

Long Point Bird Observatory Rare Bird Report Form

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Canadian Migration
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In order that any sight record or banding of a rare species can be confirmed for the historical record, it must be properly documented. LPBO cooperators are therefore asked to complete a form in every case where a rarity is being claimed. Guidance as to which species are considered rare in the Long Point area may be obtained from the LPBO Program Coordinator and in the Long Point Area Checklist found in *A Birding Guide to Long Point Area*. Each observer should prepare his/her description independently and preferably before consulting any field guides or other literature.

PLEASE PRINT.

Species claimed: Smew (*Megullus albellus*)

No. of birds: 1

Age: Unknown

Sex: Male

Date(s): March 9, 2012

Place: Coletta Bay, Long Point – viewable from the north end of Willow Ave.

Time(s) of Observation: 0655

Who first saw the bird(s): Ron Ridout on March 8, SAM on March 9.

Who first identified it: Ron Ridout on March 8, SAM on March 9.

Other observers (names and addresses):

Any who disagree:

Your previous experience with the species: Observed individuals of all age/sex plumage combinations in Great Britain. Observed young bird in Whitby, Ontario, December 27, 2011.

Your previous experience with any closely similar species:

a) Formerly: Extensive experience observing all merganser and duck species.

(b) Same day: Many Common Mergansers around, a few Red-breasted, and couple of Hooded.

Species present for comparison: Common Merganser and approximately 10 other duck species.

Which were beside it for comparison: Common Merganser

Distance from observer(s): 200-500m

How measured: Estimate.

Optical aids used: Kowa TSN-822 (20x-60x zoom) at approximately 30x.

Weather conditions (at time of observation): Partly cloudy to overcast with almost full sun on the Inner Bay at times between 0630

and 0700. Large cloud bank with extensive snow fall to the immediate west which reached the area around 0705.

Visibility: Clear - 10km or greater.

Cloud Cover: 40% at time of observation.

Lighting: sunlight.

Wind direction and speed: West, 2-4 Beaufort

Other relevant conditions: Heavy snowfall came into the area about 0705 and lasted for about 15 minutes.

For "Waterbird " records only

Lake conditions: calm

Wave height: N/A

Height of observer above lake: 2m

Was observer's position sheltered: yes

Weather system preceding the date of observation (if known):

Attach weather map clipping from local or national newspaper if relevant.

Associated movements of other species:

There was been a large accumulation of ducks of many species on the Inner Bay of Long Point since early February ranging from 5000 to 30,000+. On the day of the observation there was about 5000 ducks observable from my location, mostly Canvasbacks and Redheads with a large mix of other species. Approximately 200 Common Mergansers were in the far south channels of Coletta bay along with approximately 500 of other species. At 0655 a small group of Mergansers took flight with the Smew followed very shortly thereafter by the rest of the Common Mergansers, all of the ducks from the south channels and most of the ducks on the Inner Bay. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the ducks returned to what appeared to be their original location, but there was definitely some degree of mixing and dispersal.

Was the bird trapped: no

Band # if banded:

Was it photographed:

If yes, by whom (name and address):

Specimen or parts preserved:

Present location:

