

## Louisiana Ornithological Society's

## LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## Report Form

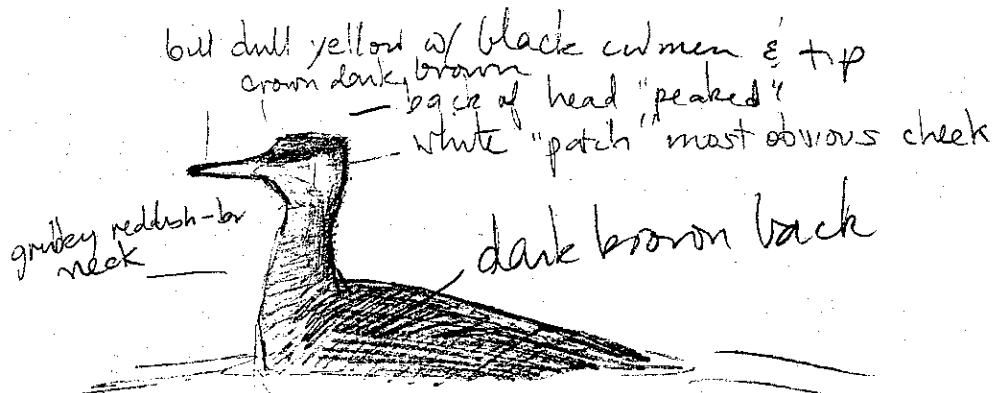
This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of fieldnotes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: Red-necked Grebe  
(Podiceps grisegena)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2 ad.in breeding or alternate plumage): one in mostly basic plumage.
3. Locality: LOUISIANA: St. Tammany Par.  
(parish)  
North shore of Lake Pontchartrain, east of causeway (in front of "RIP'S" restaurant)  
(specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 11 March 1995
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 9:00-9:15
6. Reporting observer and address: Steven W. Cardiff & Donna L. Dittmann  
Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall  
Louisiana State University  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):  
Michael Seymour, Elizabeth Brown, Margie Griffith + 15 other members of our LSU birding class.
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): apparently not refound, although at least one "chaser" (e. g., John Sevenair) was on the scene within 1 hr of the initial sighting.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): weather was clear and sunny with light east winds. We were scanning the lake to the south, bird was first sighted coming more or less towards us from the SSE. After its closest approach, the bird then moved off generally west until we lost it. Thus, lighting was not great at first, but improved as the bird got closer and then moved west. Light chop on lake, but bird always visible when on surface.

10. **Optical equipment (type, power, condition):** Leica Ultra 10 X 42 binoculars, +/- new; KOWA TSN-4 Telescope with 25-60X Zoom lens, +/- new.
11. **Distance to bird(s):** Initially, the bird was probably about 400-500 m out; closest approach was an estimated 300-350 m. The bird was always beyond the assorted posts sticking out of the water off our position. The bird then slowly but steadily moved off to the west. We did not attempt to chase the bird west along the coast.
12. **Duration of observation:** about 15 minutes.
13. **Habitat:** open lake.
14. **Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):** Bird initially spotted by SWC while we were attempting to locate Horned Grebes, Common Loons, etc. for our class. Bird was always moving generally east-west, occasionally making brief dives; it probably covered close to a kilometer east-west during the observation. SWC used a class members cellular phone to call Dave Muth within minutes of the initial sighting.
15. **Description (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen; include if possibly: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):** A relatively large grebe, intermediate in size between "Western" and Horned grebes. There were no other birds near the Red-necked for direct size comparison, but the bird was nearly twice the size of Buffleheads and a Pied-billed Grebe in the area; it was decidedly smaller than several Common Loons in the vicinity. The bird had a relatively large, dull yellow bill with a black culmen and tip. The dagger-shaped bill was about the same length as the head, not as long, thin, and pointed as in "Western" Grebe, but decidedly longer and thicker than Horned/Eared grebes. The head was relatively large, with a flatly sloping forehead and a distinct peak to the back of the crown, giving the head a rather triangular shape. The neck was proportionately shorter and thicker than that of "Western" Grebe, slightly longer and decidedly thicker than Horned/Eared. The body bulk and length was relatively large in proportion to the head/neck. The bird rode relatively low in the water and gave the impression of being taller in the body at the front and sloping towards the tail area. Most distinctive plumage-wise was the bird's dark brown cap contrasting with a white triangular cheek patch. The dark cap came down on the face to about the lores and eye-level and angled up to the peak of the crown/nape. The rest of the back of the head, neck, and mantle were dark brown. The white cheek/auricular patch blended into a dirty grayish-white chin and throat. The front of the neck and upper breast was a grubby light reddish-brown that blended around the side of the neck into the darker brown back. Details of the rest of the underparts, eye color, leg and foot color and shape, and wing shape could not be determined.

16. **Voice:** not heard
17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation): see above, also. Western/Clark's grebe is larger, longer-necked, longer and thinner-billed, gleaming white below, black-capped, grayer upperparts. Horned/Eared grebe is smaller-bodied, smaller-headed, thinner and shorter-billed, grayer-mantled, shorter-bodied, and do not have yellow bill. In our experience, Horned Grebes can be briefly confused with Red-necked at long distance and in poor light, but not by experienced observers given relatively leisurely looks.
18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): None. Should have attempted to take some but bird was pretty far away for our set-up and we were trying to show the bird to our class, calling to alert local birders, etc.
19. **Previous experience with this species:** We have each seen small numbers in winter in CA, DLD more than SWC because they are more regular in northern CA. We found one of the few ever found inland in CA, at Lake Perris, Riverside Co., in Dec. 1983. SWC also saw small numbers in Alaska during Spring 1974. Neither of us had seen a Red-necked in about 10 years, although we do see Horned, Eared, and "Western" on a fairly regular basis in LA and/or during occasional visits to CA.
20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):  
a. at time of observation: NGS Guide.  
b. after observation: None.
21. **This description is written from:** X notes made during the observation; \_\_\_\_\_ notes made after the observation (date: \_\_\_\_\_); X memory.
22. **Are you positive of your identification if not, explain:** YES
23. **Signature of reporter:** Steven W. Cardiff 2 July 1995  
Donna L. Dittman (date)

11 March



large grebe - between WEGRE & HEGRE size prop.  
watched 20 min off & on showing odd class

RNGR, Manderville  
Lake Pontchar - RLPs