

Brant

18 Dec 1988

DeSoto N.W.R., Harrison Co., IA

*Rosenbaum *****

to 2 Jan 1989; IBL 59:38, 42, 49, 76, Silcock 1989

Record Number: 88-35

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Mindy Rosenbaum, 18 Dec

Steve Dinsmore, 21 Dec

Robert K. Myers, 22 Dec

Jim Fuller, 23 Dec

Thomas H. Kent, 23 Dec

Tanya Bray, 2 Jan 1989

Robert Cecil, 2 Jan

Ross Silcock, 2 Jan

PHOTOGRAPHS

Doug Rose, 19 Dec, P-0274 (IBL 59:88)

REFERENCES

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 59:38, 42

Field Reports: IBL 59:49

Photograph: IBL 59:88 (P-0274)

Records Committee: IBL 59:76

Silcock, W. R. 1989. Brant at De Soto N.W.R. IBL 59:88.

VOTE: 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-D. Clearly H. b. hrota

A-P. Excellent descriptions of a Brant of the pale-bellied, eastern subspecies. Photo diagnostic. Date, location, and appearance of bird indicate it was wild and not an escapee.

A-P. All documentations very good, mentioning all field characteristics necessary to make a positive identification for Brant. Only one observer mentions a possibility of this bird being an escapee. This species should be expected as a vagrant to Iowa so this bird is not totally unexpected.

A-P (photo by Rose). Photo good. Seen by many.

SENT TO: Steve Dinsmore; Robert K. Myers, RR2, Box 153, Perry, IA 50220; Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, RR6, Iowa City, IA 52240; Tanya Bray, 9708 Grover, Omaha, NE 68124; Robert Cecil, 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA 50311; Ross Silcock [5/30/89]

BRANT AT DE SOTO N.W.R.

W. ROSS SILCOCK

What appears to be Iowa's fourth confirmed report of Brant was reported on 12 December 1988 by a participant in the De Soto National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count in Harrison County. Subsequently, the Brant was seen by many observers, with an excellent photograph taken on 19 December by Doug Rose. Documentations were submitted by Steve Dinsmore (21 December and 3 January 1989), Robert Myers (22 December), Jim Fuller (23 December), Thomas Kent (23 December), Tanya Bray (2 January 1989), and Robert Cecil (2 January).

The descriptions noted that the bird was a small goose, smaller than a Snow Goose and not much larger than a Mallard. The head, neck, and breast were black, except for a white necklace on each side of the neck. Bill and eye were black, and the bill was described as stubby and much smaller than that of a Snow Goose. Upperparts were generally brownish, darkening towards the black wing tips, and rather plain, suggesting an adult because of the lack of noticeable pale feather margins. The bird had a white rump and tail, a dark terminal tail band about an inch wide, and a dark V on the upper tail coverts. Flanks, lower breast, and belly were light gray. The flanks had some light tan vertical barring. Legs were dark gray, with no band present.

There was general agreement that this individual was an adult of the eastern race, *Branta bernicla hrota*. Of the three previous Iowa Brant records (Dinsmore, J.J. 1988. Brant at Red Rock Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 58:24-25), two were *B. b. hrota* and the other was the western race, *B. b. nigricans*. Interestingly, one of the previous *B. b. hrota* records was from De Soto National Wildlife Refuge on 2 November 1980. The other records were also in fall: 4 October 1987 and 18 November 1982. All except the 1987 record were from extreme western Iowa. The 1987 record, possibly of a sick bird, was from Red Rock Reservoir.

Dinsmore (1988) suggests that Brant are probably regular in fall in states near the Great Lakes. The four Iowa records suggest that a few individuals pass through the state in fall, best looked for at goose concentration points. Dinsmore et al. (*Iowa Birds* 1984) discuss the likelihood that birds of either race may appear in Iowa, and suggest that the eastern race may be more likely based on nesting range and migration patterns.

Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.



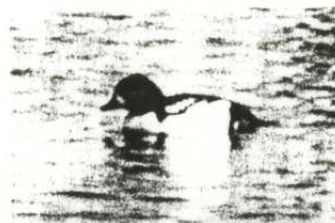
Brant, De Soto N.W.R., 19 Dec 1988.
Photo by Doug Rose.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE AT DE SOTO N.W.R.

