

Hoary Redpoll

3 Feb 1996

near Norwalk, Warren Co., IA

*Johnson, *Sinclair, *Dinsmore, *Fuller

IBL 66:60; 67:82, Johnson 1997

Record Number: 96-04

Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Ann Johnson (3 Feb), 532 120th Ave., Norwalk

Jim Sinclair (3 Feb), 810 N. B St., Indianola

Stephen J. Dinsmore (4 Feb), 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames 50014

Jim Fuller (8 Feb), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

PHOTOGRAPHS

Ann Johnson, 3 Feb 1996, P-0496

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:60

Records Committee: IBL 67:82

Johnson, A. 1997. Hoary Redpoll in Warren County. IBL 67:133-134.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, The Hoaries that I have counted in Iowa appeared considerably lighter over all especially on the mantle, less streaked on the sides and plumper than these pictures show. However, when I arrived in Pocahontas in the late 70s and early 80s I checked 3 or 4 feeder reports of Redpolls that fit the description of Lowder bird and Ann's photo. These birds didn't stand out like the Hoaries above, but still could be picked out from the Common's because they were lighter, less streaked, and had no rosy color on their breasts. I feel these were probably exilipes race of Hoary Redpoll in first basic plumage. The more obvious Hoary redpolls are probably exilipes in adult winter plumage.

A-P, Photos show many of the diagnostic features -- undertail covert -- single streak, lighter color, wispy flank streaking, buffy on side of face and throat, profile of short bill and "pushed in" face.

A-P, Identifying marks are visible in the photos. Darkness of streaking indicates first-winter bird.

A-P, The under tail shows one fine streak. The white rump is seen in one photo. The other marks are well described in the documentations.

A-P, This bird looks very much like the Waterloo C. h. xilipes from several years ago. Small conical bill, clear undertail coverts, streakless upper tail coverts, lighter frostier overall coloration, sides very lightly streaked.

A-P, Immaculate under tail coverts and very small bill diagnostic.



Hoary Redpoll P-0496
Norwalk, Warren Co., IA
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< >017 21-06 JNDJNN-119U 5333



throat patch was bordered by a thin white line. There was no "V" of white in the malar area as depicted in many field guides. There was also a faint white line above and behind the eye, reminiscent of an auricular patch. I also noticed that the rectrices appeared heavily worn; the tips were frayed and at least one was broken off near the tip. In flight, it was noticeably smaller than a Double-crested Cormorant and flew with more rapid wingbeats. On the water, the bird was easily picked out among the Double-crested Cormorants by the smaller body and shorter neck. Based on the incomplete border to the throat patch and worn rectrices, I concluded the bird was an adult that had nearly completed the molt to alternate plumage.



Fig. 1. Neotropic Cormorant at Little River Rec. A., Decatur County, 4 May 1996. Photo by Stephen J. Dinsmore

This represents the first record of a Neotropic Cormorant in Iowa. The increased number of records in states surrounding Iowa indicated this species would eventually occur in Iowa. The spring of 1996 saw an influx of Neotropic Cormorants to the Upper Midwest in April and May with records from Nebraska (*Nebraska Bird Review* 64:44, 1996), Missouri (*Field Notes* 50:286, 1996), and Illinois (*Field Notes* 50:286, 1996).

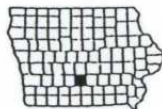
612 1/2 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, CO 80521

A RECORD LATE CAPE MAY WARBLER IN IOWA

JIM SINCLAIR

On 14 November 1997 as I sat at my desk in our kitchen area, a small warbler landed on one of our suet feeders, which hang in front of our kitchen windows. My immediate assumption was a somewhat late, but certainly not totally unexpected, Yellow-rumped Warbler. I approached the window and was able to observe the bird within three feet, for approximately two minutes, at which time the bird flew into some nearby evergreens. By this time I was not at all sure of what I had just seen. As I stood gazing out the window, mentally cataloging field marks, the bird returned for another brief feeding stint and then departed again.

This small warbler was basically gray-green above with faint streaking on the back and a dirty cream color with medium streaking on the breast and flanks. The head was the same gray-green with a white throat, a faint supercilium, and a small, slightly decurved bill. The pale hint of a neck collar was noticeable at close range. The median primary coverts were edged with white forming a narrow wing bar. The rump, the only dash of color on the whole bird, was a greenish-yellow which, because of the general dullness of the bird, probably appeared brighter than it really was. After the second opportunity to observe the bird, I was convinced that I was looking at a female Cape May Warbler, probably a first-year bird. A quick glance at the National Geographic Society field guide confirmed the identification.



