

## INTERSPECIFIC FEEDING OF CLARK'S GREBE CHICK BY RED-NECKED GREBE AT DUCK LAKE, CRESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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The Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) was first recorded in British Columbia at Shuswap Lake, near Salmon Arm, in early June 1981 (Campbell et al. 1990). Two years later it was reported breeding at Duck Lake, within the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA), when a single chick was reared by a female Clark's Grebe and a male Western Grebe (Forbes 1988). On 6 June 1996, the first confirmed breeding of a pair of Clark's Grebes was found at Christmas Island, in Shuswap Lake at Salmon Arm, when a nest with four eggs was discovered (Campbell et al. 2001). Clark's Grebe continues to occasionally breed at this location either as pure pairs or mixed with a Western Grebe (Ted Hillary pers. comm.).

This note describes observations of Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) feeding a Clark's Grebe chick during the breeding season of 2000 at Duck Lake, BC. Both Red-necked and Western grebes nest at Duck Lake, a shallow water body situated within the CVWMA in southeastern British Columbia (Butler et al. 1986). Red-necked Grebes arrive on the breeding grounds in early to late April whereas Western Grebes arrive in mid to late May. Early nesting attempts often fail due to summer windstorms so it is not uncommon to find both species nesting later in the season during July and August. Clark's Grebe is an infrequent visitor to the area and a single adult has been observed during the breeding season

in eight of 12 years from 1997 through 2008 (pers. obs.; Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** After consuming a fish, this Clark's Grebe actively pursued and engaged in a courtship ritual with a Western Grebe during the 2008 breeding season at Duck Lake, Creston, BC. (Linda M. Van Damme). BC Photo 3632.

On 31 August 2000, a Clark's Grebe chick, three-quarters grown, was observed associating with two adult Red-necked Grebes which took turns feeding fish to the begging young. Again, on 1 September, the Clark's Grebe chick was observed calling and begging, and subsequently fed by a Red-necked Grebe pair. The adults would dive in the shallow water, catch a fish and swim over to feed the young grebe. During my last visit, on 17 September, the Clark's Grebe was no longer in the company of the Red-necked Grebes. Its plumage had a more adult-like appearance, and it was observed preening, resting, and diving but was not observed catching its own prey.

Stout and Nuechterlein (1999) had no confirmed instances of successful interspecific nest parasitism. They did, however, mention an adult Red-necked Grebe that was observed feeding a Western Grebe chick for approximately 20 minutes and another pair was observed in close association with both Red-necked Grebe chick and Western Grebe chick at Lake Osakis, MN.

At Duck Lake, Western Grebes are known to parasitize nests of Red-necked Grebes which are able to successfully incubate eggs and rear the young (Van Damme 2004, 2006), so it is possible that a Clark's Grebe had parasitized a Red-necked Grebe

nest and the pair I observed was feeding a young they had reared.

### *Literature Cited*

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