W. ROSS SILCOCK

A pair of Barrow's Goldeneye was reported at De Soto National Wildlife Refuge, Harrison County, by Ruth Green prior to the Christmas Bird Count held at that location on 12 December 1988 (Tanya Bray, personal communication). Although the birds were reported on the Christmas Bird Count, no documentation was submitted. In fact, documentation was not received until 2 January 1989, when Tanya Bray described a male at the same location. Subsequent documentations of the male were received from Steve Dinsmore (3 January) and Jim Fuller (6 January). Recognizable photographs submitted by Loren and Babs Padelford were taken 8 January. Interestingly, a female goldeneye appeared near the male in both photographs, and this female appears to me to be a female Barrow's Goldeneye (see below).

The male was described as having a dark head with a crescent-shaped white patch between the eye and bill. The white patch was considered to be like an inverted tear-drop. The forehead sloped abruptly upward from the short, stubby, black bill, the bill being smaller than those of adjacent male Common



Male Barrow's Goldeneye with possible female, Mallards, and Common Goldeneye.
Photos by Babs Padelford and Loren Padelford.

Goldeneyes. The steep slope of the forehead gave the head a peaked appearance. A blue-purple sheen was observed on the head. The back, wings, and tail on the swimming bird were black, except for a line of square white spots along each side in the wing coverts. The black extended to the waterline in the shoulder area, separating white areas of breast and belly. Much more black was seen on the upper half of the swimming bird than on adjacent male Common Goldeneyes.

8-35



Brent

12-14-88

DeSoto N.W.R.

Photo by Amy Rose

IDENTIFICATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-35

What species? White-bellied Brant How many? 1

Location? In front of DeSoto Visitor Center

Type of Habitat? frozen lake

When? date(s): 12-18-88 time: 2:00pm to 2:45pm

Who? your name and address: Mindy Rosenbaum - DeSoto, IOWA (46 other counters)

Others with you: Christmas count participants.

Others before or after you: the bird has been seen for over 2 weeks now.

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Dark brown head, neck, & back.

Thin white neck ring.

Belly white.

The bird was only 15ft. away

Similar species; how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
Great lighting - 15ft. Scopes - binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
Many of the viewers had seen Brants before.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

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

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Brant

How Many?1 eastern race(H. b. hrota)

Location?DeSoto NWR, Harrison Co.-near visitors center

Habitat?large lake

Date?21 Dec 1988, 3 Jan 1989

Time?1:10-1:25 p.m. on 21 Dec, 1:15-1:55 p.m. on 3 Jan

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames

Others who saw bird:m.ob.

Description of bird:The bird was slightly smaller than the Snow Geese with which it was swimming. The head, neck, nape, and breast were black, except for a white necklace on each side of the neck. The bill was black, short, and much slimmer than the bill of a Snow Goose. The sides were pale brown. The upperparts, including the mantle and wings, were dark brown, gradually darkening towards the wingtips. The vent was white. The bird swam around in front of the visitors center for about 15 minutes and then flew out into the main flock of Snow Geese. In flight, the darker wingtips were easily seen. I could also see the tail pattern when the bird flew. The tail was white except for a narrow, dark terminal band(about an inch wide) and a dark "V" extending down from the rump. Also, the pale belly was evident when the bird flew. Based on the pale belly, I identified the bird as the eastern subspecies H. b. hrota. Although I didn't look too closely, I think the bird was an adult because I didn't see any pale feather edgings on the bird's upperparts.

I also considered the possibility that the bird might have been an escapee. However, the bird showed no sign of captivity(pinioning, bands, etc.) and generally acted very much like a wild bird. Also, the time and location are right for a vagrant Brant.

Similar species and how eliminated:The small size, black head, neck, and breast, bill shape, white "necklace" on each side of the neck, and tail pattern eliminate all other ducks and geese.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun to our right. Estimated viewing distance was no more than 50 feet. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope and Bausch and Lomb 8x40 binoculars.

Previous experience with species:I have seen thousands of Brant in Massachusetts.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made?immediately after sighting

How long before this form was completed?8 hours

What species? Brant Branta bernicla hrota How many? 1Location? DeSoto Bend NWRType of habitat? Open pool with approx 200,000-300,000 snow geeseWhen? date(s): 22 December 1988 time: 12:30pm to 1:00pmWho? your name and address: Robert K. Myers RR2, Box 153 Perry Iowa 50220others with you: Eugene + Elise Armstrongothers before or after you: Steve Dinsmore and many other observers

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.