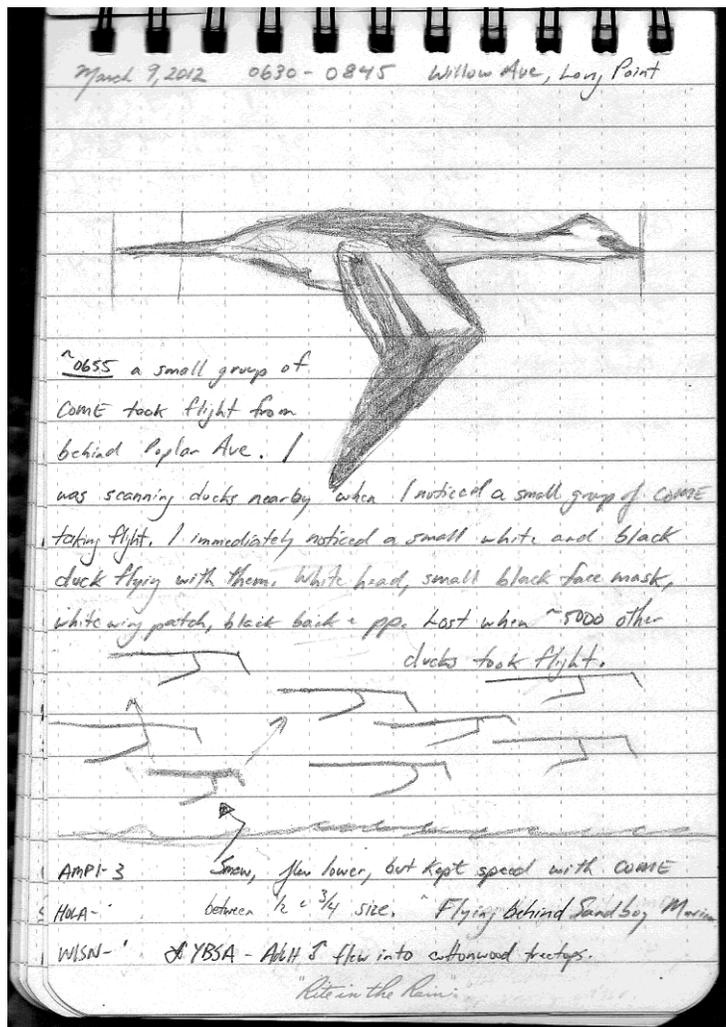
Circumstances:

Ron Ridout observed the bird swimming off of Willow Ave. for short period late afternoon on March 8, 2012. I decided that evening to return to the same location for first light the following morning. I arrived at the end of Willow Ave. around 0620 and waited for the sun to crest the horizon. I began scanning the bay around 0630. Around 0655 I was scanning to the west when I noticed a small group of Common Mergansers (~30) take flight from the far south channels of Coletta Bay and managed to get them in my scope. I immediately noticed a small white duck flying near the bottom and back of the flock and managed to keep it in my scope for about 15 to 20 seconds as it flew north before losing it in a mass of waterfowl. The other Common Mergansers (~200), and most of the ducks on the Inner Bay took flight shortly after the first flock. The majority of the ducks settled relatively quickly, but only about 50-75 Common Mergansers returned to the same location. I searched from various areas along the Inner Bay until about 0900, but despite the best efforts of myself and others the Smew was not be relocated that day.

Description:

Give separate description for (a) in the field (b) in the hand. Include full measurements and wing formula with hand descriptions.

Striking small white and black merganser appearing somewhere between half to two thirds the size of adjacent Common Mergansers (COME). The bill was small ($1/4$ length of the head) and dark. Head appeared almost entirely white with a noticeable dark/black face mask mostly anterior to the eye, and some dark plumage near the back of the head (posterior crown above the nape). Neck, body (ventral) and undertail and underwing coverts white. The back had a distinct black patch that began near the base of the neck and continued into a dark tail. The extent of the black was reduced near the upper tail coverts contrasted markedly with dusky-white plumage in the posterior-ventral regions, the white scapulars and wing patch. The wings were also distinctly white and black featuring a prominent white wing patch (upper wing coverts, greater coverts and tertials white). The rest of the wing appeared black. The tail was distinct and obvious giving the bird a resemblance in shape and flight to a Hooded Merganser, and appeared darker than the surrounding feathers, but not black. The white head and wing patch were the most striking features that immediately caught my eye while flying with the COME. The Bird was separated from a male Hooded Merganser by extensive white plumage on the head (except face mask and area near the posterior crown above the nape), and neck, no colour besides white in the ventral regions, and white wing patch was much more distinct. The bird was separated from a male Bufflehead by larger size, completely white head (aside from face mask and dark patch – posterior crown above the nape), white patch in wings did not extent into secondaries.



Copy of Stu Mackenzie's Notebook from March 9, 2012

(a) at the time: no

(b) afterwards: no

Finally, is this record 100% certain? yes

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stuart Mackenzie". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the "Signed:" label.

E-mail Address:smackenzie@birdscanada.org

Date: March 9, 2012

Mailing Address: PO Box 160, Port Rowan, ON. N0E 1M0