DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Greater Scaup How many? 2

Location? Just on North edge of Marshalltown (Marshall Co.)

Type of habitat? flooded corn fields from Iowa River overflow

When? date(s): March 19, 1986 time: 7:45a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowa

others with you: none

others before or after you: none

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.

Hundreds of diving ducks were in the flooded field right next to Highway 14 allowing for good viewing. Early in the morning with the sun shining and behind me as it was today made for very good duck watching. Several groups of Scaup were close to the road (20-30 yards away) and occasionally they would fly away from me a bit into a strong wind. Once when this happened I saw one male Greater Scaup with some Lesser Scaups flying. The Greater Scaup male had a bold white wing stripe on its primaries as well as its secondaries. Later a semi came along blowing its horn and flushed a group of Scaup. One female Greater Scaup was present with Lesser Scaup and showed the bold white wing stripe on both its primaries and secondaries as it flew and landed (30-40 yards away). When it landed, I noticed it had a distinctive whitish ear patch as noted in Natl. Geog. field guide.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Lesser Scaup shows bold white stripe on secondaries only.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? —

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Sunshine with sun behind me, distances estimated, 8x30 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
Have studied and seen Greater Scaup in Churchill and a few in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description:
Natl. Geog. Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? 4½ hours this form completed? March 19, 1986

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240