

Bean Goose

Record Number: 84-33

29 Dec 1984

Classification: A-P

De Soto NWR, Harrison Co., IA

*Grenon/Wright, *Padelfords, *Bray, *Kent,

*Moore, *Wilson, *Silcock, *S.Dinsmore; IBL 55:12, 25, 56; Wilson 1985

DOCUMENTATIONS

Alan Grenon/Rick Wright (29 December 1984)

Loren/Babs Padelford (3, 5 January 1985)

Tanya Bray (3 January 1985)

Francis L. Moore (5 January 1985)

Thomas H. Kent (5 January 1985)

W. Ross Silcock (5 January 1985)

Barbara L. Wilson (5 January 1985)

Steve Dinsmore (6 January 1985)

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, 5 Jan 1985, P-0161

B. J. Rose, 7 Jan 1985, P-0149 (NBR 53:3)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:12, 25

Records Committee: IBL 55:56

Wilson, B. 1985. Bean Goose in the midlands. IBL 55:83-86.

Wright, R., and A. Grenon. 1985. Three species of Siberian geese seen in Nebraska. Nebr. Bird. Rev. 53:3-4.

VOTE: 3-I-P, 1-II (I-P?), 1-II, 1-IV, 1-V

V, The bird appears to be a Bean Goose of eastern subspecies (based on bill) without signs of captivity. The only thing lacking is precedence for vagrancy for this species. Shouldn't we wait for more to show up before we 'count' this one?

IV, Despite strong likelihood it was a wild bird it is impossible to be 100% sure. Much like Bl-bel. Whistling Duck case but that was examined for feather wear and rejected. Report on the other two Eurasian species certainly distracts from acceptance.

II (I-P?), Lucky, lucky Iowa. Finally a bird Minnesota would kill to get!!

I-P (possibly should abstain), I have no doubt that this was a wild bird. The extremely long and tapered bill strongly suggests Middendorfi race, which is virtually never kept in captivity. The parallel occurrence of the other Siberian species in N. America the past year or so is also strongly suggestive of a source for this bird.

I-P, You've even got a precedent for this now, Tom. One considered (wrongly, probably) an escape was seen in Washington March-> April 6, 1984 (latest American Birds). As a committee we should write an article on this sighting explaining why we accepted it (or, heaven forbid, why we didn't). I consider the Swan Goose record frustrating but irrelevant; they are common in captivity but increasingly rare in the wild. The Bean Goose is so unattractive and so rare in captivity that it would probably only be found in the kind of collection that would mark and/or pinion a Bean Goose.

REVOTE (at meeting, 18 May 1985, with photos): 6-I-P, 1-VI

Wilson, B. 1985. Bean Goose in the midlands. Iowa Bird Life 55:83-86.

Bean Goose in The Midlands

BARBARA WILSON, R.R. 1 Box 41, HASTINGS, IA

During the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count, Rick Wright, Alan Grenon, Dave Starr, and Betty Grenon sighted an unprecedented Bean Goose (*Anser fabillilis*) in a flying flock of seven adult White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) and later watched it more closely on the ground.

Although the observers are known to be highly skilled and reliable, this report was not greeted with enthusiasm. Surely an odd Anser would be difficult or impossible to identify. Surely the bird (if not simply an abnormal White-front) was an escape. And surely no one would see the bird again anyway. It was recorded but dismissed immediately from mind.

Nonetheless, Nancy Curry, a refuge employee, searched for the goose and she relocated it a few days later. She alerted other birders throughout the midlands and the national birding hotline was called. Thus provoked the birding community turned its attention to this improbably sighting, came to see the bird, and began to address the questions of its identification and origin. Subsequently, the Iowa Records Committee evaluated the sighting.

This unusual bird was publicized in the Omaha World Herald (Anon., 1985; Thomas, 1985 a, b, c) as well as the national and Iowa birding hotlines, and DeSoto Wildlife Refuge was held open for observers. Perhaps as many as 1,600 visitors came to see the Bean Goose. Most visitors came from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, but others came from Maryland, Washington, New Hampshire, Colorado, Washington D.C., New York, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and, of all places, Finland. Many of the visitors were not what I would call serious birders but came to see this Siberian visitor so rare that the paper gave it front-page coverage.

The goose was last seen on the morning of January 10. It had spent much of its time resting in DeSoto Bend, an oxbow of the Missouri River. The unsurveyed Iowa-Nebraska state line runs through this oxbow. Often the bird rested on what was clearly the Iowa side of the bend, sometimes it swam in the middle, and it was also seen flying into Nebraska to feed.

The bird was a brown goose, larger than the White-fronts with it, with a longer neck and longer bill. It was a little smaller than the largest Giant Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis maxima*) with it. Eye dark. Neck brown with a rufous sheen, showing the furrows generally seen in Anser. Head and upper neck darker than the lower neck and body. Underside plain, grading from dark brown at the chin to pale gray breast, brownish belly, and white at the vent. There were black narrow vertical bars on the flanks and a white line continued the line of the closed wing. Upperparts gray brown with contrasting light edges to the back feathers. Light edging to the scapulars, greater coverts, and tertials. White edges of the secondaries formed parallel lines on the closed wing. Primaries dark. Underwings and area covered by the folded wing seemed dark gray blue. Tail dark with white tail coverts and white at the tip, as in the White-front. Legs bright orange. Bill distinctive: very deep at the base, very long (at least as long as the head), tapering to a narrow tip. Its profile invited comparison to swans or Canvasbacks. The bill's basal 3/4 was black, then there was an orange band just before the black tip. This black tip was little more than the bill nail.

