

Brant

4 Oct 1987

Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA

\*Jim Dinsmore

IBL 58:17, 74, Dinsmore 1988

Record Number: 87-20

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Dinsmore

PHOTOGRAPHS

Jim Dinsmore, P-0244

REFERENCES

Field Reports: 58:17

Dinsmore, J. J. 1988. Brant at Red Rock Reservoir. IBL  
58:24-25.

Records Committee: IBL 58:74

VOTE: 5-I-P, 2-III

III, ID is not in doubt and J. Dinsmore's research makes a good case for this being a natural occurrence. I suggest that once it was caught, it ceased to be a natural occurrence and the date should be cited as 4 October only.

I-P, Description sounds like an immature eastern race Brant. Since this species is a known vagrant to the interior it should show up sporadically in Iowa. I hope the photos are diagnostic as well.

I-P, an excellent documentation of an "in-hand" bird accompanied by very useful researched information on the Brant in the mid-west.

I-P, if photographs OK. I agree that unlikely to be wild.

III, Clearly a Brant. I'll give it the benefit of the doubt as a wild but very sick bird. The guy picked it up!?

## OTHER OBSERVERS

Eugene Armstrong (Booneville); Cathryn A. Baldner (Calmar); Bart Ballard (Cedar Rapids); Brian Blevins (Davenport); Beth Brown (Osceola); Andrew S. Fix (Ames); Jan Greer (Omaha, NE); Alan Hancock (Clear Lake); Phyllis Harris (Union); Ron Howing (Wallingford); Wayne Livermore (Sioux City); Erik Munson (Ames); Lois O'Gara (Omaha, NE); Loren Padelford (Bellevue, NE); Gale Pederson (Des Moines); Mary Lou Petersen (Davenport); Jerry Probst (Sioux City); Steve Richards; Roger Sedlacek (Ames); Dennis Thompson (Des Moines); and Guy Zenner.

## COMMENT:

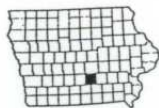
All reports were received by 5 December. This timeliness was extremely helpful and much appreciated. There is certainly an increasing awareness of early and late dates. As noted in the text, most of the sightings with record early or late dates were supported by full documentation or substantiating details. This aspect of the reports was much improved over last year. I left out several record dates due to lack of any detail or description.

The volume of material was noticeably less than last fall. A total of 735 sightings from 47 contributors were entered into a computer database and summarized in this report. There were 60 documentations. This was a little more than half of the sightings entered last year from 11 fewer contributors and less than half as many documentations. Most of the regular contributors had shorter reports this year. This may reflect less field activity or more selective reporting.

The database program used for entering, sorting, and printing the sightings was the latest version of one developed over the past few years by Tom Kent. He has spent many dozens of hours in writing and refining the program to allow rapid entry of sightings using abbreviations for species, locations, and observers. The program also flags unusual dates and neatly prints out an easy-to-read listing from which the Field Reports can be written. Tom also assisted in writing part of the report and I am grateful for all of his help. Please send me your suggestions for improving the report and corrections of names, dates, and places.

## BRANT AT RED ROCK RESERVOIR

JAMES J. DINSMORE



On 4 October 1987, Tom Miller of Des Moines and a friend were hunting geese on the south shore of Red Rock Reservoir near the Whitebreast Recreation Area in Marion Co. At 11 a.m., as they were picking up their decoys, they saw a small goose flying toward them. To their amazement, the bird landed among their decoys within a few feet of them. Miller immediately recognized the bird as a Brant and held his fire. The bird swam close to them for several minutes, then flew weakly to the shore and eventually was caught by the hunters. Miller realized the bird was unusual for Iowa and notified Jennifer Lancaster, Conservation Officer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, to whom he gave the bird. Lancaster contacted me and the next morning I met her at the Polk City Wildlife Area, a non-hunting refuge just east of Saylorville Reservoir, where we photographed and released the bird.

The release site is about 45 miles northwest of where the bird was originally found.

The bird was roughly Mallard-sized and was mostly brownish-gray on the upper body parts and light gray on the undersides. The head and neck were black with only the faintest hint of a white necklace. The black extended down on to the upper breast and then was sharply separated from the lighter colored belly region. When the wings were extended, three distinct light-colored lines extending through the secondaries and their coverts were evident. This combination of characteristics led me to identify it as an immature Brant of the Atlantic subspecies. It was similar in plumage to a Brant shot at De Soto N.W.R. in 1980 (Dinsmore, Dinsmore, and Dinsmore 1981). The bird was alert and easily swam away from us when we released it. Its breast felt somewhat thin, and the droppings in the box that held it were green, suggesting that it might have been in the early stages of lead poisoning. Steve Dinsmore and Roger Sedlacek saw it at the release site later that day but, to my knowledge, it has not been seen since.

This is the third record of a Brant in Iowa. One was shot at De Soto N.W.R. on 2 November 1980 and a black Brant was shot 5 miles north of Riverton Area on 18 November 1983 (Kent 1983). All three records are of immatures from fall. On the chance that this bird might have been captive-reared, I contacted Howard Reneaud of Bondurant, who raises a variety of waterfowl. He knows of no one in Iowa who kept Brant.

