

Very strange Ruddy Duck?

April 12, 1980

Willow Slough, Mills County, Iowa.

Description: Body dark ~~and~~ reddish, like a Ruddy, but there are some black feathers scattered on the back. Head + neck solid black, darkest on the crown. Bill blackish gray. Tail like a Ruddy Duck's. Under tail coverts gray. Belly gray brown + mottled, like ♀ Ruddy's. No pattern on secondaries + I think probably none anywhere on the wing. Size + shape of Ruddy, + there are Ruddy's on the lake.

Similar species: Resembles a Ruddy in size, shape, color of sides, + color of belly. However, it lacked any ~~that~~ light color on the cheeks. I don't know a duck that normally has this pattern.

Light etc.: 5:07pm when I stopped watching the bird. Bird in bright sun, ~~at~~ relatively close to me, seen with 20x telescope. Wind moderate from north, no problem. Bird southwest of me. Notes written without any book. Afternoon

Note: This swimming bird preened extensively, ~~and~~ turning about as it did so, so I got a good look at it from many angles.

If this is some other species, let me know!

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