













UNUSUAL SIGHTING DOCUMENTATION

Person Submitting: August & Judy Mirabella
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145-02-2002

Species: King Eider (female)

Observers: Found by: Larry Lewis on 10/31/02

Seen by: A. Mirabella, Judy Mirabella

Date Seen: 11/3/02

Where Observed: Hershey's Mill, East Goshen Twp., Chester Co.

Time/Conditions: 10:00am to 1:30pm. Variably Cloudy with periods of bright sun to 100% cloud cover. The bird was viewed with 7x42 Zeiss Binoculars and Leica APO77 Zoom Scope as close as 15 feet. Primary species present were Bufflehead, Ruddy Ducks, & L. Scaup.

Behavior & Habitat: Bird was in a man made impoundment of two acres (guess) surrounded by weeds and thickets on the impoundment sides and a paved path around the top of the dike. The bird was mostly swimming and diving along the impoundment edge, making complete trips around the whole pond more than once. It also stopped to preen for quite awhile.

Description: The main initial observation was the smaller, rounder head with shorter bill compared to Common Eider, which has the very long headed, long billed look. The overall reddish brown appearance except for the head, neck, and wings was striking and surprising, as the field guides do not show it this colorful. Possibly the field guides are intended to represent a more typical view at a greater distance which would blur the red with the black, buff, and white portions of the feathers. The head and neck were buff colored with fine streaking over the cap and hind neck making those areas appear darker. The cheek was paler buff and there was a whitish eye ring that merged into the more buffy face rather than being sharply defined. The ring width was wider at the top than at the bottom. Prominent was the down curving pale line extending from the eye back and down the head. In the video, the whitish area at the gape is visible although our notes did not mention it. The bill appeared dark but in good light and on the video, the tip was darker and the rest was paler. The bill tip had a nail. In addition, the upper bill extension stopped well short of the eye. The lower extension curved up slightly and passed through the pale area at the gape. The feather pattern between the upper and lower extensions ended in a round curve and stopped well short of the nostril. I will sketch the bill shape below. At close range the bottom of the buff neck had a row of fine blackish feathered edges creating a very fine line that separated it from the reddish brown breast and adjacent sides.

The breast, sides, flanks, undertail and uppertail coverts, were primarily rufous-brown with feathers having varying amounts of black edges. On the breast, there were also whitish portions to some feathers. These feathers were mostly reddish brown at the

base with a whitish/gold bar before the black edge. These whitish areas were not present on the sides and flanks. The curvature of these black edges was oriented so that they pointed down on the breast and toward the rear on the flanks. Some, however did not seem to show much curvature. The tail was dark. The belly was seen when lifting out of the water. It appeared grayer in overall tone with more finely marked dark flecks. Belly views were very brief. There was a well-defined very narrow white line on the wing where the front edge of the speculum would be. The color of the speculum was dark as were the primaries and secondaries. The edge of the speculum toward the rear also had a shorter less obvious white edge that was not always visible and was not as well defined. At close range, the wing between the scapulars and the speculum, were also dark but with fine reddish brown featheredges, creating rows of very thin parallel lines. The legs and feet appeared dark. There was a small V-shaped mantle with dark brown feathers with buff edges. The scapulars were black or dark brown with prominent reddish brown edges. The axillars were white as seen when the bird lifted up and flapped its wings. The overall dark gray underwing had prominent white areas on the inner wing.

Similar Species Comparison: The shape of the bill eliminates all but the Common Eider female. As mentioned above, I feel that the longheaded, long billed look of the Common Eider is distinctive whereas this bird had the relatively smaller, rounder headed short-billed look to it. In addition, the upper bill extension toward the eye was relatively short. The lower extension curves up slightly compared to the straight extension of the Common and passes through the pale area at the gape, which the Common apparently doesn't have. The feather pattern between the upper and lower extensions ended in a round curve rather than a more pointed shape, which the Common apparently has, and stops well short of the nostril as opposed to the Common where it extends almost to the nostril. These head and bill features should eliminate Common Eider. The pointed chevron or arrow shaped dark feather edging to the breast, sides, and rump that the field guides refer to in comparison to a barred look to these edges in Common is something that is hard to compare when only one species is present and we have never seen a Common at 15 feet. We basically could see the sides and breast well and there was curvature to the black edges as described in the description section above. However, in some areas, it was not obvious.

Previous Experience: No experience with female King Eider.

References during ID: Sibley Guide to Birds

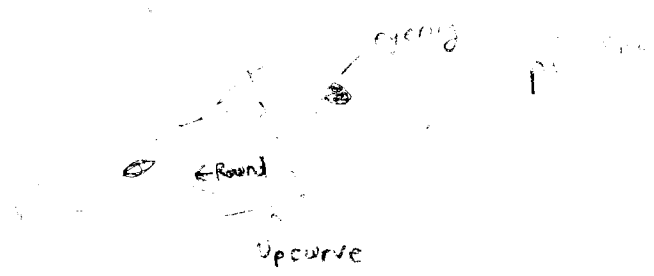
References after ID: Sibley Guide to Birds; Waterfowl, Madge & Burn, and my videotape

Other Documentation: Videotape submitted with this report by A. Mirabella (TO PERC) * PHOTO - ALAN CRADY

Date of report: 11/5/02 from notes taken during viewing.

Signature of Observer: August Mirabella & Judy Mirabella

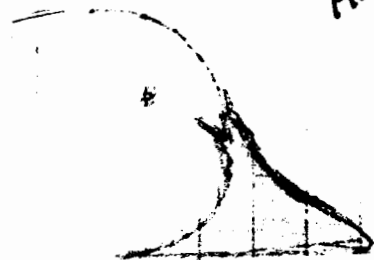
August Mirabella Judy Mirabella



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NOVEMBER

Henky's Mill - West Chester

King Eider - ♀ slightly smaller than a Mallard
overall warm brown in color.Head & face light brown, crown & nape a
darker brown, back a golden brown, wings
brown-black primaries & secondariesGroat - golden brown. Apparent to have coarse
dark brown vertical short streaks.Bill - dark & slightly sloping feather edges on
head stopped near mid-face level.King Eider
11/1/02
Henky's Mill
West Chester,
Chs Co PA

Gr x sp (4), Pudd, Duck (10), Bull, BOBU 48

West yard chippy sp (2)

145-02-2002

Nick Polcinella

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)

Date of Sighting: 1 November 2002 to 6 November 2002

Location: WEST CHESTER

County: CHESTER

Observer(s): Larry Lewis and multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: August Mirabella, Alan Brady, Paul Early

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

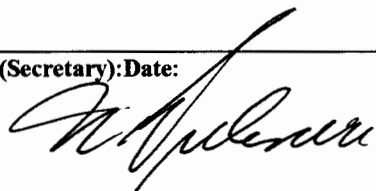
Specimen: No

Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
<i>R. Witmer</i>								
G. Armistead	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
B. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary): Date:



2/20/05