

Barrow's Goldeneye

2 Jan 1989

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

*Silcock, *Bray, *S. Dinsmore, *Fuller

to 6 Jan; IBL 59:50, 61:84, Silcock 1989 (photo)

Record Number: 89-03

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Ross Silcock, 2 Jan

Tanya E. Bray, 2 Jan

Steve Dinsmore, 3 Jan

Jim Fuller, 6 Jan

PHOTOGRAPHS

Babs Padelford and Loren Padelford, 8 Jan, P-0276, IBL 59:89

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:50

Photographs: IBL 59:89 (P-0276)

Records Committee: IBL 61:84

Silcock, W. R. 1989. Barrow's Goldeneye at De Soto N.W.R. IBL 59:89-90.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P No question about this to-be-expected vagrant. Good descriptions, and excellent drawings by Fuller.

A-P. Excellent descriptions and photos of male Barrow's. Date and location as expected for an Iowa vagrant of this species.

A-P. Too bad more attention wasn't paid to possible female. Tough call from photos alone.

A-P. There is no doubt about this record. Photos and written descriptions clearly indicate an adult Barrow's Goldeneye.

A-P. Photos by Padelfords confirm ID of male Barrow's Goldeneye. I believe a female accompanies the male (best seen in original photos). "Forehead" slope on female is more severe than that of male, and bill is very stubby.

SENT TO: Ross Silcock; Tanya E. Bray, 9708 Grover, Omaha, NE 68124; Steve Dinsmore; Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, RR 6, Iowa City, IA 52240 [5/31/89].

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 hutchinsoni hutchinsoni*. 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. hutchinsoni* and the other was the western race, *B. b. nigricans*. Interestingly, one of the previous *B. b. hutchinsoni* 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 51163



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.

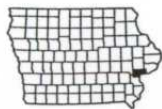
The female bird seen in the photographs appears to be a female Barrow's Goldeneye based on the steep slope of the forehead from the base of the short bill, giving this bird the same peak-headed appearance of the male. This is best shown in the photograph in which a male Mallard separates the goldeneye pair.

This is Iowa's second record of Barrow's Goldeneye—both from extreme western Iowa. The previous sighting was at Forney Lake in Fremont County from 17 March to 6 April 1984 (*Iowa Bird Life* 54:75-77).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER AT DAVENPORT

PETER C. PETERSEN

On the afternoon of 30 September 1988, Brian Blevins and I were returning to Davenport from Saylorville Reservoir where we had observed and photographed a Pomarine Jaeger. We decided to check the mud flat at the Credit Island Harbor, which, due to low water, extended to South Concord Street near its junction with West River Drive. We were, therefore, on South Concord across the harbor from Credit Island rather than on the island when we saw a small flock of eight medium sized shorebirds that we passed off as Pectoral Sandpipers. While we searched for other shorebirds with the sun behind us, this flock flew closer to our position, landing about 50 meters away. I rechecked the group with a tripod mounted scope at a 25X setting. I noticed one of the birds seemed a bit smaller than the rest and had an especially rusty cap. Brian agreed it was not a pectoral, and I mentioned the only Sharp-tailed Sandpiper record for Iowa was about this time of the year. It was, in fact, 3 October 1974, at Coralville Reservoir (Halmi 1974). Brian also called my attention to the white eyebrow as we increased power to 40X. We checked our field guide (National Geographic Society 1983) and confirmed all these points as indicating a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.



I described the bird in my documentation as "Medium-sized shorebird closely resembling Pectoral Sandpiper" but "slightly smaller", "top of head rich brown to rufous", "breast with a tan wash, almost buff, a few streaks of brown at top of breast and along sides", "cheek buff, noticeably white eyebrow which broadened behind eye". In comparing the bird with the Pectoral Sandpipers I noted, "Pectorals had streaking across buff breast wash uniformly to lower edge of buff" and "back of Sharp-tailed seemed more uniform rich brown than those of the Pectorals." We made our notes independently, mine being done as soon as I reached home, within 30 minutes of observation. I consulted the Master Guide (Farrand 1983), Cramp (1983), and Hayman, Marchant, and Prater (1986) prior to completing my documentation.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has been observed twice in Illinois, the first record coming from Chautauqua N.W.R. near Havana, about 100 miles from Davenport, on 28 and 29 September 1974 (*Illinois Audubon Bulletin* 172:4-5) and 6 October 1985 at Chicago (*American Birds* 40:120). Another lingered from 6 to 23 October 1984 near Cleveland, Ohio (*American Birds* 39:60). The first record for Indiana occurred on 23 September to 6 October in Gibson

County where it was photographed (*American Birds* 43:111, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly* 67:62, 65). It has been seen in these eastern states: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York as well as twice in Ontario. An excellent article paper on the identification of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper appeared in *British Birds* (Britton 1980).