96-04

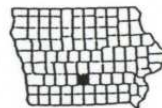
The Cape May Warbler is a long-distance migrant that winters in the West Indies. Most Cape May's have departed Iowa by the end of September with an occasional October straggler and two previous November records. This bird was present from 14 November through 18 December, the first winter record of the species in Iowa. Its frequency of occurrence at our suet feeders corresponded directly with the severity of the weather. When the weather was warm and sunny, the warbler visited us little or not at all. Twice during periods of benign weather I saw it foraging in evergreens in our neighborhood. When the weather was more inclement, the bird was a frequent visitor to the commercial suet cakes, sometimes feeding and then roosting on the top of the feeder. I last saw the warbler late in the afternoon of 17 December, and my son, Taylor, saw the bird briefly on the morning of the 18th. On the 18th a massive cold front, bringing with it record low temperatures, swept into Iowa and presumably terminated this Cape May Warbler's experiment in overwintering in Iowa.

810 North B Street, Indianola, IA 50125

HOARY REDPOLL IN WARREN COUNTY

ANN JOHNSON

The morning of 3 February 1996 was bright and sunny but bitterly cold. At approximately 7:30 a.m. I looked at my niger feeder 20 feet from the window and saw a Common Redpoll. It was soon joined by another redpoll which was much paler in comparison. The second bird was ultimately identified as a Hoary Redpoll.



I observed the bird, and two Common Redpolls, throughout the weekend and took numerous photographs. A number of other observers also saw the bird that day through 12 February.

This was a very pale bird in comparison to the browner Common Redpolls. The mantle background was light buff on the scapulars and white on the back with much gray-brown streaking extending up the neck to meet the red cap. The lower scapulars were whitish, as were the edges of the secondaries and tertiaries, contrasting with the brownish-gray cast to the mantle. The greater coverts had a fairly substantial white edge. The breast and belly were white with some flank streaking which extended perhaps two-thirds of the way to the tail. Although the streaking was not pencil thin, it was not as bold as on the Commons. The rump was white but the uppertail coverts were streaked.

The face was buffy with a very noticeable buffy-gray auricular patch. The bird had a small patch of black at the base of the lower mandible but the rest of the throat was buffy. The bill was bright yellow and small in comparison to the Commons and to goldfinches. At the base of the upper mandible was a small black spot, and the forehead was white up to the red cap on the crown. This cap was fairly small and extended back only to a point about even with the eye. A white superciliary separated the dark buffy cheek from the red cap. A black line ran through the eye.

Much of the time the bird fed on the back side of the feeder in a position where I could clearly see the underparts. The undertail coverts were immaculately white with the exception of a gray center towards the end of the two longest covert feathers. This position also helped verify the shortness of the flank streaking.

Often, all three birds were on the feeder concurrently which allowed for a number of comparisons. While the streaking on the back of this bird made it look somewhat

dark from above, the underlying color was lighter than the warmer, darker brown of the Commons. This feature combined with the white feather edgings to the secondaries, tertials, and scapulars gave the bird the paler appearance of a Hoary. The broad white edge to the greater coverts was much more distinct than on either of the Commons.

The buffy face and strong white superciliary are characteristics of Hoary Redpoll. The smaller red cap also lends itself to Hoary. The bill was tiny in comparison to the Commons, and the upper mandible was fairly straight.

The difference in flank streaking was very obvious. Besides the shorter lines of the Hoary, they were also not nearly as bold and heavy as those on the Commons. Although they were not thin, some white feathers seemed to create breaks on the streaking, giving the appearance of lighter lines.

The undertail coverts are perhaps the most striking difference between Hoary and Common redpolls. Commons usually have heavily streaked undertail coverts. Adult males with bright red breasts may show only one streak, but since this bird was not even pink on the breast, and had only one feather tip even dusky, the undertail coverts are the strongest argument for identification as a Hoary Redpoll. The extent of streaking and the darker color on the mantle are probably indicative of a first-winter bird of the expected subspecies *exilipes*.

532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211

I.O.U. BUSINESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shueyville, 20 September 1997, 12:35-1 :25

Mark Proescholdt, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

Present: Jim Dinsmore, Maridel Jackson, Mary Kuhlman, Curt Nelson, Mark Proescholdt, Jim Scheib, Carol Thompson.

Rare Bird Hosts: It was moved (Thompson, seconded by Scheib) to present certificates of appreciation and 1998 memberships to Lucy Rimler of Ames, Annie Leich of Glenwood, and Ruth Winebrinner of Spirit Lake. The board discussed whether this recognition process needs to be done faster. No changes in the procedure were made.