The above description was written from documentations on file with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, written by T. Bray, S. Dinsmore, A. Grenon, T. H. Kent, F. Moore, L. & B. Padelford, W. R. Silcock, B. L. Wilson and R. Wright.

The bird was clearly a Bean Goose and the thick, long, dark bill suggests that it was a member of the eastern (Siberian) race *A. F. middendorffii*. However, identification of Bean Geese to subspecies in the field is apparently trickier than it seems in field guides. The subspecies have been defined by bill shape and bill color, but measured samples are small and both shape and color are variable within populations. As a result, there is disagreement on the limits of the named races (Ogilvie, 1978). Though naming it to subspecies may be inappropriate, the goose on the Iowa border seems to fit among the large, long-billed eastern races, not among the European forms.

More difficult than identification is the problem of the origin of this unlikely visitor to the midlands. The Bean Goose is a common goose throughout the Old World arctic regions. It nests in both the tundra and adjacent forested areas. It migrates south into Europe and Asia for the winter. Indeed, its name refers to its habit of foraging in Europe's cultivated bean fields in winter.

Since the Bean Goose nests far east in Siberia, it would take only a simple

Wilson, B. 1985. Bean Goose in the midlands. Iowa Bird Life
55:83-86. (cont)

BEAN GOOSE

85

error in navigation to bring one flying southeast into North America rather than south or southwest into its normal wintering ground. The species is considered a regular migrant in the Bering Sea (Farrand, 1983). Continental records have been few, but one was sighted in Washington from March to April 6, 1984 and was dismissed as an escape but also reported to *American Birds* (Mattocks, 1984).

Though the Bean Goose may have flown here as a result of individual error or accident, it may have been a part of the "Siberian Express", a series of weather conditions that brought an abundance of Asian species to North America in the fall and winter of 1983-1984. These included Rustic Bunting, Siberian Accentor, Stonechat, Bramblings, Siberian Ruby-throat, Whooper Swan, Smew, Slaty-backed Gull, and perhaps Washington's Bean Goose (Lehman, 1984). This goose did appear to be an adult and may first have visited the midlands on the "Siberian Express" and now returned to its familiar wintering range. There are several recent examples of birds that wintered in unusual places for a number of years in a row.

While one may delight in creating scenarios that explain the natural arrival of a Bean Goose in the Midlands, one must consider the possibility that the bird's origin was not natural at all. Could it have escaped from a captive waterfowl collection?

Many of those who saw the goose looked closely for signs of captivity. There were none. The bird had no bands, tags, or collars, no tattoos on its webs. It had all four toes on each foot and all seemed to be of normal length. The plumage appeared normal except for a few broken primaries in one wing. The hunting season ran through December 16 in areas of southwest Iowa and could easily explain this damage. The bird's behavior did not seem abnormal in any way.

Of course, all this evidence is negative, as it must be. Some birds wear clear evidence of captive origin but none wear signs declaring them to be of wild origin. Escaped captive birds usually die but if it lived a bird might lose any tags; tattoos might fade; its behavior might become normally wild.

Our attention turns to a search for a location from which a Bean Goose might escape. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Iowa Conservation Commission list no Bean Geese in these two states. Randy Rockwell, general curator at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, knows of none in the midlands. Various waterfowl collectors questioned know of none. Indeed, some do not even know what a Bean Goose is. As of 1982, the ISIS inventory of animals in zoos listed one Bean Goose, in Buffalo, New York. The San Diego Zoo made an inventory of waterfowl in private collections. It listed no Bean Geese in 1982. Neither list is complete, but clearly the Bean Goose is rare in North American collections. Todd (1979, p. 358) lists the Bean Goose as common in captivity in Europe but rare in the U.S., with the eastern races *A. F. middendorffii*, *serrifostris*, and *johanseni* especially rare in captivity anywhere.

The scarcity of captive Bean Geese is not surprising. This species may be a big, impressive goose but it too closely resembles the domestic species to be popular as an ornamental bird. One gets the impression that any collector serious enough to bother owning one would probably mark it and perhaps pinion it.

A recent article (Ryff, 1984) gives a point of comparison. The author stresses that since the Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) is common in captivity, virtually all North American records of free-flying birds represent escapes. He compares it with the Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), considered by some an isolated race of the Bean Goose. This form is relatively rare in captivity (eight birds listed by ISIS in 1982) and there are only four North American sightings, one unanimously accepted as a wild bird, one probably an escape, and two controversial. The Bean Goose appears to be rarer in captivity than the Pink-footed Goose and sightings can not automatically be dismissed as escapes.

Evaluation of the Bean Goose record has been complicated by two sightings of

Wilson, B. 1985. Bean Goose in the midlands. Iowa Bird Life 55:83-86. (cont)

86

IOWA BIRD LIFE - 55, 1985

unusual free-flying geese in western Nebraska. A hunter shot a Swan or Chinese Goose (*Anser cygnoides*) at Lake Lewellen, an arm of Lake McConaughy, on December 8, 1984, and for several days Nebraska Game and Parks Commission personnel observed a pair of Bar-headed Geese (*A. indica*) at nearby Lake Ogallala in mid-February, 1985 (Cortelyou, 1985).

