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DIPLOMATES
AMERICAN BOARD OF INTERNAL MEDICINE
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

January 4, 1995

Ms. Donna Dittman and
Mr. Steve Cardiff
Louisiana State University
Museum of Natural Science
Foster Hall 119
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Dear Steve and Donna:

The following is a description of the bird I observed on June 11, 1994. The bird was clearly a duck, eider type, female. I took seven slides using Kodachrome 64 with a Tokina f5 400 millimeter lens, hand-held. Light was good, but harsh. The bird was seen twice in the morning and once in the afternoon, roughly in the same area, and behaved similarly. It was seen on the outer beach and when approached, swam out into the surf after being flushed from basking on the outer beach in the sunshine. The bird gave the appearance of good health, and from a distance of about 30 meters, the plumage overall was a rich brown rufus and somewhat reflective. The bill was dark grey and the gape was difficult to see, but appeared to curve upward and the pale mark at the gape was clearly visible and was also demonstrated in the slides. Slide No. 5 appears to show the upcurving gape.

A pale line beginning above the eye and extending inferoposteriorly down the face was quite obvious and clearly so in all slides showing this aspect of the face.

Of further interest was that the primaries were really pinfeathers and incapable of supporting flight and compatible with molt. Of some concern is the bill and facial feathering, appearing to project nearer the nostril, more like that of a common eider, but not clearly so. All the bill shape seems slightly more common eider-like, but I believe that the prominent upsloping gape clearly seen both observed through binoculars and shown on the slides appears to support the diagnosis of female king eiter.

You may keep the enclosed slides for further study. I have no use for them at this time, but I assume that I could copies at some time if need be, but at the moment do not require them.

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It has been my pleasure to know you both, and I hope that our paths will cross again. As you know, I am moving to Palm Springs, California, in the middle of January and will be living there and starting a new practice situation after the first of February.

My home address will be 339 Vereda Norte, Palm Springs, California 92262, phone 619-323-7232.

The office phone will be 619-346-0642.

I plan to look up Gene when I get out to Palm Springs and hope that he and I can bird together. If you happen to talk to him, please mention this.

Note also that I know of your affinity for the salt and sea area and if you plan to bird out that way, please let me know so that we can hook up. Also of interest, I will have a small guest house that will certainly be available to you should you wish to stay with me. You have a standing and open invitation, naturally.

I have always wanted to make a fall trip to Curlew Island, and perhaps next year this will be possible. I just couldn't put it together this year and if I do, I would love for you two to accompany me.

In the meantime, I hope you had wonderful holidays, will have a successful 1995, good birding, and good luck to you both.

Sincerely yours,



Lawrence P. O'Meallie, M.D.

LPO:cmw
dd: 01/04/95
dt: 01/05/95

Enclosures