REAP Grant: Proescholdt announced that the REAP Grant has been approved. The I.O.U. has committed \$2,000 to this educational project and has agreed to be the sponsoring organization.

Life Membership Dues: Dinsmore distributed information about the cost of life memberships. The current rate for a life membership is low compared to the yearly rate for regular membership. He suggested that the payment for life memberships be tied to regular dues on a set ratio. The board will consider options at the spring board meeting.

Spring 1998 Meeting: Dinsmore reported on plans for the 75th anniversary meeting. It will be held on 15-17 May at the Maple-Willow-Larch residence hall complex at Iowa State University. Plans are being made for an outside speaker. Big Bluestem Audubon will be the local hosts. Commemorative t-shirts and hats are planned.

Fall 1998 Meeting: The fall 1998 meeting is tentatively scheduled for Des Moines. The board discussed whether two meetings should be held in central Iowa in 1998. The board felt it was not a problem.

Nominating Committee: Proescholdt announced the appointment of Pam Allen, Ann Barker, and Carol Thompson to the nominating committee. A secretary, treasurer, and two board members will be elected at the spring meeting.

Warbler Voice Cards: Jim Scheib announced that cards are available for \$.25 each. The board thanked Scheib for making these.

Next Board Meeting: Proescholdt announced that the spring board meeting is scheduled for March.

FALL BUSINESS MEETING

Shueyville, 20 September 1997, 4:15-5:25 p.m.

Mark Proescholdt, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

The president began the meeting with a short tribute to the memory of Pete Petersen, longtime I.O.U. member who died in July.

The treasurer's report for January to August 1997 was distributed. It showed an excess of expenses over revenues and support of \$14,142.49. Major expenses were purchase of copies of the *Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas* for school libraries and the educational booklet.

Committee Reports

Records: Tom Kent reported that the committee is up to date on records. They are anticipating changes in the checklist.

Membership: No report.

Publications: Harold White reported that there is one vacancy on this committee.

Library-Historical: Hank Zaletel reported that he continues to collect material. The committee is planning to use some of the historical materials for a 75th anniversary display.

Nominations: Proescholdt announced the appointment of Pam Allen, Ann Barker, and Carol Thompson to this committee. Elections will be held at the spring meeting for secretary, treasurer, and two board members.

Feeder Survey: Rick Hollis reported that he has met with two Iowa State University students who will be analyzing the data collected the last few years. The report will be given at the fall 1998 meeting and a paper will be published. Plans have been made for the feeder survey to continue this winter.

Partners in Flight: Carol Thompson reported that the group needs an educational chairman.

Birdline: No report.

I.O.U. Web Page: Ann Johnson reported that the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union has linked their web page to ours. The Records Committee will be adding information to the web page.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Carol Thompson reported that the atlas data will be added to the web page in the future.

REAP Grant: Hank Zaletel reported that the REAP grant was awarded for developing a middle school curriculum called, "One Bird, Two Worlds." I.O.U. has committed \$2,000 to this project and is the sponsoring organization. Zaletel also announced that the new printing of the elementary educational booklet is available for \$7.00.

Field Reports: Proescholdt encouraged members to make reports.

Upcoming Meetings: The 1998 spring meeting will be 15-17 May at Iowa State University in Ames. The 1998 fall meeting will be in the Des Moines area. Des Moines Audubon is the local host. Proescholdt asked for proposals for future meetings.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

It was moved (White, seconded by Hollis) that the board establish a policy for granting I.O.U. money for outside projects. Motion carried.

Rare Bird Host Awards: Proescholdt announced that the board awarded certificates of appreciation and 1998 memberships to Lucy Rimler of Ames, Annie Leich of Glenwood, and Ruth Winebrinner of Spirit Lake.

Proescholdt announced that the cost of I.O.U. life memberships will probably be raised next year. They can currently be purchased for \$300.

Announcements

Proescholdt thanked the Iowa City Bird Club for their work as local hosts for the meeting.

Proescholdt announced that he has received information about plans for an Upper Mississippi birding trail system consisting of eight loop trails between Minneapolis and the Quad Cities. Fred Leshner of LaCrosse, Wisconsin is one of the coordinators of this project.

Bob Cecil announced that he is planning a trip to Mexico on 14-22 February 1998. I.O.U. members are invited. This is not an official field trip.

Opponents of the Mourning Dove hunting season were asked to speak to Jim Sinclair.

