

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) Number: (leave blank) WVBRC 2020-5
Location: Belleville Locks and Dam (Wood Co.) Date: May 6, 2020 Time: 7:30 PM
Bird Seen: 7:30 PM To: 8:00 PM Age/Sex: Uncertain

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Medium sized stocky water bird with straight, pointed bill.

The bird was essentially in winter (basic) plumage

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt) *Dark brownish top of head. Dark around the eye. Dark bill. Eye appeared dark, but I did not see it in direct sunlight. Back of neck was gray and streaky, possibly due to molt. White chin and front of neck. Continuous thin dark "chinstrap." Clear separation between front and back of neck. Very dark back. No white on flanks.*

Description of any vocalizations, if heard: *None*

Description of behavior: *This bird was first sighted and identified earlier in the day by Terry Bronson (Photos and comments at ebird.org/checklist/568483012). At this time, the bird was in the lock channel. It spent most of its time over the next two days in the lock channel where it dived and fed intermittently.*

Habitat: (General and Specific)

Ohio River

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

See back page.

Previous experience with this species:

I have seen Pacific Loons several times off the coast of Oregon and Washington.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific) I have seen Common and Red-throated Loons in WV and throughout the eastern U.S.

Common Loon - Larger and heavier.

Red-throated Loon - Finer, upturned bill. More white on face.

Arctic Loon - White flanks, no "chinstrap".

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report. May 6 - Josh Holland, Jason White, and Janet Keating observed the bird from the Ohio side in the lock channel.

May 7 - Josh Holland, Jason White, David Patick, and Gary Rankin saw the bird briefly after it moved out of the lock channel into the WV section of the river. As far as I know, there were no observers who disagreed with Terry Bronson's initial identification of the bird as a Pacific Loon.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:

The Sibley Guide To Birds - David Sibley
National Geographic Field Guide to the Bird of N.A. - Dunn and Alderfer
Seabirds - an identification guide - Peter Harrison

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

Next day - May 7

Name:

Mike Griffith

Address:

[Redacted]

Date:

May 13, 2020

Signature:

[Redacted]

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
170 Stallion Ct.
Hedgesville, WV 25427
Or E-mail to:
wilhershberger@mac.com

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

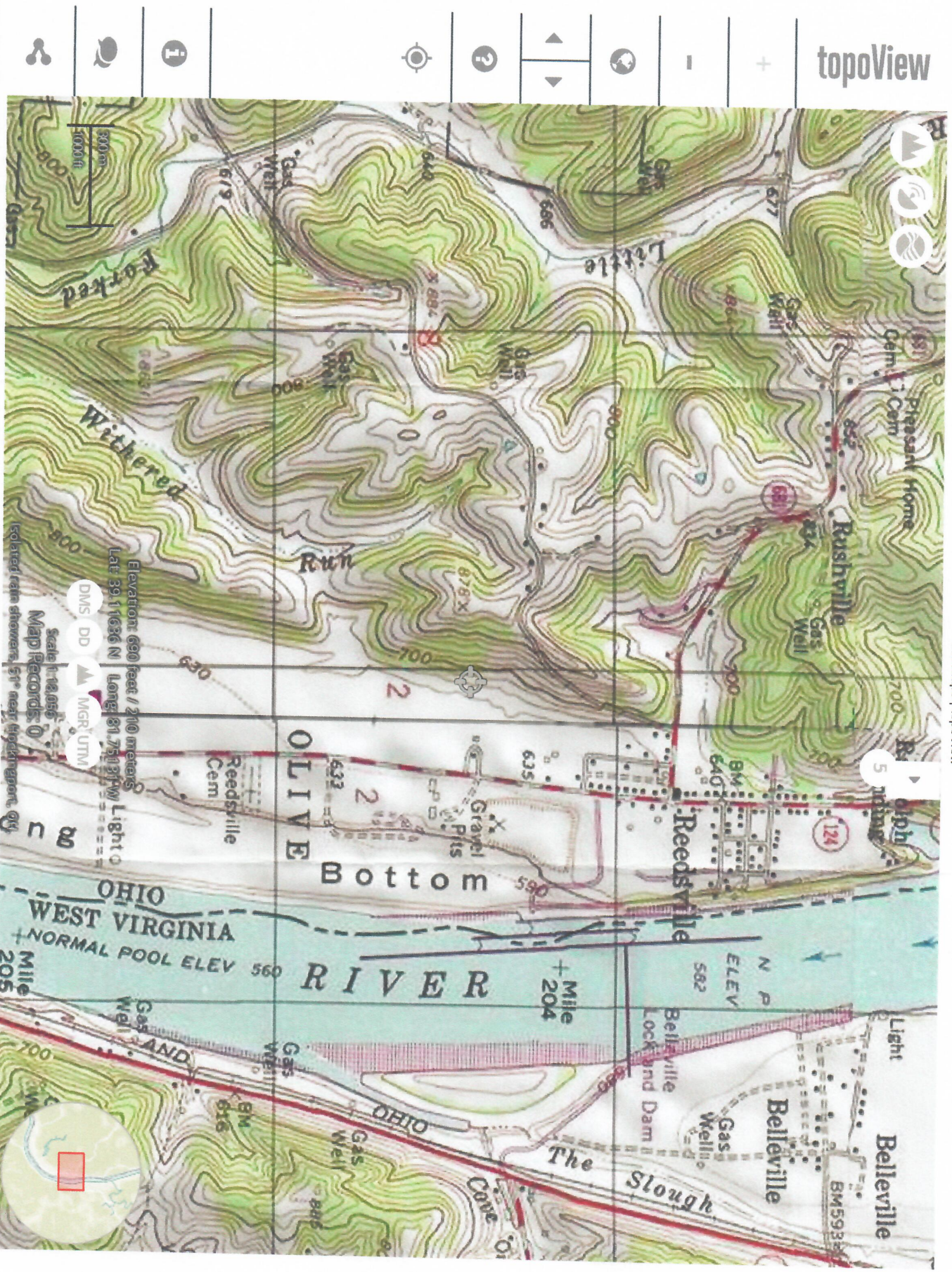
Circumstances of observation:

I had been watching for the bird for about 3 hours from the WV side of the Belleville dam. I briefly left to check another vantage point upstream and when I returned, the bird was floating and moving around just upstream from the hydroelectric section of the dam roughly 30-50 yards from the WV shoreline. During the time I watched the bird, it was approximately 30-100 yards away from me. I was using 8.5x binoculars and a 20-60x spotting scope. I watched the bird for about 30 minutes before it flew back across the river to the lock channel. .

Several observers from WV and Ohio saw the loon from the Ohio side of the Belleville Dam, although there was uncertainty as to the position of the bird relative to the WV-Ohio boundary. I have included a copy of a section of a USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle - Pond Creek, WV. This small section shows the state boundary at the Belleville Locks and Dam.

This seems like an ideal time for the BRC to have a discussion on the WV/Ohio boundary. I'm sure most of us who spend a lot of time birding on the Ohio River would welcome clarification on what standard is to be used for determining whether a bird that is on or above the Ohio River is in WV or Ohio.

topoView



Elevation: 690 feet / 210 meters
 Lat 39.11636 N Long 81.75131 W Light 0
 DMS DD MGR UTM
 Scale 1:24,056
 Map Records 0
 Isolated rain showers, 5" near Fountainport, KY



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