

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Canvasback How many? 3 malesLocation? Mississippi River, Pool 19 near Montrose, Lee County, IowaType of habitat? RiverWhen? date(s): June 25, 26, July 15, 1984 time: Several times during day  
*3 different times*Who? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil, 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: Noothers before or after you: Not to my knowldege

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.

I don't know if this sighting is worthy of documentation, but I noted that summer sightings of Canvasbacks are rare in this area (Iowa Birds) and besides, I figured I could use the practice in documenting. I made the following notes as I watched the birds: Color: Uniform light gray/white sides, slightly darker on back between wings.

Head rusty red with red eye.

Tail gray/black, breast black, with clear demarkation between red of head and black of breast.

Bill uniform black.

Bill: Gradual, steady slope between tip of bill and crown of head

Behavior: Birds regularly dived. Upon surfacing, birds reared up in water and flapped wings a few times. They maintained their approximate position by swimming into the current, maybe 30 feet offshore. Two regularly remained together, the other a couple of hundred feet distant.

These notes were made the time of the sighting (first sighting). I presume the 3 birds I saw on the 26 and on July 15 were all the same birds.

These notes are a copy of a copy made the day of the sighting. I had typed them up as part of continuing report to Dr. Kent, but he then sent me some Documentation Forms and a copy of how to report observations. I learned that letter-style reports on 8½x14 paper with sightings in chronological order ~~was~~ was not the best way to send in records, hence the rewrite of this and the Grosbeak documentations.

Similar species and how eliminated: Redhead: These had much flatter forehead than a redhead. The bill on these birds was also a uniform black, not bi-colored. (I didn't realize this was a field mark until later when I was reviewing my notes and looking through a field guide.)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: N.A.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

First day: Brilliant clear skys. Distance, perhaps 100 ft. (estimate)

Optics \* 8x Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen large numbers (thousands) at this location during migration.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None while writing descriptive notes. Referred to Peterson, Iowa Birds, National Geographic Field Guide shortly after.

How long before field notes made? Made at the time this form completed? 3 weeks (see above)

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

*a tracing of a tracing made during sighting*