

Red-breasted Merganser 12-20-98

Kelly J. McKay

We observed a young male swimming with a small group of Bufflehead immediately upstream of Lock and Dam 14 in Rock Island County. The bird was overall a grayish-brown with a very "shaggy" chest. It had a whitish throat and a reddish bill. The bill was thinner than that of the Common Merganser and the bird was slightly smaller than the latter species. The bird did have the beginnings of the broad reddish band of breast streaks, but it was fairly light. Other observers included Donna Blair, Mary Foulk, and Peggy Hudson. I used Leica Ultra 10x42 binoculars and a Kowa TSN-822 Spotting Scope. The bird was about 100-150 meters away.