

Musgrove

2414 Adams Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
Dec. 16, 1982

Dear Dr. Kent,

Here are a few observations that may be of use:

✓ On Nov. 13, Barry Kenney of Des Moines (who used to hunt with Jack) reported that an immature whistling swan sat in the duck and goose decoys for quite a while at Hendrickson Marsh east of Collins. One of the party tried for photos, but it was pretty far away. Barry reported the significant facts--slightly grayish plumage; white wings with no black; size larger than goose decoys. Several years ago, he spotted a "big snow goose" that some Marshalltown hunters were showing off at that same marsh--another immature swan--called the federal officer after getting a license plate number, and four Marshalltown men paid stiff fines. I think Barry knows a swan when he sees one.

Saturday, Dec. 11, I checked the tailwater area of Saylorville Dam and saw no eagles (we have sometimes seen them there) but did see about 25 mallards; mallards often winter in the area.

Sunday, Dec. 12, luck was better at Red Rock Lake. In an open spot near Roberts Creek Lake, but on Red Rock Lake proper, I saw more than ✓ 400 American mergansers; the count was made by counting in from one end of the flock till I had 100 and the flock was getting dense; then counted in from the other end for another 100 and again the flock was getting too dense for an accurate count--and I still had half the flock in the middle of that "sandwich" so 400 is a very conservative estimate.

In the dam and tailwater area were several thousand gulls, both herring and ring-billed; I didn't pick up anything else. They, like the mergansers, were feeding on small fish which I think were probably shad.

Also in the tailwater area, about 200 mallards, and best of all, five bald eagles--four immatures in various typical plumages, plus one adult in full plumage.

I hope to check out DeSoto Bend for eagles, etc., before mid-January, and may go back to Saylorville and Red Rock also, and will report anything of interest. I've never before seen so many mergansers at once; more than an hour checking the flock showed nothing else except a few gulls.

Sincerely,

Mary Musgrove

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