The Swan and Bar-headed Goose sightings have not been accepted on the newest Nebraska state list (Bray et al., manuscript). The Swan Goose has long been domesticated in China and is common in North American waterfowl collections. Its native range in Asia is south of the Bean Goose's range, making vagrancy to North America less likely. There are no accepted records of the species as a vagrant in North America or Europe. The Bar-headed Goose is also common in collections. Its native breeding range is in south-central Asia, east to Manchuria. It winters on the Indian subcontinent (Cramp and Simmons, 1977). No plausible scenario could explain the arrival of a truly wild Bar-headed Goose in Nebraska.

The occurrence of these three unusual goose species in the same winter in the same state may be coincidence, particularly as Lake McConaughy is about 300 miles west of DeSoto Bend. Some feel that all three species may have escaped or been released from one source; this would certainly discredit the possibility of a wild origin for the Bean Goose. Others, less reasonably, consider the presence of a wild Bean Goose at DeSoto Bend to be a precedent for accepting the Swan and Bar-headed Geese as wild birds. It seems best to judge each sighting on its own merits.

The Iowa Records Committee evaluated the Bean Goose sighting. Identification was not considered a problem. Initially the record was narrowly voted down, due to the possibility of captive origin, but after additional research the record was accepted (on 6-1 vote) as an addition to the Iowa state list. A major factor in accepting the record was the great rarity of the species in captivity on this continent.

This unexpected and controversial sighting will no doubt enliven birder's conversations for a long time to come.

REFERENCES

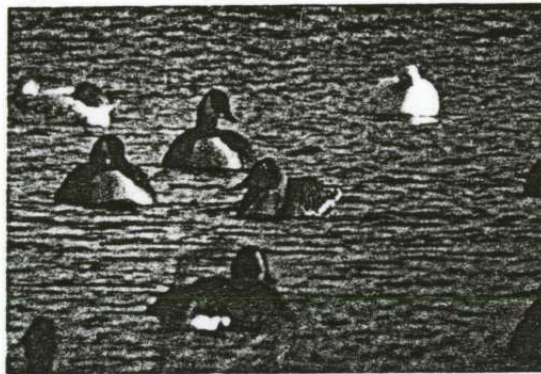
- Anon. 1985. Hundreds seek glimpse of goose. Omaha World Herald, January 6, p. 1-A.
- Bray, T., B. Padelford, and W. R. Silcock. Birds of Nebraska; a Critically Evaluated List. Manuscript.
- Cortelyou, R. G., ed. 1985. Nebraska Bird Review. 53: p. 4-5.
- Cramp, S., and K. E. L. Simmons. 1977. Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England. p. 422.
- Farrand, John, Jr. 1983. The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding. Vol. 1: Loons to Sandpipers. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.
- Lehman, P. 1984. The changing seasons. American Birds 38:p. 287-292.
- Mattocks, P. W., Jr. 1984. Northern Pacific Coast Region. American Birds, 38: 349-351.
- Ogilvie, M.A. 1978. Wild Geese. Buteo Books, Vermillion, South Dakota.
- Ryff, A. J. 1984. The long sea-flights; a precise tradition. Birding 17: 146-154.
- Thomas, F. 1985. Birdwatchers flock to see rare Bean Goose. Omaha World Herald, January 4, p. 1.
- 1985. Hundreds migrate to DeSoto to see wayward goose. Omaha World Herald, January 6, p. 7-B.
- 1985. Bean Goose offers birders rare photo opportunity. Omaha World Magazine of the Midlands. February 17. p. 4.
- Todd, F. S. 1979. Waterfowl: Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World. Sea World Press, San Diego, California.

1984 TREASURER'S REPORT

	This year	Cash To/from other years	Investments	Current Account	Total Assets
Balance 1 January 1984	1,189.20	930.49	5,100.64		5,359.35
Accounts payable paid	(426.24)	(426.24)			
Prepaid items used below	(504.25)	(504.25)			
RECEIPTS					
Memberships	166 Active	1,162.00			
	62 Family Active	620.00			
	23 Sustaining	345.00			
	7 Family Sustaining	140.00			
	14 Student	42.00			
	2 Life	200.00		2,509.00	
Subscriptions	29 Domestic agency	188.50			
	7 Domestic direct	49.00			
	3 Foreign direct	27.00			
	1 Foreign agency	8.50			
	Last of long-term sub.	5.25		278.25	
Miscellaneous	Review copies	364.00			
	Field cards	4.90			
	Checklists	58.22			
	Armpatch etc.	65.05			
	Spring Meet (net)	125.00			
	Fall meet (net)	181.25			
	Interest	171.48	254.92	1,224.82	
	Total Receipts	3,757.15	254.92	4,012.07	
EXPENSES					
Publications	Review printing	1,398.05	379.28		
	Newsletter	325.36			
	Postage	140.00		2,242.69	
Officers' expenses	Editor	120.09			
	Treasurer	39.00		159.09	
Miscellaneous	Bird Atlas project less contributions	483.55 (94.00)			
	Other printing	242.30			
	Binding Reviews	93.00		724.85	
	Total expenses	2,747.35	379.28	3,126.63	885.44
	Doris Gates memorial exp. less donations	(110.00) 25.00			(85.00)
	Other gifts	150.00			150.00
	Prepaid memberships	298.00	298.00		
	To investments	(500.00)	500.00		
Balance 31 December 1984	1,131.51	677.28	5,855.56		6,309.79

THREE SPECIES OF SIBERIAN GEESE SEEN IN NEBRASKA

At about 3:00 PM on 29 December 1984, while participating in the DeSoto NWR Christmas Count, Betty Grenon, David Starr, and the authors, Rick Wright and Alan Grenon, flushed from near the west shore of the DeSoto Cut-off (Washington Co., Nebraska) a party of seven Greater White-fronted Geese. With these seven geese was one distinctly larger, which drew our attention as the small flock flew above us for about five minutes. The larger bird displayed obvious damage to or loss of primaries on each wing, making it easier for the four of us to concentrate our observations on it and compare our impressions.