96-04

Species: Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni*)

Date: February 3, 1996

Time: 7:30 AM and periodically throughout the day

Location: Feeding station at 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Warren County, IA

Observer: Ann Johnson

Other observers: Jim Sinclair and Rick Trieff in the late morning

The bird was also seen through 12 February by many observers.

Weather: Clear and sunny; bitterly cold

I looked out the window to check feeders at approximately 7:30 AM and saw a Common Redpoll on the niger feeder. It was soon joined by another redpoll which was much paler in comparison to the first. The overall effect was that the bird was extremely washed out. The niger feeder is 20 feet from my utility room window. The bird returned to this feeder throughout the day while at other times it could be seen in the snow below the branches of a willow roughly 60 feet from the house. I set the camera on a tripod and was able to get numerous photos of this bird and two distinctly different Common Redpolls. At times the three birds were at the feeder together allowing for great comparisons.

Description (from notes taken throughout the first two days):

This was a very pale bird in comparison to the browner Common Redpolls also present. I was able to pick out the bird at 75 feet with the naked eye because of its whitish appearance. The mantle background was light buff on the scapulars and white on the back with much gray-brown streaking extending up the neck to meet the red cap. The lower scapulars were whitish, as were the edges of the secondaries and tertiaries, contrasting with the brownish-gray cast to the mantle. The greater coverts had a fairly substantial white edge. The breast and belly were white with some brownish flank streaking which extended perhaps two-thirds of the way to the tail. This flank streaking consisted of reasonably thick lines interrupted by some white feathers which created slight breaks in the pattern, thus giving the flanks a lighter look. The contrast of the bird's flank pattern with the adjacent Commons was striking since the lines on the Commons were much bolder and there were more streaks. The rump was white but the uppertail coverts were streaked.

The face was buffy with a very noticeable buffy-gray auricular patch. The bird had a small patch of black on its chin at the base of the lower mandible but the rest of the throat was buffy. The bill was bright yellow and short in comparison to the Commons and to goldfinches. The stubbiness of the bill, which was nearly an equilateral triangle, produced the "smashed face" look that is a key feature of Hoary Redpoll.

Above the base of the upper mandible was a small black spot and the forehead was white up to the red cap on the crown. This cap was fairly small and extended back only to a point about even with the eye. A white superciliary separated the dark buffy cheek from the red cap. A black line ran through the eye.

Much of the time the bird fed on the back side of the feeder in a position where I could clearly see the underparts. The undertail coverts were immaculately white with the exception of a gray spot near the end of each of the two longest covert feathers. At times only one small internal mark was visible, presumably because of the feather arrangement of the coverts. This feeding position also helped verify the shortness of the flank streaking.

The tail was dark brown and notched. The outer tail feathers appeared white when the bird was perched but this feature was not noted in flight. Eyes and legs were all dark. One time while it was feeding, the feathering on the tarsi looked as if it came down toward the foot further than on the Common. This mark was confirmed on 9 February when both species stood on the ground beside each other.

The bird was very aggressive towards the other finches at the feeder. It regularly visited the niger feeder until mid-afternoon.

Similar species: The only species this bird could be confused with is Common Redpoll. Two individuals, one an adult male and the other a probable adult female, were present on the same day. Oftentimes all three birds were on the feeder concurrently which allowed for a number of comparisons.

Characteristics which differentiated this bird from the Common Redpolls and identified it as a Hoary Redpoll:

- Underlying color was lighter than the warmer, darker brown of the Commons
- More extensive white feather edgings to the secondaries, tertials, and scapulars than shown on Commons
- Broad white edge to the greater coverts
- Buffy face and strong white superciliary
- Smaller red cap
- Broken and shorter flank streaking
- Short, triangular bill with resulting pushed in face
- Nearly white undertail coverts (Although brightly colored adult male Common Redpolls may have diminished markings on their undertail coverts, this bird had no red except for the cap.)

References:

Standard field guides

Pyle, Howell, Yunick, and DeSante. 1987. Identification Guide to North American Passerines.

Czaplak, Dave. "Identifying Common and Hoary Redpolls in Winter", *Birding* 27: 446 - 457.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

96-04

What species? Redpoll Sp. possible Hoary How many? 1

Location? Johnson residence, 532 120 Ave, Norwalk, Ia.

Type of Habitat? Feeders

When? date(s): 2/3/96 time: 9:50 to 10:50

Who? your name and address: Jim Sinclair, 810 N. B St., Indianola

Others with you: Rick Triefe

Others before or after you: _____

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Obvious redpoll, not noticeably different in size from the common Redpolls present. Bill looked marginally smaller in comparison. Forecrown was very small. Mantle was streaked with ground color a pale brown, however, I did not perceive a "hoary" effect although the bird was considerably lighter than the other two redpolls. Flank streaking was minimal and the rump was a clean white. Breast had absolutely no red or pink. Undertail coverts were clean with the exception of one long, faint, gray streak. Cheek and face had a distinct butty wash.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? ?

