

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: [Long-tailed Duck \(*Clangula hyemalis*\)](#)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
[One female, unknown age](#)

3. Parish: [St. Tammany](#)

Specific Locality: [Tchefuncte River Mouth, Madisonville, LA \(approx. 30.377756, -90.160434\)](#)

4. Date(s) when observed: [29 December 2023](#)

5. Time(s) of day when observed: [3:45 pm](#)

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Erik I. Johnson
City: Sunset
State: LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): [Darlene Eschete, Shae Freeman, Aubrey Freeman, Jenny Alvarado](#)

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): [When we arrived, Ken Harris, Joelle Finley, Pat Dwyer, and a few others had just seen the bird. Many other observers had seen this bird in the days and weeks\(?\) before. I have lost track who first discovered the bird.](#)

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): [Bright afternoon sun. I was looking SE toward the bird, and the sun was to the SW making for a bit of glare.](#)

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Swarovski 25-50x 65mm scope, Vortez Razor 10x42 binoculars, both in good condition.

11. Distance to bird(s): About 100-200 yards? Hard to definitively gauge over the water. Far enough to be hard to see with binoculars, and almost impossible to see through the viewfinder of my 600mm DSLR camera.

12. Duration of observation: 15 minutes

13. Habitat: Lake Pontchartrain waterfront

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The bird must have spent about 90-95% of the observation underwater foraging. The winds were steady at about 15 mph and there was a good bit of chop on the water with light white caps. The bird would briefly bob up into view maybe for a couple of wave cycles and then disappear. It more or less stayed at the same bearing, so it wasn't too hard to relocate when it was up. There was also a group of about 15 Buffleheads and 4 Lesser Scaup at a similar distance and bearing, but the Long-tailed Duck seemed to be moving and foraging independently of them.

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*): When the bird was at the surface, it sat relatively high in the water. The face was pale whitish with a bit of a tear-drop shape protruding to the rear behind the eye, surrounded by a darker brown cap and nape, similar in color to the back. It had a small (short) dark bill. The tail wasn't particularly evident, being a female.

16. Voice: Not heard.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): There is not too much that can be confused with a swimming female, even at a distance – maybe a strange Northern Pintail or something like that, but the bird was clearly diving, reducing the number of possibilities.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): No. I took exactly 49 pictures, totaling 555 MB of data, and missed the bird every time. Very frustrating to try to photograph as I jumped between the scope and shooting somewhat blindly out into the ocean. I'm including a single example of the habitat with a similarly distant Bufflehead that I accidentally photographed to give a sense of the conditions.

19. Previous experience with this species: Not a bird I have a tremendous amount of recent experience with, but I saw them regularly in winter in New England while I lived there from 2001-2003. Since 2012, I've tallied five eBird reports of the species from Louisiana, including up to 3 individuals in some cases.

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

a. at time of observation: None.

b. after observation: Macaulay Library to gut-check assessment of the bird's sex.

21. This description is written from:

<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes.

23. Date: 1 January 2024

Time: 2:10 pm

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page? Yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes

Hi Paul,

Attaching a report for the Madisonville Long-tailed Duck. The photo doesn't have the duck, but including it as an example of the sighting conditions.

Cheers,

Erik