Bean Goose, DeSoto NWR, January 1985 --- Photo by B. J. Rose, Omaha

During this first in-flight sighting, each observer remarked independently on the superior size of the bird in relation to the White-fronts. Even at approximately 200 m, the distinctive soft-part colors and pale face-patches of the White-fronted Geese were clearly visible through binoculars, while the larger bird showed a bill apparently all dark. Most striking at this time was the rather swan-like profile, the result of a long neck and head and long, sloping bill. We also noted the orange feet, showing no flash of aluminum, and the plain underparts, shaded from the dark neck to the very pale vent. At this point, suspecting that the bird might not be merely an aberrant immature Greater White-front (Bean Goose, *Anser fabilis*, was mentioned as a possibility), we left the area.

We returned approximately half an hour later with spotting scopes, and found the flock still in the air; again the geese were at a considerable distance, but thanks to the excellent lighting and increased optical power, the large bird was even more clearly different. We estimated it to be 125% the size of its companions, with a proportionately longer neck and a markedly long head and bill profile. The bill was indeed dark, but at 22x showed a small light area at or near the tip. The underparts were as we had first observed them, and the light feather edgings of the dorsal surface were evident. The bright feet were clearly seen to be without bands.

We agreed that the bird probably was a Bean Goose, of unknown provenance, and prepared a documentation supporting our belief. Copies were submitted to Nancy Curry, CBC Compiler; Babs Padelford, for *American Birds*; and Barb Wilson, for the Iowa Records Committee (Nebraska having no such body for the rigorous evaluation of unusual sightings). These details are also available in the documentation file of the Editor of *The Nebraska Bird Review*.

The Bean Goose was found again 2 January 1985, by Nancy Curry. Before it left on 10 January it was seen by over 6,000 people, including the present authors, who spent the afternoon of 3 January watching it on the ice of the Cut-off, among about 200 Canada Geese of a large race. The Bean Goose was only slightly smaller than the Canadas, with a brown head and neck; neck furrows were visible, as they are in many of its congeners. The forehead was long, sloping into the long bill, which was dark but for a well-defined orange-yellow band at the tip; this mark went completely around both the mandible and the maxilla. The light edgings of the back feathers and upper wing coverts were conspicuous; there were white bands above and at the tip of the tail, as in the Greater White-fronted Goose. The feet were thick and bright orange, the surest way to pick the bird out quickly among the other geese. Good photographs were obtained by B. J. Rose, among others.

This excellent sighting let us see definitely the lack of nasal markers and leg bands. Both hind toes were intact, and the webs, seen well in good light as the bird walked and preened, were free of tattoos. The absence of any of these legally required marks of captivity does not prove the goose's wild origin, but in conjunction with the bird's wariness and accomplished flight, suggests that its presence in Nebraska was unassisted.

The bird's racial identity also supports the probability of natural occurrence. The large size and long bill with restricted color point to one of the east Palearctic races. While it was at DeSoto, the bird was generally assigned to *middendorfi*, although it seems to us now that the bill was perhaps not outside the range of *serrirostris*. Neither subspecies is known to be kept as a captive in the area, (but *brachyrhynchus*, variously treated as a race of the Bean Goose and as a distinct species, Pink-footed Goose, *Anser brachyrhynchus*, is present in the zoo at Omaha). That an escaped captive from elsewhere would occur at DeSoto seems not much more likely than that a wild individual should mingle with Greater White-fronted Geese in Siberia or Alaska and accompany them on their migration to the southern Great Plains; there is a strong inductive argument to be made from the occurrence (perhaps regular) of the Common Crane in flocks of Sandhill Cranes. Securing the specimen might have permitted a certain racial designation, minimally strengthening this geographic argument. We do not believe, however, that taking an unmarked bird could have finally settled the matter; the question of the bird's origin will be definitely resolved only if a waterfowl collector reports an escape in the fall or winter of 1984. Until then, though, we feel that wild provenance is the most satisfactory explanation.

---Rick Wright, 11530 Westwood Lane, #33, Omaha, Neb. 68144
 Alan Grenon, 517 Benjamin, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

(Mrs. Grenon added that they had the National Geographic guide with them in the field. From 2 to 10 January the interior of the Refuge, normally closed to visitors during the winter, was opened to visitors to allow them to see the Bean Goose. During that period 6,707 visitors were counted at the Refuge. This included 3,829 at the visitors' center, many of whom also looked for the Bean Goose. Visitors were recorded from New York to California, and Minnesota to Texas. When the Bean Goose was in with the other geese, on the ice, unless it was on the near side of the flock, observers might have a long wait until it stuck its head up and it could be recognized by the orange mark on the bill. Colder weather is believed to have caused some of the geese, including the Bean Goose, to move on after 10 January, presumably to refuges farther south, but the Bean Goose has not been reported since. Siberian Bean Geese do visit Alaska; the European forms are casual in Iceland, and have been reported in eastern Canada. Palmer (*Handbook of North American Birds*, 2, 116) cites records in Massachusetts, New York, and Delaware (this latter possibly an escapee); Peterson's new eastern guide cites only the first two two of these, under Pink-footed Goose.

---Ed.)

