

Eurasian Wigeon

15 Apr 1984

Sweet Marsh, Bremer Co., IA

\*Moore, \*Myers, \*S/E Main, \*Kent, \*Staudt

\*Petersen, \*Bendorf; IBL 54:43; 55:56, Moore and Myers 1954

Record Number: 84-06

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen P. Main (15 April)

Elaine Main (15 April)

Francis L. Moore (15 April)

Robert K. Myers (15 April)

Thomas H. Kent (15 April)

Thomas J. Staudt (15 April)

Peter C. Petersen (16 April)

Carl J. Bendorf (17 April)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:43

Moore, F. L., and B. Myers. 1984, Eurasian Wigeon at Sweet Marsh. IBL 54:54.

Records Committee: IBL 55:56

VOTE: 6-II, 1-III

II, well studied by many.

III, satisfactorily seen by many good observers.

II, Question is, where did it come from?

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation  
by the Records Committee  
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: EURASIAN WIGEON  
DATE SEEN: Apr 15, 1984  
SITE OF OBSERVATION: Sweet Marsh, Bremer County  
OBSERVERS: Francis Moore, Bob Myers, S. & E. Main, Tom Staudt, Carl Bendorf, et al.  
DATE OF REVIEW: 1984  
METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation of description by mail to Records Committee  
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: II

COMMENTS:

This bird was described satisfactorily by many observers, on different occasions. There were no discrepancies or contradictions in the descriptions which might have raised questions on the Committee.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

Moore, F. L., and B. Myers. 1984, Eurasian Wigeon at Sweet Marsh. Iowa Bird Life 54:54.

**Eurasian Wigeon at Sweet Marsh** — While observing a mixed group of ducks on the North side of Sweet Marsh near Tripoli, Bremer County, Iowa on April 15, 1984 we noticed an unusual wigeon with a small group of American Wigeons (*Anas Americana*.) This duck had a rusty red head with a creamy buff patch on top of the head extending from the forehead through the crown. The color of the breast was also reddish but of a much lighter color than the head. The back and sides were a gray color with a short white horizontal slash about half-way up the side. The tail end was black with a white bar separating the black from the gray sides.

We identified the bird as a Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and immediately enlisted the aid of Stephen and Elaine Main of Waverly, who were also birding in the area, to help confirm that we were seeing a Eurasian Wigeon. We then started our rare bird calling and understand that quite a few birders got to see the duck during the next few days.

The new Iowa Birds, Dinsmore, et al lists two other records with details so this would be only the third record of this species with supporting details in Iowa, and possibly the first to be viewed by several independent observers over a period of time. Reference: Dinsmore, J. J., et al., 1984 Iowa Birds. pg 80. Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703, Bob Myers, 1236 Sylvania Ave., Waterloo, IA 50701.



BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

8406

1. Species European Widgeon, *Maréca penélope* 2. Number 1
3. Location Sweets Marsh, NW section, Tripoli, IA
4. Date: 4-15-84 5. Time Bird Seen: 11 am to 12 noon
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):  
⇒ observed: reddish head w/broad, almost white stripe on forehead;  
gray sides w/white stripes
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: swimming in shallow water among dead vegetation w/other ducks
9. Habitat - general: Marsh  
specific: see above
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
see #14
11. Distance (how measured)?
12. Optical equipment: Telescope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
over cast
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
none w/this bird; have previously seen American Widgeon, Shoveler (present this time) and Redhead
15. Other observers:  
\*Francis Moore, \*Bob Myers, Elaine Main
16. Did the others agree with your identification?
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:  
\* spotted bird, we agreed w/their conclusion
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Birds of No. Amer., Robbins et al.; Nat'l Geog. Guide (theirs\*)  
(ours)
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 1 day
- Signature: Stephen P. Main Address: 720 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW
- Date: 4-16-84 City, State: Waverly, IA 50677

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

54-16

1. Species European Widgeon 2. Number 1  
3. Location Sweets Marsh, north entrance  
4. Date: 4/15/84 5. Time Bird Seen: 11:15 to 11:30

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):

Ruddy - tan breast and grey stripe on body  
Red head w/ yellow stripe from beak to top of head  
Bluish beak  
Grey back

7. Description of voice, if heard: none

8. Description of behavior: swimming, feeding in marsh

9. Habitat - general: marsh  
specific: flooded grasslands

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

11. Distance (how measured)? 150 yd.

12. Optical equipment: telescope  
(secondary binoculars)

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

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

15. Other observers: Francis Moore, Bob Myers, Stephen Main

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

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

Peterson Field Guide, National Geographic Field Guide  
Zim

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 24 hrs.

