LBINO COMMON LOON

URRAY WAGNER, 248 Carpathia Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba.   R3N 1S9

On 4 July 1988 a partial albino Common Loon was sighted on Winnange ke, Ontario at lat. 49°44'N, long. °41'W. The sighting was made at about 00 h, from a canoe, in clear, calm nditions.

he albino individual was swimming in roup with three other adult Common ns. They were moving slowly, periically thrusting their heads under ter. As the author approached, they an to make the irritable clucking their cies typically makes at the slow apach of people. They, again typically, an to dive as the observation distance reased further. Individuals dispersed le underwater. The albino bird was the first to dive and its behavior was discernibly different from that of its panions. After a second, more onged dive the albino was some dise from the canoe and we med our respective derings.

subsequently learned that r sightings of an albino loon made on the same lake g 1988. One occurred in June, approximately 6 km -northwest of the 4 July ing. The second was in st approximately 3 km west of the location of the sighting.
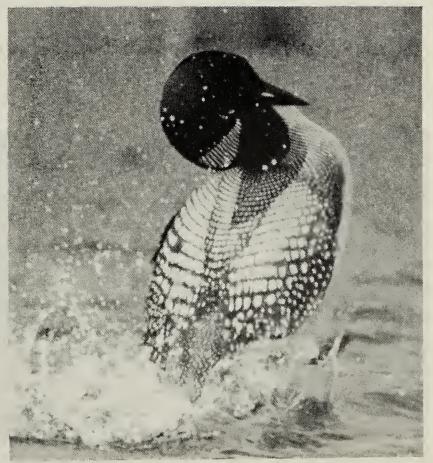
minimum distance of my vation of the partial albino was about 40 m, and graphs were taken with a mm lens (not suitable for uction). The bird was not ly white, but had light lumage where Common are normally black. The

bill was black. The loon(s) sighted in June and August were similarly described.

Although albinism is a widely known phenomenon, its frequency among wild populations is largely undocumented. A review of the Zoological Record from 1954 to 1987/88 disclosed only one reference to albinism in the genus Gavia, in France.[1] The type of sightings made at Winnange Lake appear to be extremely rare in birding literature.

Acknowledgements

[1] COLIN, D. and C. STEERMAN 1981. Red-throated Diver with partial albinism in France in November 1981. Dutch Birding 3(4):118.

Common Loon displaying   Wayne Shiels