



# United States Department of the Interior



Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge  
Wapello District  
10728 County Road X61  
Wapello, Iowa 52653

4/28/95

TO: Pete Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52805

FROM: Jim Quinlivan, MTNWR S.Q.

SUBJECT: Notes on the sighting of Oldsquaw on the Louisa Division.

On April 26, 1995 at 0900 hrs, I observed a probable Oldsquaw (Clangula hyemalis) on the Louisa Division of the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge. Weather conditions were poor, with overcast sky and a steady drizzle. However, calm winds allowed good observation from a window-mounted 25x spotting scope at a distance of 50-75m.

The bird was observed swimming with 35 Lesser Scaup (Aythya affinis) in a flooded field (see attached map). Water depth in this field was obviously at least several feet, as the scaup were diving easily. My first impression of this bird was immediately an Oldsquaw. It was definitely trimmer than the nearby scaup, and appeared slightly smaller. The bill was short and a pink band or patch near the tip was very noticeable, and the most outstanding field mark. The head was pulled close to the body at all times, giving it a small-headed appearance. Overall plumage lacked any outstanding field marks and was generally sooty, slightly darker grey on the back, breast, and rear. The head coloring was very patchy, showing grayish-white with a much whiter area around the eye. Any elongation of the tail was never evident, though this feature could have been submerged. A check of several reference guides indicated that bird fit the description of an immature male Oldsquaw. Given the patchiness of the plumage, this bird is likely a first winter male beginning to acquire adult plumage. I have observed several Oldsquaw, both males and females, in Ohio on Lake Erie. While these birds had more definitive winter plumage overall, I am confident that the Louisa sighting was an Oldsquaw.

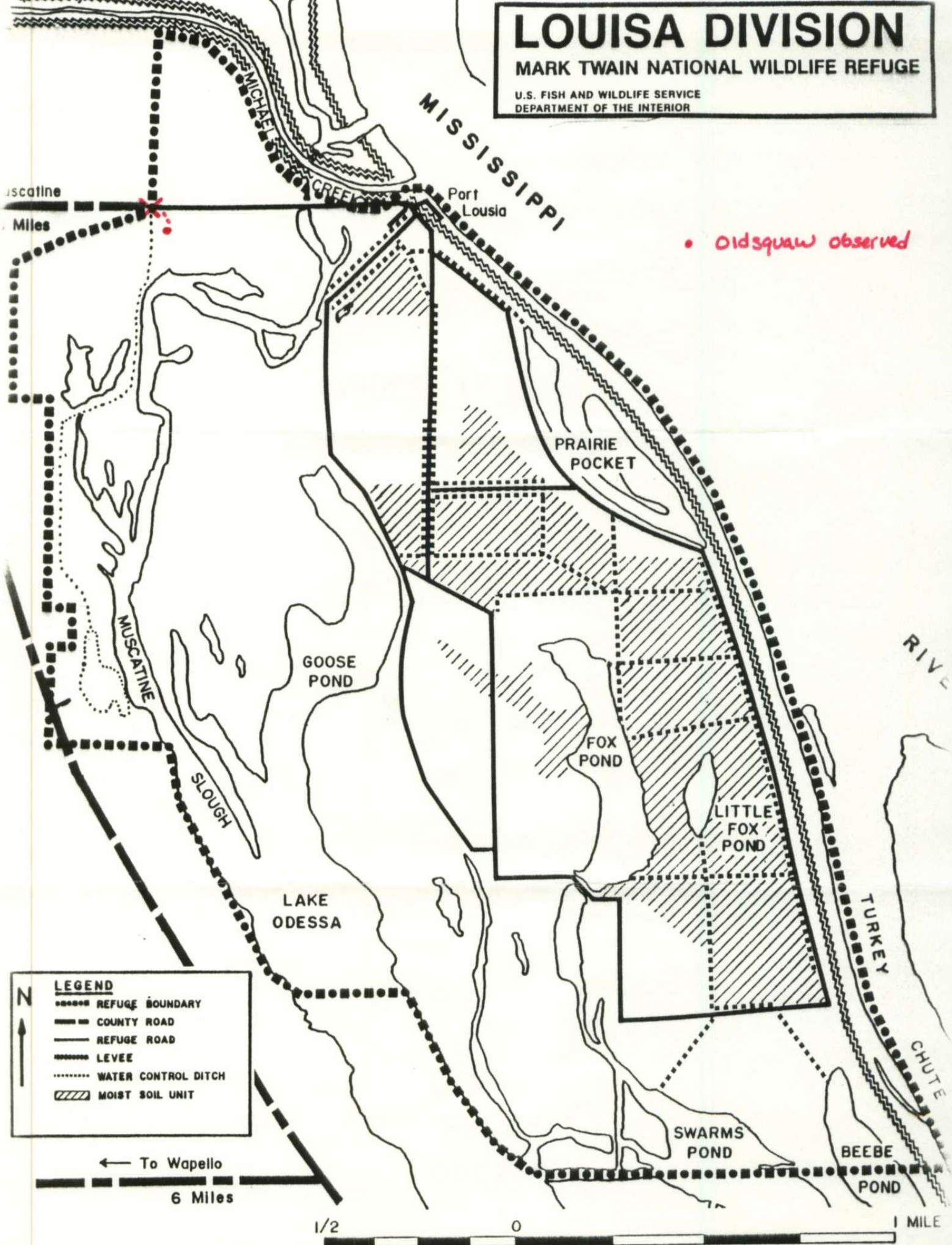
The Oldsquaw was observed through the spotting scope for 10 minutes, slowly swimming among the scaup but making no attempt to dive or fly. The bird disappeared from sight when I turned the vehicle around to leave the area. It was not located in this area on the morning or evening of April 27. Much of the Louisa Division is flooded several feet above normal due to rising river levels. Access to this Division is very limited and a complete waterfowl survey has not been conducted for several weeks. It is very possible the Oldsquaw has been present in the area for several days and may remain on the Division in deeper areas such as Fox and Goose Ponds, which are more attractive to diving ducks.



# LOUISA DIVISION

## MARK TWAIN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



• Oldsquaw observed

**LEGEND**

- REFUGE BOUNDARY
- COUNTY ROAD
- REFUGE ROAD
- LEVEE
- WATER CONTROL DITCH
- MOIST SOIL UNIT

← To Wapello  
6 Miles



SCALE 1:12000