



Figure 1. Aberrant Black-capped Chickadee photographed in Plainfield, New Hampshire.

this individual appeared to be the same as the rest of the flock of Black-capped Chickadees that frequent our feeding stations.

The next winter the variant, or a similar aberrant individual, again appeared. While we suspected the presence of more than one of these birds, we were not certain until we saw two such individuals together at the feeder. We then noted that one of the variants had a yellow lower mandible.

Several days later at a friend's home about 6 miles away in Meriden, New Hampshire, I saw a similar variant chickadee. When I commented on this I was told several such birds had been seen during the winter. Subsequent unconfirmed sightings of apparently similar variants have been reported to me from Norwich, Vermont and Lyme, New Hampshire, 12 and 23 miles, respectively, north of Plainfield.

Although the variants at our feeder appeared to be part of a larger flock, we noted that they were somewhat ostracized by the population at large and usually fed on the ground below the feeding station when other birds of the flock occupied it. No particular association between the variants was ever observed.

While Tanner (*Auk*, 51: 240, 1934) describes a partially melanistic Black-capped Chickadee collected near Ithaca, New York and Sweet (pers. comm.) reports two similar birds, one of which he banded, during the winter of 1965-66 in Glastonbury, Connecticut, I have been unable to find a prior record of the aberrant form reported here.—RICHARD J. LOW, *Department of Pathology, Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755*.

Diving times of the Least Grebe and Masked Duck.—In 1963 the Least Grebe (*Podiceps dominicus*) and the Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*) fed by diving and swimming beneath the surface of the pond on the grounds of the Instituto Interamericano de Ciencias Agrícolas near Turrialba, Costa Rica. None of the other summer residents on this 3.6-hectare, 2 m-deep pond fed by diving.

A comparison of diving times and of intervals between dives during active feeding bouts is presented in Table 1. The average diving time of the Masked Duck (recorded 30 July 1963) was almost twice that of the Least Grebe (recorded 3 August 1963). The diving times are significantly different ($P < 0.001$, $t = 6.62$). The surface pause times are not significantly different.

The diving behavior of the two species differed in at least two other important ways. Masked Ducks invariably surfaced within one or two body lengths of where they dived. Least Grebes almost never surfaced near where they dived and usually came up 5–10 m away. This difference must be the result of the Least Grebes pursuing free-swimming animals and the Masked Ducks feeding on plant material on or near the bottom.

The second difference was in the relative importance of diving. During some 200 hours of watching, I saw Least Grebes capture food above the surface only twice. Masked Ducks fed mostly around the edges of floating mats of vegetation, on the floating mats, and by tipping-up in shallow water. Although diving and feeding beneath the surface was their least frequent method of feeding, Masked Ducks fed regularly by this method throughout the period of observation (29 June to 19 August 1963).

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF DIVING TIMES FOR *PODICEPS DOMINICUS* AND *OXYURA DOMINICA*

	Time in Seconds			
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean \pm SE
Diving				
<i>Podiceps dominicus</i>	23	8.7	14.7	12.48 \pm 0.59
<i>Oxyura dominica</i>	16	11.0	26.6	21.02 \pm 1.37
Surface pause				
<i>Podiceps dominicus</i>	24	2.3	24.1	11.95 \pm 1.36
<i>Oxyura dominica</i>	12	8.3	15.4	11.49 \pm 0.73

I can find no reports of diving times for these two species, but they may be compared with those for congeneric forms reported by Heintzelman and Newberry (Wilson Bull., 76: 291, 1964). The mean diving time of the Ruddy Duck (*O. jamaicensis*, 19.78 \pm 1.14 seconds) is not significantly different from that of the Masked Duck. The mean time for 25 dives by a Horned Grebe (*P. auritus*) was 17.38 \pm 0.77 seconds, significantly different from the diving times of the Least Grebe ($P < 0.001$, $t = 4.86$). Four dives by one Pied-billed Grebe (*P. podiceps*) are not different, but ten dives by a second individual are different from the Least Grebe ($P < 0.01$, $t = 3.18$). The average diving time for a Horned Grebe reported by Dow (Auk, 81: 556, 1964), 12.4 \pm 0.57 seconds, is the same as the diving time for the Least Grebe and significantly different from the time reported by Heintzelman and Newberry (op. cit.). Horned Grebe diving times in England (Ladhams, Brit. Birds, 61: 27, 1968) agree with Heintzelman and Newberry's data. Ladhams' average time of 13 seconds for the Pied-billed Grebe is close to my figure for the Least Grebe but he does not give enough data to allow statistical comparison. These comparisons emphasize the considerable variation in grebe diving times and the important influence thereon of local ecological factors.

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