem more subjective. Unfortunately, the head shape was not described. According to the NGS Guide, the bill on Common Goldeneye is "rarely all dull yellow." In view of the far greater likelihood of the Common, and the difficulty of separating the two, we should probably take the conservative approach here.

NA, The only characteristic suggestive of Barrow's Goldeneye is the yellow bill. Female Common Goldeneyes generally have a black bill with yellow tip but can very rarely have an entirely yellow bill. There are subtle differences in the white wing patches between the two species, but they are visible only in flight. My references don't mention any differences in pupil size. The best distinguishing field marks for female goldeneyes are head shape and bill shape.

NA, Female Common and Barrow's are notoriously difficult to separate. Best marks are the head and forehead contours and bill shape. Bill color can be deep orange or yellow-orange in the western population in adult and all or partly dusky orange in imm. female.

NA, While the yellow bill is very suggestive of Barrow's Goldeneye, pupil size is not useful field mark. Head shape, bill shape, and angle of forehead must be noted to separate the goldeneyes. The differences in the amount of white in the wing are best noted in flight.

NA, Head shape and bill size are the most critical features in distinguishing Barrow's from Common Goldeneye. Neither was mentioned. Some Common Goldeneye females are said to have yellow bills. The difference in amount of white in the wing said to be subtle.

NA, Possible due to yellow bill, but no other field marks noted, such as head shape. Common Goldeneye on occasion can have a yellow bill.

NA, I need more complete details before I accept this bird.

What species? Barrow's Goldeneye How many? 1 (Female) 99-08

Location? De Soto Bend National Wildlife Refuge Missouri Valley, Iowa

Type of habitat? Lake, Forest

When? date(s): February 28, 1999 time: 4:00 PM to 4:15 PM

Who? your name and address: Josh Obrecht 33178 335th St Minden, IA 51553

others with you: Dave Obrecht

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.

The bird had a brownish colored head, was ducklike in size and shape, and I could not hear its voice and all it did was swim. The bill was yellow in color, the eye was yellow with a small pupil, the neck was compact bringing the head close to the body, the speculum had a little white on it, and the breast and body were grey in color.

Similar species and how eliminated: Common Goldeneye. I eliminated this species out because the bird I saw had only a little white on the speculum and a large yellow eye with a small pupil. The common Goldeneye has a lot of white on the speculum and a large pupil in the eye.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

I was inside of the visitor's center and the lighting inside and outside was good. I estimate the distance between the bird and myself as being about 25 yards. I used binoculars to get a better view of the bird.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE

References and persons consulted before writing description: Jim Fuller and National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds, Eastern Region

How long before field notes made? 2 days this form completed? 34 days

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