

6-1988

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Red-necked Grebe Scientific Name: Podiceps grisegena
 Date: April 13, 1988 Time: 8:30 am Length of time observed: 5 minutes
 Number: 1 Age: Adult Sex: ?
 Location: Cataract Canyon, Canyonlands National Park. Bird was swimming in ponded side-channel adjacent to Rapid number 3.
 Latilong: 18 Elevation (if known): 3860'
 Distance to bird: 150 feet Light conditions: Bright shade as bird was within shade of canyon wall.
 Optical equipment: Minolta 7X20 binoculars
 Weather: Clear

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The bird was a medium to large sized grebe with moderately long neck and large bill. The bird's shape was more similar to a western grebe than the eared-horned grebe group. The bill was broad at the base and was about as long as the head was wide. The head ^{was} somewhat flattened in shape.

The bill color was yellow at the base and graded to near black near the tip. The head of the bird had a dark cap down to about the level of the eye. Below this area the head was white to light grayish, with the whitest area being in the ear patch area. The chin area was a very light gray, almost white. The neck of the bird was a buffy to rusty brown color. The back of the bird was dark, almost black with the sides near the waterline being a little lighter. The back of the head and neck was dark.

In total the plumage looked close to breeding plumage but lacked the crisp color demarcations in a full breeding plumage bird. It was likely still in transition to full breeding plumage.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: None

Behavior: The bird was actively feeding in the pond, diving frequently in pursuit of fish. The pond had been seined on previous fishery trips and contains a wealth of small fish - mostly Red-shiners.

Habitat:

The bird was in a ponded side channel adjacent to the main river. The pond had no direct flow through it and is 150 to 200 meters in length and 30-50 meters wide. The depth is at least 5 feet and likely deeper.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

- ① Horned Grebe - The overall shape was not of this bird. The bill was much larger and longer relative to the head. Also the white to light grayish face and throat patch would not be found on a nearly breeding plumaged horned grebe. The bill color was not correct for a horned grebe.
- ② Western or Clark's Grebe - Although the shape, particularly head profile was very similar to this species, the color pattern, especially the rusty neck, was not of that of a western or Clark's grebe.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have seen this bird both in Michigan and off the coast of Oregon.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

'Birds of North America' ^(Rebhorn) was consulted at the time of observation. 'Seabirds' (Harrison) and 'Birds of North America' (Nat. Geo. Soc.) were consulted 5 days later in an attempt to better define the plumage stage. The description was written from notes taken at the time of observation.

Significance of record in this area or the state: Previous sightings, but no documentation (Utah Birds)

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

None

Description from notes taken at time of sighting X notes made later ___ from memory X

Observer: Ronald J. Ryel

Signature: Ronald J. Ryel

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753-6077 (home)
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Other observers who independently identified this bird:

None, but seen by two other birders: Scott Cheney, Sharon Tully

Date prepared: April 18, 1988

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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