

BIRDS: DOCUMENTATION OF UNUSUAL RECORD

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (1)

Location: Willow Slough, Anderson Township, Mills Co., Iowa.

Date: June 4, 1978 Late evening

Description: Gray body, lighter below. Head dull brown, throat light --a very gradual change. No chance of it being a Common.

Habitat: open water on a lake, near shore.

Similar species: This was no Common Merganser ~~xxxx~~. This bird's throat color was light and so unsharp in its border that the color really started fading at the crown to get to the light of the throat.

Distance: 50 ft.? Not far. Closer than that part of the time. At closest, near the openable ~~me~~ part of the dike while I sat ~~at~~ at the boat-launching place you can drive up to.

Optical equipment: 20x telescope.

No other observers who could identify the bird. (a family fishing, but I forgot their names.) No books.

I have seen female Common Mergansers at Lake Michigan without their males, and labored long over them, ~~am~~ wondering, "Is the border of the throat sharp (as it seems) or just slightly fading?" This bird didn't ~~ix~~ look like them!!

The part under the heading "Description" was written while I was looking at the bird.

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~~June~~ 14, 1978
July

Light: the bird was NNE of me, near ^{the} dike I was sitting on. The sun was low in the west, and the duck was shadowed by the dike. If it was been far away, the identification ~~amx~~ would have been difficult or impossible. The sky was still bright.