The newspaper reports of the Bean Goose brought news of another: Ruth Green wrote in Audubon Society of Omaha's *A Bird's Eye View*, XIV, 1, 3; Bill Craig, of Ogallala, read about last month's Bean Goose and he was just sure he and his friend had killed one on 8 December, at Lake Lewellen, which is an arm of Lake McConaughy. Since neither he nor the game warden could identify the bird, he carefully photographed it and saved the head and feet in hopes of finding someone who could identify it later. . . . After reading all of Fred Thomas' articles, he contacted him and related his story. His

account was passed on to me in hopes I could help. His description over the phone did not convince me it was a Bean Goose, so he decided to mail it to me for closer inspection. It didn't take long to determine that it was in the same family of grey geese as the Bean Goose, but not a Bean Goose. The large, long, buffy head with a darker chestnut cap coming just below the eye, and running down the back of the neck to the mantle identified it as a Swan Goose, *Anser cygnoides*. The size, shape, and coloring of this species stands alone, so there is really no possibility of confusion with other species. It weighed nine pounds and it's "clean" appearance, plus the white around the bill, which the first-winter birds do not have, indicated a mature bird and the 98 mm culmen identified it as a male. At the time it was shot it was on the lake pretty much to itself, although there was a rather large flock of Canadas nearby. . . . The wild species is indigenous to eastern Asia, just a little south of the range of the Bean Goose, and it winters in the Sea of Japan just as its cousin does. However, Swan Geese are fairly common in waterfowl collections, but most have been mixed with domestic birds over the years and there are few if any pure specimens in captivity, at least not in North America. Pure Swan Geese are very trim birds, long sloping foreheads and incredibly long and straight bills - all this describes the Ogallala bird perfectly. Domestic varieties on the other hand, are huge and cumbersome, often weighing up to 30 pounds, with a large frontal knob and much longer necks. Game birds raised in captivity are usually banded or marked on the feet in some way - this one was not.

After Mrs. Green wrote this she learned from the Game Commission that four other Swan Geese had been taken in the area.

In February 1985 the Game Commission reported that two Bar-headed Geese, *Anser indicus*, had been identified, in with Canadas on Lake Ogallala. But they are common among game breeders and it is presumed that they are escapees.

1984 (TWENTY-SEVENTH) FALL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Two hundred seventy-eight species (plus the possibility that the Empidonax species was not one listed) from twelve locations are listed in this report. Comparable figures for previous years are 262 species from 10 locations in 1983, 269 species from 10 localities in 1982, and 277 species from 14 locations in 1981.

The information is presented in a rough west (left) to east (right) order, with locations of about the same longitude listed with the northernmost first. Two dates indicate the first and last records for the period. The symbols are:

Jl, Au, Sp, Ot, No, and Dm for the months.
 b in X column for observations made in Buffalo Co. *
 c in X column for observations made in both Kearney and Phelps counties.

f in X column for observations made in Phelps Co.
 k in X column for observation made in Kearney Co.
 P to indicate a species which is present all of the year, although the same individuals may not be present during the whole year, and the numbers may vary greatly.

(p) for probable permanent residents for which few or no records were made this year.

S - to indicate a species which arrived before 1 July and was reported on the Spring Occurrence Report.

(s) - to indicate a species which probably arrived before 1 July but for which no record was made before 1 July.

S - W to indicate much the same thing as P, but where the situation is not always the case.

- W to indicate a species which remained after 31 December (but the lack of such an indication does not necessarily mean the species did not remain).

X as a column heading for observations in Buffalo, Kearney, and/or Phelps counties. See comments under Buffalo.

x when the exact date in a month is not known.

* to indicate that there are comments in the text.

Supporting Details for Bean Goose, Anser fabalis

Ross 2 copies
84-33 (Schost)

December 29, 1984; 3:00, 3:30 p.m.; mostly sunny, ca. -3° C.

Duration: ca. 10 minutes total; sun was to west, bird to east, lighting excellent

Location: in air over DeSoto Lake, east of Wood Duck Nature Trail,
Washington Cty., NE, and Pottowatomie Cty., IA, DeSoto National
Wildlife Refuge

Observers: Alan Grenon, Betty Grenon, David Starr, Rick Wright

Optical equipment: 7X35, 7X50, 8.5X44, 10X50 binoculars,
22X60 spotting scopes

Bird was noticed flying with seven greater white-fronted geese (A. albifrons), first noticed as significantly larger than accompanying A. albifrons, flew past several times at distances greater than 200 m. Some primaries were damaged.

The A. albifrons all had visibly pink bills, white faces, and speckled bellies (all adults)

The A. fabalis was ca. 125% the size of A. albifrons, with a longer neck, longer bill, and a swan-like profile. Underside plain, grading from dark brown at chin to white at the vent. Gray-brown above, back feathers with contrasting light edges, primaries dark. Bill: significantly longer than A. albifrons, dark with light area near or at tip, long head profile. Feet: orange. White above and at tip of tail as in A. albifrons.

This account based on notes made 1½ hours after sighting and submitted to Barb Wilson, Iowa Records Committee, and DeSoto CBC compiler Nancy Curry in support of sight record of probable bean goose.

January 4, 1985; 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.; sunny, ca. -1° C.

Duration: ca. 3 hours; sun was to southwest and south-southwest, bird to east, northeast, lighting good to excellent

Location: as above, but standing on ice, swimming in water, not in flight

Observers: Tanya Bray, Duane Bright, Nancy Curry, Alan Grenon, Babs Padelford, B. J. Rose, Loren Padelford, Al Werthman, Ione Werthman, Melba Wigg, Rick Wright.