I reviewed all issues of *American Birds* from 1977 to present covering the fall season of 1976 through winter 1986-1987. Over that time I found a total of 76 records of Brant from the following states: Ohio (24), Michigan (14), Illinois (10), Indiana (7), Minnesota (5), Wisconsin (5), Kansas (4), Iowa (2), North Dakota (2), South Dakota (2), Missouri (1), and Nebraska (0).

Seasonally, 55 of the records were from fall, 15 from winter (including some that carried over from fall), 8 from spring, and 3 from summer. The fall migrants were distributed as follows: September (3), early October (4), mid-October (3), late October (10), early November (8), mid-November (17), and late November (2).

From these data, I conclude that Brant is fairly regular in parts of the Midwest, especially in states bordering the Great Lakes in fall. Although the Red Rock bird was relatively early, it was not exceptionally so. There are records from 2 and 15 October in Illinois, from 7 and 16 October in Wisconsin, and from 12 October in Minnesota.

I appreciate the cooperation of Tom Miller, Jennifer Lancaster, and Howard Reneaud.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Dinsmore, J.J., S. Dinsmore, and M. Dinsmore. 1981. Brant specimen from Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 51:125-126.  
Kent, T. H. 1983. Field reports-fall 1983. *Iowa Bird Life*. 53:98.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames IA 50010



## DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Brant

How Many? one

Location? released at Polk City Wildlife Area; bird had been caught on south shore of Red Rock Reservoir, Marion County

Habitat? freshwater lake

Date? caught on 4 October, I saw on 5 October 1987

Time? caught at 11 a.m., released at 8:30 a.m.

Observers Name and address: Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames

Others who saw bird: Jennifer Lancaster, IA DNR; Tom Miller, Des Moines; Steve Dinsmore and Roger Sedlacek, Ames

Description of bird: small gose, about size of Mallard, body largely greyish-brown above, light gray underneath, head and neck black with black extending down onto upper breast and sharply demarcated from the lighter color of the belly. The neck was all black although a few feathers had a slight hint of being slightly white in color. No evidence of any white cheek patch. Bill was black, iris was dark brown. Feet and legs were black. When wing extended, there were three distinct light colored lines on feathers/feather tips in the secondary region extending out from the body. The bird was not banded, and the bill did not show any obvious wear like a captive bird might have. Although it was a young bird, the feather wear was not excessive on the tail or wing feathers as would be in a captive bird. The bird's breast was somewhat thin and the droppings were green, suggesting it was suffering from lead poisoning. It was alert and easily swam away when released. When I talked to Miller (who found the bird), he said the bird flew in to their decoys but was easy to approach. Given the high arctic nesting grounds of the species, Miller may have been the first human the bird had ever seen and it may have acted accordingly. I saw nothing on the bird to suggest it was a captive bird. If it was, given its age, it must have been raised in captivity. This is not an especially common captive bird. Based on the plumage, I would call it an immature of the Atlantic or east coast subspecies. Photos were taken by Lancaster and me.

Similar species and how eliminated: Canada Goose-small size eliminates all but the smallest races; the bird lacked a cheek patch

Viewing conditions and equipment: examined in hand

Previous experience with species: have seen it in Massachusetts and Alaska. Also saw the DeSoto NWR specimen which was in same age and plumage group as this one.

References consulted: Robbins; Bellrose-Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America. Former compared with bird in the field. Identification was obvious as soon as I saw the bird. I was mainly interested in checking the subspecies.

How long before field notes were made? immediately after viewing bird  
How long before this form was completed? three days

## Comments on Brant in the Midwest

I reviewed all issues of American Birds from 1977 to present which starts with the fall season 1976 and goes through winter 1986-87. Over that time I found a total of 76 Brant records from the following states:

IA	2
IL	10
IN	7
KS	4
MI	14
MN	5
MO	1
NE	0
ND	2
OH	24
SD	2
WI	5

Seasonally, 55 of these were from fall with 8 spring, 3 summer, and 15 winter (including some that carried over from fall) records. By date, the fall birds were first recorded as follows:

Sept	1-10 Oct	11-20 Oct	21-31 Oct	1-10 Nov	11-20 Nov	21-30 Nov
2	4	3	10	8	17	2

From this, I conclude that Brant are fairly regular in parts of the Midwest, especially on the Great Lakes states and mainly in fall. Although the Red Rock bird was early, it was not exceptionally early. There are records from IL from 2 and 15 Oct, WI for 7 and 16 Oct, and MN from 12 Oct.

16 Oct 1987--I contacted Howard Reneaud of Bondurant. Reneaud raises a variety of waterfowl in captivity. Specifically, I asked him:

1. Did he have any Brant in his flock of captive birds? no
2. Did he know of anyone else nearby who kept Brant? no, nor did he know of any waterfowl breeder in Iowa who had Brant
3. Were they a common bird for waterfowl fanciers to maintain in captivity or to breed in captivity? (from the age of the bird, if captive, it must have been hatched in captivity) no no
4. If captive, would it have been banded? yes, breeders normally have some band to mark their birds

Finally, he volunteered his opinion that it must have been a wild bird.