LITERATURE CITED

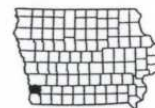
- Britton, D. 1980. Identification of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. *British Birds* 73:333-345.
Cramp, S. ed. 1983. Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Vol. 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Farrand, J. ed. 1983. The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Vol. 1. New York: Alfred Knopf.
National Geographic Society. 1983. Field Guide to the Birds of North America. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
Halmi, N. S. 1974. Sighting record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper near Iowa City. *Iowa Bird Life* 44:106
Hayman, R., J. Marchant, and T. Prater. 1986. Shorebirds. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co.

235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, Iowa 52803

BARN SWALLOWS ACCEPT NEST SUBSTITUTE

BARBARA L. WILSON

When I entered our barn on 2 July 1988 to check Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests, I noticed a couple of adults flying about and calling more persistently than usual. Assuming they had simply learned to recognize me or my mirror as an apparent threat to their nest, I began checking nests on the floor joists beneath the hayloft and did not notice anything really unusual until the dog and I entered the central alleyway. Then the dog pounced on a bit of grayness. One nestling swallow, with feathers barely emerging from their sheaths, broke for the manger while its three siblings huddled in a depression on the dirt floor. I grabbed the dog (who fortunately had inherited an inhibited attack from generations of sheep-herding ancestors), caught the fleeing nestling, and returned it to its siblings. After I held my hands around the group a moment, they settled down to watch us alertly. Fragments of a broken nest lay nearby, probably dislodged the previous day when my husband loaded green locust boards into the hayloft to dry.



While the dog stared at the nestlings alertly indeed, I worried. The barn cats would eat them even if the dog did not, and with their nest fallen, they could not be returned where they came from. Hand raising baby swallows would be difficult, time-consuming, and probably unsuccessful. Feeding the swallows to the cats was a tempting alternative, but I decided to try to replace the nest instead. Although birds often abandon a nest that is disturbed during incubation, I knew that they sometimes form such strong bonds with their young that they can tolerate amazing changes. The Barn Swallows, apparently still trying to protect their grounded young, seemed like good candidates for nest substitution.

Putting the four young and some nest fragments in a bucket, I took them into the house. There I cut an 11 x 8.5 cm piece of wood and nailed a wooden

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

89-03

What species? BARLOW'S GOLDENYE How many? ONE ♂

Location? DE SOTO MNR

Type of Habitat? OX BOW LAKE, PARTLY OPEN

When? date(s): JAN 2, 1988 time: 10³⁰ AM to 12³⁰ PM ^{OFF ON}

Who? your name and address: ROSS SILCOCK

Others with you: M.O.B (VIRTUAL IOWA REUNION); TANYA BRAY

Others before or after you: PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY RUTH GREEN & TANYA BRAY; NOT CONFIRMED UNTIL THIS SIGHTING

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.

PICKED OUT FROM COMMON GOLDENYES BY DARKER APPEARANCE, WITH DARK SIDES EXCEPT FOR BREAST (DELIMITED FROM WHITE ALONG WATERLINE BY DARK MARK EXTENDING TO WATERLINE) AND WHITE AREA ALONG WATERLINE, AND PROMINENT ROW OF ABOUT 5 WHITE SPOTS ON WINGS. FACIAL CRESCENT WAS ALSO VERY OBVIOUS AND CLEARCUT, AS WAS DIFFERENT SHAPE OF HEAD COMPARED TO NUMEROUS ADJACENT COMMON GOLDENYE MALES. FOREHEAD ROSE ALMOST VERTICALLY FROM BASE OF RATHER SMALL BILL. BIRD WAS EASY TO LOCATE WITH 10X50 BINOCULARS AT 150 YDS.

Similar species; how eliminated: SEE ABOVE - ALL FEATURES DIFFERENT COMMON GOLDENYE

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

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
PERFECT LIGHT, 150 YDS (EST), 10X50 BINOC, 25X SCOPE

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
ONE SEEN IN IOWA (ONLY PREV. EXPERIENCE)

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).