Optical equipment: various binoculars including as above,
several spotting scopes as above, photographs taken by
B. J. Rose and Al Werthman

Bird standing on ice with ca. 200 Canada geese (Branta canadensis), also walking; swimming, preening, drinking. Slightly smaller than the larger Branta.

Head and neck brown, eye dark, neck furrows visible as in other Anser, long, sloping forehead, bill dark except for bright yellow-orange band near tip. Light feather edgings of back feathers and most upper wing feathers clearly visible. Tail and underparts as above. Feet thick and bright orange.

Bill was seen to be free of nasal markers, feet free of bands, hind toes intact, and webs free of tattoos (seen well while bird walked and preened). Racial identity and lack of legally required marks of captivity point to wild origin.

Bird was seen by Nancy Curry and others between and after these dates.

Writing this account:

Alan Grenon, 204 Merwood St., Bellevue, NE 68005
517 Benjamin, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Alan L. Grenon

Rick Wright, 401 M. M. Kountze, Bellevue, NE 68005
10 Summer St., Somerville, MA 02143

Aaron E. Wright, Jr.
aj

Supporting Documentation for Bean Goose, *Anser fabalis*

Seen January 3 & 5, 1985 at DeSoto Nat. Wildlife Refuge

Observers - Loren & Babs Padelford

Location - DeSoto Refuge - approximately the middle of the ice about a half mile south of Prairie Lane. The bird was in Iowa when it was on the ice; however, when it was swimming in the open water to the west of the ice, and when it flew west to feed, it was also in Nebraska.

On Jan. 3 it was observed from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. in good light. The sun was in the south at our backs as we were looking north from a distance of about 250 yards. The bird was on the ice with approx. 150 Canadas and 10 snows and blues. We viewed it through a Bushnell 25x spotting scope.

Description: It was larger than the snow geese and slightly smaller than the medium-sized Canadas. It had a thick, long bill that was about $\frac{3}{4}$ black from the base, $\frac{1}{4}$ orange band to the tip, and the tip was black. Bigger than the Canada bills. The color pattern and massive size of the bill indicates that it is the *middendorffii* form. The head was brown with a rufous sheen, neck light gray with darker furrows on the back of the neck. Breast light tan to white. Narrow black vertical barring on flanks. Prominent $\frac{1}{4}$ inch white edging on scapulars, greater coverts and tertials. Undertail-coverts - white. Black tip on tail. Reddish-orange legs and feet.

It was preening for about 30 minutes during which time we were able to see that there were no bands on the legs, or marks or notches on the webs of the feet. Both hind toes were the same length.

On 1/5 we watched the bird throughout the day from 8:45 am to 4:55 pm at which time it flew off to the west with about 35-40 Canadas, presumably to feed. It was seen leaving at the same time the day before by Assist. Ref. Mgr., Tom Prusa. In flight, the bird appeared to have slightly longer, narrower wings in relation to the body size than the Canada geese it was flying with. Also, there seemed to be about three feathers (primaries & secondaries) missing from each wing.

On 1/4 Bruce Trindle of Neb. Game & Parks, Norfolk, Ne. consulted by phone with LJP regarding captive bean geese in Neb. To his knowledge no one with a waterfowl permit in this region has bean geese. Game & Parks has not received any calls of missing bean geese. He said that captive birds are usually pinioned and are marked by banding or marking the feet in some way. He advised that we should accept it as a wild bird.

Loren Padelford
Babs Padelford

Loren & Babs Padelford
1405 Little John Rd.
Bellevue, Ne. 68005

BEAN GOOSE

January 3, 1985

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Harrison County, Iowa

12:30--3:00 p.m.

Description:

- General:** An overall brownish-appearing goose somewhat smaller than Giant Canada Geese (*B. c. maxima*) but much heavier and larger than Snow Geese--both in direct comparison.
- Head:** Rather flat-headed with the narrow head merging with the bill to form an elongated triangle--quite different from the rounded head and thick, comparatively stubby bills of North American geese. The head color was a warm brown-buff, darkest at the base of the bill.
- Bill:** Very long, swan-like bill--thick at the base and narrowing towards the tip. The basal $\frac{3}{4}$ of the bill was solid black. An orange band crossed the bill near the tip. This band was narrow across the culmen, widened on the sides of the upper mandible, and extended onto and down the sides of the lower mandible. (It may have completely encircled the bill, but I was unable to determine this.) The orange band was very bright, pure orange and was extremely noticeable, especially when the Bean goose was looking directly toward the observer. The tip of the bill was black, ending in a considerable hook or "tooth".
- Neck & Throat:** The neck was also a warm brown. It was quite long and thin. This was most obvious when the Bean Goose would stretch up from behind several Canada Geese. The throat had "furrows" as in Ross' Goose.
- Beast & Belly:** The breast and belly were a very pale buff to oyster-shell white. The breast at times looked medium gray due to the bird's habit of fluffing his feathers (which he did often) or preening. There were no markings or speckling of any kind on the breast or belly.
- Sides & Flanks:** Vertically barred with dark gray or black.
- Back:** Gray-brown with wide (perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ inch) white feather edgings giving the back a "wavy" look.
- Undertail Coverts:** Pure snowy white
- Uppertail Coverts:** Not seen
- Tail:** Black ends to the feathers

Bean Goose
Page 2

Primaries & Secondaries:

The color was the same as the back with prominent white feather edgings. Tips of the Greater and Median wing coverts broadly--perhaps as much as $\frac{1}{2}$ inch--edged with white giving the look of wing bars.