Signature: Claire Main Address: 720 First Ave., NW

Date: 4/16/84 City, State: Waverly Iowa 50677



What species? Eurasian Wigeon (Anas penelope) How many? 1 ♂Location? North side of Sweet Marsh, Bremer Co., IAType of habitat? shallow weedy cattail marsh next to parking lot on North side of marsh near Rangers house.When? date(s): April 15, 1984 time: 11:20 am to 12:00 noonWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Bob Myersothers before or after you: Tom Kent, Tom Staudt, others

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.

I had just set up my telescope to look through the ducks at the North side of Sweet Marsh. As I focused it on the first ducks I was going to look at I noticed a very bright reddish headed duck in the middle of my scope. Much brighter red than any Red head or Canvasback I had ever seen. It then raised its head and I saw that the bird had a creamy beige forehead that extended into the crown of the bird. The breast of the bird was a reddish color but not as bright as the birds head. The birds back was a light gray color about the same color as its sides. The rear end of the bird was black (tail, upper and lower tail coverts) there appeared to be a thin white stripe separating the back from the sides longitudinally. The bird also had a verticle white bar in the area of the flank just before the under tail coverts. The bill was a light color. The bird never flew as we watched. No voice was heard. The bird was actively feeding among a group of 10 to 12 American Wigeon during the time of the sighting. It was about the same size of the American Wigeon around it.

Similar species and how eliminated: Much different coloration than American Wigeon, had reddish head cream colored crown + forehead unlike American Wigeon. Different body coloration than Canvasback and Red head, had a more cinnamon red colored head than either of these ducks.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Bright overcast from approx. 150 yd. using C90 Celestron at 33X and 55X and 25x60 Spacemaster telescopes

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have never seen Eurasian Wigeon before, have lots of experience with American Wigeon, Canvasback and Redhead.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? At sighting this form completed? 6 hours

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



BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

84-06

1. Species Eurasian Wigeon 2. Number 1 ♂
  3. Location Sweet March - Bremer County
  4. Date: April 15, 1984 5. Time Bird Seen: 11:20 A.M. to 12:00 noon
  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):
    1. Size + shape similar to American Wigeon with bird.
    2. Head was very reddish (like Redhead) with a buffy (creamy) patch extending from in front of eye at top of bill up to crown of head.
    3. Breast appeared reddish but lighter than head.
    4. Back + sides were gray with a white horizontal stripe about 1/2 way up from water line.
    5. Rear end (tail area) of bird was black and had a white bar separating gray of sides from the black.
  7. Description of voice, if heard: NOT HEARD
  8. Description of behavior: Bird was swimming + feeding with American Wigeons
  9. Habitat - general: Shallow - weedy marshy area  
specific: Bird was usually within 15' to 20' from shore.
  10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
American Wigeon has gray head + red sides.
  11. Distance (how measured)?  
125-150 yd. (est.)
  12. Optical equipment:  
Spotting scopes of 25X, 33X + 55X
  13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Mainly cloudy but sun would peak through once in a while -
  14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
None with this species but have seen many American Wigeons
  15. Other observers: Francis Moore, Stephen Main + Elaine Main (we recruited the Mains to be observers and they were most cooperative)
  16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes
  17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
  18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
I identified the bird without a guide but we checked the NBS guide to be sure.
  19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? about a week
- Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: 1236 Sylvia Ave.  
Date: April 27, 1984 City, State: Waterloo, Iowa

84-06

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Eurasian Wigeon (1 male), 15 April 1984, Sweet M., Bremer Co., IA  
Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

Other observers: Francis Moore & Bob Myers (before); Tom Staudt (with).

Time: 4:05-4:06 PM; 5:40-6:00 PM

Habitat: artificial, marshy bottomland pond

Description: "A Harrier came along and the ducks flushed; I spotted a duck with white wing patches in the same location as an American Wigeon and a red head and a light neck. The bird settled down and we could not locate it. An hour and a half later I finally saw a bird flush that looked similar. It landed 150-175 yards from us and remained in sight for the next 20 minutes. The bird was the size, shape and behavior of an American Wigeon. The head was red, about the color of a Redhead but brighter. On the forehead there was a light patch in front extending down to the short bill. The neck blended indistinctly with the head (or we weren't close enough to see a distinction) and the breast was lighter. The back and sides were gray--sort of a streaked black on white appearance. The back was darker than the wings and sides. There was a slight horizontal white streak between the upper wing area and the back, more toward the anterior end and sloping downward toward the rear. The rear end was black. In front of this there was a white area. The bird was definitely a dabbling duck, feeding in the marshy grass without diving."

Song: not heard.

Behavior: Associated with a large group of dabbling ducks. Appeared slightly larger in flight than an American Wigeon (vague impression). On the water it poked along just like an American Wigeon.

Conditions: 150 yards at closest. Late afternoon sun at about a right angle. 8x binocs, 20x scope.

Similar species: The white wing patches and behavior rule out all diving ducks with red heads.