If yes, explain: Lots of discussion,

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

Good light as close as 30 ft. with 10x42 glasses

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen one "good" Hoary Redpoll and one 90% or

References and persons consulted before writing description:

look at N.G.S field guide and 12/95 Birding

How long before field notes made? late this form completed? 2 hr

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Hoary Redpoll
 Number: 1 first-basic
 Location: Ann Johnson's feeder n. of Indianola, Warren Co.
 Habitat: suburban feeder
 Date: 4 February 1996
 Time: 9:12-9:14 a.m., 10:15-10:23 a.m., and 10:45-10:49 a.m.
 Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50014
 Others who saw bird: Ann Johnson, Jim Sinclair, m.ob.

Description of bird(s): When I arrived at the feeder, there were three redpolls present. They were all the same size, but one bird was noticeably paler, though not as pale as some Hoaries. Compared to a nearby Common, this bird's bill was slightly smaller and shorter with a straighter culmen. To me, the bill did not appear as "pushed in" as in some of the photos of Hoaries I have seen. The red crown patch was of similar length, but much narrower than that of a Common. The rest of the head was mostly pale with darker brown streaking on the nape and a prominent buffy auricular area. The mantle was also pale with darker brown streaks. The chin was black. The remainder of the underparts were white with some thin brown streaks along the flanks. The undertail coverts were very pale. At least a couple of these feathers had a gray smudge near the tip, but there clearly was no prominent streaking. The rump was difficult to observe, but in the few brief glimpses I had it appeared white and unstreaked. The pink color was absent on the rump and breast. The wings were dark with a large white bar across the secondary coverts. The bird was probably in first-basic plumage because of the darker mantle color, more prominent streaking on the flanks, and lack of clear white edges to the tertials. I conclude this bird was probably of the nominate race exilipes because of the small size, darker coloration to the body, and the presence of some darker color on the undertail coverts.

Similar species and how eliminated: The only similar species is Common Redpoll. The combination of overall paleness, pale rump, mostly unstreaked undertail coverts, smaller crown patch, and bill size and shape were used to eliminate Common Redpoll.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with mostly sunny skies. Estimated viewing distance was as close as 30 feet. I used 10x42 binoculars.

Previous experience with species: I have only seen one other Hoary Redpoll-in Massachusetts. Very familiar with Common Redpolls.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the birds of North America
 Czaplak, D. 1995. Identifying Common and Hoary Redpolls
 in winter. Birding 27: 47-57.

How long before field notes made: written during observation

How long before this form completed: 10 hours

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Hoary Redpoll (*Carduelis hornemanni exilipes*)

LOCATION: Yard and feeder of Ann Johnson (rural Warren County)

DATE & TIME: 8 February, 1996 (8:05-8:15 AM)

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

OTHERS; Jane Fuller. Before and after MOB

DESCRIPTION: This bird will be compared to the Haory Redpoll reported from Ken Lowder's yard. This was a very light (white) colored Redpoll, much more so than the Common Redpoll at the feeder or the Lowder bird. The significant features were:

Undertail Coverts: The undertail coverts were entirely white except for one short dark streak on the longest covert.

Mantle: The mantle ground color was lighter than either the Common or the Lowder bird.

Rump: The rump was not seen.

Flank Streaking: There was less streaking on the flanks than either the Common or the Lowder bird.

Head and Breast: This bird had even more obvious buffy wash on the sides of the face and on the throat just below the black chin area, than did the Lowder bird, and I could not see a buffy wash at all on the Common Redpoll. The breast was clear white, with no pink or red.

Bill: The bill appeared very short, with an attendant "pushed-in" forehead, like the Lowder bird, and the neck was bulky like the Lowder bird. Both these features seemed more pronounced than on the Common Redpoll.

OPTICS & VIEWING: It was a sunny early morning. I was using Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars to look at the feeder about 20 feet away. I was viewing north, with the sun in the southeast. Most of the time the bird faced me, so viewing of the undertail coverts was excellent.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen two Hoary Redpolls at a feeder in northern Wisconsin, and the bird at the Lowders.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: I had previously studied National Geographic Guide and the Czaplak article in "Birding", December 1995. Notes were taken at the time of viewing, and this form was typed on 20 February.