

**LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

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Species: Long-tailed Duck, *Clangula hyemalis*

Location: Crowley Wastewater Treatment Plant, Acadia Parish, Louisiana

Date: 3 November 2017

Age and sex: Adult female, I think

Molt status: None apparent

Number of individuals: One

Other observers: Andre Moncrieff, Mac Myers, Carol Ortenzio, Christopher Rustay, Don Glasco, Ellen Miller, Linda Helm, Michael Weaver, Sara Bettencourt, Steve Drilling, Vicki Derr, Joe Faulkner, Paul Baisich, and a few others

Original observer: Paul Baicich, I think

Circumstances: Mac, Paul, Andre, and I were leading a field trip to the Crowley Ponds for the YRARF festival when (I think) Paul found this bird. People were surprisingly quiet when they first called it out, and I didn't even realize that it had been found and identified until a minute or two after it had been found, so I'm not sure who the original observer was. It was a particularly foggy morning, and the bird was on one of the larger ponds, drifting in and out of the fog. It stuck around all morning, however, and we all got great looks at it after the fog lifted. It took off with a few scaup and flew around the ponds at one point, but re-settled after a minute or two. Dense fog early on, lifted by the time we left, to a mostly sunny sky. Calm, humid. Lower to upper 70s. I managed some photos with my phone through my scope, and a few flight shots with a telephoto lens when the bird was in flight. The eBird checklist is here:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40282473>

I spoke to some other birders the following day who suspected that they had seen the Long-tailed Duck on 2 November 2017, but had thought that it was a female Bufflehead. I don't know if there are any photos of the bird from that date.

Description: A small compact duck, slightly smaller than nearby Lesser Scaup. Mostly dark brown, with bright white flanks, fading gradually to a dark chest. There was a thin (barely noticeable) white neck collar. Most of the side of the face was occupied by a large teardrop-shaped white mask, starting at the base of the bill, encompassing the eye, and extending to a point at the rear of the auriculars. The bill was short and dark. The wings were entirely dark above and below.

Discussion: Clearly a Long-tailed Duck based on the white lower flanks, teardrop shaped white mask, and otherwise dark plumage. I'm not sure about the age and sex of the bird, but I suspect that it is an adult female in basic plumage, though it could be a young male that has not yet developed any pink in the bill. Checking the second volume of the Pyle guide has only made me more confused on the matter, so I will leave it to others to figure that out.





