

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Bird name (common & scientific): European wigeon (Anas penelope)

Date & time of sighting: 6 March 1993, 1 PM
 Length of time observed: On & off for several minutes (until sated)

Number of birds observed: 1
 Age & Sex: adult male

Latitude/longitude: (Fish Springs NWR--Mallard Unit)
 Elevation: ~4200 - 4300 (valley bottom)

Distance to bird: Approx. 1/8 mile
 Light conditions: Excellent, sun behind and above us (we were looking northward).
 Optical equipment: 10 x 40 Bausch & Lomb Custom binoculars, several different Kowa scopes, 40x and 30x power

Weather: partly cloudy, mostly sunny

Description of bird:
 --brick-red head, with distinctly bright yellow-cream crown and forehead
 --pinkish breast, gray sides & back with white (wing feather) stripe in crescent along side
 --black under tail outlined white
 --size & shape of American wigeon, which were around in abundance for comparisons
 --pale bill shaped like wigeon's (this last is from memory, but clearly so)

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: none

Behavior: swimming about on open water in huge flock of mixed waterfowl

Habitat: open water near a dike road in a refuge marsh ("Mallard Unit").

Similar species and how these were eliminated:
 --American wigeons: reddish head with yellow crown, no eyestripe, gray sides
 --Green-winged teal: much larger (many species for comparison), black rather than straw under tail, white "racing stripe" on flanks, no eyestripe
 --Gadwall: head colors, extent of white on flanks much greater, white around black rear end, pinkish breast
 --Blue-winged teal: very different shape & size, pink did not extend to side, colors of head, white stripe on flanks
 --Merganser: completely different bill & body shape, black under tail, white flank stripe longer

Previous experience with this and similar species: I've never seen this species, but I've often seen all the other possibilities.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how these influenced this description:

After identification, we consulted the Peterson and Nat. Geographic field guides. The books only confirmed the obvious.

Significance of record in this area or the state: very rare in Utah

Additional material (drawing, photograph, tape, DNA sample, corpse, etc.):

Dave Thompson took several photographs, though I do not know the status of these.

Description from: 1. Notes taken at time of sighting (including sketch)
2. Notes made later (if so, when)
3. From memory

Date this form was prepared: 19 March 1993

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Signature:



Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Dave Thompson, Laura Lockhart,
several other people