

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/22/00

Hoary Redpoll

4 Feb 1996

north of Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA

*Jim Fuller

IBL 66:60; 67:82

Record Number: 96-06

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:60

Records Committee: IBL 67:82

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, (exilipes first basic)

A-D, Not enough field marks described to rule out Common Redpoll.

A-D, Description fits first winter exilipes. Face/bill and undertail are especially convincing.

A-D, This sight record describes the undertail coverts, rump, bill, and presumably the scapulars.

A-D, Excellent discussion of ID criteria.

96-06

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni exilipes*).

LOCATION: Ken Lowder backyard and feeder north of Iowa City (Johnson County).

DATE & TIME: 4 February, 1996 (8:15-11:30 AM).

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHER OBSERVERS: Ken Lowder, Jim Scheib, John Daniel.

BACKGROUND: Ken Lowder called early the morning of 4 February, saying he had a Redpoll he wanted me to look at. I arrived just before 8 AM, and the bird appeared about 15 minutes later on the ground under the niger feeder. It stayed at that location for thirty minutes. It was also observed for other long periods, as well as in the tree above the feeder. It was the only Redpoll, so unfortunately there was no direct comparison with Common Redpoll.

DESCRIPTION: The bird was a small finch, noticeably smaller than the Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos with which it was feeding. The head had red on the anterior half of the crown only, and that was the only red or pink anywhere on the bird. It was generally a gray-brown and whitish bird. The bird had a very small bill, especially the upper mandible, and there was a "pushed in" appearance to the upper face. The bill width at the base and the bill length seemed about the same dimension, and the culmen appeared straight. It was mostly yellow, with some dark edging. The neck seemed thick. The eye was dark. The chin had a squarish black patch, and the throat and upper breast were white, except where there was a buffy wash around the black patch. The sides of the face and the sides of the nape also showed a buffy wash. The posterior half of crown, nape and back showed grayish-brown feathering, with much lighter grayish edging. The edging was almost white on the middle and posterior portions of the mantle. There was a white wing bar. The sides of the white breast had grayish streaking, but it did not extend to the tail. The undertail coverts were white, except for two very short dark streaks (almost dots), which lines up on the longest covert. The upper tail and wings were a grayish-brown. The rump was only seen once when the bird spread its wings, and it was quite light with faint streaking. The legs were dark.

The bird never went to the niger feeder, rather fed on the ground beneath it. Much of the time it showed a head down-tail up posture.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Comparisons to Common Redpoll are made by utilizing the field characteristics described in an article by Czaplak in December, 1995 "Birding".

Undertail coverts: This bird showed two very short streaks (almost dots) on longest covert, whereas a Common typically has wide bold streaking. The brightest adult male Commons may have only one medium width streak, but this bird had no red or pink on breast, and so was not an adult male Common.

Rump: The rump was white with faint streaking. Most Commons have extensive streaking. Bright adult Commons can have no streaking, but the rump is pinkish-red.

Mantle: The ground color of the back of the Common is described as warm brown, or sometimes paler grayish-brown. This bird had grayish feather edgings, with whitish-gray in the middle of the mantle and toward the back.

Flank Streaking: Common typically has thick brown streaking. This bird had more wispy gray-brown streaking, which extended back to the base of the tail.

Breast and Rump Color: Common has pinkish-red to bright red breast. This bird was buffy under chin, and the rest of the breast was white.

Size & Structure: Common has a less bulky neck and greater slope to forehead. This bird had a steep forehead slope and what appeared to be a bulky "no-neck".

Bill shape: The bill was short on this bird. The width at the base of the bill appeared to be the same dimension as the length. Common typically has longer bill.

Head: This bird showed a buffy wash to the face, sides of the nape, and upper breast, which Common typically does not have.

OPTICS & VIEWING CONDITIONS: Viewing was through a window from within the house, most often at a distance of about 20 feet. It was a sunny day, with side lighting on the bird. Optics were Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen two Hoary Redpolls at a feeder in northern Wisconsin.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: Field notes were made at the time of viewing. Czaplak article in December, 1995 "Birding" was referenced as the bird was viewed. This form was typed on 7 February, 1996.