Legs: Very thick, bright orange-red. These legs were at least twice as thick as those of Snow Geese. Very often the Bean Goose could be located in the midst of the Canada Geese by looking for these legs.

Signs of Captivity: None noticeable. This bird had both hind toes. There was no notching or tattooing on the webs of the feet. There were no bands on the legs. There were no nasal disks. The plumage was very bright and fresh looking, with no sign of wear. The color of the legs and bill were very bright.

Voice: Not heard

Behavior: The Bean Goose spent much of the time resting on the ice. At intervals he would walk a few feet, or preen before setting down again. Late in the afternoon he went into the open water and swam for a few minutes. He stayed with Canada Geese, moving among them.

Habitat: DeSoto Lake, an oxbow of the Missouri River. The lake was almost completely frozen except for one small patch of open water around which the approximately 250 Canada Geese, 12 Snow Geese and several hundred Mallards were congregated.

Sky: Clear, Sunny. Sun at right angle or slightly behind observers. The light grew much better as the afternoon progressed.

Equipment: 25x Spotting scope
7 x 26 Binoculars

Distance from bird: 750 feet

Similar species: White-fronted Goose. The Bean Goose's bill was entirely different (see description above) effectively separating it from Immature White-fronted Goose.

Other observers: January 3; Babs & Loren Padelford, Rick Wright, Allen Grenon, B.J. Rose,
January 5: Tom Kent, Ross Silcock, Francis Moore, Barbara Wilson, Graham Chisholm

Tanya Bray
9708 Grover
Omaha, Ne 68124

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

84-33

What species? Bean Goose (Anser fabalis) How many? 1Location? DeSoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge, Harrison Co., IowaType of habitat? Sitting on ice shelf close to open water on an old ox-bow of the Missouri River.When? date(s): January 5, 1985 time: 12:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Tom Kent, Ross Silcock, Barb Wilson, Tanya Bray, Loren + Babs Paddlefordothers before or after you: m.ob.

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 was in with a flock of approx. 100+ Canada Geese. It was heavier bodied and about the same size as the largest of the Canada Geese. Most of the time it was behind the Canada Geese and difficult to see. It also slept or rested quite a bit of the time. The birds feet and legs were a bright orange color. The bill was bicolored with the front 1/8 (approx.) being black, then the next 1/4 or so being a yellowish color; the rest (approx. 5/8) was black. The head and neck was a medium brown or mouse brown color with the neck getting gradually lighter as it approached the breast. There were a few darker streaks of brown running the length of the neck. The breast was a lighter brown than the head or neck with the under belly turning to a white color. The vent and under tail coverts were white. The side was a light brown color with lighter feather edging that gave a scalloped look to it. The upper wing coverts were a dark brown color with the primaries being a blackish color. The feathers of the back and wings ~~showed~~ showed a lighter feather edging giving a suggestion of rings on its back. The tail was black with a band of white above the tail on the upper tail coverts. I never saw the bird in flight and did not hear its voice. The slope of the bill was suggestive of a Canvasback which leads to the possibility of this bird being of the A.f. middendorffii race, one of the Siberian races. The eye was blackish. This bird apparently flew in to this location with several Greater-White-Fronted Geese but did not leave with them, but stayed with Canada Geese.

Similar species and how eliminated: 1st year Greater White-fronted Goose does not have a black and yellow bill like this bird did. Pink footed Goose has pink feet, this bird had orange feet and legs. Different shape than Canada Goose.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: There is a possibility that this bird could be a released or escaped bird from an aviary or private collection. The European race is rarely kept in captivity in the U.S. and the Siberian races are even rare in captivity in Europe.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Very good viewing conditions, seen from approx. 150 yards using 10x40 Leitz binoculars, Celestron C90 telescope at 33X and 55X.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: No experience with this species, lots of experience with Greater White-fronted Goose, no experience with other "Gray" goose species.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? ~ 2 hrs. this form completed? 20 hrs.

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

What species? Bean Goose How many? 1Location? DeSoto NWR, Iowa and Nebraska (bird in center of water between states)Type of habitat? Mostly frozen Missouri R backwaterWhen? date(s): 5 Jan 1984 time: 12:30 to 3:30 PMWho? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52240others with you: Francis Moore + many othersothers before or after you: hundreds of people

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.

Bird standing and sleeping on ice next to open water with Canada Geese, Snow Geese and Mallards. Intermediate in size between small and large Canadas, about size of snow geese. Shorter legged than other Geese with bright orange-red legs. Shorter, thicker neck than Canadas. Overall granular goose with white rump/under tail. White edging to back and wing feathers with white line between wing and body. Head and neck not much darker than other parts. Bill large and long - twice as long as small Canada, 50% longer than large Canada. Culmen nearly straight with slight angle with forehead.

Bill thick at base both vertically and laterally; thin at tip (distal 1/3).

Tip of bill dark with yellow organ subterminal band. Base of bill dark.

Yellow orange band about 1/3 width of basal dark portion.

Five streaks on sides -- no speckling on breast. No white at base of bill. Eye dark. No bands on legs.

Similar species and how eliminated: Bill shape and color, leg color and lack of white front and speckling eliminate White-fronted Goose, Pink-foot Goose, and Greylag.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No.

If yes, explain: Everyone agreed that it was a Bean Goose of a subspecies from the eastern part of its range. Exact subspecies will await expert analysis of photos.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
 Sun light behind at 30-45°; 100 yards (est); 30x scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Saw 1 in Alaska in 1978

References and persons consulted before writing description: The bird was extensively discussed and many references viewed before writing notes. This doc is meant to supplement photos.

