

Brant

2 Nov 1980

De Soto NWR, Harrison Co., IA

\*M Muhm, \*R Sease, \*J. Dinsmore

P-0094, IBL 51:26, 125-126; 52:41

Record Number: 80-19

Classification: A-S

DOCUMENTATIONS

Maury J. Muhm

Randall G. Sease

James J. Dinsmore

PHOTOGRAPH

James Dinsmore, of mounted specimen, P-0094 (IBL 51:126)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 51:26

Dinsmore, J.J., S. Dinsmore, and M. Dinsmore. 1981. Brant specimen from Iowa. IBL 51:125-126.

Photograph: IBL 51:126 (P-0094)

Records Committee: 52:41

VOTE: 1-I, 1-II, 4-III, 1-IV

III, both have taken ornithology from me.

IV, documentations lack enough detail for identification.

Specimen or photos needed to accept as a new state record.

III, The description leaves something to be desired, but the field marks as stated seem to fit a brant.

I, reluctantly; based only on probable competence of the observers. Descriptions minimal but probably sufficient. Especially irritating is the lack of detailed description, measurements, or a photo, considering the refuge personnel had the specimen in hand. (What happens to category I when the specimen is eaten?)

II, apparently not preserved.

III, Convincing record -- would it be possible to encourage these people to have a camera on hand when they ck out these waterfowl?

III, Bird examined in hand, compared with books. Poor details in documentation, but enough to be highly suggestive of this species.

REVOTE: 5 Sep 1981, 6-I-S, 1 absent

Documentation by J. Dinsmore based on viewing the specimen and photo of the specimen were reviewed at the meeting. The photo is on file.

Dinsmore, J. J., S. Dinsmore, and M. Dinsmore. 1981. Brant specimen from Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 51:125-126.

**Brant specimen from Iowa** — On 2 November 1980, Larry Coney, Kevin Lundegard, and John Kounas were hunting from a blind in the northeast (Iowa) section of DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge in Harrison County. Between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. a single strange small goose landed in front of their blind. The goose flew, was shot, and retrieved. When the three checked out of the refuge, the bird was seen by Randy Sease and Maury Muhm, both students at Iowa State University, and several refuge personnel, who collectively identified the bird as an immature Brant (*Branta bernicla*) (see Kent 1981, Kleen 1981). The bird was kept by Kounas of Sloan, Iowa who had it mounted. On 27 July 1981, we saw the bird in Sloan and concurred with the identification (see photo). The bird is about the size of a Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) or a small Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), with a relatively short neck and the short bill typical of geese. The head, neck, and upper breast are black. There is no cheek patch and the neck has only a faint white necklace of feathers around it, eliminating the possibility that it is one of the small races of the Canada Goose. The belly feathers are a canvas color similar to that of the Canada Goose rather than the chocolate brown typical of the western race of the Brant. The tail feathers are worn and the wings have four lines of light-colored feathers extending out them. This combination of characteristics is typical of the immature eastern race of the Brant (see Palmer 1976).

This appears to be the first tangible evidence of the Brant occurring in Iowa. There are several earlier records of the species in Iowa but none supported by a photograph or specimen. Some of these probably refer to misidentified small Canada Geese. The most convincing previous record is one seen for about a month starting in October 1970 at Ingham Lake, Emmet County (Musgrove and Musgrove 1977). This individual was seen by several Iowa Conservation Commission personnel and probably was correctly identified but no photographs were taken.

**Literature cited**

Kent, T. H. 1981. Field reports. *Iowa Bird Life* 51:24-34.



Brant Mount  
Sloane, Iowa — July 27, 1981

- Kleen, V. M. 1981. Middlewestern prairie region. *Am. Birds* 35:187-191.  
Musgrove, J. W., and M. R. Musgrove. 1977. *Waterfowl in Iowa*. Fifth edition. State Conservation Commission, Des Moines. 130 p.  
Palmer, R. S. 1976. *Handbook of North American Birds*. Vol. 2. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven. 521 p.  
JAMES J. DINSMORE, STEPHEN DINSMORE, and MARK DINSMORE, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, Ia. 50010.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species Black Brandt 2. Number: 1

3. Location De Soto Bend Nat. Wildlife Refuge, Missouri Valley, Iowa

4. Date: Nov. 2, 1980 5. Time Bird seen: 12:15 PM to 12:30 PM

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Belly and neck were all black - dark brown. The feathers on the back were black with lighter brown edges. The bird was seen in the brush - in station of a being shot by hunters.

7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A

8. Description of behavior: N/A

9. Habitat - general: N/A  
specific: N/A

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: The all black neck and belly distinguished the bird from other brandt.

11. Distance (how measured)? N/A

12. Optical equipment: N/A

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): N/A

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: none

15. Other observers: Randy Sease

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: 2 refuge employees

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Was first thought to be a black brandt by sight I.D. and was confirmed when the refuge employees followed to Ducks Goose, a town of Iowa.

9. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 11/12/80

Signature

Shawny J. Miller Address: Crestview 2 RR 4

Date: 12/80

City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Black Brandt 2. Number: 1
3. Location DeSoto Bend Nat. Wildlife Refuge, Missouri Valley, Iowa
4. Date: Nov 2, 1980 5. Time Bird seen: 12:15 to 12:30
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):  

Belly and neck were all black-dark brown. The feathers on the back were black with lighter brown edges. The bird was seen in the hunter check-in station after being shot by hunters.
7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A
8. Description of behavior: N/A
9. Habitat - general: N/A  
specific:
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  

The all black neck and belly distinguished the bird from other brandt
11. Distance (how measured)? N/A 12. Optical equipment: N/A
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): N/A
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: none
15. Other observers: Randy Sease
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: 2 refuge employees
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  

Was first thought to be a black brandy by sight I.D. and was confirmed when the refuge employees referred to Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 11/12/80

Maury J. Muhm (signed)

Address: Crestview #2, RR 4

Signature

Date: 11/12/80

City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species BLACK BRANT (Branta nigricans) 2. Number: ONE

3. Location DESOTO BEND NATL Wildlife Refuge, Missouri Valley, Iowa

4. Date: NOV-2-1980 5. Time Bird seen: ± 12:30pm to —

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

THE Brant appeared slightly larger than an adult drake mallard, Bill, Head, neck, and breast region all were of a Brant umber color, lacking any white markings; confirmation of the species was obtained by the refuge workers using Ducks, Swans, and Geese of N. America. THIS Bird was immature in appearance.

7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A

8. Description of behavior: N/A

9. Habitat - general: Bird was SHOT ON THE REFUGE BY HUNTERS  
specific: OVER PICKED CORN Field. Blind # 1, west of observation tower.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Brant (Branta bernicla) was eliminated due to the darker coloration of the ventral surface of the Black Brant.

11. Distance (how measured)? N/A

12. Optical equipment: N/A

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): N/A

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: - NONE

15. Other observers: TWO REFUGE WORKERS, MAURY muhm, numerous other hunters

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: - REFUGE WORKERS identified Bird as BLACK BRANT

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Birds of North America, Robbins, - did not influence my description only reaffirmed it.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 3 day -

RANDALL G. SEASE Address: 422 Nth 14th ST  
Signature

Date: 11-5-80 City, State: FORT DODGE, IOWA

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) 2. Number: one
3. Location DeSoto Bend Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Missouri Valley, Iowa
4. Date: Nov 2 1980 5. Time Bird seen: 12:30 pm to \_\_\_\_\_
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):  

The Brant appeared slightly larger than an adult drake Mallard, bill, head, neck, and breast region all were of a brunt umber color, lacking any white markings; confirmation of the species was obtained by the refuge workers using Ducks, Swans, and Geese of N. America. This bird was immature in appearance.
7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A
8. Description of behavior: N/A
9. Habitat - general: \_\_\_\_\_  
specific: Bird was shot on the refuge by hunters over picked corn field. Blind #1, west of observation tower.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Brant (*Branta bernicla*) was eliminated due to the darker coloration of the ventral surface of the Black Brant.
11. Distance (how measured)? N/A 12. Optical equipment: N/A
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): N/A
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: none
15. Other observers: Two refuge workers, Maury Muhm, numerous other hunters-
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Refuge workers identified bird as Black Brant
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Birds of North America, Robbins,-did not influence my description only reaffirmed it
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 3 days

Randall G. Sease Address: 422 Nth 14th st  
Signature

ate: 11-5-80 City, State: Fort Dodge, Iowa

Middlewestern Prairie Region  
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

80-19

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Brant 2. Number: one
3. Location DeSoto Natl. Wildlife Refuge, Harrison Co (shot in NE corner on Iowa side of refuge)
4. Date: 2 Nov 1980 5. Time Bird seen: shot between to 9:30 and 10:00 a.m.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):  
The following notes were taken on 27 July 1981, about 15 minutes after examining the stuffed specimen in Sloan, IA.  
Size-approx size of mallard, neck not exceptionally long  
Bill-short, black, obviously goose bill, not broad and flat like duck bill  
Legs and feet-black, feet smaller than those of typical duck  
Head, neck and upper breast-black, no white cheek patch, faint hint of white necklace, sharp line dividing black of breast from stomach  
Stomach-canvas gray color, more like Canada Goose than chocolate brown
7. Description of voice, if heard: (continued on attached page)
8. Description of behavior: NA
9. Habitat - general Shot in field on refuge  
specific:
- Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Canada Goose-size of hutchin's race but no white cheek patch, otherwise bill size, neck proportions, and overall size matched Hutchins  
Brant-not adult because lacked white necklace, not dark race because belly was light
11. Distance (how measured)? examined in hand 12. Optical equipment:
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Have seen both eastern and western races of brant in field, one time each
15. Other observers: Steve and Mark Dinsmore
16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes We agreed to look at the bird first before we talked about it but they both knew what the bird had previously identified as.
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
Maury J. Muhm, Randy Sease, John Kounas (who has the bird now), refuge people at DeSoto
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
After looking at bird, we compared it with plates in Robbins

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 15 minutes

Signature Steve Dinsmore Address: Dept Animal Ecology, ISU, Ames  
Date: 4 August 1981 City, State: Ames, IA 50011

Dinsmore- documentation of Brant

Tail-tail feathers worn at tip(indicating an immature), white on underside and rump, tail feathers black with white upper tail coverts

Back- brown in color

wings - upperside of wings brown with four distinct lines of white going out wing (white from tips of the coverts), underside of wings white

From talking with Kounas, the bird was shot between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. It was alone on the ground and was flushed and shot. No others seen although a flock of hutchins had gone by earlier and it may have been with them.