

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Common Merganser, *Mergus merganser*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 in female-type plumage
3. Parish: Iberville Parish
Specific Locality: St. Gabriel; Intersection of Hwy 30 and LSU Ag Road.
4. Date(s) when observed: 30 December 2017
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 2:00-3:00 pm
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul Conover, Lafayette LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Van Remsen found and reported the bird. I chased it.
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): none known
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Bird to NW, sun from S
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60X, Samsung S4 and older Sony digital Videocam.
11. Distance to bird(s): About 200 yards.
12. Duration of observation: about 1 hour
13. Habitat: Farm pond in middle of pastureland with industrial and commercial presence nearby, as well as a busy highway and railroad.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The bird was staked out; when I arrived, it was in the SE corner of the pond, whereupon it began to drift along the S shore and out of my sight. Within a few minutes it began to cover the S half pf the pond, diving after a few seconds above water, and moving 10-20 yards underwater before resurfacing. It then began to preen, then tucked its head and began to sleep.
15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

Thin-billed, somewhat shaggy crested duck with well-demarcated brown hood, mostly gray body, whitish chest, and discrete white chin patch.



Head with crest of short, fine feathering running down midline of nape from hind-crown to about mid-nape. Head and neck dark brown except for white chin and small white spot separated from the chin spot by the line of the gape. Bill orange, broadest at base, the sloping concavely down to tip. Culmen appeared to be slightly dusker than remainder of bill. Eye appeared to be orangey or slightly paler brown than head color.

Upperparts a neutral lead gray.

Breast whitish with gray scalloping increasing toward the waterline, gray scalloping becoming predominant on the flanks.

Body afloat not especially buoyant; hind end of body sloped into the water with tail at or slightly above waterline.



Underwings grayish with white secondary patch, white patch on wing linings. Belly whitish with yellowish or pinkish wash—whether pigment or stain not apparent.



17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Cormorants and grebes eliminated by pattern, most other ducks by bill shape. No plumage of Hooded Merganser is similar. Female Red-breasted Merganser most similar, but generally less well-demarcated hood, less richly colored head, lacks discrete white chin patch, typically spikier crest, overall dingier.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, video mainly, with attached stills from those videos.

19. Previous experience with this species: Fairly extensive experience across the continent at various times of year, but no previous experience in Louisiana.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	No, recorded
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? Yes.

23. Date: 12/30/2017