

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/20/00

Sabine's Gull

22 Oct 1995

Lock 13, Clinton Co., IA

*Peter C. Petersen

IBL 66:22, 96; Petersen 1966

Record Number: 95-57

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport 52803

[*3/24/96]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:22

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Petersen, P. C. 1966. Sabine's Gull at Clinton. IBL 66:139.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, This is a marginal description for this species because of the description of the secondary coverts being described as grey. Even with this miscolored area of the wing I believe the description is beyond reasonable doubt.

but its small size and white wing linings eliminated this possibility. The Eurasian Curlew, though the right size, has white wing linings and white rump, which eliminated it. The clinching field mark was the ascending killdeer-like "curlee" call that was heard repeatedly as this bird was in the air. The above features combined with the call confirmed my suspicion that this was a Long-billed Curlew.

Upon returning home, I made several phone calls to report my finding. Unfortunately by the time I arrived home it was dark and anyone interested in searching for the bird would have to wait until the next day. Though several people looked for the bird, it was not relocated. Long-billed Curlews once nested on the prairies of northwestern Iowa but disappeared in the late 1800s. This is only the fourth record of this species in Iowa since 1960, all from western Iowa.

407 Court, Ida Grove, IA 51445

CLARK'S GREBE AT PLEASANT CREEK

CHRIS EDWARDS

When I arrived at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area in Linn County on the morning of 12 November 1995, Alan Martin of Cedar Rapids was searching for a large grebe which he had observed minutes earlier. We quickly relocated the bird and, during the next hour, we identified it as an adult Clark's Grebe based primarily on bill coloration and facial pattern.



The bird had a very long, slender neck and in overall size was approximately the same length as a nearby male White-winged Scoter. The bright orange-yellow bill was long, thin, and straight. The forehead, crown, and hindneck were black, with the black of the crown extending down the side of the face to the top edge of the eye. The eyes were reddish

and surrounded by white except for the top edge. The lores were bright white with a thin dark line underneath between the bill and the eye (see Fig. 1). The back was dark gray with some white flecking, and the sides were light gray with much white mottling. The throat, breast, and belly were white. The uppersides of the wings were dark gray with white wing stripes.

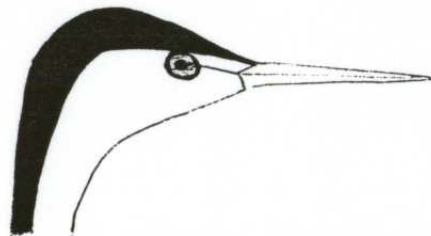


Fig. 1. Clark's Grebe, Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area, 12 November 1995. Drawing by Chris Edwards.

I observed the bird for several hours as it alternated periods of resting with active swimming and diving. It was seen by many other birders and was last reported on 14 November. There are five other Iowa records for Clark's Grebe since 1983, including three in May and one each in October and November (Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 65:86, 1995).

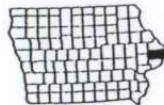
85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

95-57

SABINE'S GULL AT CLINTON

PETER C. PETERSEN

On 22 October 1995, Dennis Carter, Mary Lou, and I were birding at Lock and Dam 13 on the north edge of Clinton. The lock access is from Illinois, and the lock lies about 1 mile from the Iowa shoreline and about 1.5 miles from the Illinois shoreline. In mid-morning, we observed a small gull flying over the channel just upstream from the lock. It was much smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls which were common in the area. It displayed the classic "W" pattern with the six outer primaries and their coverts black, the remaining primaries and the secondaries white to the carpal joint, and most of the secondary coverts grayish-brown. The head was whitish with a brownish smudge behind the eye and on top of the head; the bill appeared entirely black. Its flight was very light for a gull. The closest observation was from about 80 m, and the bird was in flight for the entire observation. The sky was clear, and the sun behind us. After about two minutes, the bird flew behind a barge coming into the locks toward the Iowa shore and was not seen again. This is the first report of this species from Clinton County.

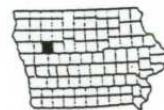


235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803

LITTLE GULL IN SAC COUNTY

PETER ERNZEN

On the morning of 21 April 1996 I was driving by the southeastern corner of Black Hawk Lake in Sac County when I noticed a small flock of Bonaparte's Gulls. As has been my habit for the last three years, I stopped to look them over for anything unusual. Almost immediately, a small, hooded gull caught my attention. The following observations were made over a 23-minute period from an estimated 30-100 feet.



The bird was small, an estimated 20 percent smaller than Bonaparte's Gull, with a light gray mantle, rounded wings, stocky appearance. The undersides of the wings were a dark gray/black in color with a white trailing edge to the wings. The contrast between the light gray top and dark underwing was prominent.

The head appeared to be smaller than that of a Bonaparte's Gull and possessed a hood with no eye ring. The bill was black, and the feet were dark red. The bird sometimes hovered over the water and moved its feet giving the appearance of running in place. Occasionally in this position the bird dipped its bill into the water.

The other five black-hooded gulls seen in Iowa were eliminated for a variety of reasons. Franklin's and Laughing gulls are larger and darker mantled with a prominent eye ring. Sabine's Gull has a bicolored bill, forked tail, and a different wing pattern. Bonaparte's Gull is slightly darker mantled and larger, with more angular looking wings and a white leading edge to the wings. The Black-headed Gull looks like a bigger version of the Bonaparte's Gull with a dark brown hood and red bill.

After I returned home, I made several phone calls and returned in the late afternoon to search for the bird again. Though I was unable to relocate the bird, Jim Fuller

Tom - if you need full doc address.
 Gull id notes - 10/22

Pet

✓ Sabine's Gull. 10/22 - Lock 13 flying over channel near barges - within 50m at closest - imm p plumage - much smaller than Ring-bills. wing showed clear W marking - leading edge triangle of primaries black, secondary coverts grey, rest of wing white, bill black, tail notched, black edge. Head with brownish grey smudge behind eye. 10X40 Zeiss binocs - Mary Lou Petersen saw well, Dennis Carter saw fairly well. 10:00 AM. For 2-3 min.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - 10/22 Lock 13 - perched on circular structure 1mi. from IA shore, 1.5mi. from IL shore with Herring & Ring-bills. it was intermediate in size. Back & mantle very dark grey, bill yellow, legs not visible as bird resting on belly. Head white with brown streaks, breast & belly white. White edge showing between primary tips (which were black) & mantle not wide. Bird of same description seen 10/28 from IL shore by Dan Dornau & Kelly McKey. Viewed thru HOWA scope at 40-60X, range about 500m. + Mary Lou Petersen & Dennis Carter about 10:00 AM, seen for 15 minutes.