

I had started to scan the bird with my scope when a Bonaparte's Gull flew at the duck startling it into flight. The duck flew across the lake and landed on the other side. I noted a Greater Scaup-like white wing stripe and whitish belly in flight. I quickly ran back to my truck and drove around to the other side of the lake. After a short search I found the bird asleep (the tuft was obvious) with a small flock of scaup about a quarter of a mile out on the lake. It awoke a couple of times and I had fairly good scope views and took several not very hopeful photos. I saw the dark head, contrasting brownish, somewhat rufous sides, and dark back. Suddenly the bird got up and flew toward the islands and out of sight. I noted the whitish underwings and again the white stripe on the wings when the bird flew.

I searched for another two hours without finding the bird. Several observers were present that evening, but it was windy and visibility was not good. A search of Lake Springfield 16 March failed to produce the duck.

On 17 March I drove east of Springfield and was checking for waterfowl on several ponds. At the Buffalo sewage ponds one mile southwest of Buffalo I observed the female Tufted Duck again. This pond is about 11 miles northeast of Lake Springfield as the duck flies. Lots of waterfowl feed at the ponds during the day and come back to Lake Springfield to roost. I was able to get several photographs, one of which was probably 25 to 30 yards away from me.

I also took additional notes: A brownish-orange eye (I knew already that it was light-colored); whitish undertail coverts; and gray bill with black margin along the front edge. I also noted that the tuft was at times more noticeable than others depending on whether the duck was diving (less obvious).

The duck stayed on this pond from 17-20 March and was seen by many observers. Two other observers, (C. McDonald and P. Weber), noted that there were no bands on the legs and the wings did not appear clipped, which helps to eliminate ducks as escapees.

This March 2004 Lake Springfield Tufted Duck appears to be a typical adult female with no white in the face. As far as I could tell there were no traits that would indicate this bird was a hybrid. This bird, which has been accepted by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee, represents the fourth state record for Illinois.

On Sunday, 21 March after a cold night and west wind the, Tufted Duck could not be found.

Literature Cited

Bohlen, H. D. 1989. The birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 221 pp.

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Canada Warbler



Bay-breasted Warbler



Photo Gallery

*Photos taken by Jerry Kumery
 at the Magic Hedge, Cook County,
 23 May 2004.*

Blackpoll Warbler