Agreement: all.

Previous experience: seen on Attu.

References/time used: We purposely did not look at field guides until after notes made.

Time of notes/typed: 5 min after viewing ended/18 hours.



What species? Eurasian Wigeon ~~mult~~ <sup>mult breeding plumage</sup> How many? 1Location? SWEETS marsh, Bremer CO., IowaType of habitat? Shallow marshy lakeWhen? date(s): April 15 1984 time: 5:45 pm to 6:00pm

Who? your name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas J. Staudt  
931 North Summit  
Iowa City, IA 52240others with you: Tom Kentothers before or after you: Bob <sup>myers</sup> ~~myers~~, Francis Moore

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 first seen in flight, it appeared to be somewhat chunky. As it landed large white patches on the upper wing coverts (as on an Am. Wigeon) were observed.

On the water the head color of the bird was the most obvious feature, the head and complete neck were a bright red, somewhat more sharply colored than the head of a Redhead duck. The color may have been exaggerated because the bird was seen with the full effect of the setting sun. The bird had a creamy orange crown strip that extended from the base of the bill (its widest point) and narrowed back over the head.

The breast of the bird was lighter than the head and body parts, no sharp demarcation was seen between head-neck color and breast area. The body of the bird was gray flaked with the back being darker than the wings and the wings darker than the sides. A thin white horizontal line could be seen at the bend in the wing. The rump was black and the flanks white, as on an American Wigeon.

The overall size, shape, and feeding habit (picking off the water surface) were similar to that of an American Wigeon.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The male American Wigeon has a white bald pate, large greenish eye crescent, and gray facial area - The body is brownish

Green winged teal has a similar reddish face but has a green eye crescent, red cap, and is smaller.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
partly sunny to full sun 150 - 175 yds est.

20X scope


Previous experience with species and similar ones:

References and persons consulted before writing description:

none with this species many sightings of Am. Wigeon  
discussion of description with Tom Kent while observing

How long before field notes made? during observation this form completed? 4 hrs.

## BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Eurasian Wigeon 2. Number of birds: one - ♂
3. Location N. end of Sweet's Marsh. County: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date: April 16, 1984 5. Time bird seen: 9:28 A.M. to 9:29 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):
- First seen in flight - white on top of wing very noticeable.  as was rust head. After landing, cream crown noted. Bird was next to a mallard which gave a good size comparison, the wigeon noticeably smaller.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: Flying with other puddle ducks, then seen submerged
9. Habitat - general: Sweet's Marsh Feeding  
bush  
specific: Fairly shallow pond NW of parking area - in some vegetation
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
American Wigeon - crown white, head green + light grey. Many were present nearby.
11. Distance (how measured)? 300 yards - est 12. Optical equipment: 30x scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Clear sun directly behind observer
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Have seen in Europe on several occasions
15. Other observers: previous day - Francis Moore
16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes ←
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
checked Robbins after observation (F.C. to N. Am Birds)
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 10 mins, this form
- Peter C. Peterson Address: 235 McClellan Blvd.  
Signature
- Date: April 16, 1984 City, State: Davenport, IA 52803



BIRD DOCUMENTATION FORM

CARL J. BENDORF  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY IA 52240

SPECIES: EURASIAN WIGEON NUMBER: 1  
LOCATION: Sweet Marsh COUNTY: Bremer  
DATE: 17 April 1984 TIME: 11:30 TO 11:45 AM

HABITAT: Large marsh pool with much vegetation in shallow water.

DESCRIPTION: This was a bird feeding alongside a group of American Wigeon for direct comparison. Back was gray. White patch of wing showing as horizontal stripe on side of swimming bird. Sides finely vermiculated with light gray. Breast a light reddish-tan color. Entire head a bright orange-brown color gleaming in sunlight. Broad cream stripe starting from top of head on down forehead to bill. Bill was blueish with darker tip. This was an adult male in perfect breeding plumage.

Behavior was identical to American Wigeon as they fed in shallow water at edge (and sometimes in) the vegetation.

SIMILAR SPECIES--COMMENTS: American Wigeon is eliminated by the head color and the color of sides and breast. Only other bird with orange type head would be Redhead or Canvasback. Not even close to these.

AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT OF OTHERS: Roberta Oppedahl and Lucille Liljedahl of Cedar Rapids were both present and in agreement. There were numerous others both before and after.

LIGHT CONDITIONS: Bright clear sun was at my back. The colors of this bird almost glowed in the bright light.

DISTANCE: 80 yards (Estimated) EQUIPMENT: 15 X Scope

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES: Very familiar with American Wigeon. Have seen Eurasian at close range in California.

REFERENCES, PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION: None

FIELD NOTES MADE? 30 Minutes THIS FORM DONE? Retyped 17 May.