

009-01-1995

## Eared Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: April 6, 1995

Time: 4:30 to 5:00 PM

Weather: Cloudy, visibility good

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and TSN 4 Kowa scope at 30 X

Details of sighting and description of bird: I had just arrive at the first parking lot past Leo's when I spotted a lone grebe no more than 100 feet from shore. I immediately identified the grebe as an Eared Grebe in rather worn basic plumage. The bill was thin and all black and the lower mandible angled upwards about mid-way giving the bill an upturned look. The forehead was steep forming a point near the middle of the crown. There appeared to be a lot of wear on the crown as the feathers appeared to be quite ragged. The face and neck were dusky with a tinge of buff to the neck. The patch of white behind the ear was larger than on most of the Eared Grebes I have seen in this plumage, proably another indication of wear. Some white was also present near the lower part of the neck near the water line. The upper body was dark gray with smudges of white present along the flanks. Compared to nearby Horned Grebes, the body appeared to be shorter, the back was humped more, the neck appeared slimmer, and the head was shorter and not bulbous looking. See photograph.

The Eared Grebe was seen again on 8 April by myself and Ed kwater

On April 22 & 23, one was seen again in the same area (possibly the same bird?), but this one was in near full alternate definitive plumage. Can Eared Grebes molt from basic to alternate plumage in fourteen days?



PHOTOGRAPHS TO FOLLOW

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EARED GREBE IN ERIE COUNTY, PA. Ed Kwater

On Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup> 1995 my wife Cheryl and I were birding at Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co, PA. As we headed east and crossed the bridge over Long Pond I noticed 2 small grebes on the south side of the road. On stopping and investigating we discovered that one was a Pied-billed Grebe, Podilymbus podiceps and the other was an Eared Grebe, Podiceps nigricollis. A few minutes earlier we had just been watching a Horned Grebe, Podiceps auritus. The Eared Grebe was about the size of a Horned Grebe and very slightly smaller & slimmer than the Pied-billed. The bird had a very distinctive head shape. The forehead was very steep rising to a distinct peak on the crown unlike the flatter-crowned profile of a Horned Grebe. The neck was thinner than in a Horned Grebe and the bill was noticeably finer, appearing slightly upturned. This was due to the very straight culmen. Plumage wise the Eared Grebe was very different than a Horned Grebe. The forehead and crown were dark blackish gray and this continued as a thin stripe down the nape and also down below the level of the eye, merging into dusky gray cheeks. The foreneck was also dusky gray with a slight brownish tinge. This pattern was completely different from the Horned Grebe which had a sharp cut-off between the dark cap and white cheeks (at the level of the eye) and also a white foreneck. The upper parts of the Eared Grebe were a dark, blackish gray and the flanks were a paler dusky gray. The iris was bright red. When first observed the bird was about 80 yards away from the bridge. It then swam directly

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towards us, diving several times on the way, and ending up only about 15 yards from the bridge. It remained at this distance for several minutes and I managed to take several photographs of the bird. A group of joggers then flushed the bird and it flew off, revealing white secondaries. It circled the marina several times then passed about 100 feet overhead and headed out to Lake Erie. The flight action was very rapid, fast and direct. The wings were relatively long and narrow and the body dumpy and thick. The neck and head were held very slightly below the level of the mid-line of the body in flight.

The Eared Grebe was observed through x10 binocular and x30 spotting scope for approx. 10 minutes. I have had extensive experience with this sp. before, both in Europe and North America including 6-figure numbers in California. I have also seen at least 8 Eared Grebes at Presque Isle in the last 10 years.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Eared Grebe (Podiceps nigricollis)**

Date of Sighting: **6 April 1995 to 8 April 1995**

Location: **PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK**

County: **ERIE**

Observer(s): **Jerry McWilliams**

**Ed Kwater**

Date of Submission: **1995**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams; Ed Kwater**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **YES** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
N. Pulcinella	X							
E. Kwater	X							
R. Ickes	X							
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe	X							
S. Feldstein	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*J. C. Haas*

Date:

5-1-96