This small goose was noticeably smaller than a snow goose only being slightly longer than a mallard which were also present. The head, neck and upper breast were black, Bill + eye were also black. A small, whitish patch (triangular patch) was noted on both sides of the neck just behind the throat. These white marks did not meet on the front of the neck. The flanks, lower breast, and belly were light gray and the flanks showed some light tan vertical barring. The back was basically a dark gray-brown. Tail + under tail was white. Legs were dark and no band could be seen.

The goose was observed swimming, flying, stretching, and walking on the ice.

The brant had been sighted at least 2-3 weeks before this sighting and has been seen quite a few times before our observation.

Similar species and how eliminated: It would be difficult to confuse this small goose with any other.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Excellent - bright sun from behind us - closest was probably about 50-75 yd. - used 20x scopes

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE

References and persons consulted before writing description: NONE

How long before field notes made? NONE MADE this form completed? SAME DAY

MAIL TO: Spring ~~R. K. Myers~~, Field Reports Editor, ~~221~~ ~~Street~~, ~~Perry~~ IA ~~50220~~
RR2, Box 153, Perry, 50220

What species? BRAUT How many? 1Location? DE SOTO NWR - VISITOR'S CENTERType of habitat? OPEN WATER ON OTHERWISE ICED-IN LAKEWhen? date(s): 23, DEC 1988 time: 10:55AM to 11:35AMWho? your name and address: JIM FULLER, 6 LOUQUIER KNOLL, RR#6, IOWA CITYothers with you: TOM KENTothers before or after you: MOB

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.

GENERAL SIZE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS A MALLARD, OR 2/3 THE SIZE OF THE SNOW GEESE. BODY LOOKED LIKE A DUCK, BUT HEAD SHAPE (FLATTENED) AND LONG AND RELATIVELY THINNER NECK WERE MORE GOOSELIKE. BILL WAS SHORT & STUBBY & SMALLER THAN SNOW GOOSE & MUCH SMALLER THAN MALLARD. BOTH EYE AND BILL WERE DARK. HEAD AND NECK WERE COAL BLACK WITH A SHARP DEMARCATION BETWEEN REST OF BODY. ON NECK, JUST BELOW HEAD THERE WAS A WHITISH AREA, IRREGULAR IN SHAPE. BACK WAS A GRAYISH-BROWN. SIDES WERE LIGHTER THAN BACK AND HAD A DIAGONAL LIGHT STREAKING. RUMP WAS WHITE. BREAST WAS A DINGY WHITE AND IN SUNLIGHT ALMOST LOOKED BROWN-ORANGE WASHED. LEGS WERE GRAY. WING TIPS WERE DARK.

Similar species and how eliminated: CANADA GOOSE - SMALL RACE. - ~~FACE~~ ~~PATTERN~~ ~~AND~~ WHITE NECK AREA PRESENT IN BRAUT AND WHITE FACE PATTERN IN CANADA - NEITHER IS PRESENT IN THE OTHER

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: IOWA TSN-4 SCOPE 20-60X. CLEAR SKIES. SUN IN SOUTH VIEWING TO EAST. 75-150 YARDS.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: SEEN ON EAST COAST

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? 1 HOUR this form completed? 12 HOURS

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

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-35

What species? Brant - eastern race How many? 1

Location? DeSoto N.W.R., Harrison Co., IA

Type of Habitat? Old Missouri River Backwater

When? date(s): 23 Dec 1988 time: 10⁵⁵ to 11⁴⁵

Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52246

Others with you: Jim Fuller, Babz + Loren Padelford

Others before or after you: many

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

A small goose - slightly longer than mallard and about 2/3 size of Snow Goose. Longer + thinner neck and head compared to Mallard. Head, neck + front of breast dark brown-black. Lower breast and belly dirty white. Under wing white. Back and wing medium brown with more white in wing. Sides with broad light brown streaks. Horizontal white patch midway up side of neck. Patch small + does not extend to front or back of neck. Bill + eye dark. Bill shape much like Snow Goose but much smaller. Primaries black.



Similar species; how eliminated:

Neck and face pattern not that of small Canada Goose.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
Overcast, 25-50 yards, 80x binocular, 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: have seen on both coasts

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Looked at field guide before bird found, not after.

