

## UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Species: Arctic Loon

Date: 11/15/85

Number: 2

Age: Unknown

Sex: Undetermined

Locality (exact address or other specific information to describe location, such as x miles north of x intersection):

Rush Lake; north and northwest ends.

County: Tooele

City: Stockton

Elevation: 5,000'

Time: 10:00 - 10:30 am

Length of time observed: 2 different sightings. Saw 1 bird w/ common loon for 5 minutes and 1/2 hour later observed 2 arctic w/ 1 common for an additional 5 minutes.

Habitat: Lake

Distance to bird:

50 - 100 yards

Light conditions:

Overcast, but good light.

Optical equipment:

Binoculars and 15-60x spotting scope both Bushnell.

Observer: Joelle Buffa

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Clyde Morris, Ella Sorenson, Ray Smith, Jeanne LeBer (all on subsequent days)

**DESCRIPTION.** Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern color, and any unique features.

The bird was obviously a loon in winter plumage; Generally grayish plumage above and some white below

I first observed a common loon, and then what I assumed to be another common loon next to it. Closer inspection w/ a 15-60x spotting scope, revealed that I was a common loon, but the other was a different loon species. I identified it as an arctic loon because of the following characteristics:

The arctic loon was generally a "slimmer", more "delicate-looking" bird in appearance. It was smaller in both body size and bill size. (thinner) than the common. The head & nape were lighter gray, contrasting with a darker gray back. (while the common loon had a dark head - darker than the back).

The arctic loon had a sloped forehead, while the forehead of the common loon was peaked. The arctic loon had a distinct demarcation between the white throat and the darker nape, caused by a thin dark line between the gray nape and white throat.

Voice and/or call notes: None observed

Behavior: Bird was swimming and feeding in the Lake. It made frequent dives.

Describe what specific feature(s) you saw and/or heard that caused you to come to your conclusions:

The arctic loons were swimming next to a common loon, making it very easy to distinguish the difference in body shape, head shape and bill thickness.

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

Common loon. Coloring similar in winter plumage, but eliminated because it was next to a common loon.

What experience have you had with this and similar species?

Have seen common loons quite frequently and have observed arctic loons several times during previous year in Alaska.

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

National Geographic Field Guide. Consulted for identifying field marks on site while observing bird.

Significance of record in the area and/or the state:

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

Small fish have recently been stocked in Rush Lake

Signature: Jelle Buffa

Address: 658 E. 1700 South, #B  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84105

Date prepared:

1/10/86 - Bud I copied from notes taken at time of observation.