

Tundra Swan
18 Dec 1988
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
*Ann Johnson, *S. Dinsmore
also 6 Jan 1989; IBL 59:42, 48, 56

Record Number: 88-34
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Ann Johnson, 18 Dec
Steve Dinsmore, 6 Jan 1989

REFERENCES

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 59:42
Field Reports: IBL 59:48
Records Committee: IBL 59:76

VOTE: 7-A-D

A-D. Overwintering is rare but not unprecedented.

A-D. Good description of imm. Tundra. Other swans adequately eliminated.

A-D. The documentors describe the critical features given by Peterjohn (IBL 56:9). We need more documentations of immature swans like these.

A-D. Documentations adequately describe Tundra Swan All necessary identification characteristics described to eliminate Trumpeter and Mute Swans.

A-D. Dished upper mandible and coloration (mostly white) sufficient for ID.

Sent to: Ann L. Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211; Steve Dinsmore [5/30/89]

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species Tundra Swan - immatureLocation Des Moines River below Red Rock Dam - Marion Co., IowaHabitat river with sandbarsDate(s) 12/18/88 Time 2⁰⁰ pm to 2¹⁵ pmName and Address Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, Ia. 50211Other observers Jim Sinclair, Wyman Barts - Indiana

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 behavior and voice.

Swan was feeding in shallow part of river. The bird was primarily white but showed some dingy brown to gray from the top of the head down the neck. There were less gray/brown feathers on wings and body but they were definitely present. Bill was mostly bright pinkish-orange tipped with black. Head was rounded and concave bill evident on profile view.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Mute swan immature eliminated by bill color.
 Trumpeter swan eliminated by the presence of many white feathers at this date and concave bill shape. Unable to determine size difference.
 Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Sun was behind and to the left. Viewed at approximately 100 yards through scope at 30X.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have observed both trumpeter and mute swan immatures in summer. Tundras have been observed on Mississippi previously.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Nat'l Geographic guide; Peterjohn article in Iowa Bird Life

How long before field notes made? 4 hours. How long before this form

completed? 1 day

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Tundra Swan

How Many?1 imm.

Location?on Des Moines River about 1.5 mi. below Red Rock dam, Marion Co.

Habitat?large patch of open water on river

Date?6 Jan 1989

Time?10:50-11:35 a.m.

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

Others who saw bird:Erik Munson

Description of bird:The very large size as compared to Mallards, white color, and general shape identified the bird as a swan. The bird was mostly white, with noticeable lighter brown areas on the head, neck, and upperparts. The bill had an obviously "dished" upper mandible. Otherwise, the bill was very pink near the base, but was dark for about the distal one third. As the bird swam and fed in the river, I noticed that the neck was always held straight up, not bent back over the body. The legs were black.

Similar species and how eliminated:The neck posture, "dished upper mandible", pink color on bill, and light, not dark, brown color on head, neck, and upperparts eliminates immature Trumpeter and Mute swans.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were good with sky mostly overcast. Estimated viewing distance was 75 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen numerous Tundra and Trumpeter swans in Iowa and many Mute Swans in Massachusetts.

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

How long before field notes were made?none made

How long before this form was completed?8 hours