

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? OLDSQUAW How many? 1Location? In Mississippi River, just offshore in downtown Ft. Madison, Lee Co.Type of habitat? Bird was swimming very close to shore in Mississippi RiverWhen? date(s): 17 November 1982 time: 12:30PM to 1 PMWho? your name and address: Carl J. Bendorf 825-7th Ave. Iowa City, IA. 52240others with you: none

others before or after you: _____

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

As I was parked along riverbank, I noticed a small group of Buffleheads (both sexes) floating past in the current. I immediately noticed one bird that had a different size (larger) and shape (longer and lower in water). The birds were all diving at regular intervals, and I noted the following details:

General duck shape. Somewhat larger than Buffleheads. Rode lower in water and held head less erect than Buffleheads.

Entire bird was a combination of brownish-greys and white. Top and back of head were greyish. Broad area on cheek was whitish with a large dark patch below and behind the eye. This white cheek area extended up and over the eye. Thus the dark eye was entirely surrounded by the white area. The head was smallish and rounded.

Back, wings and sides of bird were greyish-brown. The tail was a short but prominent "pin-tail".

When the birds flushed, I saw no white in the wings.

I concluded that this bird was a female Oldsquaw in typical winter plumage.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The female Ruddy Duck has a pointed tail and a light cheek patch, but the cheek patch in the Ruddy does not extend above the eye.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Light was not the best. Sun was bright and off to my right, gave some backlighting to bird. Bird was viewed with 20X scope as it floated to within 20 yards. Because of the close proximity to bird, overall viewing conditions were good.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen winter plumaged Oldsquaw on Lake Michigan.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Field notes made as I watched the bird.

How long before field notes made? ↗ this form completed? 2 weeks

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