How long before field notes made? ^{during} ~~after~~ this form completed? 5 hrs

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

88-35

January 2, 1989
12:20 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.

DeSoto Bend NWR
Harrison County, Iowa

Observation:

In general, a small, dark goose.
Black head, neck, and breast. Short necked.
White "lacey" triangular marking on neck.
Small, conical black bill. Black eye.
Dark gray upper wings and back, rather plain.
Planks were off-white with vertical brown streaking.
Rump and tail white with dark black band at tip.
White undertail coverts.
Grayish belly

behavior: Flew in with small flock of Snow Geese and landed
on water quite close to shore. During the time
of my observation, it swam around in this area.

Equipment: 7 x 26 Binoculars
25 power Spotting Scope

Distance from bird: At closest point, 50 feet

Others who saw bird: Ross Silcock, Eugene & Eloise
Armstrong, Bob Cecil, Francis Moore, and several others were
present when I saw the Brant. Many others saw the bird both
before and after this date.

Documentation written from notes made 1 1/2 hours after the
sight: 199.

Tanya Boay
4708 Grover
Omaha, NE 68124

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-35

What species? Brant (Branta bernicla) How many? 1

Location? DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Harrison County, Iowa

Type of Habitat? Oxbow Lake

When? date(s): Jan. 2, 1989 time: 12:15 PM to 1:00 PM

Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil, 1315 41st St. Des Moines, IA

Others with you: John Cecil, John Hoogerheide, Francis Moore, Armstrongs, R. Silcock, T. Bray

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I observed a small waterfowl (compared to accompanying Snow Geese) displaying the following field marks:

--Size smaller than Snow Goose, similar in size to Mallard.

--Black (or very dark) head, neck, and breast, sharply distinct from dark gray back, much paler underparts.

--Sides buffy, barred, belly pale (consistent with hrota subspecies).

--Bill short, stubby, triangular, perhaps half length of head. Bill similar to Ross' Goose in shape and proportion to head. (Ross' Goose present for comparison)

--Small, triangular white patch just below head on each side. Bill dark - similar to color of head and neck.

--Legs dark.

Similar species; how eliminated: None that I'm aware of.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. 20x Nikon scope.
Viewing conditions excellent. Distance perhaps 100'.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Life bird

References and persons consulted before writing description: None.

How long before field notes made? at time this form completed? 4 days.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

88-35

What species? BRANT How many? ONE

Location? DESOTO NWR, IA-NE

Type of Habitat? E OXBOW LAKE, PARTLY OPEN

When? date(s): JAN 2, 1989 time: 12²⁰ to 12³⁰ PM

Who? your name and address: ROSS SILLOCK

Others with you: M.O.B. W/LL TANYA BRAM, GEWE ALMSTRAUER

Others before or after you: M.O.B BEFORE

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

AT 12²⁰ P.M. A GROUP OF SNOW GESE ARRIVED ACCOMPANIED BY A SMALL (ABOUT 1/2 SIZE OF SNOWS; MALLARD SIZE ALMOST) DARK G.OOSE. IN FLIGHT THE DARK HEAD, DEMARCATED FROM PALER BELLY AS WELL AS WHITE UNDERTAIL AREA + WHITE RUMP SERVED TO ID. THE BIRD. FURTHER STUDY SHOWED A DARK TAIL BAND (TOP OF TAIL ONLY) + SOME DUSKY COLORATION ON UPPER (PROXIMAL) RUMP AREA. WHEN ON THE WATER, THE WHITE NECK MARKING COULD BE SEEN ALSO. BILL AND EYE DARK, FRONTS LIGHTLY BARRED (VERTICAL).

Similar species; how eliminated:

CANADA G.OOSE - NO WHITE FACE PATCH; ENTIRE RUMP (ABOVE + BELOW) WHITE (OR AT LEAST PALE) EXCEPT FOR DARK DISTAL BAND.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NO
If yes, explain:

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

EXCELLENT - ABOUT 100 YDS AWAY IN FLIGHT, 50 YDS ON WATER - SEEN FROM VISITORS' CENTER

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

MUCH IN N. CAROLINA

References and persons consulted before writing description:

NONE

How long before field notes made? 2 HRS this form completed? 2 HRS

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).