89-03

What species? Common Goldeneye
Location: DeSoto Bend NWK

Type of Habitat: Open water
When dated: Jan 5 1989

What time of day? 11:30 - 11:45 a.m. and various other times on this date

Others with you: DeSoto Bend NWK Washington County, Nebraska; Harrison County, Iowa

Description:

Black head with crescent-shaped white patch in front of eye (between eye and bill). Forehead abrupt, sloping sharply upward from bill. Short, black bill.
Black back with a row of white square patches on wings. White breast and belly with black crescent separating breast and belly. This dark mark extended nearly to the water line.

Behavior:

First observed swimming near but not with Common Goldeneyes. Later moved much closer to Visitor Center and dove repeatedly.

Equipment: 7 x 26 Binoculars
25 power Spotting Scope

Distance from bird: 500 to 100 feet.

Others who saw bird: Ross Silcock, Eugene & Eloise Armstrong, Bob Cecil, Francis Moore, Dennis Thompson, and many others. All agreed with the stated identification.

Documentation written from notes made 1 1/2 hours after sighting.

Tanya E. Bray
9708 Grover
Omaha, NE 68124

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Barrow's Goldeneye

How Many? 1 male

Location? DeSoto NWR, Harrison Co.

Habitat? open patch of water on large oxbow lake

Date? 3 Jan 1989

Time? 12:55-1:45 p.m.

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

Others who saw bird: m.ob.

Description of bird: We were looking over the numerous Common Goldeneye on the lake when we noticed a different male goldeneye. This bird was generally darker than a Common, and the head and face pattern were different. The head appeared dark colored, without the greenish sheen of a Common Goldeneye. The bill was dark, stubby, and smaller than the bill of a Common Goldeneye. The forehead was very steep, giving the head a very peaked appearance. The facial spot was teardrop-shaped, not round like the face spot of a Common Goldeneye. The breast, underparts, and flanks were white. The back, wings, and tail were black, except for a line of white spots along each side, just above each wing. A dark line extended forward and downward from the shoulder, touching the waterline.

Similar species and how eliminated: Male Common Goldeneye eliminated by head shape, shape of the facial spot, dark mark extending from shoulder to the waterline, and by the row of white spots on each side, above the wing.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were very good with the sun mostly behind us. Estimated viewing distance was 75 yards at the closest. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen one other Barrow's Goldeneye in Iowa, and several 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? 2 days

What species? BARROW'S GOLDENEYE How many? 1 ♂Location? DESOTO NWR - HARRISON CO.Type of habitat? OPEN WATER WITH ICE AROUNDWhen? date(s): 6 JAN 1989 time: 12:15 PM to 3:45 PM OFF AND ONWho? your name and address: JIM FULLER, 6 LONGVIEW KNOLL, Rte 6, IOWA CITY 52240others with you: ANN JOHNSONothers before or after you: NOB

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 - ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE MALLARDS. OFTEN ASSOCIATE WITH COMMON GOLDENEYE - ABOUT THE SAME SIZE.

HEAD - DARK COLOR (THE BLuish-PURPLE SHEEN OBSERVED SEVERAL TIMES) WITH SHARP DECARCATION WITH WHITE OF NECK + BREAST. EYE WAS YELLOW AND RELATIVELY SHORT STUBBY BILL WAS DARK GRAY. HEAD WAS MORE ROUNDED THAN THE COMMON GOLDENEYES AND CROWN WAS OVER EYE RATHER THAN BEHIND AS IN COMMONS AND FOREHEAD SLOPE WAS ALMOST STRAIGHT UP AND DOWN. THE WHITE SOMEWHAT CRESCENT AREA (WIDEST TOWARD NECK + MORE POINTED TOWARD TOP OF HEAD) EXTENDED ABOVE EYE, WHILE IN COMMON (♂) IT WAS MORE ROUND AND ENDED ABOUT EYE LEVEL IT WAS LOCATED JUST BEHIND BILL.

SIDE - BARROW'S SHOWED MUCH MORE BLACK ON UPPER HALF THAN COMMON AND HAD A ROW OF 6 SLANTING WHITE MARKS BELOW BACK AND ABOVE TWO LARGER WHITE AREAS. THERE WAS ALSO A BLACK EXTENSION ONTO ~~THE~~ NECK.

TAIL - DARK. LEGS SEEN WHEN PREENING WERE YELLOW-ORANGE

FEEDING + DIVING - OFTEN SPREAD TAIL TO A FAN AS IT WAS DIVING.

