

Barrow's Goldeneye  
12 Nov 1989  
IPL Ponds, Pottawattamie Co., IA  
A. Grenon  
IBL 60:12, 61:84, Grenon 1990

Record Number: 89-25  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Alan G. Grenon

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 60:12

Records Committee: IBL 61:84

Grenon, A. G. 1990. Barrow's Goldeneye in Pottawattamie  
County. IBL 60:74.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D: Adequate description; might have been more detail about  
shape of head and bill and shape and location of face crescent  
after 50 minutes of observation. Surprised a bit at no mention of  
dark color of back extending forward and down almost to water.

A-D: It would have been nice to have more detail on head  
shape, but crescent near eye, extent of black/white on back, and  
comparison to nearby Commons supports the identification.

A-D: Direct comparison and observation time make this doc easy  
to accept.

A-D: Good description of the goldeneye.

A-D: Not a classic description, but crescent on face well  
seen, and blacker appearance and head shape (not well described)  
compared directly to Common Goldeneyes.

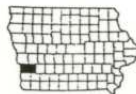
#### OTHER OBSERVERS

Gordon Brown (GBr); Tanya Bray (TB); Andrew S. Fix (ASF); L. Paul Hertzler (LPH); Edna E. Peters (EEP); Mary Lou Petersen (MLP); Jerry Probst (JP); B.J. Rose (BJR); Roger Rose (RR); W. Ross Silcock (WRS).

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

#### BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

ALAN G. GRENON



At 9:30 a.m. on 12 November 1989, my mother, Betty Grenon, and I visited the Iowa Power and Light plant in Pottawattamie County near the Missouri River south of Council Bluffs. We examined the waterfowl on the south pond with spotting scopes, and among the first birds we checked was a male Barrow's Goldeneye.

The bird was swimming and diving in the company of six Common Goldeneye (four adult males, an immature male, and a female) perhaps 50-100 meters north of us. The bill and head were dark (near black), with a large oblong white crescent between each eye and the bill. The head was shaped differently than those of the nearby Commons, appearing longer. The sides and breast were white. The back had more black and less white than the backs of the male Commons, with white marks almost forming a line curving up and back from near the shoulder in what appeared to be an otherwise all black back. The eyes were white to yellow. During 50 minutes of intermittent observation, we saw this group fly, and noted the Barrow's back had more black and less white than did the backs of nearby flying male Common Goldeneye. Other than as noted, the bird was similar to Common Goldeneye in size, shape, and behavior.

Sue and Rollin Gentes arrived during our observations and also saw the bird. To my knowledge, the bird could not be located later in the day, but a male Barrow's Goldeneye, probably the same bird, was reported there 14 and 15 November by Babs and Loren Padelford, and 15 November by B. J. Rose.

This is the third record of this species for Iowa. This location is about 44 miles south of DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge where a male Barrow's Goldeneye was seen in Iowa/Nebraska boundary waters in January 1989 (*Iowa Bird Life* 59:89-90), and less than 40 miles north of the site of Iowa's first record in March 1983 (*Iowa Bird Life* 54:75-77).

Neale Woods Nature Center, 14323 Edith Marie Avenue, Omaha, NE 68112

#### A SPECTACULAR REVERSE MIGRATION AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR



BERY ENGBRETTSEN

On 18 May 1990 while observing shorebirds at Saylorville's Sandpiper Beach area (for map, see location #13 in Dinsmore et al., *Iowa Bird Life* 60:2, 1990), I noted small groups of warblers in the air off the beach at about 8:30 a.m. As I left the beach area, I noted large numbers of warblers moving through the rows of trees along the exit road. I parked on the roadside and upon leaving my car, I noticed in addition to a stream of warblers moving through the trees, that as far as I could see with the naked eye, the sky was also full of warblers. Most intriguing was the fact that the birds were all heading south off the point that forms Sandpiper Beach and continuing on across Saylorville Lake.

Over the next two hours I conservatively estimate that 12,750 warblers passed over the point heading south. The numbers could have been as much as 30,000 or more. The speed of their flight was too rapid for one person to make accurate counts. Few birds paused for more than an instant in the trees in front of me. Most were in the air above the trees, some so high as to be at the limit of my vision with the naked eye. The flight stretched as far as I could see to the east and west. Through my binoculars I could see birds far out over the lake to the west and over the marina bay to the east.

To try to estimate the magnitude of the flight, I made three 5-minute counts of birds that passed within my field of vision to the west in an arc from vertical (90 degrees) to approximately 45 degrees, my vision being limited where I stood by the low trees about 40 yards in front of me. These counts were: 151, 128, and 169. I could detect very little variation in numbers during the time period of approximately 8:45 to 10:30, and numbers seemed roughly equal when I looked to the east over the open field. These counts may be used in two ways to try to estimate the total number of birds passing by. If my count arc held roughly 25% of the total 180 degrees of viewing available to me, then the total birds passing over the point would be approximately 12,750, using a rough average of 150 birds/5 minutes for 1 hour and 45 minutes, and 50 birds/5 minutes for the last 15 minutes until the flight stopped. I believe this to be a conservative estimate as my count arc did not contain the line of sight to the west horizon, and I would expect most birds to be closer to the ground. If, on the other hand, I consider that I counted only those birds that crossed a vertical plane extending from directly overhead to the trees in front of me (a rectangle with a base of 40 yards and extending upwards to the limits of my vision), then the flight contained far more birds. Birds were passing in front of me along a horizontal distance of at least a quarter of a mile, which would make the total flight some 31,500 birds.

Counting individual species proved to be just as formidable as estimating total numbers. I finally settled on three main groupings: abundant, moderate, and uncommon (three or fewer). I identified 19 species. Abundant species included (in rough order of frequency) American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Solitary Vireo, Warbling Vireo, and Wilson's Warbler. In moderate numbers were Nashville Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Blackpoll Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Philadelphia Vireo. There were three Orange-crowned Warblers, two Common Yellowthroats, and one each of Black-and-

89-25

## UNUSUAL SPECIES DOCUMENTATION

Barrow's Goldeneye, Bucephala islandica one adult male

12 November, 1989; 9:30 a. m. to 10:20 a. m.

Iowa, Pottawattamie County, south of Council Bluffs, the south pond of the Iowa Power and Light plant's ponds, two miles north of the county line (three miles north of the Bellevue exit on I-29); Also present was Betty Grenon

south wind, bird to the north (to east), 40's (F.)

optics used: 7 X 35 binoculars, 22 X 60 spotting scope; National Geographic guide to Birds of North America used after the identification was made (another birder showed up with a book), but during the sighting.

This description is prepared from notes made during the sighting.

The bird was floating on the water and diving from the surface in the company of 6 Common Goldeneye (4 ad. males, 1 im. male, 1 female). The bill and head were dark (near black), as was most of the back. The sides and breast were white. A large oblong crescent was between the eye and bill, the head was of a different shape than the Commons, being longer behind than they were. The back had more black and less white than the Commons, having a white mark, almost a line, curving up and back from near the shoulder, in an otherwise all-black back (as seen). The eye was light, white to yellow. In flight, its back had more black and less white than nearby flying Common Goldeneye. Other than noted, it was similar to the Common Goldeneye in size, form, and behavior.

This description was prepared on 14 November, 1989.

I have considerable experience with Barrow's Goldeneye from northern Utah where they are regular in winter, and I observed one at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Iowa, in early 1989.

Alan G. Grenon, 14323 Edith Marie Avenue, Omaha, NE 68112.

*Alan G. Grenon*