How long before field notes made? 24 hours this form completed? 24 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

Silcock
2 copies
-C. P. D.
-G. C. S.

Details of Unusual Sighting in Iowa: BEAN GOOSE

A Bean Goose was seen by me (and many others) at DeSoto NWR Jan 5, 1985. This summary is written from notes taken in the evening of January 5, and distills various discussions and references to literature made that day and evening.

The Bean Goose was seen resting on ice beside a small area of open water with 300-400 Canada Geese. These birds were on the horseshoe lake at the refuge, which constitutes the boundary between Iowa and Nebraska. The Canada Geese were of varying size, from probable Giants to very small Mallard-size birds. A few Snow Geese were also present, perhaps 30.

Time of observation was about 1.15 to 3 pm, using primarily a Celestron telescope owned by Francis Moore. Light was perfect, a sunny cool day with no wind. We were looking east with the afternoon sun behind us. The main problem encountered while observing this bird was that it remained on the far side of the Canada Goose flock, and was seen only from time to time as the Canadas moved around. The Bean Goose was about 200 yards away from us at all times.

Description:

In general, appeared similar to White-fronted Goose, but overall somewhat paler in appearance, particularly on breast. Legs very obvious red-orange, very similar to leg color of Mallards present. Breast pale or even pearly-gray, no dark barring as in adult White-fronted Goose. Belly was brownish. Upperparts were grayish brown, most feathers edged whitish, especially the primaries. When wings raised, wing linings and area of body covered by folded wings dark gray-blue, not as dark as charcoal. Head and upper neck a little darker than lower neck and breast, perhaps best described as light chocolate. Bill was very long, at least as long as head, with culmen fairly straight. Would not be described as stubby by any stretch of the imagination, but rather more like that of a Trumpeter Swan. Basal 2/3 to 3/4 was black, with a black tip. The rest of the bill, no more than 1/4, immediately behind the black tip, was orange, not as red-orange as the legs, but a pure orange (as in Orange Crush). The black tip appeared to be little more than the nail.

Comments:

I believe this bird to be one of the eastern races, either serrirostris or middendorfi. Because these races are virtually unknown in collections, especially in North America, I believe this bird to be a true vagrant, probably brought to this area in late 1983 during the very cold air which moved from Alaska to the mid-United States at that time. At the same time, a Slaty-backed Gull appeared near St Louis, and several Bramblings were found in the northern United States and in Canada.

I am aware of observations made by Andrew Saunders,

Naturalist at the Fontenelle Forest Nature Center in Bellevue, Nebraska, who has carried out graduate research in waterfowl behavior. Mr. Saunders considers the Bean Goose to be show no signs of captivity, based on:

1. no leg bands
2. no other markers of any kind
3. presence of both hind toes
4. no sign of web tattoos
5. very bright plumage and soft part colors
6. plump breast, rather than the concave breast usually seen in captive waterfowl.

Ross SILCOX
M. H. Silcox

Bean Goose - 1 Jan 5, 1985
 DeSoto NWR, Iowa/Nebraska border

Description - a brown goose with glowing orange feet. Similar to White-front. Head brown. Body ~~body~~ + neck gray brown, or at any rate lighter than the head. Wing feathers gray. White bar on wings (edge of coverts). White edges run down the length of the secondaries. Undertail coverts white. White, scalloped effect on wing coverts. No white on face. Breast, belly seem white. Sides gray with a white line below.

Goose as big as the bigger Canadas it is with.

Head sometimes seems like a Canvasback's in shape. Bill long, sloping, ~~with~~ narrowing to tip. Base thick. Bill black with a black tip, but there's an orange spot before the tip.

Similar species: Similar to white-front but no white on front. Bill of white-front is shorter, pink. I've never seen a white-front's legs ^{seem} so bright. White scalloping on ~~to~~ Bean Goose more obvious than on white-front. Of ~~course~~, ^{course} the Bean Goose lacked the speckled belly of the adult white-front.

Differs from flying ~~and~~ domestic goose in color of bill + bill shape.

Viewing conditions: Bird east of us. I don't know how far. 20x Scope. Afternoon.

Notes written while watching the goose. Lots of books + advice used. Lots of people there.

Barbara L Wilson
 Rt 1 Box 41
 Hastings, Ia 51540

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

84-33

What species? Bear Goose How many? 1Location? DeSoto NWRType of habitat? open water on oxbow lakeWhen? date(s): January 6, 1985 time: 11:30 AM to 12:00 AMWho? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010others with you: Jim Dinsmore, Ames JJD

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.

A medium-large brown goose. Compared directly to Snow Goose and about 15-20% larger in size.

Feet and legs bright orange

Bill mostly dark colored - fairly large and long (not stubby like Snow Goose)

Belly was whitish gray in color - no dark speckles as in white-fronted goose

Back, neck, head, and wings were dark brown or gray colored.

No white at base of bill or on forehead.

Bird did not make any recognizable vocalizations.

Similar species and how eliminated: All other geese by lack of overall brown appearance contrasting with bright orange feet and a dark bill with a yellow tip.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: _____

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

Viewing conditions ok. - clear sky, light in front of us and colors were hard to see. Estimated viewing distance 150-200 yards. Optical equipment was a Bausch & Lomb 20x Telescope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: none

References and persons consulted before writing description: _____

How long before field notes made? 1 hour this form completed? 4 days

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240