OTHER BEHAVIOR - SEVERAL TIMES IT PUT ITS HEAD UP AND BACK AND THEN MOVED IT UP AND DOWN. SEE DIAGRAM ON BACK

Similar species and how eliminated:

COMMON GOLDENEYE - WHITE CRESCENT NOT WHITE CIRCULAR AREA. HEAD SHAPE DIFFERS AS DESCRIBED. BACK AND SIDE PATTERN DIFFER AND COMMON DOES NOT HAVE BLACK EXTENSION TOWARD NECK

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

DING? ALMOST FULLY DAY - LITTLE WIND.

9X36 BINOCULARS AND 20-60X KOWA TSU 4 SCOPE

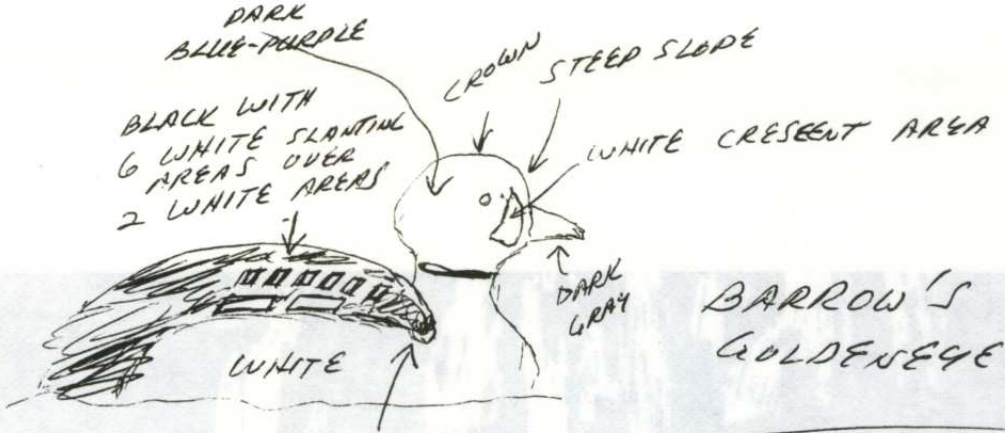
Previous experience with species and similar ones: SEEN IN WEST

References and persons consulted before writing description: NATL. GEOG GUIDE

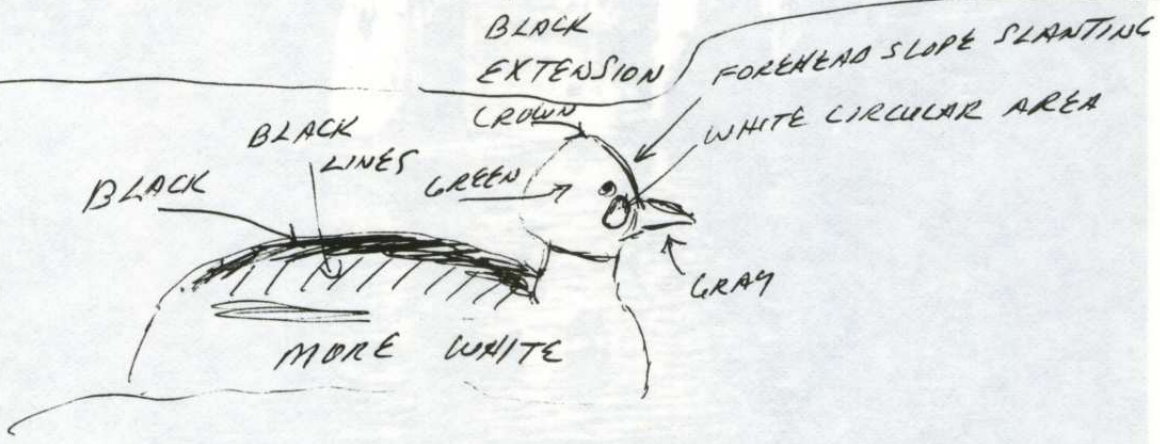
How long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 3 DAYS

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

89-03



BARROW'S GOLDENEYE



COMMON GOLDENEYE

Barrow's Goldeneye
 19-8-1
 with white
 patch above
 eye and white
 patch on
 back

89-03



Barnon's Goldeneye
1-8-89
De Soto W.V. R
photos by
Babs & Loren Padelford

89-03



